

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 35 students from the Holy Rosary community school. They are accompanied by the teacher Dan Labelle, principal Clarence Demchuk, and the community co-ordinator Annette O'Keewehow. I hope I've not butchered that name too badly.

I look forward to meeting these students afterwards and discussing what you've seen here. I ask all members to join with me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and the other members of the Legislative Assembly, a group of grade 2 students from Davin School, approximately 20 students. And they are being accompanied by Jan Finlay and chaperon Martha Bailey.

And I should indicate, Mr. Speaker, that Ms. Finlay brings her students here on a very regular basis because we've seen her on a number of occasions before. I'd ask you to welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, a group of 24 students from the town of Mistatim in the north-east part of the province. They're grade 6, 7 and 8's. They're here on a tour of the Legislative Buildings and a tour of the city. They're accompanied today by the teacher Annette Legare. Their chaperons are Gordon and Joanne Kirkland; also along with them is Garth Lutz, Valerie Shekk, and Debbie Simoneau. I'll be meeting with them later for some pictures and some drinks in my office at 204.

But I also want to just make mention that this is a group of students and teachers and community that decided that their community was very, very important to them, that their school was important. They got together and they proved to the necessary folks that they can succeed by working together. And I was very proud to have them in my constituency and very proud to know many of them on a personal basis.

I want to ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming these students and their chaperons and teachers to this Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tusa: — I'm also proud to make an introduction to the Assembly this morning. The introduction I wish to make is five grade 10 students from Earl Grey School.

They are accompanied by their teacher Diana Ritter.

This is the second group of students to come in to visit our Legislative Assembly from Earl Grey School this year. So I would like to congratulate the teachers and the school itself for encouraging a high degree of participation in our democratic system. Please welcome the students from Earl Grey School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Legislation on Deficit Budgets

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, in what must be a high water mark for hypocrisy even for this government, you announced that you were going to introduce legislation which would prohibit deficits.

You, Mr. Premier, who took a government that had consistently balanced this budget over three decades and through three governments, and reduced it to a basket case; you, Mr. Premier, whose government still holds the record for the highest per capita deficit of any government ever recorded in North America.

Mr. Minister, my question concerns the goals that such legislation might seek to achieve. In 1986 your Finance minister projected a deficit of \$360 million; in fact in 1987 we saw that the deficit was 1.3 billion. Your Finance minister admitted he knew it wasn't accurate when he said, well politicians will be politicians.

My question, Mr. Premier, is: how will this legislation ensure that in the future, as distinct from the last nine years, ministers of Finance will conduct themselves with integrity?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to have the NDP (New Democratic Party) opposition ask questions with respect to Finance when they've hid on all the issues in terms of how they would balance a budget. They hid the deficit — and when I say that, Mr. Speaker, they don't want to listen to the response — they hid the deficit in 1982. They had a huge deficit they hid in the Crown corporations. And the Saskatchewan family of Crown corporations was so unpopular, Mr. Speaker, they lost every seat but eight in the province, and the people knew that. And they hid pension fund deficits, Mr. Speaker.

Then when we come out and we say, we'll harmonize and we'll balance the budget, they hide — they couldn't find them. And then when the Ontario NDP comes in with its plan, \$10 billion deficit, Mr. Speaker, in the first six months, they hide; they don't know whether to defend it or not.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says, well isn't it a fact that it was difficult here and you have a deficit. I'll say to the hon. member, in Alberta where they put \$10 billion

in the Heritage Fund in the 1980s, Alberta's run over a billion dollar deficit on their current account consecutive years in a row.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll say, the same government that put the Heritage Fund in there also said, we've got to defend farmers, defend people against high interest rates. Mr. Speaker, we did that and we won in '82; we won in '86. People still know we'll defend farmers; we'll defend home owners, and we lay out a plan, Mr. Speaker, which is a lot more than the people in Ontario have got from the NDP or from the member opposite quite frankly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — What you've not done a very good job of, Mr. Premier, is defending the Saskatchewan taxpayer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — A further supplementary, Mr. Premier. Between 1982 and 1990 you brought down eight budgets. You missed by a bit — '86-87 you missed by 216 per cent; 1989-90 you missed by 98 per cent; 73 per cent in 1988.

Mr. Minister, my question is: will the legislation guarantee that in the future ministers of Finance could — oh we don't want to be too tough here — say pass a grade 2 arithmetic test before they assume office?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the opposition refuses, as they have done on Fair Share and on every other issue on agriculture, Mr. Speaker, they refuse to take a position. They hide and they hide and they hide. They say one thing in the country, one thing in the city.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to you, and I will share with the members of the media, this is exactly what got the NDP into trouble in Ontario and I want to read to you, Mr. Speaker, just three short sentences to make my point. On June 11, "Allan Pilkey, Ontario's minister of trade and technology, told reporters . . . (that they're looking at including) harmonization of the provincial sales tax with the federal GST."

That's the first. Second, on the 12th, Mr. Speaker, "Ontario has no plans to collect the federal GST with its provincial sales tax . . ." says the Premier — no plans. Then on the 12th: "Ontario treasurer Floyd Laughren said yesterday the province is considering harmonizing . . ." with the GST (goods and services tax), Mr. Speaker.

So we've got ministers saying that they will harmonize. You've got the Premier said that he won't harmonize. That's exactly what the NDP did prior to the election. Now the people of Ontario see what they really got.

That's exactly what these people are doing over here — one thing in the country, another thing in the city; I might harmonize, I might not harmonize, Mr. Speaker. They hid all kinds of deficits in the '70s. People in 1982 knew it, they knew it in '86, and they know it in 1991.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — One final supplementary, Mr. Premier. Mr. Premier, my question is: how could any legislation curb the stupidity, the irresponsibility, and the patent lack of honesty which has been a hallmark of your budgetary process over the last nine years?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the opposition . . . the opposition, Mr. Speaker, said to the people in 1982 and again in '86 . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that they don't want to hear about Ontario. Yesterday they didn't want to hear about Alberta. They wanted to talk about Alberta. Mr. Speaker, they don't know what they want to talk about. They are all over the map, Mr. Speaker. What we know is if they don't harmonize, Mr. Speaker, it's a 23 per cent increase in income tax to the people of Saskatchewan.

Now that takes us right back to where we were in 1982 when they all lost. If that's the question, Mr. Speaker, that we have to face, and the public has to face, the NDP should come clean right now and say, yes, that's it, it's a 23 per cent increase in income tax, no interest rate protection, no programs for farmers, none of that, Mr. Speaker. Finally come clean. So please let us know what you're going to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Meetings of the Crown Corporations Committee

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, speaking of hiding, I want to ask you a question about hiding half of your expenditures in the Crown corporations.

If you recall, Mr. Premier, I have sent four letters to your government requesting that this committee, which accounts for over half of your expenditures, to meet immediately, to reconvene. The last two letters, I might add, Mr. Premier, have gone unanswered.

In addition to that, I've asked on three or four occasions verbally that the Crown Corporations Committee meets. On Monday of this week, your House Leader, the member from Melfort, said that he would, in his own words, very soon draw to the attention of the member for Pelly that it is time Crown Corporations Committee met and we will meet in a very few days.

Mr. Premier, it's four days later and nothing has happened. Will you finally show some leadership and instruct your caucus to respect the democratic principles of this Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, when we have had the members opposite ask about Crown

corporations, Mr. Speaker, we've said, well let's take some of the Crown corporations and let's open them up to the public so that they can invest in them and actually be better for everybody in the province and we the country, Mr. Speaker. And they said, Mr. Speaker, they're absolutely against it.

And when we privatized Saskoil for example, they voted against it, which reduces the size of government, cuts costs, allows people to invest. And in fact Allan Blakeney, the former NDP member, stood there, was against it, and we find out, Mr. Speaker, he has shares in Saskoil. Whoops! How about that.

Now they're really interested in Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, the old NDP Saskatchewan family of Crown corporations that's going to have all its advertising budget, all this politics, Mr. Speaker, that's fine for them.

But when we put it in the hands of the public, in share offerings and trade with it, they're against it, Mr. Speaker, except when their leader can actually have shares.

Mr. Speaker, that's the hypocrisy the people of Saskatchewan voted against in '82 and in '86 and they're aware of right now, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, your government has failed to live up to every commitment you've ever made, including the last one the member from Melfort made on Monday with respect to calling the Crown Corporations Committee.

Mr. Premier, if you're so proud of your Crown corporations in terms of their administration, why won't you call them to meet immediately? What are you trying to hide?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Imagine, imagine now, Mr. Speaker, as a result of us opening up the Crown corporations to the public, you know all the share values. You know what it's worth on the market everyday. People can invest, and they're saying that that isn't open. Mr. Speaker, it's exactly the opposite.

What they want to do is nationalize them all, put them into government, hold them all here, keep all the information together. And we're the opposite, Mr. Speaker. In fact even in the Soviet Union today, Mr. Speaker, they've asked to open up. They said we want investment. We want share offerings. But not the NDP, Mr. Speaker; they're back in the nineteenth century with respect to share offering.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. I don't know how long you think you'll be able to keep the scandalous details of your government's mismanagement of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company from public scrutiny, Mr. Premier. After all, at least a portion of the gory details will come out in a

courtroom in September. You have a responsibility to let the people of this province know how you are spending their tax dollars. When are you going to allow the Crown Corporations Committee to open the books on the Crown corporations, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I have a list . . . I've just quickly written down, Mr. Speaker, a list just so the opposition really can appreciate how much the public has involvement now, finally, in Crown corporations.

Mr. Speaker, Saskoil is now totally public, and the people can go to shareholders' meetings. Mr. Speaker, Sask Potash Corporation . . . they don't like to hear all this, but let me finish, Mr. Speaker, because these are all Crown corporations.

Saskoil is public. Sask Potash is public. WESTBRIDGE is public. Cameco, Mr. Speaker, in the uranium business, is going to have a public share offering, and they're absolutely against uranium. They closed all the uranium mines. Prairie Malt, Mr. Speaker, Prairie Malt is now privatized into the hands of the public. All the members of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and the employees, Mr. Speaker — now that's more public than anything they've ever done in their political life, Mr. Speaker.

They put them all into hiding in government; we've opened them up to the people so they can see them every day in the newspaper. Employees can have memberships. They can hold it, Mr. Speaker. That makes them uncomfortable, but it's absolutely the truth.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. The hon. member had just risen to ask a question and I don't think he's even got a word out and the members are not allowing him to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Lease of the Silver Lake Farm

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If the Finance minister would just let me put my question.

Mr. Speaker, I want to direct my question to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. And, Mr. Minister, on June 5, I asked about the status of the ownership or the leases of the Silver Lake farm in Green Lake. You said it was up to the courts to decide who the lessees of the land should be. Mr. Minister, is it correct to take from that answer that the ownership of the farm remains with the Crown, and that it currently is not leased to anyone?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, what we have done is we have asked the Department of Justice to give us a ruling on the validity of who the lease should be to, and whether in fact we have the authority to lease to anyone until all of the matters arising from the discussion and from the court cases have been dealt with.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — New question, Mr. Speaker. It's quite clear that no one has the lease; the lease is in the name of the Crown. But, Mr. Minister, my question to you is: two people are renting land on the Silver Lake farm, one who is using it as rental pasture and another who is farming the cultivated portion. And by way of information, Mr. Minister, the people in Green Lake were told those two individuals were renting the land from the Prince Albert consortium which brought the non-fixed assets of the farm and turned around and sold them. How is it that this Prince Albert group could be renting out land which is the Crown, not they have title to?

Mr. Minister, my question for you is: why should these people be collecting revenues which should rightly be going to the provincial treasury by your own admission?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — There's two issues there, in answer to the member's question. The non-fixed assets on the day that we transferred the assets to them, that included the livestock and machinery, we deposited to our account on that day the value of that property.

And the second observation that you made is that the lessees are currently on the property. What we have instructed through our department is that the individuals who are there from the village of Green Lake are really trespassing, that we have instructed the people who were in a bid position for the property that they are also trespassing. And so we have made that information available to both of them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Are you indicating that you will be laying charges against the trespassers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — No, Mr. Speaker, we're not.

