

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today, on behalf of the member for Swift Current, to introduce 46 grade 3 and 4 students in the west gallery. They are from St. Patrick School in Swift Current. They are accompanied today by Miss Meloche, Miss Banks, Miss Burnay, and Mrs. Bulbeck, who are the chaperons, Mrs. Mah, and Mr. Cliff Wright is the bus driver. I didn't see Cliff up there but he may be around somewhere. Cliff is a constituent of mine and runs a busing company.

And I want to have all of the people in this Assembly join me in welcoming these students to Regina and to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, and through you, a delegation of people sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, who are here as a result of a large meeting that was held last night of over 250 people protesting the cuts to the Myers House in Regina.

These people, the friends of Myers House, are seated in your gallery and I would ask you to welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a group of 45 grade 6 students here from St. Mark School in Saskatoon in my constituency. They're accompanied by their teachers Arley Olson and Dave Schurman and by their chaperon Mrs. Uzik.

And I'd ask members of the legislature to welcome these students to the legislature today, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sauder: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and the other members of the Assembly a delegation of people from my home town, the town of Carrot River.

Here today to see the proceedings for a while this afternoon is alderwoman Emily Grimes, alderman Dean Anderson, and the town administrator Duril Touet. They're in Regina today on some town business to meet with one of the ministers to discuss issues relating to their town, and wanted to sit in and view the proceedings here this afternoon. I trust they'll find them interesting and that they'll have a safe trip home.

I just ask you and all colleagues to help welcome them here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members of the Assembly, a group of 43 grade 5 students from St. Gerard School in Saskatoon. They are located in the east gallery facing me. The students today are accompanied by teachers Aline Korol, Clément Bertoncini, and chaperons Mme. Boudreault and Mlle. Sousa. I want all members to welcome these students.

But at the same time we have an added bonus — because I wasn't aware they were coming — is a group of students, if this is correct, Mr. Speaker, from St. Goretti School which is not too far from St. Gerard School. Located in the Speaker's gallery today, 44 students from grade 5, 6, 7, and 8. The St. Goretti students are accompanied by their teachers Jim Jelinski and Al Bodnarchuk.

And I hope that all members will join me in welcoming these two groups of students from St. Gerard and St. Goretti in the constituency of Saskatoon Westmount, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join my colleague from Westmount in welcoming the children from St. Goretti School. But I do so more particularly because of a former colleague of mine, Jim Jelinski, who is accompanying the students today. He's also a fellow parishioner of St. Philip's parish, and Jim and I see each other pretty well every Sunday. And I want to welcome Jim here today and hope he enjoys his summer vacation, Jim. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Use of Quotations to Promote Fair Share Saskatchewan

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier, the minister in charge of decentralization. Mr. Minister, for the last two weeks your Premier has stood in this House and told people that Dr. Leo Kristjanson supports your version of decentralization.

That being the case, Mr. Minister, let me quote from today's *Star-Phoenix*:

Former University of Saskatchewan president Leo Kristjanson says he's being misrepresented when Premier Grant Devine claims he's a supporter of Fair Share Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, how do you explain your Premier's misrepresentation of Dr. Leo Kristjanson's remarks?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Speaker, all the Premier did was quote Dr. Kristjanson from a radio interview which was conducted by CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio on the day of the first announcement in the Fair Share program, which was to Humboldt and

area and which dealt with the Agriculture and Food department.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I have another question to the minister of decentralization. Mr. Minister, I want you to listen to what Dr. Kristjanson is saying, and again I quote from the *Star-Phoenix*:

... the former president says he's only heard enough about Fair Share to decide it certainly doesn't meet the test of being a planned, long-term program.

"You don't change people's lives without a fairly long buildup process," he said.

Mr. Minister, don't you owe Dr. Kristjanson and the people of this province an apology for misrepresenting Dr. Kristjanson's remarks?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — If Dr. Kristjanson has heard, through the media once again, the representations that have been in the media about how this is not a plan, and how it won't go out over a longer period of time, well then his reaction may be based on that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this decentralization program is one element of a much larger plan to stabilize the economy of this province of Saskatchewan. First of all, and that member and others over there, several few months ago, just a few months ago, in the late winter and the early spring when GRIP (gross revenue insurance plan) and NISA (net income stabilization account) and those programs were being talked about extensively across our province and beyond the borders of this province, the NDP (New Democratic Party) members said it was nothing but politics. They said it was nothing but just political posturing; they would never take place; the programs were flawed — all of those things.

Mr. Speaker, today you don't hear that from these NDP members. Eighty-nine per cent of the farmers in this province have signed up. The only thing you hear from them now is another element of the program which they criticize, and they use the same criticism, and when this plan ...

The Speaker: — Now I know that it's very ... perhaps even normal for one to want to give a very elaborate response. At times questions are very long. They haven't been today — I'm not insinuating that — but they have been in other times. And I'd just like to bring this to the attention of hon. members that it seems that in this House one of the problems in question period is that hon. members do not appreciate overly long questions and overly long answers. And I think that the only way that we can control that is for members themselves to co-operate rather than me having to intervene in various cases. So I want only to bring that to your attention.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I have another question to the minister of decentralization. Mr. Minister, in your promotional video on Fair Share you used Brook Dobni, a commerce professor at the University of Saskatchewan, as someone who has studied rural Saskatchewan and thinks decentralization could stabilize our rural economy.

Again I quote from the *Star-Phoenix*.

But Dobni said Wednesday he's not an expert on rural development and was expressing his personal opinion that any decentralization has to be well-planned. To this point, he doesn't see much evidence of that.

Mr. Minister, why are you using people and twisting what they say, especially when they don't agree with you?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — As I recall, Mr. Speaker, in the video that is presented when Fair Share announcements are made, Professor Dobni, that the hon. member refers to, is quoted in there. And one of the things that he says very clearly in that video, very openly, and which we present very openly, is ... and I don't quote him directly but it's to this effect. It's to this effect, Mr. Speaker, that without a solid plan, decentralization may not work and may be harmful. And we present that openly and we agree with that. Without a solid plan, decentralization may not work. I would agree with that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, but the difference is just as it was with the long-term safety net programs in agriculture, just as there was with community bonds and those other instruments developed by this government for investment in communities by people who live in those communities, and which were criticized by members all across over there Those were good plans. This is another element of an excellent plan.

Stabilization of the economy of this province must be a priority for every one of us who wants ... every one of us who wants to represent this entire province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Supplementary to the minister of decentralization. Mr. Minister, Mr. Dobni and Dr. Leo Kristjanson say that they see no evidence of any kind of long-term plan when it comes to your government's version of decentralization.

Mr. Minister, these two gentlemen are quoted in the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* as saying they disagree with you. Mr. Minister, why do you twist their words and misrepresent what they say? Why doesn't your government apologize to these two gentlemen and apologize to the people of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, in the case of Professor Dobni there was no twisting of his words — in the case of Professor Dobni. Professor Dobni said what he

said, and the video is an accurate representation because it shows him saying what it is that he was saying. And one of things that he said was there had to be a good plan or it wouldn't work. And I'm saying that there is a good plan and it will work.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about quotations from various individuals. And, Mr. Speaker, let me quote some individuals that will be known to members in this House. We have, for example, what was quoted the other day from the newspaper in Tisdale, the Leader of the Opposition quoted in the Tisdale newspaper. And I quote exactly: "For the PC's to say that we would cancel Fair Share is an outright lie." The Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the NDP.

Now, Mr. Speaker, yesterday when some particular union leaders — I submit to you and to this House and to the public of Saskatchewan — when some union leaders in Saskatchewan said to that Leader of the Opposition, you better get on board and go against this Fair Share, never mind what you're saying out in those rural communities, he changed his position, Mr. Speaker. He was told, you want . . . us in the union movement are deciding for you and we'll tell you . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I'm going to just once more remind the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Health; I'm going to once more ask for his co-operation.

Costs of Decentralization

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for disintegrating the public service of Saskatchewan, the member from Meadow Lake. Mr. Minister, today you announced you are moving 60 employees of the Department of Energy and Mines to Weyburn. And your daily . . . today's phoney price for this move is about \$550,000 according to reports.

It has become evident to everyone in the province, Mr. Minister, that your government will not give out the truthful figures about decentralization and that you will do absolutely nothing to justify your announced costs. My question is this, although I don't think you'll answer it because you're afraid to, but I none the less feel compelled to ask. Mr. Minister, what is the cost breakdown of the \$550,000 to \$900,000 you claim to be spending on the move? What is the cost breakdown?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said on other occasions, the cost range that is announced on each individual case as announced is the cost that it will take to move the employees of the department to the location designated. Now, Mr. Speaker, that will depend on the number of people that move; it will depend on the difference in the price of lease space in those two locations.

Mr. Speaker, just to go back one more time for the hon. member who is now against decentralization in a major way, and that's important to note. The hon. members of

the NDP have now said they are against it when they're here in Regina.

Another quote, Mr. Speaker, from the hon. member from Humboldt, who said in Humboldt: in my constituency I don't see any problem with continuing in that vein. May 29, 1991, on CK radio.

Here's another one, Mr. Speaker. The NDP candidate in Melfort: I sincerely hope those jobs will be delivered.

Here's another one, Mr. Speaker. Here's the one that is the best of all though, Mr. Speaker, because it fits very . . . Mr. Speaker, one . . .

The Speaker: — I realize it, sir. However . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, another question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, this is really a futile exercise. You have no facts on the program, just political rhetoric. And that proves, as we've always said in the opposition, that this is just a political program, not an economic program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: — The only thing different, Mr. Minister, today, with respect to your answer, is that you're not quoting Dr. Leo Kristjanson, and for good reason.

My question is this, Mr. Minister: if this is an economic policy as you claim, where are the economic studies? What is going to be the cost to the taxpayers for this crazy program?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — What hon. members of the NDP refuse to do . . . They sit there in opposition. They pretend to be a party who's concerned about all portions of this province, this total province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Pretend, I say. Pretend to be that, Mr. Speaker, when in fact a program that is directed right at the problem of the economy of this province and the need to stabilize the economy of this province — one element of a much wider program — and they say to me and they raise political . . . the fact that it's a political program.

Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that the Leader of the Opposition, in conversations I would suggest with members of the union movement, said now he's against it.

Mr. Speaker, let me quote from the NDP candidate in Gravelbourg — the NDP candidate in Gravelbourg. Here's the question: if the NDP win the next election, will the move still take place, he was asked. And here's his quote: I have no information on that. I can't speak for the NDP, says the NDP candidate in Gravelbourg. I can't speak for the NDP.

The hon. member now . . . We see that in Gravelbourg from the candidate who says he's a candidate; he can't speak for the party and we've seen yesterday that the leader of the party maybe can't even speak for the NDP. Maybe the leader of the party doesn't even speak for the NDP. Maybe his chain is rattled by union leaders in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, everyone is Saskatchewan knows what's going on here. You people have come to the realization that there's no way the Saskatchewan voters are going to trust you with another term in office. So on your way out, you've embarked on a scorched earth policy reminiscent of Saddam Hussein leaving Kuwait.

You no longer care, Mr. Minister, one bit, if your policies make good economic sense or social sense. You've even given up defending them. You're thumbing your nose at the people of this province, Mr. Minister, and you're saying well, we're going to do what we want and if you don't like it, tough bananas.

My question is this, Mr. Minister. If you can't even pretend you're a responsible government just for a few minutes, and either table your economic analysis of Fair Share Saskatchewan, or will you finally admit you don't have an economic plan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, there's the member from Regina speaking for the NDP, who does not recognize the difficulty in the economy in this province, that this province's economy has been through with a 60-year low in the wheat prices and all of those factors which contribute to the instability of this province's economy.

Mr. Speaker, decentralization, Fair Share Saskatchewan, is one element of a program to address that directly. The hon. member, what he will not come to grips with is the fact that that economy needs stabilizing, and if it is not stabilized, that whole provincial economy . . . Stabilized rural economy means prosperous cities, Mr. Speaker. And that's the only way we'll have prosperous cities in this province, if we have a stable rural economy.

And, Mr. Speaker, they can say what they like. This urban based party of the NDP can say what they like about rural communities and about those communities that need that stability. But, Mr. Speaker, we will stand behind them because it's important to the economy across this entire province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Closure of Myers House

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health, and I would like to tell the Minister of Health that we stand for

all Saskatchewan families, not just urban or rural families. We stand for every family in Saskatchewan and so should you, sir.

My question is to the Minister responsible for SADAC (Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission), Mr. Speaker. Last night at a public meeting, Mr. Minister, some 250 residents — from across the province I might add — were protesting your callous and uncaring decision and the way you closed Myers House.

For reasons that nobody understood at this meeting, you have decided to close this resource, depriving some 1,500 people a year with addictions that valuable resource, that proven resource, Mr. Minister. And the result will be higher human and financial cost to this province and to Saskatchewan families. My question is simple: will you today reverse that decision, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the decision of the board of directors of SADAC to close Myers House was a decision that that board of directors took. And all I say to you, Mr. Speaker, is that there's been some representation that Myers House is a treatment centre. Myers House is a residence, Mr. Speaker, and I agree, has been over a number of years tied in with treatment that goes on in the city of Regina.

Mr. Speaker, much of what has been happening in the treatment of the disease of alcohol and drug abuse and dependency has been changing in recent years. There's no question that that's right and it certainly has been changing in Saskatchewan under this government, when you look at the expenditures that have been made, the expenditures that have been made by the government, through SADAC in this province and the time of us being in office.

Mr. Speaker, for members of the NDP to stand in this House after their dismal record in that whole area of alcohol and drug abuse is hard for me to believe, Mr. Speaker, frankly, hard for me to believe that members of the NDP with their very dismal record over their 11 years of government in some better fiscal times and the absolute lack, the absolute lack of attention to this disease . . . And now they stand in the House to grandstand a little bit over this issue of Myers House, Mr. Speaker, does not add up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I didn't intervene but I would like once more, once more, to ask for the co-operation of the Minister of Health.

Mr. Pringle: — New question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, the delegation from Myers House know that that answer is absolutely unacceptable and so do you.

Now you are the minister responsible for the general health of all Saskatchewan residents. Mr. Minister, had you attended the meeting . . . and you were invited and you did not even have the courtesy to tell them that you

wouldn't be there, so they couldn't get answers last night from you or your department.

Myers House was described last night as a safe, secure, live-in facility that is essential in the treatment range for addictions. And you should know that, sir. My question, very simple, is: this was a political decision; will you reverse this decision?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the board of directors of SADAC, an arm's length board of directors of the Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, has made this decision based on different trends and the way in which programs are delivered for people in need of this service. And there are people in need, and it's an increasing need. And I understand that.

And there have been substantially increased expenditures in this whole area by our government. Mr. Speaker, let me just put that into context. Funding for SADAC has increased by 251 per cent, 251 per cent increase between '82-83 and 1990-91 — Mr. Speaker, a significant increase for the disease alcoholism.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we're committed to that. We're committed to programs, and we're also committed to the changing way in which treatment is provided, not only in this area of health care delivery, but in other areas of health care delivery.

And, Mr. Speaker, no, the decision will not be reversed, even though I know that there are people who have received treatment in that centre and who have benefitted from it and so on and feel strongly about it. That's the case with every alcohol treatment centre that there is in existence, whether it's in Mandan or the one at White Spruce that we built, or wherever.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear, the decision won't be reversed. SADAC has made the decision and I believe it's a proper decision.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — For the third time I'm going to ask the Minister of Health to co-operate. For the third time I ask him.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, my question, Mr. Speaker, and it's a new question, it's to the same minister.

Mr. Minister, last night 250 people at the public meeting my colleague referred to earlier, including people who are sitting in the gallery, including the member for Regina Centre and myself, heard a member of the SADAC board of directors stand up and say that the decision to close Myers House was made, not by the SADAC board, but was made by you when you and your secretary walked in and laid down the list of cuts that you were going to make.

Mr. Minister, my question is this: why are you deliberately misrepresenting the position of SADAC here? Are you trying to deliberately mislead this House? Are you not telling the truth or are you saying that the people

from SADAC aren't telling the truth?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The hon. member for Regina Rosemont has made, in my estimation, an unparliamentary statement and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. Lyons: — Let me make the question clear, Mr. Speaker. I'll withdraw it if it was unparliamentary. I put it in the form of a question . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. No, no. Order. I simply want a withdrawal from the hon. member.

Mr. Lyons: — I will withdraw that question but . . .

The Speaker: — Thank you for the withdrawal.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the same minister since he refused to answer. Very simply, Mr. Minister, who is telling the truth? When you say that it was SADAC made the decision and board members from SADAC say it was that you made the decision, who is telling the truth here? Somebody isn't, Mr. Speaker, and I think we know who.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, we have budget responsibility in the government. I have budget responsibility as Minister of Health to fund the agencies that are funded by the ministry of Health.

SADAC is a board which receives its funding through the ministry, that's true. SADAC has a certain amount of money and they make their decisions on which is the best way to spend that money. SADAC made the decision on the best way to spend their money and their decision involved the closing of Myers House which is a residence.

Not the treatment, Mr. Speaker, because some of the misrepresentation from members opposite would leave the impression that treatment centres are closing. It's not the case. There are more counsellors. Treatment centres have longer hours. All of that's the case. The Myers House residence is closing and that's it, Mr. Speaker. The decision was made based on the budget that the SADAC board had. I admit the budget came from our department.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Election Date

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As one who was present last night, let me say I heard the member of the board of directors say that you delivered it personally.

Mr. Speaker, I have a . . . I notice a different solution to the problem which we have faced over the last few days. In today's *Leader-Post*, one:

Dean Armbruster of Euroland Motors in Regina sends a message to Premier Grant Devine. The sign on this 1986 Mustang reads: "Devine: Quit

and this car is yours.”

Seems to me, Mr. Minister, we have a win-win situation. The Premier is going to get a car and the public are going to get the election which they say so badly want. Will you take the offer?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, as I’ve said on other occasions, as the Premier said on the other . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, order. Member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg and the member for Regina Lakeview, order. Order.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, as the Premier said, and as I’ve said on other occasions in the House, the hon. members opposite will have an opportunity to put their plan forward which they have not done. We have put our plan forward. They have criticized it on many occasions and as they’ve done again here today.

Plan for stabilizing the economy of this province, a financial plan put forward by the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, they’ll have their chance for an election. And when they do, the people will say, what’s your plan? What’s your plan, Mr. Romanow or the Leader of the Opposition? What’s your plan? And maybe we should be going directly, maybe the frustration all citizens have had, we should be going directly to Barb Byers and other union leaders and asking them what their plan is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I have gone to introduction of Bills, but due to the high level of discord in this House we can’t hear it. I don’t think I should holler over the noise, so introduction of Bills.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 85 — An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act.

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

Bill No. 86 — An Act to amend The Communications Network Corporation Act and certain other Acts

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to move first reading of a Bill to amend The Communications Network Corporation Act and certain other Acts.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 62 — An Act to amend The Revenue and Financial Services Act

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of Bill No. 62, an Act to amend The Revenue and Financial Services Act. The Revenue and Financial Services Act provide for, among other things, many of the administrative rules applicable to our provincial consumption taxes.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, amends several of those administrative practices to conform with the corresponding federal GST (goods and services tax) rules. It repeals a provision which allowed a vendor to avoid the obligation of collecting tax from a purchaser who refused to pay tax. Removal of this provision ensures that vendors remain accountable for tax on their sales at all times. It is consistent with the provisions of the GST, and this amendment is retroactive to April 1, ’91.

This Bill adds a provision similar to the GST which allows vendors to recover tax remitted on sales which ultimately prove uncollectable. Previously, Mr. Speaker, vendors were obliged to bear the tax burden of their bad debts. The Bill also extends the limitation period for refunding overpayment of tax from three years to four years for most tax types. Taxpayers will now have four years to recover sales tax overpaid to the government. These last two amendments are retroactive to January 1, ’91.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, this Bill also makes some minor technical amendments with respect to Board of Revenue commissioners and the Provincial Comptroller.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 62, An Act to amend The Revenue and Financial Services Act.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a few comments with respect to Bill 62. The minister indicated that it had to do with the collection of consumption taxes and I will refer to that in a moment.

