

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly two very special people in my life. My wife Jo and my daughter Sheila are in your west gallery and I'd like to welcome them here to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce another very special person, someone that it has been my privilege to serve with on Saskatoon City Hospital Board for the past number of years, and I'm referring of course to Mr. Frank Hartman. He's in the east gallery. I think many people in this House will know Frank. He's been very active in the labour movement for many years and he's an excellent contributor to Saskatoon City Hospital Board.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, there's two people I'd like to introduce this afternoon in the west gallery, to the Assembly through yourself. And one is Fred Clipsham, who is the president of our constituency organization and a long-time community activist and contributor to sustainable development and change in the community of Saskatchewan. So I'd like to introduce to you Fred Clipsham.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — And as well I saw a friendly face walk in that has a northern look about it. It's Howard Lucas, who worked for many years with the La Ronge Indian band in economic development, community economic development and training in the North. And I'd like to welcome you too, Howard.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleague in welcoming Howard Lucas to the legislature. Howard Lucas is a constituent of mine. Howard is now very involved in the trade union movement. And I'm sure that we'll be hearing from Howard and his membership in the days and months ahead. So welcome to the legislature, Howard.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to introduce a member that perhaps does not need too much of an introduction to this Assembly — he's sitting behind the bar — having been a colleague for many of the legislators in here, Mr. Ralph Katzman, the individual who preceded me as the representative for the constituency of Rosthern.

He had a long, illustrious career. And I know that very shortly after he was first elected, of course, it didn't take him very long to become one of the largest political personalities in this province. So I'd like all of the members here to join me in welcoming him, please.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the member from Rosthern in welcoming Mr. Katzman to the Assembly. Ralph and I had the enjoyable task of sitting in this House together for a number of years.

And I remember one tour that we went on, a very productive one, I might add — a libraries committee, a legislative libraries committee that worked on a special project, and I think brought about some useful changes to the library system. And I think the period we're going through in terms of committees of the Assembly — setting them up — Ralph, I think the work you did was well worthwhile.

The other stories I won't tell, because we're sworn to secrecy.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wormsbecker: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to the Assembly and to yourself two of my constituents from Weyburn. They're sitting in the west gallery: Joe Vilcu, a farmer from the Midale area, and Arven Snelling, a retired employee from Souris Valley Regional Care Centre. I'd like the Assembly to welcome these two members.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, Mr. Gordon Nystuen Jr. in the Speaker's gallery. He has for many years been active in the wheat pool movement, and he's a delegate from our area to the wheat pool. So I'd like members of this Assembly to welcome him.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Financial Management Review Commission

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, the Gass Commission recently announced that it would be examining 12 items ... 12 transactions, I believe. Would the Premier at least announce to the Assembly today which 12 transactions those might be?

Mr. Speaker, there are many taxpayers, shareholders and people, companies around this province who would like to know if they are to be summoned before this particular tribunal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon.

member for that question. I tell the hon. member that I do not know the decision to which he refers. I suggest that a direct communication by him to Mr. Gass or the officials of the inquiry will provide the answer for him. If he wishes that we do it, we'll undertake to do it and provide it to him in the next few days. But there's nothing preventing him making direct contact to Mr. Gass or the officials there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Supplementary to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, it is very clear, with no conflict of interest guide-lines in place for this particular tribunal — and this tribunal is, I remind this House, a creature of the Executive Council — what would happen if the chairman of that particular tribunal, who is an employee of the firm Deloitte & Touche, a firm which I might add is also the auditor of SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation), under what the Minister of Finance said the other day where that member would excuse himself from the committee — would that not leave, Mr. Premier, three admitted NDP (New Democratic Party) partisans then deliberating on whether that particular item should be discussed or not, with no scrutiny from the media, from members of this House, or the public at large? Do you think that is acceptable, Mr. Premier, given the pronouncements that you have made many times in this province and in this House earlier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, first of all I do not accept any of the fundamental assumptions behind the question of the hon. member. All of the commissioners have taken out declarations which indicate that they will not be in conflict of interest. The commissioners are in the process, I'm advised, of finalizing guide-lines which, I think, will be before its next meeting sometime next week. And I'm sure those will be made public or at least available to the member. More detailed guide-lines are in their preliminary work, getting prepared for their studies.

So the argument and the fundamental assumption of the member opposite, that there are no conflict interest guide-lines or any declarations is erroneous. Moreover the hon. member ought to know better, I say with the greatest of respect. In 1982 when his desk mate, the former premier, established the Wolfgang Wolff Commission composed very much of the same kind of personnel — people who were involved in the chartered accountant private business and auditing government business and involved from universities and the like — that problem was apparently dealt with to the satisfaction of the hon. members opposite.

I suggest that the people in 1991 are no less honest, no less full of integrity, and no less capable of solving the same problems as those in 1982.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the Premier. Mr. Premier — and I'm glad to see that we are making small amounts of progress here — Mr. Premier, yesterday my colleague from Arm River raised some very pertinent questions on SPMC, the fact that your political

friend Garry Beatty has been hired to run that particular agency of government and that he has hired a number of political operatives to sanitize SPMC.