Mr. Thompson: — New question, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. Mr. Minister, there are currently no residents of Green Lake employed at the Silver Lake farm today. And by way of information, when you privatized it, the conditions of sale were that the new owners had to maintain employment levels, run it as a viable farm, and purchase the land.

I want to quote, Mr. Speaker, by way of information by the minister who is in charge of privatization. And he quoted . . . and I'm quoting from the paper of January '89, and he said: proposals must also contain a sound business plan that provides assurance of continued economic viability for those northern farms plus local employment. Instead you got owners who quickly sold off the cattle, then the machinery, buildings and tools, and now apparently rent it out for pasture and share-cropping. Plus not one individual is working on that property.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is: how are

these people allowed to violate the terms of the sale's agreement with your government, and then how do they get away with it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, the involvement by the individuals who set up an agreement to originally buy the property could not receive title clear and free for that land. And so the issue came back to us and said how do we resolve the issue when caveats are on the property and we can't transfer the property.

What we have there today is that there are some people from the village of Green Lake, I believe, who are living on that property, have moved on and have put some cattle on there. So we have a serious concern about how to deal with that problem and also the problem with the residents on that property who are not able to buy it because of the caveat that Green Lake put on it.

Mr. Thompson: — Final supplement, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, are you saying that the residents of Green Lake have occupied and are living on the land that you sold — the property of the Silver Lake farm?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — It's our legal opinion that the land was never sold, and therefore we have begun to deal with the caveat. We have begun to deal with the residents from Green Lake who are supposedly living on there. That's the last that I heard, and then the people who were intending to buy it but couldn't get the title free and clear.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Payment of Revenue-Sharing Grants

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I might say that the stench emanating from some of the government's privatization deals is getting more powerful as we go along here.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Community Services. Mr. Minister, you've changed the schedule for paying out revenue-sharing grants from four times a year to eight times a year. I wonder if you can tell this House why you've made that change?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Speaker, as you're probably aware, over the last year and the last few years physical situation of the province has been difficult, difficult to manage. Mr. Speaker, I think it's a responsibility of everyone to share in that responsibility. Local governments have done a very good job, Mr. Speaker, in managing their affairs. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that we'll be able to work with them to manage the challenges that lay before us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Speaker, a new question

to the minister who seems to be admitting that he has made this change and seems to be offering some lukewarm reasons as to why he's doing that.

Mr. Minister, are you aware of the fact that the city of Regina, for example, will lose 50 to \$100,000 this year in interest payments? And were you aware of this before you made this change?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said, we across this province really do have to work together. We have to work together to meet the many, many challenges that are before us. And I feel confident that if we do work together, Mr. Speaker, we'll be able to meet those challenges.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Urban municipalities must be laughing, Mr. Minister. They've done a wonderful job in Saskatchewan of tightening their belts over the years. They've yet to see you do the same thing, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, isn't this just one more example of where you're off-loading or dumping your fiscal mess onto the backs of municipalities in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Speaker, we set our priorities by working with the people. We have a plan, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan. We set our priorities. We set our priorities — health and education funding, Mr. Speaker, some help for the farming community. We set our priorities carefully and we did it with consultation with the people of the province, Mr. Speaker. We have some challenges and we will meet those if we work together.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hiring of GATT Negotiator

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Economic Diversification and Trade.

It was about a year ago right now, Mr. Minister, that you made the brilliant move of hiring Simon Reisman, one of the most expensive consultants in Canada, to apparently assist you in the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations. Now we all watched the GATT negotiations and the almost zero contribution that this government was able to make to that process turning into what was little more than a European holiday for the Premier and for Mr. Reisman.

I'd like to know, Mr. Minister, whether Mr. Reisman's contract has been terminated and how much the retention of Mr. Reisman as our advisor cost the taxpayers of this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Reisman is the most senior trade person in Canada. He works for us as required on a fee that he is paid as he works, depending

on how much work he does and how much is required.

It's very interesting that today the members opposite object to trade and trade agreements, when GATT and its future is so important to the farmers of Saskatchewan. And today when the Free Trade Agreement with the United States and Canada has had its final panel ruling on pork, has ruled in favour of the farmers of Canada and Saskatchewan, that's why we have Simon Reisman, that's why we have a trade agreement to protect our farmers and give them an opportunity to trade. And they will now not be paying tariffs when they're shipping their pork into the United States.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the minister makes no attempt to say that Mr. Reisman contributed in any way to the GATT negotiations. And from what we say from our vantage point, our contribution to that process was an absolute zero.

My question is, Mr. Minister, and it's a plain, direct question: how much were we paying Mr. Reisman per day, and how much did he cost us in total by the time his contract was terminated?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, the amount that we pay Mr. Reisman depends on how much work he does and is published in the *Public Accounts*. If he was paid last year, it'll be published in the current accounts, and if he's paid this year, it will be published next year. I don't have the exact figure in front of me today.

But I can say that Mr. Reisman's advice has been very, very valuable to the people of Saskatchewan, to the pork producers of Saskatchewan. Because this very day the agreement that he negotiated, that he advises us on, has ruled in favour of the pork producers of Saskatchewan and there's no longer a tariff on pork going to the United States.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

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

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of Bill No. 85, An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act. The objective of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to provide a restricted retirement option to employees who have age and service totalling at least 75 years. The restricted retirement option will be generally available to individuals whose positions are abolished and generally available to individuals who may choose not to be relocated in decentralization initiatives.

The Legislative Assembly is familiar with the more general early retirement program which was offered to individuals in 1987. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, will provide comparable benefits and unreduced pension to individuals participating in the public service superannuation plan, or an increased pension to individuals participating in the public employees' superannuation plan, and a bridge benefit of \$350 per month until age 65, and a severance payment.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 85, An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, we just received a copy of this Bill yesterday. There are several provisions here which I think people that are involved should be advised about and should be consulted about — particularly who the restrictions apply to, the retroactivity that's referred to in the Bill, the amounts. We'll want to know a little bit about the costing.

So I think we should provide a little time for the people involved to be consulted and have their voices heard so that they may be expressed here in the legislature.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of debate on this motion.

Debate adjourned.

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

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to move second reading of Bill No. 86, An Act to amend The Communications Network Corporation Act and certain other Acts.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I'll note a couple of the accomplishments of SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network Corporation) near its first year. As we near the end of the academic year, SCN has provided post-secondary credit courses to almost 3,000 students throughout the province. This is up from approximately 900 students last year, and next year SCN expects a further 35 per cent increase in the courses offered, which will serve obviously an even greater number of students.

This remarkable growth, Mr. Speaker, in the demand for SCN services shows the strong support throughout Saskatchewan for SCN's initiatives, and speaks volumes about the quality of educational services being provided by SCN and the commitment of the government in continuing to support educational initiatives for the benefit of all the people in the province.

The second notable achievement of SCN in the past year has been the CRTC's (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) granting a broadcast licence to SCN. On May 6, 1991, SCN went on the air throughout the province and is now providing quality educational programming to communities like Buffalo

Narrows and La Loche, who have never before had the benefit of a service like this.

To help provide funds for the production and acquisition of programming carried by SCN, The Communications Network Corporation Act introduced the distance education development fee. This Bill will amend some of the technical collection procedures associated with this fee, so as to make the collection and remission of the fee easier for cable operators. The changes proposed in the Bill will allow cable operators to collect and remit the distance education development fee in the same manner that they are currently collecting and remitting E&H (education and health) tax.

Finally the Bill also enables the Lieutenant Governor in Council by regulation to establish different categories of cable subscribers, and allow for variation of the rate of the distance education development fee.

This will allow for example a variation in the fee charged to cable subscribers of very large systems from that charged to subscribers of small community based cable systems, recognizing the different tiers of cable operator licences as authorized by the CRTC.

Both changes will continue to ensure that SCN will have the funds necessary to provide the high quality of programming that the people of Saskatchewan now already have come to appreciate and benefit from.

Therefore I move second reading of An Act to amend The Communications Network Corporation Act and certain other Acts be now read a second time.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having received a copy of this Bill yesterday, I want to make a few brief remarks before adjourning the debate on this Bill.

We on this side have stated very clearly from the outset our support of distance education. It is an area that should be a non-political area, but only because of the way the Bill has been introduced and of the way it has been — I'm not referring to this Bill but rather the original Bill — the way the whole distance education system, the SCN network has been put into place, it's become a very political thing.

I see in this Bill the ability to establish different fee for different categories. And I will be consulting with various people in the industry to find out precisely what that means. I have every reason to suspect it means that the major cable companies such as Cable Regina will be paying a premium as opposed to what the cable companies of the smaller systems will be paying.

Anyway I will be checking on the ramifications of this and, Mr. Speaker, with that I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 86.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 54

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hepworth that **Bill No. 54 — An Act respecting the Tabling of Documents** be now read a second time.

Mr. Pringle: — Mr. Speaker, I'll just make a few comments. Particularly I think after this morning where we've seen what I would describe as a pathetic display in question period by our Premier and his ministers that I think is very much related to this Bill.

Here we're in a situation where the government is presenting this façade about democratic reforms and sharing of information and opening up the process of government and pretending that they're running an open government. They're going to table documents on time, which would be a major switch for this government.

But in the face of all these so-called democratic reform initiatives we see a Minister of Economic Development and Trade who's not prepared to share information about costs of Simon Reisman charged to the province. We see the government not prepared to answer questions on the game farm.

We see the government not prepared to call a Crown Corporations Committee which spends over 50 per cent of the public's money. And the government does not have the courage because of what they're hiding there, likely in terms of advertising costs, polling costs, and so on, to call that committee together, Mr. Speaker.

And that unwillingness to call the Crown Corporations Committee so that the expenditures of Crown corporations can be scrutinized, I mean that's the other part of tabling documents, Mr. Speaker. Government normally has been tabling the documents late and then even when they table the documents they're not prepared to bring the Crown Corporations Committee together to discuss those documents. And so I don't know what an opposition can do to force the government to try and be accountable for expenditures of public money.

And, Mr. Speaker, with regard to this particular Bill, one of the concerns I have and we have on this side of the House is that even where there are rules about deadlines and tabling of documents and financial statements, they're not complied with. And this Bill here does not speak to, what if the government doesn't meet those deadlines. And as the Provincial Auditor has pointed out, that has been their practice, not meeting the deadlines.

So this Bill in my view places no consequences on the government if they refuse, as they have on so many occasions in the past, to actually meet the deadlines of their public documents.

So, Mr. Speaker, the public wants information. They want information about how their government spends their money. They're concerned about a lack of accountability which was reinforced as to why they should be this morning when the Premier of the province was not prepared to take responsibility for the fact that the Crown Corporations Committee which would allow the

opposition to scrutinize these annual reports of Crown corporations, was not prepared to take responsibility to make sure that this happens.

It's very frustrating, Mr. Speaker, because I don't know what an opposition can do. We've written to the government, I think some . . . (inaudible) . . . letters; we've asked in question period; we even went to the Premier this morning and he's not prepared to open up the scrutiny of his government.

(1045)

And so he can talk about all the democratic reforms he wants, Mr. Speaker, but with this government there is not a will to be democratic and open and accountable and that's why the public sees all these democratic reform initiatives as a façade. And this Bill is going to be no different. This Bill has got no teeth. That's the major concern I have about the Bill. It simply does not have any teeth and there's no consequences for the government that would continue to break the law as this government has done, to break its own laws if they refuse and don't table documents on time.

So they haven't changed their ways. They haven't shown that they're willing to openly share information that the public has a right to have access to, and I'm not reassured that this Bill is going to change anything, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of questions on some of the sections in committee and I will be asking the minister to answer those. But for the time being that's all I want to say on this Bill. Thank you.

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

Bill No. 57

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hepworth that **Bill No. 57 — An Act to amend The Financial Administration Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few remarks with respect to this Bill. In the main the Bill before us proposes some housekeeping amendments to The Financial Administration Act and are of no real consequence.