I notice that the minister, in indicating what the content of the Bill was, neglected to mention two things that I would like to bring to the attention and to put on record.

And that is that this Bill adds to the waste that the government has been instructed repeatedly by the opposition and by the people of Saskatchewan to try to put an end to. And here instead of doing that, they add to the waste.

It may not be a big item, Mr. Speaker, on this particular Bill, but it’s very symbolic of the direction that the government has been going all along and it seems to be persisting on, and that is that in this Bill they increase the number of the commissioners on the Board of Revenue from five to seven. That’s an increase to the expense added to the taxpayer. Why, I don’t know. They rationalize it by saying it balances that number with a number on another board. They could just as easily have balanced it by decreasing the number on the previous board.

I don't understand why a government which has saddled the province and the taxpayer of Saskatchewan with such a monstrous debt is continuing in the direction of increasing waste. The only answer that I could have is that they have two people that want to be put on a board some place and they're trying to find a job for them and so they're going to increase the number of the board from five to seven so they can pay two more people off.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's just ludicrous that they would go to this to increase the expense. It's probably not a very large expense when it comes to the millions that we're already in debt, but symbolically it's a tremendous expense, particularly when you look at it as an increase of two out of five — a 40 per cent increase in the expense paid to the Board of Commissioners.

Another thing that the government has been repeatedly criticized for, Mr. Speaker, is the accountability, or rather the unaccountability that this government has been . . . that has been exposed about this government.

And in this particular Bill, another thing that they try to do here is that the government is now proposing that they no longer have their cheques filed. They've invented some kind of a new procedure, which is not explained here. But they're giving themselves the power of not having to have the cheques returned to the government, but not saying in any manner whatsoever how they're going to account for these and how the auditor is supposed to check this out. How anybody in accounts, Public Accounts, or that's checking these accounts will be able to account for the cheques that are written by the department of taxation.

A reduction in accountability, Mr. Speaker, and an increase in waste. Both items perhaps small in the whole scheme of things but very, very symbolic about the direction that this government has been going. And I want that targeted, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make a couple of comments about consumption taxes and the effect that consumption taxes are having on the province of Saskatchewan. This Bill is updating the collection of consumption taxes. The reason, Mr. Speaker, that consumption taxes . . . one of the reasons that the province is having a problem economically is that the consumption taxes, the taxes on the consumer in this province are now at the stage where people are complaining daily and are saying that they are being taxed to death.

The most recent increase in a consumption tax, we all know, has been the PST (provincial sales tax) where the government is pulling in \$440 million, an equivalent of \$440 for every child and woman and man in the province. That was on top of the existing sales tax. And that is also on top of the federal GST, which I estimate to be approximately \$950 million, according to recent press reports. That cash cow is probably more than that now, but I'm basing it on figures that are available through perusal of the budget.

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the record as to what has

happened to the taxes, to the revenue to the province from taxes, it's clear that consumption taxes have gone up far too fast. They have sky-rocketed to the extent that people cannot take it any more. Mr. Speaker, they're going to be going up further again on January 1 when we'll be paying taxes on every service that's . . . virtually every service that's offered in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, just looking back at the record, one might wonder why are the taxes going up so much recently. Is it that the revenue has not been forthcoming to the province? If you look at what has happened to sales tax from 1982 to 1989 and look at the numbers, they've gone up from 330 million to 476 million. That's a 44 per cent increase just till '89. That doesn't include the '89 year. That doesn't include the 1990 year. That doesn't include the PST. That's been a 44 per cent increase.

So the revenue has been going up on consumption. Consumption is paid by individuals. Individuals in Saskatchewan pay tax not just through consumption tax but also as an income tax, Mr. Speaker. Individual income tax in that same period of time has gone up. The revenue collected by the province of Saskatchewan has gone up from 612 million to 831 million. That represents an increase of 36 per cent. So the people of Saskatchewan, the consumers and the taxpayers of Saskatchewan have had steady tax increases throughout, from '82 right through to the present, 44 per cent and 36 per cent in those two categories.

And if you compare what's happened to the corporate tax income during the same period of time, you will notice there has been a change from 107 million in 1982 to 134 million in 1989 — a 25 per cent increase, considerably less than what consumers pay and what taxpayers pay through income tax.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've already had the sales tax and the individual income tax increasing at a faster rate than the corporate tax, from '82-89. The same applies to 1990. And now in 1991 we have the additional burden of this GST put on the province federally, \$950 million taken out of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, circuited through Ottawa. And then we have on top of that this government, effective April 1, putting on a PST which they want to expand on January 1 of 1992 — that PST being an equivalent of \$440 per person.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan economy simply cannot take it. It's overburdened with taxation. And that is why our caucus, the New Democratic caucus has made a decision. And the decision was announced by our leader that upon election and after this government is defeated in the next election — whenever they should get the courage to call the election — we will eliminate that PST. That PST is going to be eradicated because the people of Saskatchewan and the economy of Saskatchewan simply can't take it.

We are saying, Mr. Speaker, that the amount collected, the \$4.5 billion that the province is now getting in revenue has simply got to be enough. The province has got to learn to live within its means — something that this government has never learned to do and has piled debt upon debt. And now, Mr. Speaker, of all things, they're

talking about proposing legislation that deficit financing be eliminated. Can you think of anything more hypocritical? Can you think of anything more hypocritical?

Nine deficit budgets and now they're going to outlaw deficits.

An Hon. Member: — Actually it's 10 budgets you're talking about.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Ten, my colleague from Saskatoon says, it's 10 deficit budgets. And now after 10 deficit budgets, a record of 10 deficit budgets, they want to impose a law to outlaw deficit budgets. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if they're going to make that law retroactive. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, who they're going to send to jail for the last 10 years, which one of them are going to volunteer.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to deal briefly with the substance of what happens to an economy like Saskatchewan's when you increase the consumption tax at the rate that they're proposing to do.

The government members have somehow proposed that this tax that they are putting into place is going to create thousands of jobs. The numbers vary but they say it's going to create thousands of jobs. Let's say . . . I think the figure they've used has been 5,000 jobs. They're saying that a 7 per cent PST is going to create 5,000 jobs somehow. I'm not quite sure where the jobs are going to be created or how. The only possibility of creating jobs through this PST would be due to the tax credits that the people in manufacturing are going to get. That's the only possibility.

The other categories, anybody that's in the service industry knows that a consumption tax takes money out of the economy, so it's not going to increase jobs there. Farmers will be getting the same tax credits that they've always been getting, so it's not going to change the economic situation there. So it's not going to increase or decrease the number of jobs there except possibly it will cost farmers more for the stuff that they consume.

But the people in the manufacturing sector . . . there's a possibility that those who have very high overhead in terms of equipment may benefit somewhat from the elimination of this tax, may benefit a slight amount.

Now let's do an analysis of this in a little greater depth. If you take a look at that industry which may benefit, that industry now employs 38,000 people. That is all of the people that are in the primary industry such as oil and gas and mining and forestry and fishing and trapping, and all of the manufacturing in Saskatchewan account for about 38,000 or 9 per cent of the jobs in Saskatchewan — 9 per cent. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that the record over the last 20 years of people in the primary industries — that is in oil and the gas and the mining and the forestry and fishing and the trapping — has been as they capitalize, as they put more equipment to work, the number of people employed has actually become less.

What has happened, Mr. Speaker, is that in many cases

those industries have increased their output, but the number of people employed has decreased. And there's no better example, Mr. Speaker, than the case of forestry which I have documented and which I wish to document at this time.

In the case of forestry, Mr. Speaker, we know that the number of people employed has declined by about a thousand people over the period from 1979-80 to 1988-89. There used to be 3,060 people employed in 1979. Now there are . . . in '88-89, rather, there were 2,423 people employed. The number of people employed in the forest industry, which would be very similar — I would expect the same thing would happen in mining or in fishing and trapping and oil and gas — has decreased because the mechanization has taken over the jobs.

So what has happened is by putting this tax credit on, the government is actually accelerating the decrease or the decline of the number of jobs in that particular sector.

Now you add to that, Mr. Speaker, what is also going to happen in the other sector, the sector that we can refer to as a domestic sector which employs 73 per cent of the people that are employed in Saskatchewan. There are 329,000 people employed in this sector, in the sector that was characterized by construction workers, transportation, communications, utilities, trade, finance, insurance and real estate service, public administration, health, education — 329,000 jobs — 73 per cent of the jobs in that sector compared to 38,000 in the manufacturing and primary sector.

Mr. Speaker, and while I'm at it I might add that the other 18 per cent is in the agricultural sector, approximately 76,000 jobs. And the agricultural sector, I maintain, if it's affected at all, it's affected very little by this tax.

Mr. Speaker, it is this group of 329,000 people, the jobs in that sector that are most adversely affected by this PST and by the PST that is coming, the additional PST that is coming January 1. It is this sector that's affected because it is the sector that suffers most significantly when customers end up buying less. If they have 14 per cent less to spend, you can see that there's going to be 14 per cent less spent on things like communication and transportation and utilities and on construction, and that's very evident. And in the retail sector in general.

So the point I'm trying to make then, Mr. Speaker, I would summarize, is that this tax, which the government has somehow come up with an idea that they're going to create 5,000 jobs, is going to end up with a net loss of jobs. The government, however, has failed to listen to the petitions of the people of Saskatchewan. The government is continuing on its way. It shows a complete disregard for all of the representations they've heard from the various groups.

And I predict, Mr. Speaker, that there's going to be more opposition to this in the future. When the people who are in the service industries, when the automobile dealers, actually have to charge this tax, when all of those people that are in the service industries like the cosmetic industries, when they have to start charging, when the

insurance brokers have to start charging for tax on top of their fees, there's going to be another series of protests on this. And the retail sector, which is already suffering, when they join this sector.