But there is one major change in the Bill that I'd like to talk about and that is the change with respect to the tabling of the *Public Accounts*. Mr. Speaker, you will know that The Financial Administration Act states that when the *Public Accounts* are prepared by the Provincial Comptroller, they will be laid before the Legislative Assembly as soon as is practicable by the Minister of Finance. It's now proposed that we change that so that the *Public Accounts* will in fact now be completed by a certain date every year. This has been rather loose. It was up to the Provincial Comptroller to prepare the *Public Accounts*. Generally he was able to have the *Public Accounts* done by the end of the year, that is, the end of a calendar year following the fiscal year. Saskatchewan has a fiscal year that ends March 30.

The Provincial Comptroller then takes all the information on how the money has been spent in that year and puts all that information into the *Public Accounts*. And of course you can well appreciate that it takes some bit of time to get that information; to put that into a proper format, even with computers that we have. To publish that information, to print it and so on, it takes some months to do that.

In the past the Provincial Comptroller has mostly been able to do that by the end of the year, even though there was no legislation that he had to do that. And then as soon as he had it done he would give it to the Minister of Finance, and then the Minister of Finance would then lay it before the Legislative Assembly the first opportunity that he had when the Legislative Assembly was sitting.

Now the Bill says that the Provincial Comptroller must complete his *Public Accounts* by November 30. I don't think there's any particular problem with that. It's my understanding from the Department of Finance people that November 30 does not create any specific concerns for them in terms of being able to get the information from the previous year and to publish that information by November 30 of each year. It doesn't seem to create any problems.

Then the Bill goes on to say that instead of the present process where the Minister of Finance is expected to lay the *Public Accounts* before the Legislative Assembly and thereby make them public as soon as is practicable — I think is the term in the present legislation — it now says that the Minister of Finance will lay them before the Assembly on the earliest possible day. So it takes away a little bit of the latitude that the Minister of Finance has in terms of laying the *Public Accounts* before the Assembly. In the past it was as soon as is practicable; now it says at the earliest possible day.

And the reason that this is coming before us is that there has been some problems in the past in the tabling of the *Public Accounts* — and I'll get to that in a minute, Mr. Speaker — but I think that it's important to review just what the *Public Accounts* are. We talk about these *Public Accounts*, but I think it's important for people to understand just what the *Public Accounts* are.

The *Public Accounts* provide the only detailed record of the government spending, Mr. Speaker. It shows exactly what the Legislative Assembly passed in terms of a budget, and then how the government spent that money in the specific year under review. And the public really doesn't know how money has been spent unless it has the *Public Accounts*.

The *Public Accounts* also provides the only detailed summary of advertising expenses, and the only complete record of political staff salaries, benefits, travel expenses, on the part of those people. And it seems to me that the public has a right to know that particular information, and that information is contained in the *Public Accounts*.

The *Public Accounts* also lets the public know about any contracts that the government has entered into. For example, this morning in question period, there was

discussion about a contract between the government and one Simon Reisman who was hired by the government to advise it on trade matters.

Now in question period, the minister wouldn't give us any answers as to what money was spent on Mr. Reisman or what money the taxpayers . . . or what taxpayers' dollars had been spent to engage Mr. Reisman. But the *Public Accounts* for this year, for the year ended March 31, 1992 — or I would expect because the contract was last year it may well be in the *Public Accounts* for the year ended March 31, 1991 — the *Public Accounts* would show then the amount of money that had in fact been spent on Mr. Reisman for this contract that he had with the government to advise it on trade matters and to have dinner with the Premier in Brussels and so on.

We really don't know as an opposition, and the public really doesn't know, what kind of money has been spent on contracts such as that until we get the *Public Accounts* because the government, of course, always hides that information and refuses to provide that information when asked for it. And they always say well, you can get that in the *Public Accounts*. So the *Public Accounts* does give us that kind of information.

The *Public Accounts* also lets us know whether or not the government overspent in significant areas. In *Public Accounts* we know, like, how much money the government was given by the Legislative Assembly to spend on certain items. But the *Public Accounts* will show whether or not the government overspent in certain areas.

For example, a couple of years ago, the Premier said, well we're going to cut back on advertising costs, and we're going to cut back on travel costs. But then when we got the *Public Accounts* for the year, we found out that in fact that that hadn't happened and that advertising expenses by the government had continued to go up and that travel expenses, including the travel expenses by the Premier — as opposed to being less than it was the previous year and being less because the Premier said we wanted to reduce it — the travel expenses were in fact far more than they were in the previous year.

But the only way you really find out whether the government spent more than they said it would is through the *Public Accounts*. And the only real way you find out if the government is in fact going to do what it says it will do, or that the government will do what the Premier says it will do, is through the *Public Accounts*.

Now that's one case where we found out that, you know, things quite hadn't turned out the way the Premier said they were supposed to. In fact he spent a whole lot more on travel than he said he would. And the only way we can really find that out, Mr. Speaker, is through the *Public Accounts*. So the *Public Accounts* are very important and are an important part of the whole legislative process.

I think people have to remember that the government doesn't have money unless the Legislative Assembly votes them the money. The government puts a budget before the Legislative Assembly but has to have the money voted by the Legislative Assembly before they can

vote that. Now they're allowed to spend some money on an interim basis through special warrants and so on. But they really have to have the approval of the Legislative Assembly. Usually it's before the fact, but there's also some approval that's given after the fact for certain kinds of spending.

So it's not the government's money, Mr. Speaker; it's the people's money and it's the Legislative Assembly that represents the people that then gives the government the money to spend. And we do that because we want to make sure that the people have somewhat of a hold on the government and that the government just can't do whatever it wants to do without going back to the people, or the representatives of the people, which is the members of the Legislative Assembly.

Now usually the government gets its way because most of the members of the Legislative Assembly are government members and they support the . . . or they're members of the same party that the government comes from and they generally tend to support the government when the government asks for something. If they don't, then of course the government falls and you have to have an election.

But it's important to remember that — that that's part of accountability in our system of democracy, that the government cannot have money unless it's voted by the representatives of the people here in the Legislative Assembly.

By the same token the government can't just spend money without accounting for how that money has been spent. And we account for that in a number of different ways, but the major ways are: one, we have a Provincial Auditor who has to examine the government's books. But also we demand that the government publish a *Public Accounts* which then details how the government spent money in the past, so that the taxpayers, through their members of the Legislative Assembly, can then see how the government has spent the money — whether they spent it wisely, whether they spent it foolishly, whether they spent more than we allowed them, whether they spent money on things, on political items, as opposed to strictly government items and the like. So that's the process and that's why *Public Accounts* are so important.

Now, Mr. Speaker, earlier I alluded to the fact that *Public Accounts* . . . that the change in the legislation that's being proposed is to make sure that the *Public Accounts* will be tabled by the Minister of Finance as early as possible when the legislature is sitting, and that the *Public Accounts*, even if the legislature isn't sitting, will in fact be ready by November 30.

And people might well ask: why is a change being proposed at this particular time? Well the reason that there's a change is that we've had some real problems in Saskatchewan. I think even if the public don't remember the reasons or all of the particulars and the details of that, I think they certainly remember that, you know, that in the last couple of years the PC (Progressive Conservative) government has held up the tabling of the *Public Accounts* and they've set some records in Saskatchewan for late tabling of the *Public Accounts*.

Like, as an example, it's my understanding that . . . well just to review a bit of history, that going back to 1945 through 1973 the *Public Accounts* were always tabled in February because the Legislative Assembly happened to be sitting then, so that in February you had an idea of the specific expenditures of the government from the previous year.

There was even some times in the early '70s where that information was provided the same year, Mr. Speaker. They were provided in December, so that for the year ended March 30, 1973, the Legislative Assembly happened to be sitting in December and the *Public Accounts* were tabled here in the Legislative Assembly on December 19 of 1973. So it was a matter of a few months when the *Public Accounts* were tabled.

And this carried on, Mr. Speaker, in the main through the '70s, although there were a few times when it was tabled in March. But there were some years where, for example, in the 1980s, where again the *Public Accounts*, or the year ended, the *Public Accounts* were provided to the Legislative Assembly in that same calendar year.

We saw a major change take place, Mr. Speaker, in 1985 when the government for the first time tabled the *Public Accounts* in April of that year; and then in 1987 when the government tabled the *Public Accounts* in June of that year, which set a record in Saskatchewan for late tabling of the *Public Accounts*. So that you had more than a year following the close of a fiscal year before anybody had any idea of how the government had spent money.

And the following year, in 1988, the government tabled the information in May of that year. In fact there was even court challenges which were undertaken at that time to try and force the government to table the information.

(1100)

So that we've had some significant problems in Saskatchewan with not only the government not calling the legislature so that the *Public Accounts* couldn't be tabled on a timely basis, but also ministers taking that clause in the Bill to table them as soon as is practicable, to take that clause and to misuse it, and to simply hold up the tabling of the *Public Accounts* for no good reason except for political reasons. That the minister said, well we'll be embarrassed by this information so we're just going to hold it up; we're not going to table it.

And you know that's rather unfortunate that now we have a change proposed in the legislation, a change proposed in the legislation, when before we've never needed that because Finance ministers had a great deal of integrity and they tabled the *Public Accounts* as soon as was possible. Governments were regular in terms of meetings of the Legislative Assembly, so that the *Public Accounts* could be tabled on a timely basis.

But here you've had some PC Finance ministers with absolutely no integrity at all, holding up the tabling of the *Public Accounts* for no reason other than political reasons — political reasons to suit their own political agenda, and now we have to change the law on account of these

ministers not having any integrity.

And it's like the . . . you know I remember when I was a child in school and sometimes one kid would get out of hand and the teacher would say, well now everybody in the class is going to have to stay behind or everybody in the class is going to get a punishment on account of what one or two people did. And you know that's what's happening here, is that we're having to change legislation on account of one or two rather unscrupulous Finance ministers here in Saskatchewan. So it's unfortunate that we have to have that.

Now I tell you that the proposed change poses no problems for the New Democratic Party. The history of the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and the New Democratic Party in Saskatchewan is that we would always have been within the time frame of this legislation if that legislation had been in place. So it causes us no problems, and I guess in the final analysis it's probably good legislation.

Although I fully expect that the PC government will get defeated in the next election and that we're not going to see them for another 50 years in Saskatchewan, nevertheless in case there's some future Finance minister who is as unscrupulous as some of the PC Finance ministers, then at least there will be a law which demands that he lay the *Public Accounts* before the Legislative Assembly earlier rather than later, as was the case with the PC Finance ministers, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So there has been a real problem here in Saskatchewan. And it's important that these *Public Accounts* be tabled before the Legislative Assembly begins with the budget of the next year because most people know . . . at least in terms of my personal finances at home, or organizations that I've been involved in, Mr. Speaker, where I've been treasurer or president and so on, I always like to know what we spent the money on the previous years before I can undertake to commit myself to expenditures for the next year.

Now I know that hasn't been a problem with the PCs because, looking at their record of financial management in Saskatchewan, they don't frankly care a lot about asking those kinds of questions. And they just spend, spend, spend without really caring about what the money was spent on in the past. They've been rather reckless that way. But I tell you from my personal viewpoint, and most people, when they're sort of looking at the family budget for the next year, they do that with some knowledge of what the money has been spent on in the past.

And the same principle holds here. It's important for members of the public and members of the Legislative Assembly to know what money has been spent on in the past before you can really make commitments about spending in the future.

And that's something that the Provincial Auditor has pointed out to us time and time again. In his reports to the Legislative Assembly, he always talks about the timeliness of financial information, points out that it's important for the people to know how money has been spent before making any commitments.

Now does the Bill solve the problem? I think that in some ways it does. It solves the problem in so far as well maybe it wasn't a problem in terms of the Provincial Comptroller preparing the *Public Accounts*. It's my sense that he's pretty much had them ready by December or November in any event. The Bill says that he has to have them ready by November 30 of the fiscal year. In the past he's pretty much had them ready at that time anyway.

So I don't know if the Bill is going to solve any particular problem there. It might cause him to speed up his operations a little bit, but then with the computers that he has at his disposal now to bring forward records and to have them published readily, I don't think that this particular thing is going to be any problem for the Provincial Comptroller.

Now the other part of the Bill that causes us some concern is this part where it says that the comptroller has got to have the *Public Accounts* ready by November 30. And then it's got to be laid before the Legislative Assembly, if it's sitting, immediately. But if the Legislative Assembly is not sitting, then it should be laid before the Legislative Assembly as early as possible after the first sitting date of the Legislative Assembly.

Now if that sounds a bit confusing, maybe I can get a little bit more specific about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We haven't had the Legislative Assembly sit on November 30 for the . . . well it's never sat on November 30 except in 1986 after the fall election that year. But since that time, the Legislative Assembly has never sat on November 30 or in December or in January or in February. And it's never really been called back to meet again until later in March and April, and in the one case the government didn't call the Legislative Assembly until June.

So that even though — if the future sees the same pattern as we've seen in the last few years — that even though the *Public Accounts* will be ready by November 30, they're not going to be tabled or made public and the public will have no way of knowing what's in those *Public Accounts*. The members of the Legislative Assembly will have no way of knowing what's in those *Public Accounts* until March or April of the next year, or whenever it is that the government decides to call the Legislative Assembly.

So it seems to me that it's kind of a silly situation here to say that, well the *Public Accounts* have got to be prepared by November 30, but you're not going to make them public or lay them before the people of the province until what? — some four or five months later. Well that doesn't make a whole lot of sense to us, Mr. Speaker, to do that.

It seems to us that if you're going to have the *Public Accounts* ready and they're all going to be printed and so on by November 30, then you need to have a more effective way of getting those *Public Accounts* out to the public through the members of the Legislative Assembly.

Now I'm not going so far as to say the Legislative Assembly should sit on November 30 of every year, but certainly the government should have looked at alternatives such as, if the Legislative Assembly wasn't sitting, to perhaps have the *Public Accounts* released

publicly and have them referred automatically to something like the Public Accounts Committee.

Because what happens, when the *Public Accounts* are laid before the Legislative Assembly, the first thing that happens is that the *Public Accounts* get referred to the Public Accounts Committee for them to look at the *Public Accounts* on behalf of the Legislative Assembly.

So what you're saying now is that the *Public Accounts* are going to be tabled on November 30, the legislature doesn't get called until March or April . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Minister of Finance wants to get into the debate again, then I certainly encourage him to do that. The thing I guess that disturbs me is that he sits there and yip-yaps from his seat and he . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I'd ask members not to make reference to people's absence or presence in the legislature.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister of Finance has a problem in this Legislative Assembly of always intervening and injecting himself into debates from his seat, yelling and hollering. And he doesn't seem much inclined to want to stand up on a lot of occasions to defend what he's doing, but he does sit there in his seat and yip and holler and yell a lot, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway the rather silly situation that's being posed by this Bill is that the *Public Accounts* are going to get tabled on November 30. That's clear.

The Legislative Assembly doesn't sit till March or April, so that's when the *Public Accounts* then get made public, even though you've had them published some months before — December, January, February, say, March. You've had them sitting on a shelf for four months, then you make them public. Then they're automatically referred to the Public Accounts Committee, and then the Public Accounts Committee examines the *Public Accounts* on behalf of the Legislative Assembly.

Now it would make a whole lot more sense if you said that November 30 the *Public Accounts* are ready, you're automatically going to go to the Public Accounts Committee and they can start to look at the *Public Accounts* at that point — in the period of December, January, February, and March. So that they might even be able to look at it and then provide some report to the Legislative Assembly when the Legislative Assembly sits. So the Legislative Assembly then has some idea of what happened in that particular fiscal year and what it is that was in the *Public Accounts*.

So that even though the Bill gives the appearance here of solving some problems that the PC government has created or that their unscrupulous, dishonest Finance ministers have created . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I find that unparliamentary and I'd ask the member to apologize.

Order. The member from Regina Rosemont is interfering with the Chair and I'd ask him to refrain from that. And I'd ask the member for Regina Victoria to rise and apologize

to this Assembly.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Was it the word unscrupulous or dishonest?

The Deputy Speaker: — The word dishonest, and I'd ask you to apologize.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — I certainly apologize for calling PC Finance ministers dishonest.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. You cannot do indirectly what you cannot do directly. I'd ask you to rise and apologize to the Assembly.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — I apologize for calling him dishonest, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I've warned the member twice. I will warn him once more. I would ask him to rise and unequivocally apologize or I will name the member.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — I unequivocally apologize, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But anyway we have the situation of PC Finance ministers that have been, well how shall we put it, less than forthcoming, less than straightforward. I guess there's any number of adjectives that might apply here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the point is that that's what has happened in the past.

The Bill really doesn't solve the problem that has occurred in the past; it can still occur. I mean it would eliminate one of the problems that we had where the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden who was Finance minister at the time, instead of tabling the *Public Accounts* when he had them when the legislature first sat in April of one year, sat on them for no reason at all. Even though they were ready, he refused to table them.

He was playing some kind of political game at that point. And this is, I tell you, this is the reason that this Bill is before us, is because of their antics and their abuse of the legislative process. The people of Saskatchewan are or have been upset with the way the government has acted, have a sense that this government is not forthcoming or is as honest as it should be about things such as the *Public Accounts*, and that this is a government that is for ever trying to hide information from them. That's the sense that people have.

In order to dispel that type of thing, this image that's been created and this feeling that's been created . . . I might say for very good reason that the people should believe that, because that belief is based on actual fact of what's happened here. But in order to dispel that the government is coming in here now, sort of some weeks before a provincial election, and saying well look, you know, we're going to change the legislation here to table the *Public Accounts* real early.

And well that change might have . . . you know, I can see it here, would have meant that the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden who was the Finance minister at that time, would have had to lay the *Public Accounts*

before us a little bit earlier. Well now let me take that back. He's a lawyer, and he's skilled and he'd probably find some way to get around it, you know, as he did that year.

(1115)

But anyway, the whole Bill is just some political exercise to tell the public that even though we as a PC government hid all this information in the past, wouldn't let you have this information on a timely basis, even though we did all these things, here we are a few weeks — I hope it's a few weeks — before a provincial election, now we're going to change the law so that kind of stuff will never happen again.

Well thank you for small mercies. This is a good step forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I don't think that anybody in Saskatchewan is fooled by what the government is doing. Obviously the government, the PC government has been concerned about the opinions that Saskatchewan people hold, and so there's stewardship of the public purse. And this Bill and some others are intended to correct that, correct it I might say, at a very last minute in their term.

Again if the government was truly interested in dealing with this problem in an effective manner, it would put before the Assembly some amendments to this Bill which would see that when the *Public Accounts* are completed on November 30, that the *Public Accounts* will automatically be referred to the Public Accounts Committee for review, where it properly should go in conjunction with the Provincial Auditor's report and to have a standing provision that that Public Accounts Committee shall meet to consider these reports in between sessions.

So as you know in the past, the Public Accounts Committee only meets rarely between sessions or at least it has met . . . no, not rarely, it's met a couple of times now in the last few years. And that's because the legislature hasn't been sitting, but there's still work to do.

So if it's the intent of the government to not have the legislature sitting, then it seems to me that those committees should be sitting to consider this work. And if the government was really interested in full accountability, they would think this thing through, and they would be putting amendments before us that would accomplish that.

So that when it's completed on November 30, they're also then published and made available to the public and to the Legislative Assembly on November 30, as opposed to this rather curious proposal that we have here that the *Public Accounts* will get published or will get printed and be ready on November 30, and they'll sit on a shelf in the Finance minister's office until March or April of next year.

And that doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Why don't you just say then that they should be ready by March. You know it doesn't make any sense. So it seems to me that there's a more logical way to proceed here, but no one ever said that the government opposite had to be logical. And in fact they've given us ample evidence, I think, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, over the past, that they've been anything but logical.

But, Mr. Speaker, we'll certainly support the Bill. I mean I think it is a step forward. I don't think that it harms anything by having this. I think that there's some logical further steps which need to be taken. If we're truly concerned about having the *Public Accounts* being made available on a timely basis, then there's some logical further steps which need to be taken by the Assembly to give effect to that. But we'll deal with those kinds of questions in committee. And I suspect that future governments may well have to deal with that matter as well in legislation.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, we support the spirit of this Bill, and we support it as far as it goes. We support the intent of the legislation and therefore will be supporting it on second reading. But I would tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we'll have some suggestions for improvements to make, specific improvements, during the committee stage. Thank you very much.

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

Bill No. 83

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McLeod that **Bill No. 83 — An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981** be now read a second time.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Bill that is before us is a Bill that removes the time restrictions for granting temporary permits to doctors working particularly in rural Saskatchewan. It's designed for the purposes of dealing at least partially with the problem that we have in Saskatchewan, and that is the lack of medical doctors in rural communities. And hopefully this legislation will help somewhat in that regard.

It's my understanding that the college initiated . . . the College of Physicians and Surgeons initiated this change and the college is supporting the change. We will therefore be supporting this Bill.

However I wish to point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the problem with respect to getting medical doctors in rural Saskatchewan is a long-standing problem. It's one that this province has faced for many years and there have been studies done on it. We have seen virtually no plan of action from the PC government with respect to dealing with that problem. On the contrary, its many policies have increased the difficulty we have in getting doctors to rural Saskatchewan.

In fact this particular amendment was initiated by the College of Physicians and Surgeons as opposed to the Minister of Health. So this government still has no . . . is showing no leadership and no plan with respect to solving the problems of meeting the fundamental principles of health care for rural citizens, those fundamentals principles, Mr. Deputy Speaker, being comprehensiveness, universality, accessibility, public administration, and of course portability.

The principles of medicare are that comprehensive health care services — in other words, as comprehensive as reasonably possible, Mr. Deputy Speaker — comprehensive health care services be universally accessible to people throughout Saskatchewan. Those are the fundamental principles of medicare.

But what we see in the province today is a lack of accessibility to services in rural Saskatchewan and in northern Saskatchewan in particular. In fact the Murray Commission report, or in conversations Dr. Murray had, there were references to northern Saskatchewan conducting third-world medicine.

And that's the situation we face in Saskatchewan today. And I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a crisis situation with respect to the provision of comprehensive, universally accessible health care services to rural Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan.

What we've witnessed in Saskatchewan in the last nine and a half years under a PC government is a complete lack of vision with respect to health care. And we've witnessed a government floundering about in the area of health care with no plan, no long-term strategic plan, and a total lack of policies that enhance the principles of medicare and further the objectives of medicare as originally envisioned by the forefathers of medicare.

What we've seen in this government was something like an \$18 million cut in health care services back in the 1987-88 budget. And this government is still reeling from those wrong decisions and trying to play catch-up. And I might say very unsuccessfully because what we witnessed this summer — or this spring rather — were further cuts and bed closures and lay-off of health care professionals throughout the province.

What we witnessed in the nine and a half years of PC government was a destruction of the school-based children's dental plan, where in some 333 communities there were health care workers who were looking after the health care of our children, the dental care of our children. And now from 333 communities we have a number of dentists who are out there. And we never know for sure whether it's 20 or 25 or 33 because they set up offices and some of them shut them down and move out. And it's very unstable.

But the fact of the matter is the accessibility to dental services in rural and northern Saskatchewan is less than what it was five years ago . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . it's less. The members opposite say no it isn't. You will be proven wrong on that. In fact you have been proven wrong.

What we also saw, what we also have seen in the last nine and a half years was a reduction in prescription drug plan benefits that caused considerable hardship for people throughout Saskatchewan and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which still is causing hardship to individuals in Saskatchewan who have the need for large numbers of prescription drugs because they may have three or four members in their family who are asthmatic, for example, or some people who are on three or four different types of medication.