And if this . . . Any government that refuses to listen to the intensive protest that is being put by the people of Saskatchewan — well over 120,000 signed petitions so far, and they're still coming in, phoning our MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) offices and asking us for petitions — a government that refuses to listen is going to be turfed. I don't know, even if the government this day backtracked on this tax, whether they would be saved, but at least the province and the provincial economy would be saved.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I will close then by simply repeating the commitment of the New Democrat Party and my leader, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, that when we . . . after the next election, should the people of Saskatchewan . . . for the people of Saskatchewan there's going to be a clear choice. A very, very clear choice. You elect those members opposite and you've got the PST. You elect the New Democrat Party and the PST is gone. And perhaps that way the province of Saskatchewan and the province's economy will be able to recover.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

(1500)

Bill No. 74 — An Act respecting the Registration of Leafcutting Beekeepers

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I want to rise today to introduce second readings on The Leafcutting Beekeepers Registration Act. The Saskatchewan leafcutting bee industry represents an extremely successful diversification initiative in the province of Saskatchewan.

Leafcutting bees were first recognized by people of Saskatchewan as a part of the industry that dealt with the alfalfa seed production. And people from Saskatchewan were the first ones to recognize that there were a certain quality and a certain characteristic in a certain type of a bee that provided that dynamic for the people of Saskatchewan to produce alfalfa. And research from the university in Saskatchewan plus university people from Saskatchewan in other parts of Canada and the United States, put together this research that allowed us to develop, not only this industry, but to develop the characteristics of the insect itself.

One of the problems that has arisen because of that is a disease that was started in the United States and the disease is called chalkbrood — it's a disease that affects the larva of the leafcutting bee. It was first noticed in the United States in the '70s and it quickly moved north into the Pacific north-west of the United States. And during this period of time Canada put restrictions on the

transportation of the leafcutting bee into Canada.

However, what happened was that the Alberta governments and the Manitoba governments did not restrict the entry into the provinces as much as they should have, and therefore chalkbrood became a very serious disease that infected the majority of their products.

So what has happened in Saskatchewan because we closed the border and because we closed . . . and killed off those bees that would have a tendency to get infected, we in Saskatchewan now have an export industry into the United States that's worth about \$5 million to the leafcutting bee industry. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a very important part of the total aspect of the industry.

As a part of that, in order to have the individuals who are connected with it know who all the leafcutter bee people in the province are, they have asked through the alfalfa seed processors, a method whereby they could register all of the leafcutting beekeepers in the province. And so, because of that, and because of the association and because of the potential for diversification expansion in the province of Saskatchewan, I urge all members of the legislature to support The Leafcutting Beekeepers Registration Act and therefore I move its second reading.

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

Bill No. 76 — An Act to amend The Coroners Act

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Coroners Amendment Act, 1991. The amendment proposed today will authorize the appointment of coroners to be made by the minister responsible for the Act. This amendment will facilitate the appointment of coroners where the local coroner is unable to act or a new appointment is needed.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Coroners Act.

Mr. Mitchell: — I just want to speak briefly, Mr. Speaker, to indicate that we have considered the proposed amendment to The Coroners Act and regard it as not controversial and will be supporting the amendment.

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

Bill No. 77 — An Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 1991. The amendments proposed today will allow the Queen's Bench judges, who are also Surrogate Court judges, to use one rules committee to make the rules of court for both courts.

The change is being made at their request. The amendments in this section encompass all rule-making power presently found in The Surrogate Court Act, a complementary piece of legislation, An Act to amend The

Surrogate Court Act removes these powers from that Act.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act.

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

Bill No. 78 — An Act to amend The Surrogate Court Act

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Surrogate Court Amendment Act, 1991. The amendments proposed today remove the rule-making authority of the Surrogate Court judges from The Surrogate Court Act. A complementary piece of legislation, an Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act (No. 2) transfers that rule making authority to The Queen's Bench Act.

These changes which are being made at the request of the Court, will allow the judges to operate more efficiently by having one rule-making committee for both Courts.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend The Surrogate Court Act.

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

Bill No. 80 — An Act respecting the Application in Saskatchewan of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The International Sale of Goods Act. This Act provides for the implementation in Saskatchewan of the United Nations convention on contracts for the international sale of goods.

The convention is designed to provide for improved certainty in international sales of goods transactions by providing for a governing international law on import and export sales where the contract between the parties fails to speak to the issues contained in the convention. The convention is careful to honour the freedom to contract, and both parties remain free to contract out of the effect of the convention, if they so desire.

The convention is limited in its scope to governing issues of offer and acceptance and a general contracting process in the international sale of goods. The convention will only apply to international sale of contracts and will not apply to sale of good transactions within Canada.

Furthermore, the convention does not address such issues as consumer sales, product liability, third party rights or the sale of services. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the convention is very specific and relatively modest in its goals of improving certainty in the difficult area of international sale of goods and in the conflicts of law between countries.

Mr. Speaker, I would note that similar implementing legislation has been introduced or enacted in every Canadian province and territory other than Quebec and

the Yukon Territory. We are advised by the federal government that once provincial and territorial support has been secured, they may be in a position to formerly accede to the convention as early as the spring of 1992.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the increasing importance which international import and export sales play in the Saskatchewan economy and fully support this United Nations initiative to provide increased certainty in international goods and trade.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act respecting the Application in Saskatchewan of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods.

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to be brief again in addressing this Bill, which by the way we're not opposing. This is a very complex subject, this question of the rules applying to international sales. And I want to record our satisfaction with the United Nations convention which is a start in beginning to put some international rules in effect for some of the fundamental rules of contracting that we in a jurisdiction like this province take for granted.

And the convention is certainly a beginning, and it's appropriate that Canada ratify this convention. And for that reason we are pleased to support this Bill.

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

Bill No. 81 — An Act to amend references to the Criminal Code in Certain Acts and Regulations and respecting Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts and Regulations resulting from the enactment of the Criminal Code, R.S.C. 1985, c.C-46

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Criminal Code References Amendment Act, 1991.

On December 12, 1988, the federal consolidation of the Criminal Code, R.S.C. 1985 was completed, thereby changing the section and part numbers for most of the provisions in the Criminal Code. This has left those provisional statutes and regulations which refer to specific section or part numbers in the Criminal Code out of date.

This Bill is a technical Bill which updates existing Criminal Code section and part number references in provincial legislation and regulations to concur with the new provision numbers in the Criminal Code 1985.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Criminal Code References Amendment Act, 1991.

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

(1515)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

Clause 1

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Michael Littlewood, who is at the board and teacher services of Saskatchewan Education, and behind me is Arleen Schultz from the Teachers' Superannuation Commission.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. Mr. Chairperson, our caucus has no difficulty whatsoever with this legislation. We really have no questions for the committee on the legislation as we are in support. And I would recommend, Mr. Chair, that we pass the legislation in its entirety in Committee of the Whole and move to third reading and pass the legislation so that this legislation can come into effect immediately.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Education critic for the co-operation with regard to this Bill.

There has been a tremendous amount of discussion over the last several months. The representatives that are here with me as well have worked long and hard on this particular Bill. And I know that teachers throughout the province of Saskatchewan who have come into the teaching profession since 1980 are going to be very overjoyed with the fact that this Bill is now moving forward, because this gives them the same type of a pension plan basically, as all of those who taught prior to 1980 have been on.

So it's a great day for the teaching profession in Saskatchewan. I thank my critic and the members of the opposition for their support and the co-operation here, and all of those who have been involved with the development of this Bill. Thank you.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — Do you want to do this clause by clause or do you want to do the entire Bill?

With leave of the Assembly I'd ask that they approve the Bill in its entirety.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, with leave I would move that we go to third reading. Is that appropriate?

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

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

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 69

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lane that **Bill No. 69 — An Act respecting Referendums and Plebiscites** be now read a second time.

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to speak to this Bill.

At the outset I would like to say, on behalf of my colleagues, that the notion of empowering average citizens, empowering all citizens in our province, to have input into decision making, to empower them to participate to a high degree in public affairs, to open up government, and to be active participants is a positive thing. It's good and we have obviously supported that in a very concrete way over the last three years — four years actually — when we've been developing our democratic reform paper. That process began in late '86, early 1987, where we produced our first working paper on democratic reform and have just recently in January of this year released another paper with some 25 proposals.

So those proposals and that paper are designed to increase accountability inside the legislature, to enhance the role of all members, and to increase access by the public to government information, and to actively encourage the public to participate in decision making. So we certainly support that.

I think one thing that I would say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, is that issues such as the Free Trade Agreement and the way it was staged and managed, Meech Lake, the GST on the national level, and more recently I would say the provincial goods and services tax and this whole last minute, knee-jerk decentralization scheme, has really signalled to the public, and I think is a symbol or symbols of how the governments of the 1980s have become out of touch with the public and have isolated the public from the decision making process. Those are important symbols that shows that government is out of step with the public, which I think has increased the degree of cynicism that we've seen during the 1980s.

And it's no, in my view, no accident that where the degree of cynicism has increased during the 1980s, we by and large have had Tory governments in North America, and in Britain as well where the degree of cynicism and dissatisfaction with the political process is very great.

So we've seen Tory governments in a sense sabotage traditional conventions and practices, democratic practices, and that's certainly been probably no truer anywhere else, or no truer in the entire British Commonwealth than right here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, referendums, obviously referendums —

while one can support that philosophically in plebiscites, obviously no one's going to oppose the concept of more active, direct involvement by the public in decision making.

When you get down to the practical side of referendums, on the day to day operations of government, how referendums are worded, how plebiscites are actually worded, how you interpret the results, I don't pretend to be an expert in this area, but I've read a fair amount, particularly since this Bill came in, as to what's been happening in other jurisdiction where there is plebiscite, or referendum legislation. And philosophically nobody opposes that kind of concept as it relates to more active, direct public involvement.