The cuts that the government levied are still producing hardships to Saskatchewan citizens in rural and northern Saskatchewan and in urban . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to introduce students.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, 19 students who are seated in your gallery. They're from Assiniboia. They're grade 4 students, and they're accompanied by teacher, Janice Erfle; and chaperons, Karen Willis and Joe Salaba; and bus driver, Leonard Gieman.

I ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome these guests.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 83 (continued)

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was indicating that what has taken place in Saskatchewan in the last nine and a half years — and I'll repeat it again for the benefit of the Minister of Health — is an attack on the fundamental principles of health care that have resulted in a deterioration of services in rural Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We've seen hospital bed closures this spring and on other occasions. We see the Minister of Health standing up and promising all these nursing positions and then turning around and putting hospitals in a position where they have to lay off nurses and other health care professionals.

We see the government wanting to implement user fees with respect to chiropractic services and then backing off because of the outcry. And I might say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are still looking at ways of cutting back on chiropractic services, and we hear about this every day from the profession and people who use these services.

We have seen a twinning of health care regions in Saskatchewan that have made it very difficult for public health nurses to do what they do best, and that is to deal with people on the front lines. And what we have seen is a reduction in the services that public health nurses are able to provide to their patients and their clientele, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of the minister's attack on health care.

We see in Saskatchewan a lack of funding for northern Saskatchewan and rural Saskatchewan — a total lack of

funding; and a complete lack of leadership by the PC government in dealing with the problem we have in rural Saskatchewan, which is getting medical doctors out to rural Saskatchewan, public health nurses out to rural Saskatchewan, dental therapists out to rural Saskatchewan, chiropractors out to rural Saskatchewan, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and speech and language pathologists.

It's a crisis in rural Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan with respect to the provision of these services, and there's been no leadership from the Minister of Health and the PC government in this regard. In fact this amendment to the Bill which makes it somewhat easier to get medical doctors out there, was initiated by the College of Physicians and Surgeons and not by the Minister of Health.

(1130)

What this government has done is simply betrayed medicare and the basic principles of medicare. It's betrayed medicare through a series of heartless cuts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through politically motivated decisions where they spend health care dollars for their own personal aggrandizement and political motives as opposed to for the benefit for the people of Saskatchewan.

We only have to examine the corporate strategy documents that the Minister of Health commissioned which spent hundred of thousands of dollars on health care promotion for the purposes of improving the Minister of Health's image on health care and making him look like he is concerned about health as opposed to the minister spending money on things that are really of concern to people in the health care area and people who use health care services. Instead this money, in a gross fashion, is being spent by the Minister of Health in the Department of Health under the guise of being communications and promotion to try and make the minister look good and the PC government look good on health care.

But when it comes to the real sort of services that provide health promotion services and disease prevention services to the public of Saskatchewan, that is your front-line workers like your public health nurses. They are pulled out of rural Saskatchewan. They're pulled out of rural Saskatchewan and their jobs are increased through twinning of public health regions in Saskatchewan, and as a result they're more involved in administration as opposed to patient work. These are the people that deal with health promotion and disease prevention.

This government would rather spend its money on self-serving advertising than dealing with . . . and funding, properly funding health care professionals who can work with people in organizations and on a one-to-one basis.

That's this government's priority, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's this government's priority, improving its image as opposed to doing what is necessary in the area of health promotion to enhance medicare and the quality of life and the quality of health for people in Saskatchewan.

And there have been proposals, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There have been proposals as to how we can increase the efficiency of health care and reduce health care costs and still deliver first-quality health care to Saskatchewan people. But the Minister of Health sat on that proposal, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a number of years and has still refused to acknowledge in this Assembly and to the public that there is merit in that proposal, notwithstanding that it is being implemented across this country in other provinces who are experiencing that it is meeting with the same sort of success that we've experienced here in Saskatchewan with our community clinics and our community health centre approach. But the minister refuses to acknowledge that for ideological reasons.

Instead they go out to rural Saskatchewan, the PC Party, and they try to frighten people by saying that the NDP are going to put all doctors on salary. And I say that those statements by the PC Party are politically motivated and hurtful to medicare and the enhancement of medicare in this province, because they know it's not true. They know, and we've debated that in this House. And they know it's not true that we're going to put all doctors on salary.

But they hope to perpetrate that myth. They hope to perpetrate that myth for the purposes of trying to scare people away from the concept of community health centres which are proven across this country to be successful with respect to delivering health care services at a reduced cost to the taxpayer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — And that's this Minister of Finance and this Minister of Health's commitment. That's their commitment to enhancing the fundamental principles of health care. It's to engage in scare tactics and mistruths across the province of Saskatchewan.

And we see that there are a number of alternate forms of reimbursement that we should be looking at and that people are talking about. Even the Murray Commission has talked about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But this government is scared to try anything different. And why is it? Because they don't want to preserve the fundamental principles of health care. They don't want to advance into new areas that may enhance medicare because underneath all of this is their desire to move away from medicare and to move into a more privatized American-style system of health care. And that is their bottom line, their motive, their basic motive for many of the things that they have done in the last nine and a half years.

First of all, they have no genuine, intelligent plan for rural Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan. Nine and half years and no genuine, intelligent plan. Why? Because they want to see medicare undermined. That's why, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And they commissioned a \$1.8 million study by Dr. Murray, called the Murray Commission report, was the report that was finally brought down. And this report talks

about centralizing health care services from rural Saskatchewan into 10 large regions in rural Saskatchewan, not including the North, but 10 large regions in rural Saskatchewan.

Now we have no difficulty with co-ordinating and integrating services. In fact I think we should move in that direction and my colleagues agree with me. What we object to is the ownership of all rural hospitals being put in a central large board, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's what the Murray Commission recommends. And that's what the Minister of Health supports, because he has said that the Murray Commission will form the blueprint for the province of Saskatchewan. And the Minister of Finance has said that it will form the blueprint.

And what we're talking about here is the ownership of these small hospitals going into a large central board, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the decisions being made by this board, the decision-making power being taken out of the hands of local communities and put in large centralized boards. And this government is doing this on the one hand and on the other hand, is talking about the need to decentralize in rural Saskatchewan. Totally inconsistent in their approach, Mr. Deputy Speaker, completely inconsistent.

The other things that the Murray Commission report recommends is that funding power be granted to these large boards. And what we have seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Saskatchewan over the years is an off-loading of responsibility from this government to municipalities. And this mechanism for funding has every potential to be used by that government which wishes in the long run to move towards a more Americanized style of medicare.

This mechanism can be used to off-load the funding from the provincial government to the large centralized board in the 10 regions in rural Saskatchewan, so that these boards determine how much each small hospital in the region gets. It can be used for the purposes of off-loading its financial responsibility. So what we see is the government backing away from providing health care services to the people of Saskatchewan. Because if indeed, and I believe they will use that provision to off-load, and I believe they will because they've done it in education and in other areas, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And therefore why wouldn't they do it in health if they should ever get re-elected.

An Hon. Member: — We will.

Ms. Simard: — We will, one very optimistic member across the way says.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the proposals in the Murray Commission report that are supported by the PC government — and in particular by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance, because they've said it publicly — these proposals detract from services being provided in small communities. It detracts from community involvement and community participation because they don't believe in it.

For all the rhetoric that they use, they don't believe in it, and that's why it took the College of Physicians and

Surgeons to propose this amendment. And that's why the Minister of Health has no long-term strategic plan and no vision with respect to health care that he has attempted to implement in nine and a half years of government, nine and a half long years. And all we get from the PC government is rhetoric about health care costs spiralling out of control. We can't afford it. We've got to tighten our belt. We're giving them 10 per cent increase which turns out to be about 2 or 3 per cent increase and doesn't even meet with inflation.

Rhetoric and more rhetoric. No commitment, no vision, no plan. And the plan that they did commission and get a report on just enhances what I have been saying with respect to their philosophy, and that is that they want to centralize health care in 10 large regions and put the control in super boards.

And what we have seen in Saskatchewan in this last budget was something like a \$40 million shortfall in funding to institutions, to hospitals and nursing homes, Mr. Deputy Speaker — a \$40 million shortfall and something like a \$1.4 million shortfall to the Cancer Foundation in providing those services, without a commensurate amount of funding to home care to pick up the slack. Now obviously home care's going to have to step in and do more if people are released from institutions earlier.

We do not disagree with the general movement towards more involvement by home care. In fact we've been urging that in this House for the last . . . since 1986 and prior to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And certainly since I've been opposition Health critic, a year has not gone by where I have said there's been a moratorium on home care in this province. And we have to move towards more services being provided by home care because once again the statistics show that services can be provided by home care much more cheaply than keeping people in institutions.

But if we move in that direction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and if we are genuinely interested in enhancing universality and accessibility of medicare, the fundamental principles, then we have to provide sufficient funding to home care to be able to pick up the slack. Otherwise the result of your movement, without adequate funding on the other side, is that you decrease the services to people and you undermine the fundamental principles of health care.

And so while the government says, we're being progressive in this move, they aren't. They are being regressive because they failed to properly fund on the other side of the equation — home care for the purposes of maintaining the universality and accessibility and comprehensiveness of health care services to Saskatchewan residents.

I want to also state that we have raised on a number of occasions our concern about the government wanting to move to a more Americanized system. And we arrive at that concern because we hear constant rhetoric from the PC government and right wing people across this country that medicare costs too much.

And I only have to remind you about the privatization conference that was very well attended by the PC government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And one of the main topics there was the privatization of health care. So there's no question in my mind that they are considering this in considerable detail.

Now I have come to this Assembly on numerous occasions and illustrated how much more costly a privatized health care system would be to the ordinary . . . to the average person in terms of dollars spent. And the American system, which is in large part privatized, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is much more costly to administer than the Canadian system and the Saskatchewan system — much more costly.

(1145)

There is absolutely no merit to the citizens of this province or the citizens of Canada to move to a more privatized system, because it will cost them more money and there will be many people who will be without services in the same way there's some 36 million Americans who are uninsured with respect to health care services, and most of them are working people.

So there's no merit in moving in that direction. We know our system is superior here in Saskatchewan, in Canada, and we're proud of our medicare tradition.

What we have to do in this province and across Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we have to do, is to take a look at our tradition of medicare and look at ways in which we can enhance the provision of services and the quality of health care and reduce the costs — but reducing them without detracting from them.

Now when there's a \$40 million shortfall to institutions and no commensurate funding to home care, we are not reducing the costs; we are detracting from the quality of health care services to people. And that's their decision and the PC government's choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Our decisions in health care, when we look at trying to contain health care costs, first of all in the containment, should assure us that the quality of health care is maintained. That has to be the first objective. The second objective is to look at ways of doing it more efficiently, from the point of view of taxpayers.

But this government's first objective with respect to health care is cost containment. And if the quality of health care goes by the way in the course of this, that's fine by them. That's fine by them.

Well let me tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the New Democratic Party have been watch-dogs on their ideology and their manner of dealing with health care issues in this province. And I know that the people of Saskatchewan recognize that they have not served the public properly in the health care area.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that in the next election this recognition will be expressed by people voting out that PC government and voting in an NDP government, which will preserve and enhance the fundamental

principles of health care, and which will have a plan for getting doctors into rural Saskatchewan and more health care services into the North and rural Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — We will not sit on our butts on proposals that have been there for years; that are good proposals and that have met with success not only in Saskatchewan and very isolated cases, notwithstanding that government has refused to fund those experiments in an adequate fashion, but that have met with success in Saskatchewan and across this country.

We, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will move toward more, not less community involvement and community control. We will work towards getting health care professionals into rural Saskatchewan through community and co-operation at a local level, and not through centralization and super boards that this government is proposing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order, please.

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 58 — An Act to amend The Statutes Act

Clause 1

Mr. Chairman: — I would ask the Minister of Justice to introduce his officials to us please.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Introducing again to the committee, Susan Amrud, Crown solicitor; Darcy McGovern, Crown solicitor; and Brent Prenevost, Crown solicitor.

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a Bill which we considered and I spoke to on second reading, Mr. Chairman. And we understand the purpose for the amendment and indeed support the amendment. So I have no questions to ask the minister or comments to make with respect to the Bill.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend The Interpretation Act

Clause 1

Mr. Mitchell: — Again, Mr. Chairman, as I indicated during the second reading disposition of this Bill, we understand the purpose for the amendment and we're not objecting to the legislation, and so I have no questions or comments with respect to it.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Just to expedite the process, I gather the same applies to Bill 76, 77, 78, 80 and 81. Is that correct?

Mr. Mitchell: — That's correct, Mr. Chairman. We have no objection to any of those Bills, nor any amendments to offer to the House, nor any questions to ask, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — So with leave, Mr. Chairman, can we do those as a group, and I will move that we report all of those Bills?

Mr. Chairman: — In an effort to run this committee like a business, we'll do what we can. We have to go through each one individually. We can ask the clauses to be inclusive, but we'll have to do each Bill on an individual basis.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

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

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

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

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Martens: — I'd like leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the member for Swift Current, it gives me a good deal of pleasure to introduce 62 grade 4 students from Central School. And as I read through the list of people who are here, I recognize some very familiar names: D. Rezansoff, P. Gatzke, Mrs. Lake — taught some of my kids. Then there's Gerri Regier — she taught my youngest son for sure, and she wanted to take him home because he was such a nice kid, and now I'm beginning to wish I maybe had. Then there's Mrs. Burnett, Mrs. Stolhandske, Constable Glover, Mrs. Redvedt, Mrs. Holland, and Mrs. Wallace.

All these people are here to view the procedures in the legislature and tour the building here, and I want all members to please join me in welcoming these students here to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

Clauses 1 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

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

Clauses 1 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

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

Clauses 1 to 9 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

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

Mr. Mitchell: — That falls in a different category. The Bills that the minister and I indicated were no problem, we reached the end of that list and now we're on to another list.

Mr. Chairman: — Did you care to make references then on Bill 72?

Mr. Mitchell: — Just give us a moment, Mr. Chairman, and we'll sort ourselves out here. We need the officials and we need the critic.

Mr. Shillington: — What Bill are you calling now?

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order, please. On the order paper that I have, we've been following from (a) to (h) inclusive so far, (h) being item no. 72. It was my understanding that (i) and (j), being Bills 75 and 60, would follow there later. Now if the House leaders have made a different arrangement . . .

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, I apologize to the members opposite. I was busy here on some other business. I will forthwith walk over and visit with them on the precise order.

(1200)

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

Clause 1

Mr. Chairman: — I'd ask the minister to introduce his officials, please.

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to introduce to you, on my left, Keith Schneider who's the associate deputy minister; seated behind me is Ron Davis, executive director, and on my right is John Edwards, assistant director.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chairman, my question to the minister: Mr. Minister, who are the ministers responsible for each of the authorities that are under review for the Bill before us?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, those ministers are the member from Wascana, the member from Mayfair, and the member from Thunder Creek.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I see the member . . . the minister from Mayfair here. I don't see the member from Wascana, and I do not see the member from Thunder Creek here.

I bring that to your attention, Mr. Minister, because as you know from my remarks just the other day when we were debating this in second reading, I asked very specifically that the minister responsible for the Wakamow Valley Authority be present in the Legislative Assembly when we're considering this Bill for which he is responsible.

And I ask, Mr. Minister, why it is that he's not here when we're considering it in Committee of the Whole so that questions can be addressed to him and hopefully responded by the government minister responsible.

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as the member from Moose Jaw is aware, the funding for the parks comes from my budget, and that's the reason that I'm responsible for the legislation that's before us.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, if you're the minister responsible for the funding, then why do we have other ministers who are responsible for the parks, and why are they not here when we're considering the funding for those parks for which they're responsible?

I hear your explanation, and I stated very clearly my position on the illogicality of your government's handling of who in the world is on first and in charge of funding for these urban parks in debate the other day.

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, as the member is probably aware, the member from Wascana, the member from Mayfair, and the member from Thunder Creek, all very, very fine representatives from their respective areas and for the province, sit in cabinet, and funding is approved by cabinet, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you still haven't answered my question. Why are they not here so that the questions can be addressed to them when we're considering this Bill for funding of the authorities for which they're responsible in Committee of the Whole?

Mr. Chairman: — Order please. The member has made reference on more than one occasion to the member's presence or absence in the House. I think it's the government prerogative to have any minister they wish

carry the Bill, answer the questions. The opposition member or members are more than welcome to ask questions of the government, but to keep on making references to other members absence or presence is not acceptable. Thank you.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — . . . Mr. Chairman. I agree that it's up to the government to have any minister here that they want, but wouldn't it make sense to have ministers here that can answer the questions?

Mr. Chairman: — Whether a member's opinion it does or does not make sense is not the issue. The issue is that you cannot make reference to the member's absence or presence in the House. So if you care to ask questions of the minister, they will be answered for you.

I think there was a question on the floor. Do you want the minister's response or do you want to ask a new question?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Well in response to the member from Regina, we'd like to have a question. I mean he'd like the question answered; we'd like to have a question first.

Mr. Hagel: — Question: why is the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority not here?

Mr. Chairman: — The Chair will rule the question out of order because again you're making reference to a member's presence or absence in the House.

Mr. Shillington: — I just want to speak to the problem briefly. It's not unknown for ministers to handle other minister's Bills. It's not generally done over the objection of the opposition, where opposition members think they may have detailed questions which the ministers . . . would require the minister responsible. It is most unusual to have ministers handling Bills which aren't their own over the opposition of the opposition. It's normally been done only with the consent of the opposition, Mr. Chairman. So the member's points I think have some merit.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order, please. I'm informed that it is not necessarily so that the opposition has to give their approval for a minister to stand in or sit in for another minister to ask questions. With that, I would ask the member if he has a specific question he would like to ask. The minister that is carrying the Bill has officials with him, and I would ask him to put his questions to the minister with regard to the Bill.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll choose not to listen to the insults being shouted from the other side of the House. And I remind the minister very clearly that in debate on second reading on this Bill, that I recognized at that time the minister responsible for the Wakamow Valley Authority chose not to be present in the Assembly. And I said at that time . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. I would ask the member from Moose Jaw North to please just ask his questions of the minister and wait for the response. But he insists on making references to when he's requested ministers to be here or not to be here, and whether their presence is in fact here in the House today.

So I'd ask him just to continue with the questions please.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, then, as I reviewed in second reading debate, the statements of previous ministers who had handled this Bill last year and the year before, that the funding for the Wakamow Valley Authority and others was under review last fall. And that in fact the review was going to be completed by last fall well in advance of this budget year.

And so I ask you then, Mr. Minister, what did the member for Thunder Creek — the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority — what did he have to say in these negotiations, to whom did he say them and what was his argument that he put forward, Mr. Minister, in defence of funding for Wakamow Valley Authority, respecting the intentions, Mr. Minister, for the funding of Wakamow Valley Authority, moving to the two mills of funding which was the original funding and eventually to the equivalent of five mills of funding for Wakamow Valley Authority.

Can you tell me, Mr. Minister, what was the member for Thunder Creek's input into these negotiations? How did they take place? Who did he talk to? What was his defence in respect to the funding for Wakamow Valley Authority? Would you answer those questions for him, Mr. Minister?

(1215)

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, as you're probably aware, the development of this budget was part of a strategy and part of a comprehensive discussion with the public. It followed on the heels of Consensus Saskatchewan and it followed a tour made by the Finance minister.

There was an awful lot of public input, Mr. Chairman. The public told us very clearly, they told us very clearly to be careful, to set our priorities very carefully. They said to fund health and education. They said try to help the farmers, Mr. Chairman. They said deal with the debt and the deficit. All funding, Mr. Chairman, and expenditures, were carefully reviewed.

The members that the member opposite has referred to, fine representatives from Moose Jaw and Saskatoon and Regina, were part of that discussion. The representation was made at cabinet, Mr. Chairman, and as you're probably aware the process and tradition as it relates to cabinet. And I think that those deliberations are as they have been in the past, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, can you tell me, regarding the member for Thunder Creek, what was the public input related to funding for Wakamow Valley Authority made to the member for Thunder Creek, the minister responsible; and what was his assessment of the validity of that input, Mr. Minister; and why did he then not conclude that it is appropriate to increase the funding for Wakamow Valley Authority this year, as implied by the ministers in two previous years in this Chamber? Can you advise the Assembly of that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as you're aware and I'm sure the members opposite are very much aware, there's been some tremendous fiscal pressures on the province that have affected each and every one of us and the public at large — tremendous pressures because of an international grain trade war.

We had to make some difficult decisions, Mr. Chairman. We went through a public consultation. We were very careful in setting our priorities. People told us very, very clearly to try to help the farmers, to go ahead and fund health and education — to do those sorts of things, Mr. Chairman. We were very careful to visit each and every request, and in that process we had to make some difficult decisions, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hagel: — I guess we're going to have to break this down, Mr. Minister. What public input was made to the member for Thunder Creek, the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority, regarding funding for Wakamow Valley Authority?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I referred to the public process as it was laid out there, laid out there last fall and this spring.

The Minister of Finance went on a tour around the province and asked for public input, and the public told us loud and clear, Mr. Chairman. They said to set our priorities carefully. They said to get our financial house in order. They said to deal with the debt and the deficit. They said to fund health and education, Mr. Chairman. And they said to help the farmers. And, Mr. Chairman, that's what we've done.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, maybe the question could be answered if the minister responsible was here, but as he isn't, let me ask you again the very specific question — this is as referred to by the former minister responsible for funding who brought it to the Bill last year, the minister for Parks, that this was under review, the review's going to take place by this fall, the minister from Thunder Creek is the minister responsible.

I repeat my question. Would you please answer my question. We're dealing with a very specific Bill. The Bill has to do with funding for the urban authorities. I'm asking specifically about funding for the Wakamow Valley Authority. What was the presentation made by the public that you referred to, to the member from Thunder Creek, the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority, what was the presentation made to him? There's obviously a number of questions we want to get to but maybe we can just deal with this a step at a time. Would you please tell me what was the presentation made to the member from Thunder Creek, the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I've already stated a number of times that the public had a lot of opportunity for input into the budget that was presented before us. The public said very, very loud and clear, Mr. Chairman, they said to set our priorities carefully. They said fund health and education. They said help the farmers, fund agriculture. They said deal with the debt and the deficit. They made that concern very, very obvious to us and they

were given lots of opportunity for input in the process of Consensus Saskatchewan and also in the round of public hearings held by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, does the member for Thunder Creek, the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority, approve of this Bill that you're bringing to this House today? Does it have his personal endorsement to limit the funding for Wakamow Valley Authority to the level instituted in 1983 when it was cut back by your government from the equivalent of 2 mills to 1.6 mills? Does the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority endorse that position which you're bringing to the House today?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I've said it a number of times and repeated it. The public was given a lot of opportunity for input into the budget process this year, probably as much or more than they ever have in the past. Mr. Chairman, we had to make some difficult decisions and that was part of the budget process. The decisions were cabinet decisions. And there's fine representation, and I repeat, very fine representation from Moose Jaw, Regina, and Saskatoon. There was an opportunity for input. We still had to make some difficult decisions, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, does the member for Thunder Creek, the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority, endorse this Bill which you bring before this House today?

Mr. Chairman: — Order. So far today the proceedings of the Assembly have gone relatively smoothly and I wonder if we could finish off the morning with that. I wonder . . . Order. Order, please. I wonder . . . Order. I'd ask the minister from Regina Centre to not interfere with the Chair. And I would ask the Minister of Finance to kindly let the proceedings continue.

Mr. Hagel: — If I need to repeat the question, I shall, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, does the minister responsible for the Wakamow Valley Authority, the member for Thunder Creek, endorse this Bill which you are bringing before the House on his behalf? You're saying you're the minister responsible for the funding, but he's the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority. Does the minister for Wakamow Valley Authority endorse the content of this Bill which you're bringing to this House?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I've said a number of times that the public was given an awful lot of opportunity for input. They told us to set our priorities very carefully, and we've done that. We've funded health and education with increases of some three and a half per cent. We've funded agriculture. And we've come up with GRIP (gross revenue insurance plan) and NISA (net income stabilization account) funding.