The problem is of course, as the world becomes more complex and decisions become more complex, thorough discussion is often required as to the best way to proceed to solve problems and to reach solutions. And issues are never black or white or clear-cut, and that's one of the — as I found out in my reading anyway — that's one of the risks of government by referendum, in that you tend to make decisions in isolation from other important considerations.

And there are many examples of that in California and in other parts of the United States.

(1530)

And I think that I won't read these, but there are a number of articles I've come across to reinforce the very point that I'm making. I'll just refer to two or three of these — one by Charles Gordon who wrote in *Maclean's* on April 22, '91. What we want are politicians with courage, he says. And he says: "Referendums are signs that the system is not working." And he goes on to say: But the system is fine — it is the elected officials in our governments who are not working, not the system.

So he goes on to say that what we should be demanding is not referendum legislation, but we should be demanding better politicians who are open and honest with the public. So that's his caution regarding the use of referendums and managing a government by referendum.

The *Star-Phoenix*, April 25, Thursday, makes the same . . . I think the same caution. While you can't argue with the concept, in practice there are many problems with a government that's going to rely on referendums. Now that of course isn't the motivation of this government. The motivation of this government, as I'll talk about in a few minutes, is a public relations, window-dressing exercise which is reflected in the way this Bill is so badly flawed.

But back to my point about the *Star-Phoenix* editorial . . . also talks about "Populist bid has its flaws." And they talk about the California experience that has found out that, and I quote:

"Direct democracy" . . . can lead to conflicting legislation, laws that are impossible to enforce and assorted other horror stories. It is not necessarily some form of people's political heaven.

It would be interesting to know what prompted the Saskatchewan government to opt for its new populist approach. Someone in a backroom somewhere must have cast the entrails of a gopher and seen "Reform Party" looming in the distance.

And I think that's probably the real motivation, the other motivation for this Bill, is that that's a clear platform agenda item for the Reform Party, a large number of those people who have traditionally been members and supporters of the Conservative Party.

The *Leader-Post* also gives that same caution about the other side — the drawbacks to government by referendum, and this is . . . Let's see, an article, April 21, the heading is "Putting the question: Saskatchewan style". And I just quote one small part of this, but this supports my point. I quote:

The referendum and plebiscite mechanism may be a response to the times, but let no one presume it will (would) be a democratic miracle machine.

Okay, and that makes the same point. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, when we see in the Angus Reid poll of last week where over 84 . . . well, yes, over — I guess we knew this by a previous poll, where over 84 per cent of the public opposed the provincial goods and services tax.

It was interesting that the goods and services tax Bill was introduced in the House the day after the referendum and plebiscite Bill. And at that time you'll recall we challenged the government to put their new Bill to a test. If they're really concerned about public opinion and the opportunity for plebiscites initiated by the citizens, then put that PST to the test. And of course they didn't have the courage to do that.

We also saw last week by the Angus Reid poll, which the government may have discredited but certainly the vast majority of Saskatchewan people haven't, where only some 10 per cent of the public of Saskatchewan approved of this PC government's so-called Fair Share. Last minute's major decentralization plan, only some 10 per cent approved of it. That's certainly not a very strong indication of consensus of Saskatchewan people.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we see here is a Bill that gives the appearance that somehow the public is going to be more involved in decision making and in public affairs; they're going to be more involved in influencing decisions that their government makes.

And I say this is window-dressing, Mr. Speaker, because I think the best prediction of what a government is going to do in the future is based on what they've done in the past. I think most reasonable people would see that as being logical, particularly when we saw all of the rhetoric before the last provincial election about having listened and learned something, and we're sorry and we're going to do better next term.

During that 1986 election campaign, unbeknownst to the public of Saskatchewan, the government was deceptive in miscalculating their budget deficit by some \$800

million.

So I think the public knows very well that as they see this government not answering questions today about the costs of decentralization, the public knows very well that after an election we're going to find those costs I would guess 5, 6, 7 times as much as the government is saying. If they're going to be out as far as they were in the 1986 election, then those will be the decentralization costs.

So we've seen the government, they had to do something. That's why this whole approach to democratic reform. The new realities, as the Premier calls them, has been what he hopes to be one of his major thrusts during this campaign. And I've heard him on the radio stations every Saturday morning talking about these democratic reform initiatives. But the problem is people don't believe him because he continues to do all the usual things that he's done, the undemocratic things that he's done in the past, and they don't see any change about how his government operates.

So he's in a position where he's unpopular. He's broken most promises that he's made, particularly in the area of taxation. The Premier's government has ruled in a very ruthless manner. It's been intolerant of people. It's been undemocratic. It's left vacant seats open for now some 18 months, no representation in this House. It's been unaccountable, closed, and secretive. And this has been their approach, Mr. Speaker, and this is well-known to Saskatchewan people.

And here again in 1991 we have the same scenario as 1986. You know, we're sorry again, but we're listening; we're going to be responsive. But of course they realize, the government realized that they're going to have to do something specific, thus Bills like the Bill before us today, the referendum Bill.

Mr. Speaker, it's because of this style that I talked about as to why the Progressive Conservative government in Saskatchewan is now sitting at 15 or 19 per cent in the polls and the second choice of zero per cent. In other words, nobody is looking at them as a second choice, and they've lost even their own base of support. And even many of the people who were die-hards are going to stay home because they just simply see the government is not credible.

So this democratic reform initiative, so-called, and some of the other measures, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would submit, are designed to try and bring back home maybe that 25 per cent solid base of support of 5 or 6 or 7 per cent of which they've lost.

So this sort of idea of the new approach, they have no option but to try and convince people that their style of saying one thing and doing another is not going to happen in the future.

So I think their approach was look, let's examine our faults although we really don't think they're faults. But you know the public has some crazy notion that these are faults. People say we're closed; we're a closed government but we'll prove that we're not. We'll have freedom of information legislation. People say that we

can't manage the province's finances. Well we don't accept that.

But just to prove that we're doing something, we're going to bring in budget deficit legislation — which is probably the most laughable I suppose, if it wasn't so sad. This Premier's government with 10 straight deficit budgets, where we have the highest per capita debt in all of Canada, now the Premier making noises about budget deficit legislation — it's absolutely incredible and the absolute height of hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker. There's just no other way to describe it.

So, Mr. Speaker, and besides the Association of Saskatchewan Taxpayers is talking about this. The Reform Party is talking about this. So obviously they've got to do this as well. People are saying we don't listen. But the back room boys' strategist said, so what are we going to do? Well we'll prove that we listen because we'll give them a Bill that says you can initiate plebiscites as a public, and therefore we're showing how much we want to listen. We'll give you the opportunity to give us clear messages.

Now of course it breaks down right away because there was a clear message in the 123,000 petition names opposing the PST. But somehow that was pushed aside, and those people were made fun of by many of the members opposite. So they really don't appreciate and value the real input from Saskatchewan people.

Now they also believe I think, Mr. Speaker, that the public is wrong but got an election coming up so we need to pretend that we're listening.

So they're trying to deal with what they think is the wrong perception of them. And this is why their Bills are full of holes. And they're just window-dressing in an attempt to be more democratic.

If you examine every one of these Bills, Mr. Speaker, and including this Bill on referendums and plebiscites, it becomes very clear the way that they're drafted. And I will speak to this at some length in the committee when we go over the Bill clause by clause — that these Bills are designed to make sure that nothing really changes. That's clear in the freedom of information Bill. It was very clear in the plebiscite and referendum Bill where nothing is really going to change. The power is still going to be vested with the Premier and his cabinet.

But we'll let the public think that things are going to change, that they have some real power. But the reality is that the power to hold binding referendums is going to be with the cabinet, Mr. Speaker. It's not going to be with the public.

(1545)

As to what the cabinet thinks is an important issue of the day and what the general public thinks is an important issue of the day are two different things, Mr. Speaker. The public thinks that issues like decentralization and the PST and cross-border shopping and high taxes are important issues of the day, and lack of jobs, out-migration. This government doesn't feel that those are important issues of

the day.

So the government will determine what they think are important issues of the day and they will draft the wording of referendums that they control and put that wording on the referendum.

And, Mr. Speaker, the other interesting part about this Bill, the whole Bill is tipped in favour of keeping the power in cabinet and in the government. The public does not have any way to challenge the government on the government's wording of a referendum question, but the cabinet has the power to challenge . . . the ability to challenge citizen-initiated plebiscites. But not vice versa, Mr. Speaker.

I think another serious issue is the ability to participate and the plebiscite-initiated process is limited.

Mr. Speaker, I have some more comments I'd like to make on this Bill, but in view of other House business for the day, I would like to adjourn the debate at this time.

Debate adjourned.

Mr. Sauder: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to request leave to introduce guests, please.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Sauder: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and to other members of the Assembly a group of school students from the Wagner School in Nipawin, Saskatchewan.

I am told there are 53 students in the group. They're grade 4 students and they're in town to take in various activities and see various things here. It's my pleasure to be able to host them here this afternoon. I look forward to meeting them a little bit later to discuss what they've seen here, to have pictures and have some refreshments as well.

Along with the students this afternoon is their teachers Bev Gunnlaugson and Mr. Jack Rowswell, as well as chaperons Diane Bruck, Vivian Boughen, Mrs. Karle, Mr. Riendeau, Donna Mollberg, Susan Galewich, Mrs. Wartman, and Mrs. Sanderson.

I'd like to ask everyone here to join with me in welcoming these students to the legislature. I hope they have an interesting time here. I'm sure that they've had a good tour and I look forward to meeting with them again.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 71 — An Act respecting a right of access to documents of local authorities and a right of privacy with respect to personal information held by local authorities

Clause 1

Mr. Chairman: — Would the Minister of Finance kindly introduce his officials, please.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may first introduce to the Assembly, Doug Moen, co-ordinator, legislative services; Susan Amrud, Crown solicitor; Andrea Seale, Crown solicitor; and Twyla Meredith, director of administrative services.

We're doing 71 first, I gather.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my first question to the minister with respect to this Bill . . . and this is a Bill which concerns freedom of information and privacy as far as it pertains to local authorities, local authorities including urban municipalities, northern municipalities, rural municipalities, boards of education, health care boards, library boards, hospitals, universities, and I gather some other additional local bodies.