Mr. Chairman, we had to make some difficult decisions. That's part of the budget process. The members from Moose Jaw, or the member from Moose Jaw, Thunder Creek, the member from Wascana, and the member from Mayfair in Saskatoon are in cabinet, and there's an opportunity to participate in the budget-making process.

Mr. Chairman, that still doesn't mean that difficult decisions didn't have to be made. They've had to be made. And I guess the question that I have for the member opposite, is this the opposition's highest priority? Is it a higher priority than health and education funding? Is it a higher priority than helping the farmers? And if that's the case, then I ask the member opposite to say that directly; lay out their plan.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I would say this is substantially higher priority to the opposition than funding for Bob Andrew in Minneapolis or Graham Taylor in Hong Kong. But it happens to be, Mr. Minister, that we're dealing with funding. We have before us a Bill dealing with the funding for urban parks, and that happens to be the highest priority issue of concern before the House at this very minute. I wish you would address that question.

Now, Mr. Minister, I find it curious why it is that you refuse to answer my question as to what the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority, what position he takes on this Bill. I find that curious. That is unbelievable to me. I can only assume then by your answer, Mr. Minister, that obviously he does endorse it or you would have said he doesn't.

So, Mr. Minister, as we were given notice in this legislature by the Minister of Parks last year, this review of funding formula including the inequity, the inequity funding for Wakamow Valley Authority as compared to the other urban authorities, can you tell this House, Mr. Minister, why the member for Thunder Creek recommended to cabinet that there should not be any change in the funding for Wakamow Valley Authority? Why did he make that decision, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member opposite is very, very good at trying — and I repeat by saying, trying — trying to put words into other people's mouths.

I've said and I've said very clearly here, Mr. Chairman, that the public were part of the process. The public told us very clearly to set our priorities very carefully. They told us to get our financial house in order. They said to fund health and education. They said to help the farmers.

Mr. Chairman, in that process we had to make some difficult decisions. And my question is, as it was before, what's your plan? Is urban parks a higher priority than health funding? Is it a higher priority than education? Is it a higher priority than helping the farmers? And I think that's the question that the public has for the member opposite.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, three previous ministers of your government — the member for Regina South, former minister . . . as the minister of Urban Affairs; the former member for Turtleford, Colin Maxwell, as minister for Parks; the current minister for Canora as minister for Parks — all recognized in this Assembly on the record that there is inequity funding for Wakamow Valley Authority as compared to the other urban parks.

For two years in a row the ministers have stood in this House and said, the funding form is under review. Last

year we were told it would be done by the fall of 1990. You say the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority, the member from Thunder Creek, is the minister responsible.

I ask you a very simple question, a very simple question. This is certainly a question that I would think, in light of the last three years of discussion on this very specific topic in this House, one that should not be difficult to answer. We can only conclude by the Bill that you bring forward that it has the endorsement of the member for Thunder Creek. It locks the funding formula for Wakamow Valley Authority into the formula introduced in 1983 by your government, a reduction from the equivalent of 2 mills to 1.6 mills.

And so I ask you: what rationale, what reasoning did the member for Thunder Creek use in rejecting the proposal, endorsed in principle, I would suggest, by three previous PC cabinet ministers, the proposal that there should be some adjustment considered for the funding of the Wakamow Valley Authority?

On what grounds did the member for Thunder Creek reject the proposal that there should be increased funding, a change in the formula? Surely, Mr. Minister, you're not going to stand in your place and attempt to avoid that very specific question asked three previous years, with implications given by the ministers responsible that it was going to be considered and reviewed. Surely, Mr. Minister, you'll give us a straight answer in this question.

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I've tried to answer the member opposite's concerns. And I've said the public were a part of the process. There was a lot of opportunity given to the public across this province to help set the priorities in setting a budget. They told us very clearly to set those priorities very carefully. They said, fund health and education and help the farmers. They also said, deal with the debt and the deficit.

We'd like to have a lot of extra money. We'd like to have a lot of extra money for a lot of things. The reality is we had to make some difficult decisions, Mr. Chairman, and we made those difficult decisions. I believe that's in line with what the public requested. And I really think that the public had ample opportunity for input. And we've tried to do our best considering the circumstances of the day.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, now that you are the minister or seem to be the minister responsible for the matter of providing the dollars in funding to Wakamow, Meewasin, and Wascana, I'm sure you've taken some opportunity to review the history of funding since your government was elected, Mr. Minister.

I want to begin with this question: Mr. Minister, why is it in the priorities of your government that you cut funding to the urban park authorities almost as soon as you got yourselves elected? Why in 1983 did your government cut by 20 per cent the funding to the urban park authorities?

And I remind you, Mr. Minister, those were in the halcyon

days before you'd run up this huge deficit we now live with. Mr. Minister, why did you folks cut the urban park authorities 20 per cent?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I've said a number of times that we had to make some difficult decisions. We set our priorities very carefully and we set those priorities based on public input. The public told us to fund health and education. The public told us to fund health and education, Mr. Chairman. They also told us to help the farmers.

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to share with the members of the House as I understand it, the inequity as I understand it was one that was actually established by the previous government.

(1230)

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I'm going to go back. There's something seriously wrong in the House here today. Either you're not listening or you refuse to hear, or you simply refuse to answer the question.

Mr. Minister, I'm going to put the question I did. And then we're going to talk about this inequity. But I'm going to put the question again which I just put to you, sir.

I'm asking why, given that you're the minister now responsible I assume, even though you weren't in this House at the time I assume you will have done some research. Mr. Minister, why is it that in 1983, long before you've had a chance to run up your 5 and \$6 billion deficit, why is it in 1983 it was the priority of the Progressive Conservative Party government, newly elected, to cut the funding to the urban park authorities by 20 per cent. Why was that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the other member from Moose Jaw was referring to the inequity in funding to urban parks. And it's my understanding that that inequity, the difference in the formula, was actually one that was established by the previous government and not ours.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, why would . . . If the minister will listen I will ask the question. Mr. Minister, why is that you will not answer the questions put to you, sir? The question is this: why was it the priority of your government to cut funding by 20 per cent to the urban park authorities in 1983?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure of the exact discussions that went on in 1983. All I know is that difficult decisions have to be made from time to time, and I would imagine that it was a difficult decision at that time. And it probably was part of the budget process. It was probably part of that budget process that was no different than this year. It was one of setting priorities. And I don't know what the numbers were at that time as it related to other areas where funding was necessary, but I'm sure it was part of that process.

I know that the government of that day may have set different priorities than the previous government, and that's possibly why it's this government that was elected,

and possibly it's a reflection of public request, Mr. Chairman.

And I would just caution the members opposite, I just caution them that if this is their highest priority, then I would encourage them to make it be known. We really would like to hear what their plan is.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, our priorities don't include the kind of patronage appointments that you people have undertaken, including Bob Andrew and Graham Taylor and Paul Rousseau and Eric Berntson, and on and on the list it goes. Our priorities don't include the kind of expenditure on public funds and advertising and printing and political propaganda that's being promoted in this province these days. Our priorities are not there. Our priorities are people priorities, Mr. Minister.

And I tell you why you cut the funding to urban parks in 1983, since you won't answer the question. Because it's not in your priority. Parks for people have never been a priority of your government, sir. You cut the funding by 20 per cent in 1983, and you have frozen that cut ever since, Mr. Minister.

Now will you, sir, describe in your own words the inequity that currently exists between the funding for the Wakamow Valley Authority and the other urban authorities in the province? Will you describe for the House, as you understand it, the inequity that currently exists.

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I think the important question is, and I think the important question should possibly be asked to some of the members opposite. I think that if the members from Moose Jaw revisit who was part of cabinet, who was part of cabinet prior to 1983, prior to 1982, I mean who established the inequity that the members from Moose Jaw refer to? How did that process occur? Those members over there would probably be best to answer that question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, in my short experience in this legislature, I have never encountered a situation like this where the minister refuses, simply refuses to answer questions but in fact stands on his feet and asks questions.

Well then let us deal with the matter of funding in 1982 and prior to 1982, as you well know or should know. Apparently you do not know. It would be helpful if we had ministers who did know, Mr. Minister, when the Wakamow Valley Authority was established. It was established at a level of 2 mills of funding for those early developmental years. Once the Valley Authority had been established, it was intentional that the funding would be readjusted to a more equitable basis with the more established parks.

The minister from Regina South who used to be the minister for this, sits in his seat and chirps away. Perhaps I should ask the questions to him. At least we'd get something towards the question rather than what we're getting from the man from Assiniboia-Rockglen.

Mr. Minister, I want you to describe in your words to this House and to the people of Saskatchewan, the inequity

that exists for the Wakamow Valley Authority as compared to the other urban park authorities. Will you answer the question?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I think, and I've encouraged the members opposite, the members from Moose Jaw to ask their own members. I mean ask the members of cabinet that day why they set it up the way that they did. Why was it done? And if it's such a concern, and the inequity is such a concern, why don't they ask those members? Why don't they ask their leader why that decision was made, why Moose Jaw was treated in a different fashion? Why did that occur? And I'd encourage them to do that.

I'd also encourage the members opposite to stand up and tell this House, to tell the public of this province that if their highest priority for the city of Moose Jaw is extra funding for urban parks, then let that be known. Let us know, let us know loud and clear. And I ask those members, I ask those two members, where was their part in the budget process? Did they write a letter? Did they ask for extra funding, Mr. Chairman? I ask them, did they do their part if this is such a high priority for them and their city?

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, this is frankly unbelievable. The minister responsible who's being paid I don't know how much money to be the minister . . .

An Hon. Member: — Eighty thousand bucks a year.

Mr. Calvert: — . . . eighty thousand bucks a year somebody tells me, comes into this House today, the first time to review the estimates for the committee for this Bill and he simply refuses to answer questions. This is unbelievable, Mr. Chairman.

All right, Mr. Minister, perhaps you'll answer this question. In your view, is this inequity fair? In your view, the inequity that exists today, is it fair?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I ask the members opposite, the two members from Moose Jaw, I ask them to say very clear to this House and to the public of the province, what their priorities are. I also ask them, and I ask them at this time, is this an inequity?

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, you do not deserve to be a minister of the Crown. You come into this House on a Bill which is your government's Bill and refuse to answer the questions of the opposition on behalf of their constituents and the people of Saskatchewan. You, sir, do not deserve to be a minister of the Crown.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I have one further question. I have one further question. Our position is very clear. It's been stated on the record in this House many times. We have fought this inequity since we were elected, both the member for Moose Jaw North and myself, Mr. Minister. Our position is very clear.

Mr. Minister, the inequity exists. You people have been in government nine and a half long years. Mr. Minister, why

have you not done anything to address the inequity in your nine and a half long years of government?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, as I've laid out before the committee, we had to make some difficult decisions and we made some difficult decisions. But I want to ask the members for Moose Jaw, I want to ask the members for Moose Jaw, if there is an inequity — and I ask the members for Moose Jaw to ask their members, some of the previous cabinet those very same questions — I mean why did they do this in the first place?

The other question that I ask the members opposite is if they would like the inequality that they've talked about addressed or the inequity addressed, then is their suggestion cuts to Regina and Saskatoon so that it's the same for Regina and Saskatoon and Moose Jaw?

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, our positions are very clear. They're on the record in this House several times . . .

An Hon. Member: — Disgraceful.

Mr. Hagel: — Yes, they are. And if you had any decency, if you took any responsibility for bringing this Bill to the House, you would know that. You wouldn't be standing on your feet and demonstrating your ignorance to the Legislative Assembly.

So the minister sits there and laughs, refuses to bring in the ministers responsible who should know something about the specifics for the funding for Wakamow Valley Authority. Obviously, Mr. Minister, either you don't know or you don't care. You don't know or you don't care about the funding inequities for Wakamow Valley Authority.

Three of your predecessors — the member for Regina South, the former member for Turtleford, and the current member for Canora — three of your predecessors in this House recognized the inequity in funding for Wakamow Valley Authority. They recognized that on the floor, on the record, and had said that there would be a review under way.

Your predecessor in this House said it would be completed by last fall. You have come into this Assembly today in your ignorance about the issue. You have your officials here. You have not bothered to consult with them. You stood to your feet each time we've asked you a very specific question and babble on your inanities and your rhetoric that you guys are inclined to spout every time you get a question. It doesn't matter what the question is these days.

And so let me repeat the question from the member from Moose Jaw South. Do you even understand, let alone care. Obviously you don't care or you'd be giving more careful consideration to the questions being put to you. You'd at least bother to consult with your officials.

Do you understand the inequity currently being experienced by the Wakamow Valley Authority which has been recognized by three of your predecessors, cabinet predecessors in this House? Do you understand it, and if you do, would you explain your understanding

of that inequity to this House, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I think I've answered the question a few times. I do understand and I do recognize what the member opposite refers to. I also understand who created the inequity. I understand that.

And what I don't understand, what I don't understand is why those two members from Moose Jaw won't ask those specific questions to their members, to the members who were part of cabinet who created the problem in the first place. That's what I don't understand.

The other thing I don't understand is I don't understand why those members won't stand up and say extra funding, and extra funding for urban parks is the highest priority for the city of Moose Jaw. And if it is, then have them state that very clearly. I'd like to know if that's a higher priority for them than all the other concerns expressed by the city of Moose Jaw or by the people of this province, Mr. Chairman.

Is health and education more important? Is agriculture to be funded? Is the debt and deficit to be dealt with? We had to make some difficult decisions, Mr. Chairman. We made those.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, clearly, let me state it very clearly, and I'll speak slowly. Will you listen and try to understand.

When Wakamow Valley Authority was established in 1981, 10 years ago this year, the funding committed by the province of Saskatchewan under a New Democratic government was the equivalent of 2 mills. Clearly stated to those who were involved at that time, that that was in recognition of the fact that the costs were . . . the start-up costs in the beginning were going to be lower. Then over a period of time the provincial funding would expand to the equivalent of 5 mills.

Mr. Minister, that took place for a year and then the government changed. That's the position of the New Democrat government in the province of Saskatchewan as regards the Wakamow Valley Authority. In the first budget brought by your government in 1983, you reduced that funding from 2 mills to 1.6 — a 20 per cent cut. That's the history. That's the position of the New Democratic Party government prior to your government's coming into power.

(1245)

The member from Moose Jaw South and I have very clearly put our concerns on the record repeatedly in this House over the years, and a concern for the inequity in funding which has been recognized by three of your predecessors and which finally we were told last year was going to be reviewed and completed last fall, and were led to believe that there was some expectation that this year's budget there would be a change in the funding formula or at the very least, at the very least, an attempt to explain why that adjustment has not been made.

And I find it absolutely repulsive that as minister for the Crown you would come to this Legislative Assembly

today and try to give, in response to our specific questions, the kind of avoidances, rhetoric, PC babble, that you have presented in this House.

And having said that, Mr. Chairman, having said that, Mr. Chairman, out of pure frustration, I will not ask any more questions about this because it's obviously pointless. It's obviously pointless. You refuse to bring into this House the minister responsible for the Wakamow Valley Authority and then you refuse to answer questions. What's the point? What's the point of having review of Bills before the House if that's your attitude to the way that they are dealt with here?

You have officials . . . you have three officials sitting around you in the House who understand, I suspect, far, far more clearly than you, sir, what the history is and the facts of the matter are, who I suspect do have, at least in part, the answers to the questions as to what happened in the review. They may not be able to explain what was in the mind of the member for Thunder Creek when he recommended to cabinet no change should be made. Only the member for Thunder Creek can answer that question.

And so, Mr. Minister, in response, I guess out of frustration, you simply quit asking questions if it becomes so apparently obvious that the disrespect for this place has reached the point that you have brought it to here on a very specific item and in response to some very specific questions today, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Well, Mr. Chairman, just in response. As you're probably aware, there's lots of requests for extra money — lots of requests for extra money in government, across government, and in a lot of the areas of public concern. We had to make some difficult choices. We set our priorities after careful public consultation. We set our priorities in health and education and some money for agriculture. We also set a priority of trying to deal with the debt and the deficit.

If it was, as the member from Moose Jaw suggested, a priority for the opposition, if it was a priority, then I ask the members opposite why they didn't make specific reference to it before the budget came down, and why they didn't speak up; why they didn't speak up in the context of the current difficult fiscal challenge that's facing the province.

And I also ask the member from Moose Jaw — actually both members from Moose Jaw — if it was the plan, if it was the plan of the previous administration to increase funding, as they have suggested today, then why wasn't it put in legislation?

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well I tell you, Mr. Chairman, that we're ready and willing and anxious and able that as soon as he calls the election, to form the government and to deal with this stuff.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — But I tell you, continuing inequities between Saskatchewan cities, or creating inequities in terms of the Saskatchewan fabric, is nothing new for that

government over there.

I just want to ask a couple of questions about the Wascana Centre. Some of the money for this Bill that we're talking about is going to go to pay for the Wascana Centre. And I want to ask the minister if any of the money in this Bill will go to pay for the repair of the roads to the east of the Legislative Building here on Lakeshore Drive.

I know that probably in 1981 and '82 the NDP government should have done some more work on the road to make it last for another 10 years, but we just weren't able to do that. And recognizing that the road is in terrible repair, is any of the money going to go to fix that road?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, it's sort of encouraging to finally hear from the opposition what their highest priority is. It may be disappointing to a lot of the public that it may be urban parks as suggested from the member from Regina.

And I'd ask that member from Regina if his solution, Mr. Chairman, is reduced funding for Regina and Saskatoon, and if reduced funding for Regina and Saskatoon could provide a little extra money for Moose Jaw. And if that's his solution, I'd like him to stand up and say that, if he really wants to address the inequity, and say also that they're going to deal with the debt and the deficit and all those other priorities that they suggest from time to time.

I'd also remind the member, in case he may not have been listening, that the inequity as I understand it was created by the previous government. And had they chose to set it as a priority, and had they suggested or felt that it was a priority for them, then maybe they would have laid out in legislation those incremental increases that the members from Moose Jaw have stated.

As it relates to the Wascana Centre Authority and the funding, it's my understanding that the funding is supplied to Wascana Centre Authority. There's representation there from the city, from the province, and the university. And it's that Authority and that board that sets priorities as it relates to expenditures for the Authority.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — So can you tell me if you're going to fix that road or not?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I'd encourage the member opposite . . . And the two members from Moose Jaw are laughing in their seats, laughing about Regina, laughing about the roads in the Authority, laughing about the inequity after they raise such serious concerns, laughing about the priorities set by the member from Regina. And I'd encourage them to listen.

As I said before, the Wascana Centre Authority has representation from the city, from the province, and from the university, and they'll set their priorities with funds that are available to them.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well I know that, and I've known

that for a long time. I knew that when I was a member of city council and we appointed representatives to the Wascana Centre Authority, and I've known that as a member of the Legislative Assembly.

But I also know that when I was on city council and I had some question about what the Wascana Centre might be doing, we could ask our representative on the council and they would tell us, this is what the Wascana Centre is going to do.

But now we're asking the minister . . . or the minister's asking us for money for the province's share, and he won't answer. So I want to ask him again: are you going to fix the road or aren't you?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I'd encourage the member from Regina to contact the Authority and ask them if they're going to fix the road. The funding that's available to them, as I understand it, is not conditional funding.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well you want us to give you money here. That's what this Bill is all about. You want us to give you money. You want us, members of the Legislative Assembly, to give you money. You appoint people to run this Wascana Centre but you won't answer any of the questions as to what this money is going to go for.

I'm not making any suggestions here as to how they should run their business. I've simply got a question about some of their plans. And one of my questions is about their plans for the year — are they going to fix that road?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, the member from Regina knows and understands the process. I ask the member opposite if he would also liken this to funding for health and education. And if a third party such as hospital board was given so many dollars in a given year, if they were given so many dollars in a year that was unconditional, if that member opposite would ask how that money is to be spent.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well maybe . . . I guess the best way to put this, Mr. Chairman, that it's a matter of simple courtesy.

I remember when I was on city council, city council every year would be asked to put aside X number of dollars for the Wascana Centre because it's a partner in the Wascana Centre. And whenever we were asked to do that we might have some questions for the city's representatives to the Wascana Centre Authority.

And we would ask them from time to time: what are you going to use this money for? What are your plans for the year? And I have a specific question here about, would the money be used for this or would it be used for that. And a member of council would tell us that yes it will or no it won't and the money is going to be used for this or it's going to be used for that. And as a matter of courtesy, as a matter of courtesy, common decent courtesy, would tell us what the money would be used for.

And that's not to say that the council then attached

conditions to the money, saying to the Wascana Centre, you've got to use the money for this as opposed to that. We didn't do that, because we recognize the Wascana Centre as an independent Authority. But the council members would let us know, as a matter of common decency and courtesy, what they were going to use the money for. In fact the Wascana Centre staff would get together with the city on an annual basis to also let us know what the money was going to be used for.

So I want to ask the minister here. You want the money. Out of courtesy, can you tell us what the money is going to be used for? Will it be used to fix this road?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, out of courtesy and out of respect to the members opposite, and out of respect for the process as it relates to funding and the budget for Wascana Centre Authority, I would entertain — if the member so chooses — I would entertain writing a letter to the Authority and asking them for a copy of their budget and gladly forward it on to the members opposite, if that's their request.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — As a matter of courtesy, as a matter of courtesy, Mr. Chairman, as a matter of courtesy, we're prepared to vote off this thing and to give you the money and get on your way today.

But if you're going to extend it . . . if you're going to extend the courtesy of letter-writing and so on, I've got another suggestion. Why don't you extend your courtesy one step further. Bring the information back here on Monday, and then out of a matter of courtesy, we will then approve the expenditures that day. How does that meet with your . . . does that meet with your approval, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, I've said that I would do what the members requested. If the members would like me to get the budget for Wascana Centre Authority, I would request that of them. And I'd gladly convey that to the members opposite. So I would do my utmost to get as much information as they desire if that's their wish. I'd gladly do that.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Let me just say it's the road on the east side of the building. We want to know if any of the money is going to go to pay to fix up this road, which is in terrible shape.

I believe the member from Moose Jaw also has a question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, when you bring this back on Monday for consideration of Committee of the Whole, will you ensure that the member for Thunder Creek, the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority, will be here and available to answer questions put to him?

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, just for the benefit of the committee, I've said that what I would do is try to obtain a copy of the budget for Wascana Centre Authority. And I would do my best to obtain a copy of that requested from the Authority and provide that to the members opposite.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, my question was, when you

come back on Monday, or whenever you come back for Committee of the Whole, my question is, will you ensure that the member for Thunder Creek will be present in the chambers and available for questions, specific questions . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. The member from Moose Jaw North has been cautioned several times as to making reference . . . Order, order.

The question has been ruled out of order on previous occasions, that he's asking whether the absence or presence of a member will or will not be entertained down the road, and I rule the question out of order.

Mr. Shillington: — Without being very specific, could we have the minister's assurance that come Monday, someone will know something about the subject, will be present to answer the questions on behalf of the government.

(1300)

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Chairman, the member from Regina, the member from Regina, knows very well how the formula was established. The member opposite was part of the previous government and I'd encourage him, I'd encourage that member, to talk to his members from Moose Jaw and explain why the inequity exists. I think he should be able to do that because he is part of that budget-making process, part of that decision, and he should be able to answer that question as well as anyone.

The committee reported progress.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 58 — An Act to amend The Statutes Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend The Interpretation Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

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. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

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. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

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

The Assembly adjourned at 1:07 p.m.