My first question with respect to this Bill is I wonder if he could outline the process of consultation that took place prior to the introduction of the Bill, and the particulars and details of those bodies, agencies, and individuals that he may have consulted with prior to the introduction of this Bill and as part of that process of consultation.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The following organizations were consulted prior to introduction of the legislation: Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities; Saskatchewan association of urban municipalities — or Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association; Saskatchewan School Trustees Association; and the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association.

Subsequent to introduction, I could go on in some detail. Mayors of all Saskatchewan cities; city managers of all Saskatchewan cities; rural municipal . . . municipal administrators association convention; Saskatchewan Association of City Clerks; Saskatchewan Health-Care Association; Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association; Saskatchewan Medical Association; Saskatchewan Association of Special Care Homes; Saskatchewan Home Care Association; Saskatchewan ambulance association; Saskatchewan College of Physicians and Surgeons; Royal University Hospital; South Saskatchewan Hospital Centre; Wascana Rehabilitation Centre; Parkridge Centre; Pioneer Village; Wascana Home Care; Santa Maria nursing home; Saskatoon home care; Pasqua Hospital; Regina Assessment and Placement Service; Saskatchewan Library Association.

I gather a meeting has been scheduled with the Saskatchewan Library Board. I've mentioned the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, the association of school business officials and secretaries, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, St. Thomas More College, Campion College, Luther College, and all of the regional colleges; that's Carleton Trail Regional College, Parkland Regional College, Cumberland Regional College, Prairie West Regional College, Cyprus Hills Regional College, south-west regional college, and the North West Regional College.

So the list of those that have been consulted — with the one proviso, as I indicated, with the Library Board, that arrangements have been made for a meeting on June 21 — totals, without including the regional colleges but identifying them as a block, is some 35 different organizations that have been consulted.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — It would appear, Mr. Chairman, that the lists of those being consulted after the fact, after the introduction of the Bill, is considerably longer and more extensive than is the list of those consulted prior to the Bill. And I wonder if . . . just dealing with this latter group, those who were consulted supposedly prior to the introduction of the Bill, I wonder if the minister might give the details of the consultation process that occurred prior. For example, with SUMA, how much notice prior to the introduction of the Bill was SUMA provided about the Bill? What kinds of questions were they asked about the direction that the government was moving in with respect to this matter of access to information for local authorities? I wonder if he could be a little bit more forthcoming about that.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — First of all we should keep in mind, when you said at the outset that the list of those consulted after introduction is greater, we should keep in mind that those consulted before are in some cases an umbrella organization. For example, Health-Care Association, which one could safely assume would communicate to many of the organizations; or SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) would talk to municipalities; and the appropriate organizations at SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) the same.

I'm advised that I gather the — was it SUMA that you mentioned? — that the minister responsible indicated to SUMA the notice that the legislation was coming, gave them briefing notes, had discussions with them. I gather there's an implementation committee with SUMA.

An understanding was reached with SUMA that there would be ample time for discussion of particulars of implementation; if any areas cause some difficulty, that we would give them the time to make the necessary adjustments or the implementation procedures perhaps could be modified so that there is an implementation committee established and that there is a commitment that there will be time so that the Act can be smoothly implemented.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Can you . . . I wonder if you can tell us when this Bill was first introduced in the House and when consultation might have taken place with SUMA, specific dates on that.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I'm advised that it was introduced the 19th, that there would have been meetings with SUMA approximately a month before, and then a second meeting shortly prior to the introduction of the Bill. The dates we don't have, but we can go back and try and get those for you, if you wish them.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Am I to assume from your remarks then that this Bill was introduced on April 19; that a

month prior to that, that the minister of Urban Affairs, the Minister of Community Services, held substantive discussions with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association about the proposed Bills, all the various aspects of the Bills, what it was intended to cover, in an effort to obtain at that point input from SUMA. Is that my reading of what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I'm advised that the belief was that they were showed briefing material at that earlier time. But again, we'd have to go back and check that, but that's the best advice I have.

(1600)

Mr. Van Mulligen: — I'm a bit concerned here about the information that you've given us, the answers that you've given us so far. I read here from a quote from a letter from the Minister of Community Services where he says:

As I indicated to the S.U.M.A. Board of Directors at a recent meeting in Saskatoon, on April 19, 1991 the government has introduced freedom of information . . .

But nothing about him having discussed this in any detail with SUMA or provided any great detail to SUMA.

I note from reading the SUMA communications, **The New Urban Voice**, that they report on a meeting that was held with the minister of Urban Affairs in mid-April, and I assume that on or about April 19, around that time, discussed a range of issues, discussed Fair Share Saskatchewan programs, as I understand it, discussed assessment, discussed revenue sharing, but no mention of having then discussed The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. In fact the only reference is that such a Bill was introduced in the legislature. That's the only reference there is. No indication of any prior consultation with SUMA.

And you use words such as "I gather," and I wonder is there anything that would more specifically outline the consultation process that took place prior to the introduction of this Bill?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I've already given to you and to the Assembly the information that was given to me. Secondly, I don't have that letter that you're referring to. But the fact that one could interpret just from what you've indicated that the letter simply acknowledges that the legislation has been tabled, that may presume right there that there was advance information and this is just to confirm that it has in fact been introduced. So just from the words that you used, I would interpret that as it's no surprise to anyone that in fact it was coming and it is now here.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if I might obtain your impression. Do you think that this is a Bill of major consequences for local authority, or little or no consequence?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I think that the freedom of information legislation is of significance to all of those affected.

But I would like to go back to the answers that I gave to the hon. member earlier when I indicated that I'm advised that there's an implementation committee, that there has been a commitment from the government to assist the various authorities so that there can be a smooth implementation. There was no commitment made, for example, that a set date for implementation was to be dictated by government, that there was an understanding and I believe a commitment that the government and the various local governments would co-operate on implementation and look at various processes.

That again shouldn't surprise the hon. member, that the legislation is not designed, nor is much legislation ever designed, to state all the details of implementation. So there is often a discussion process, lengthy one for example on the new Police Act, and again that's not uncommon to work with those affected on an implementation, both process leading to an agreed upon date for implementation.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Minister, I'm genuinely frustrated. And I think that many local authorities in Saskatchewan are genuinely frustrated. And your remarks today do nothing but add to the frustration, when you say that this Bill is significant to all those it affected, when the list of those who were consulted prior to is a very short list, and you can give no particulars as to the details and the options that your government was considering with respect to a Bill. And this is done a month before and was done with umbrella organizations, leaving them no time whatsoever to get the input from their member organizations, that you go a month prior to the tabling of this Bill.

You go to the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association. You say, we have this Bill which is significant — in your own words — is significant to all those affected. And we expect you now to get some feedback but we won't give you any options or will give you very little information about what is in this Bill.

To me, that's not really getting input and advice from local authorities that stand to be affected by this Bill. In your own words, this is a significant Bill. In your own words, you have an implementation committee to look at the very many aspects of this Bill. But your intent seems to be to get this thing through the House and here we are, in committee, to look at the Bill.

Here we have today a long, long list of amendments to the Bill without any opportunity for the opposition, or for that matter I suppose anyone else in Saskatchewan, having had an opportunity to review those amendments, to see whether those amendments make any sense whatsoever, answer the questions that some of those local authorities have about the Bill.

Wouldn't it have been the right thing to do to have put before local authorities and the people of Saskatchewan and the members of the Legislative Assembly some white paper, some discussion paper which would outline the various options that you wanted to pursue with respect to access of . . . freedom of access to information at the local level, to outline the various things that you wanted to do, the objectives that you wanted to achieve and the various

options that might be looked at, and the various concerns and problems that might be raised. And then ask these local authorities for their input prior to tabling a Bill such as the one that we have here today.

Wouldn't that have been the more appropriate method of dealing with this?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I do find it interesting, if we all agree in the objective to pass the legislation, that the various authorities have had opportunity to make suggestions . . . and I gather that most if not all of the concerns have been brought in and dealt with on the House amendments. We submitted a copy of the House amendments to the Clerk so they've had now a couple of months to go over it and quite frankly they haven't brought forward many amendments.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well I know that sarcasm is not something that should be used often in this House, Mr. Chairman, but I venture to say that I don't know of a time that this government last made their proposed major legislative changes that would affect the oil industry without first having had some major and substantive discussion with that industry before putting a Bill before the House. Yet it seems free to do this with a host of local authorities.

I'm advised that the city of Saskatoon really doesn't know what this Bill is all about and has been told to wait for the regulations to come out before . . . and that the regulations, at the process of implementing the regulations, would be one place where they could have their concerns answered and questions answered with respect to this Bill.

But it seems to me that's the wrong way to go. We have in Saskatchewan a history or tradition that if you're going out to make legislation which has major implications for local authorities, that you consult them beforehand and you get some sense of their reaction beforehand, before putting the Bill before the House.

I really don't understand what is the rush. Can you answer that? What is the rush in terms of this particular legislation?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I don't know how the hon. member can say "rush." Without naming cities here, one particular city has chosen not to attend some of the meetings. That's the city's choice. But the other cities and certainly some of the mayors have been at the meetings and I'm advised that the concerns that they had are being addressed either in the House amendments or have been answered.

Having said that, I do think it is worthy of note by the hon. member that the number of amendments requested by local governments is relatively few, given the importance of the legislation. And there's been ample time. There's a difference in the legislation in that I think, with one major exception, most accept the principle of freedom of information. So there's not a debate on the principle. The debate may be on some narrow areas of implementation, but again I suggest to the hon. member most if not all of those have been addressed.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Minister, it is simply bizarre, given the tradition and the history in Saskatchewan that we have of involving local authorities and consulting with local authorities before taking significant actions on the part of this level of government that may affect those local authorities, it is simply bizarre to move in this fashion, to suggest something that in your own words will be significant to all those affected without effective prior consultation. That simply hasn't happened.

Effective prior consultation, to me and to local authorities, means that you float your ideas in terms of a discussion paper, a white paper, and give them an opportunity to sit down and to debate the various pros and cons and the various different options that might be pursued in a Bill. And that hasn't taken place.

Most of your consultation has taken place subsequent to the tabling of this Bill. There's been no opportunities for urban municipalities to look at alternatives or options to what you have in the Bill, or for other local authorities to do that. There's no opportunity for them to debate or discuss among themselves how this Bill might affect them and how it might be improved. There has been no effective opportunity to do that.

And yet today you say, well we've got a list of amendments and it's not a long list of amendments. Well I'm not surprised. They haven't had very much time to discuss the Bill. Even so it's a long list of amendments.

We haven't had any opportunity to discuss these. We haven't had any opportunity to look at these. We have no idea as the opposition what these amendments mean. And yet you, within the legislative time frame of this Assembly, you say that well we've got to get these things through and we've got to look at these amendments. That's not the way things are done in Saskatchewan. That's not the way that, at least in my memory, that we've done things.

I can tell you that as a member of city council in Regina for a period of six years, when the government set out in the late '70s and early '80s to review The Urban Municipalities Act, to look at a series of amendments to The Urban Municipalities Act, to update that Act, it floated the numbers of ideas and options for consideration by those in urban governments. And we had a series of meetings — regional meetings and local meetings — to discuss the various options that the government had.

It had a committee going around — I believe it was chaired by one Gregory Darychuk — it had a committee going around, trying to get input from local authorities and affected citizens on the Bill. And in this way the government got some sense of reaction from the people of Saskatchewan and significantly from those involved in local . . . in urban government as to how that Bill might affect them. And it had some sense then as to how to proceed.

But none of that has occurred here. This hasn't happened here, even though by your own words, this is a Bill that's significant for all those who are affected by it. So it's a

shoddy way of moving forward with a significant piece of legislation.

You have given no indication as to where the urgency comes from. You know as well as I do that there are any number of Bills, at least in urban affairs, that many Acts, provincial Acts, that currently provide for the kind of access that you're talking about in this Bill so that there would not be any major concerns raised if this Bill were to be halted now and subject to a public discussion process, because the right of access is already there in the case of urban municipalities through a number of other Acts — The Urban Municipality Act, The Planning and Development Act, The Local Government Election Act, The Assessment Management Agency Act, The Tax Enforcement Act, and others.

These Acts contain provisions respecting freedom of information and privacy, including all council meetings must be open to the public. Minutes of council meetings are public. Contracts and by-laws and resolutions are public. Reports of municipal consultants or employees that are submitted to council are public. Annual financial statements must be made public. Municipalities must provide notice on a wide variety of items. Cities have additional obligations to publish annual public accounts and to ensure disclosure of land and building holdings by council members and senior officials.

So that many of the things that you're talking about or trying to accomplish by way of this Act is already in place, at least for urban municipalities. So I'm not sure what the particular urgency is to get this Bill through at this point in time, at least as far as urban municipalities are concerned. And given the fact that in the past we have at least tried to consult them in an effective way prior to, wouldn't it make more sense and . . . especially now given a list of amendments here that we have no idea what these amendments are about; they've just been handed to us.

Wouldn't it make sense to pull this Bill at this point in time and given all those affected . . . give all those affected — because this Bill will be significant to all those affected, in your own words, wouldn't it make sense to now pull this Bill and hold public hearings on something that talks about the public's right to know. Wouldn't that make sense, Mr. Minister?

(1615)

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well, I'm a little surprised to some extent in the hon. member's line of attack, in that the commitment to freedom of information is not one that you've evidenced that strongly in the past. And to delay it further and not proceed with the Bill as the NDP are now asking is a little strange.

I suggest the hon. member — with one exception — all of the organizations support the concept. Concept's not in debate, okay, except between the government and the opposition. They have had at least two months to bring their concerns. It's very interesting that I'm advised we received five letters, all with some technical matters, none of substance. And again with one exception, the universities are separate from that. And with all those discussions and the opportunities and the two months

that the organizations have had, I think we have nine House amendments.

Now if the hon. member is concerned because he didn't get the House amendments till just now, I'll apologize. I thought they were sent over yesterday, and I will accept responsibility for that. But it was not my intention to surprise you. I thought they were over yesterday to your office, but again I will take the responsibility for that and apologize to the hon. member.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — The process is faulty here. You say that you have a number of amendments. And I thank you for your apology. But I frankly cannot commit to dealing with these amendments today because we've had no opportunity to review them.

But the same goes for all the other parties in the process, all the other local authorities. You say you have a number of amendments of a technical nature. Have all those who've been consulted in this process, have they been advised of some of the changes that you're now proposing, even though they are of a technical nature? We don't know.

What are the exceptions that you're proposing to this Bill? You talk about the universities, and why is that? Shouldn't there be public hearings on that? I mean aren't those public institutions? Shouldn't the public have a right to get involved in that? Shouldn't the universities be required to put their case forward publicly, if you're now proposing to exempt them? Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I'm advised that all of the amendments deal with ... I'll wait for the hon. member. All of the House amendments deal with universities or the hospitals. And we were advised as late as this morning that the health care association were very satisfied with the amendment and they were satisfactory to them.

I have a letter, June 12, a copy was sent to the deputy minister from the president of the University of Regina. In my judgement the proposed amendments meet the objectives of the University of Regina with one exception, and we can deal with that exception. It's the same matter raised by the University of Saskatchewan, and that's the governance issue. But again, not to the concept of freedom of the information.

And then the University of Saskatchewan wrote to again the deputy minister of Education June 11 saying that: The revisions you propose are responsive to the concerns expressed by university officials at the meeting held with your officials of your department, Department of Justice in May. I appreciate the efforts your department has made seeking to alleviate the concerns we have raised, especially with respect to the collegial process and research enterprise of the university.

And again they have the same simple question about governance which is dealing with the request to the university that board of governors and it's been totally exempt and that be totally exempt. And we suggest that the standard exemptions apply to them as well as to the other organizations.

But other than that one point, they have expressed to the government their satisfaction with the amendment.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Minister, I think the reason, or at least as I can ascertain, that you're putting this Bill forward at this time and are trying to get it through the House along with this other Bill 70, is that because of the concerns that have been expressed by Saskatchewan people about the way that your government has acted these last nine years, not seeming to listen, not being honest, not being open; that you're trying to dispel those criticisms at this late stage by pushing these Bills through the Legislative Assembly. And that sort of reflects your political agenda to try and dispel those concerns which have been created over the last nine years.

And I tell you, there's simply no way to do it. If you're genuinely concerned about these things and if you're genuinely concerned about the participation of members of this House, supportive members of this House, the support of local authorities in this whole matter, I suggest that what you would do is to call on something like the Municipal Law Committee or through some other mechanism have this Bill out there for public discussion and hold public hearings on it. And let's debate the changes that are coming forward as opposed to at this last moment saying to an opposition that, you know, it's been out there for a month so there's lots of opportunity even though some organizations have yet to respond and haven't had time to review this Bill. To come to the House and say, well here's some amendments and we've got to get it through, I mean that's just not the way that things are done.

You put me in a difficult position, as I try to ask you questions about the process, to at the same time be reviewing a number of amendments to the Bill so that I can then at the appropriate time tell you whether or not I agree with those amendments. I mean this is just totally absurd — totally absurd.

And I just ask you one more time, would you consider delaying this thing for more public input? And if not that, can you find some way to adjourn this thing for further discussion to a week from now or two weeks from now so that we can take a further look at these amendments so that we can get further public input?

I think you mentioned one organization that you have not yet met with to obtain their input. Can you do that, Mr. Minister? Can you give us your undertaking that you're going to, instead of speeding up this process, slow-walk this process so that everybody in Saskatchewan has an opportunity to catch up with you and so that we can move forward at the same speed and the same pace and with the same purpose in mind? Can you do that?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I find it rather interesting that the NDP in 1982 did not want to pass freedom of information legislation, introduced it in 1982 and made sure it was not passed prior to an election call. And I gather that the hon. member is not speaking for his seat mate of the hour when he's calling not to pass this legislation.

I am also advised further, and I'm a little surprised now at the attack earlier by the hon. member, because I'm

advised now that the opposition office did phone the Government House Leader and thanked him for the amendment.

And so I don't know whether you have a miscommunication in your office, but I understand that they did get them yesterday. And the call came this morning thanking them for them yesterday. So maybe they didn't pass them on to the hon. member, but we did try and co-operate.

But let me suggest to the hon. member that the legislation will be passed, should be passed, and I suspect that at least some of the members of the opposition will vote in favour of the legislation.

Finally that the amendments, given the breadth of the municipalities and the organizations and the authorities that are affected, there are some nine they affect. Two areas that the one organization, umbrella organization very happy with the House amendments, and the other is satisfied with one policy difference. And that given the time, the two months that they've all had, and we get I believe five letters with technical amendments that have been responded to, no one out there is questioning the concept that they have had their concerns responded to, and that the copy was given to the opposition.

And finally, I did make it clear at the outset that in any legislation that can be very complex, there is always an understanding between those in government that they would work out the processes for implementation. That is not new. That is standard practice. It has happened for a long time.

So my advice to the hon. member is that other than the opposition, all of these organizations, and the government, I suspect the people of this province, want to see the legislation passed. I would hope that the hon. member would not ask that the legislation be delayed, not implemented, and that he would in fact join with the government in wanting this passed rather quickly so that it can be implemented rather quickly.

(1630)

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Minister, don't you go saying that all groups in Saskatchewan other than the opposition support this Bill. I think we made it clear on second reading that we support this Bill.

I can tell you, Mr. Minister, that eight years ago I put a motion before city council with respect to a procedure by-law to make sure that the people of the city of Regina would have access to information that concerned them and access to records at City Hall — much of the same information that's now contained in this Bill.

So I don't need any little moral sermons from you, sir. I don't need any little moral sermons from you at this late stage about who's interested here in freedom of information and who has the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan at heart. I did that at the beginning of a term of office in city council; I didn't do it in my dying days in city council, Mr. Minister. So don't come on to me about little sermons about your commitment to freedom

of information, Mr. Minister.

The point that I'm making is that the process in Saskatchewan for these significant Acts generally takes a lot longer than that, that we have a process in the past of prior consultation, effective prior consultation of putting options before people. There have been concerns expressed, for example, about salaries, that salary ranges, instead of specific and detailed personal salary histories, be the kind of information that should be allowed to be published, and that detailed personnel history should be protected. Those are concerns that have been raised.

And without getting into the pros and cons of either of those, I would tell you that's a concern that has been raised. Shouldn't that type of discussion be held publicly? Shouldn't all those organizations and individuals and the people of Saskatchewan who stand to be affected by it have an opportunity to debate those things publicly?

And if you can't and won't do that because of your own political agenda, can you at least . . . I mean what would be wrong, Mr. Minister, what would be wrong by tabling this matter or adjourning this matter for a period of one further week?

You said that now, you know, in the months since you've introduced this Bill, you've gotten some replies and you've got a number of amendments to put before the House. There are some organizations that — at least one — that you say has yet to be . . . no one has met with them. I think it's the library boards or something that you indicated.

But I mean wouldn't more time, perhaps even bring forward more amendments . . . What would be wrong with just holding this one up for a week, Mr. Minister? I mean a week — a week, given sort of the nine years you've been in office; a week, given the fact that much of this information is now available anyway, and I doubt whether anyone in the next week is going to be affected adversely by us tabling this matter for a week, can you give us your undertaking to perhaps hold off for a week here before rushing this Bill through?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — This Bill's been here for nearly two months. Where's the rush? I mean I'm surprised at the confessional of the hon. member of his ineffectiveness on city council in Regina when he said eight years ago he introduced the same thing and couldn't get it through then, and there's nothing new.

So now you're telling me . . . It's eight years old. There's nothing new. It's eight years old. And that still isn't enough time for you.

Now, come on now. There's a rather strange position that the hon. member is setting out here, that he stands up and says that eight years ago I did this; there's nothing new; I was ineffective before in getting it done and I want to make sure that it doesn't happen again.

I would hope that over the eight years the hon. member would have changed and said that, let's get it through this time. Let's not delay another eight years before this debate comes up again.

So I'm very surprised at the hon. member. I'm not surprised, given the NDP refusal to pass this in 1982. But eight years, when you stand up yourself and say there's nothing new, then surely that should be enough for anybody. Let's pass it right now.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Minister, just to go over it again. And I know that you're laughing quite hard from your seat because you feel that you scored some sort of political point.

Let me just go over it very slowly, very calmly, that eight years ago as a member of Regina City Council, I put before city council amendments to our procedure by-law that would accomplish many of the same things that are now being put forward in this particular Bill, to give the people of Regina, the citizens of Regina, the right of access to documents and other information at city hall. And that is something that we did eight years ago.

And I might say, Mr. Minister, that the Bill also passed at that time and became the law as far as the city of Regina was concerned. That is something that we did on our own and without a great deal of direction from the provincial government at that time.

So don't please come on with any little moral sermons about what we did or didn't do. I tell you, that's what I did. I can also tell you, Mr. Minister, that that particular Bill was something that took some time. It was a matter that was raised at many council meetings, that was tabled for public input. And the way that at least we do it there is subject of some committee meetings. I don't know what . . . because we felt it was important to get the public's input about Bills or in that case a by-law that affected them.

All I can say, Mr. Minister, that the Saskatchewan people are the losers for your antics and your actions by your trying to push this thing through. I predict that there will be many implementation problems, that there will be many more amendments to come in the future because you didn't take the time now to put a Bill before us that has got the unanimous support or at least the great support of all local authorities. I mean for local authorities to write you and say, well we agree with the intent of the legislation, that's not enough. I think they also need to be saying that we agree with the particulars of the legislation and the way that you're proceeding.

All I can say, Mr. Minister, I do not support the process that has taken place here. What you've done is that you've gotten people from the Department of Justice in pursuit of your own political agenda, lifted information from an Ontario Bill almost holus-bolus, and has put it before the people of Saskatchewan and said here, I mean it's good enough for Ontario; it should be good enough for you. We really don't want any extensive discussion on it. That's what's taken place here, Mr. Minister. And all I can say is that this is not the way that these things should go. Everyone recognizes that, even if you don't.

Mr. Chairman: — Why is the member for Kinistino on his feet?

Mr. Saxinger: — I would like to ask for leave, Mr. Deputy

Chairman, to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Saxinger: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly a group of school children from St. Benedict, grade 9, five of them. They are accompanied by their teacher Arron Lang.

I had met earlier with them. They did some visiting in Regina. I hope they enjoyed themselves. I want to wish them a good trip back to St. Benedict. I'll again want to visit with you after the session. And I want to ask all the members to please help me welcome the students to Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 71 (continued)

Clause 1 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Lane: — You made the allegation, or one of your members did, that this was pulled from an Ontario Act. There are some rather significant differences. Certainly the matter of exemptions and the protection of privacy will have some uniformity across Canada.

There was some differences. For example, Ontario has I believe ranges, as opposed to salaries. The adjudicative role of the Privacy Commissioner is a rather fundamental change from Ontario.

So I could go into other of those differences and indicate to the hon. member, I was simply picking up on your own words when I responded earlier when you said it wasn't new, and as I say, responding to the point you made. Again a delay, in my view, is very unwise, that most people in the province want to see the legislation passed and would like to see it passed sooner rather than later.

Mr. Chairman: — No further questions?

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2

Mr. Chairman: — I would ask the minister to move the amendment to clause 2.

An Hon. Member: — What does it mean?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — It simply makes it clear that the Saskatchewan Indian Community College is not covered by the Act and that the federated colleges are included within the definition of universities. The reason that the Indian Federated College is not included is because it's primarily funded by the federal government.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2 as amended agreed to.

Clause 3

Mr. Chairman: — The minister has also moved an amendment to clause 3. Can we take the amendment as read?

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 14 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 15

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Can the minister provide some explanation as to what this amendment will do.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Just a clarification that that general provision of personal information being protected for life plus 25 years overrides.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 15 as amended agreed to.

Clause 16

Mr. Chairman: — Clause 16 agreed? Carried . . . oh wait a minute. I'm sorry. I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Van. Mulligen: — Still Victoria, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the minister might provide an explanation of this amendment to section 16.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — It's quite clear that under the provisions of the evidence Act . . . documents that a witness in a legal proceeding may not be required to produce because of the evidence Act will also not have to be produced.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16 as amended agreed to.

Clause 17

Mr. Chairman: — Amendment to clause 17.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — It would be helpful if the minister in these cases would just get up and provide a brief explanation of what's behind it.

(1645)

Mr. Chairman: — I believe the member asked for clarification of amendment no. 17, for section 17.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The amendment is meant to deal with the situation which the university or hospital administrations are unable to respond to requests for information because they do not have access to the information requested. The principle of academic independence means that faculty members do not have

to account to university administrators with respect to their projects. However in the interest of as much openness as possible, universities and hospitals will be required to reveal the names of projects and the funding being received with respect to them. So the university may not know what a particular faculty member is doing on a project.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 17 as amended agreed to.

Clause 18

Mr. Chairman: — Would the minister speak to the amendment of section 18 please?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The amendment makes it clear that subsection 23(2) does not remove from the realm of "personal information", the views and opinions of individuals about other individuals provided in the course of employment. This information would still be personal information of the individual about whom the opinion is expressed.

Mr. Chairman: — To the member for Regina Victoria, that was section 23(2), I believe you were on 18. Do you have any other questions with 18?

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 18 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 19 to 22 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 23

Mr. Chairman: — The amendment to section 23, the minister's just spoken to, is that agreed?

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 23 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 24 to 27 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 28

Hon. Mr. Lane: — It's just to make clear that the regulations under The Hospital Standards Act are applied. You'll notice that on the printed Bill it says subject to any other Act. Much of the details of the hospital standards are under the regulations, so it's being modified to include the word "regulations".

Mr. Chairman: — Any further questions then on the amendment to section 28?

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 28 as amended agreed to.

Clause 29 agreed to.

Clause 30

Hon. Mr. Lane: — It just makes it clear that the views provided in confidence by faculty members and others about candidates for promotion, tenure, etc., is part of the collegial process as established with respect to university decision making will not be released to candidates and/or others.

Mr. Chairman: — Is the amendment to section 30 agreed?

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 30 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 31 to 56 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 57

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, one of the dangers in basing Saskatchewan legislation on legislation from other jurisdictions is that other jurisdictions may well have quite different characteristics in nature that may not be found in Saskatchewan. And that even if Ontario municipalities are in the main larger and are much better able to respond to written requests for information, provide documentations, complete forms, and indulge in a great deal of paperwork, there are many Saskatchewan communities and I would venture to say many local authorities, small library boards and the like, that are ill-equipped to handle great additional paperwork and paper flow should that be required.

I wonder is . . . one of the aspects that will be reviewed in the whole implementation process, the question of additional paper flow requirements for many small jurisdictions and small local authorities. I'm not concerned about the city of Regina; they're well able to look after themselves in this way and they have some experience in doing this, but for small jurisdictions, will that be one of the things that this implementation committee will be looking at?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well just based on the way the Acts have operated in other jurisdictions, it is interesting that the smaller authorities tend to get none or very, very few requests. Manitoba last year, I believe, had about 500 in total. The Department of Justice, of course a very large one, had about 30-some. So just based on the experience of other jurisdictions, it happens that the smaller ones tend to get, as I say, very few or none in terms of requests for information.

Clause 57 agreed to.

Clause 58 agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Just to clarify, I'm advised on the information in Manitoba that Justice got 40 requests last year out of the 500, and that Justice is a major . . . tends to be a major supplier because of the corrections in most jurisdictions. We would expect it here. So Health in Manitoba, I'm advised on the statistics, had only 33. So just to reiterate the point that I made earlier.

Mr. Chairman, I first of all would like to thank my officials; and then secondly, move the committee report

the Bill as amended.

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, if I might, to thank the officials for attending here today and making themselves available to assist us in this process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.