Now, Mr. Premier, how can you stand in this legislature and say, in the example that I gave you earlier, that with three NDP-admitted partisans on that commission, that tribunal . . . obviously SPMC is on your political agenda. Those people will have no choice but to give an unfavourable report from the Gass Commission tribunal. Don't you agree, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I say to the hon. member the answer to his question, shortly put, is no, I do not agree. The hon. member is extremely loose in his characterization of the members of the Gass Commission and, I might say also, extremely loose in the choice of language that he uses. With respect to this SPMC, he says that Mr. Beatty and others are there to "sanitize" the SPMC. Maybe the hon. member knows something more about this than I do, but if sanitization is what is required by the SPMC, that's indeed exactly what Mr. Beatty and the others are going to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — New question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, it has been very clear from the actions of your government in its early days that you have a definite political agenda to follow. This flies in the face of comments that you have made around this province and I remind you, Mr. Premier, and I will quote from the *Star-Phoenix* of November 20 where you say, the member from Riversdale says, that this commission, this tribunal:

. . . will be . . . non-political and is aimed simply at improving financial accountability.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday we had the minister of Economic Development and Trade stand in this legislature, make disparaging comments about a prominent Saskatchewan athlete and I say, Mr. Speaker, directly misled this legislature as to some of the facts behind that.

The Speaker: — Order. I'll ask the member to withdraw those remarks: "directly misled this legislature." I'll ask the member to withdraw those remarks.

Mr. Swenson: — I withdraw that comment, Mr. Speaker. But in questioning afterwards, Mr. Speaker, the member said, and I quote from the *Star-Phoenix* of Wednesday, December 11, that the government specifically contracted the Gass Financial Review Commission to find out this type of thing, an event, Mr. Speaker, which I find very shameful.

Mr. Speaker, given the fact that you have made comments, that your minister has made comments that directly counteract that as far as the Gass Commission, do you think it is not proper now for you, sir, to at least bring in some type of conflict of interest guide-lines that would take that commission above the suspicion that is in there

in the public's mind?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I repeat again to the hon. member as my colleague, the Minister of Finance, who is not here today has been saying for the last week or ten days, the members have taken out a declaration of conflict of interest oath; the members are working on detailed guide-lines which as I've said in my first question, in question period today, will be finalized, I'm told sometime next week.

And therefore the entire hypothesis, the entire foundation upon which the member constructs his question is wrongly based in the light of those facts. He bases his entire question on some sort of assumption that there are no guide-lines with respect to conflict of interest being involved. And there are.

And I simply say to the member opposite and to his party leader that it is open to them to make their suggestions to Mr. Gass and their colleagues. Mr. Gass will be asking for submissions from the public, from leaders of political parties, from other legislative members of this Assembly. It's open to you, sir, to co-operate, and I would suggest that you do.

Our agenda has not changed. You're right. We're on a definite political agenda, and that agenda is open, honest, accountable government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — New question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, you need a few more examples to drive home the point that I am trying to make in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the Wheat Pool was involved in the privatization of Biggar malt. Does the Premier see no conflict of interest in the president of the Pool investigating his own deal with the government?

Mr. Speaker, not only the Wheat Pool but the employers of all members of the Gass Commission engaged in the purchase and hire of computer services. Does the Premier concede that there is a conflict of interest in allowing these people to poke about the confidential business of WESTBRIDGE; and does not he see how this will adversely affect WESTBRIDGE's ability to negotiate successful contracts? I ask you, Mr. Premier, don't you see that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite shows absolutely no regard and no respect for the members of the Gass Commission, and for which I say the hon. member stands condemned.

In 1982 when the former premier established the Wolfgang Wolff Commission, he had people on that commission like Mr. Wolff, CA (chartered accountant) Mr. Heron, who the premier, former premier knows, CA; Mr. Karim Nasser, Ph.D., a very prominent Conservative;

Mr. Graham Walker.

Our political party, at that time in opposition, co-operated fully with these people and did not attack these people. The members of the other political parties in this province are doing the same as is the public at large. I say to you, sir, that I have the confidence and the trust, as the people of this province do, in the chairman and the members of that commission. And shame on you for attacking the Wheat Pool and all of these people. Have confidence in them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — New question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, if you had not sought to staff the tribunal with your political friends in the secrecy of closed doors without access to the public, then your statements might have credibility.

Mr. Premier, I remind you again what your minister said on Wednesday, that government revealed the contract Tuesday, calling it the kind of thing the Gass Financial Review Commission has been hired to find, only find political dirt on the Conservative, former Conservative government, sir. Otherwise, Mr. Premier . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I ask the members to please not interfere when another member is asking a question.

Mr. Swenson: — Otherwise, sir, you would not have staffed this commission with only your friends. Otherwise, sir, you would have not been behind closed doors. Otherwise, sir, I ask you: why not now, in the face of all of this evidence, do you not have the political will to have the Provincial Auditor empowered to hold this particular commission in full view of the public with co-operation of all members of this Legislative Assembly. Will you do that, sir, today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, there are so many tangled and confused statements in what passes as a question by the hon. member that it's very difficult to know exactly how to begin to answer, and so many wrong and fundamental and malicious assumptions which denigrate the members of this Assembly that it's also equally difficult to know where to start.

I said to the hon. member before, the purposes of the Gass Commission come from the fact that when you, sir, sat on the treasury benches, the Provincial Auditor said that 50 cents out of every dollar raised by you was spent without accountability, and they had no way of knowing where to go.

That prompted us to say in the election campaign that we would open up the books, and we followed the model that you yourself used in 1982. We followed this model which was not objectionable to the then premier of the day, wasn't objectionable to us, and isn't objectionable in 1991.

I say to the hon. member opposite, grow up and start to co-operate with the people of the province of

Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — New question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, unfortunately you say one thing and your government does another. We have raised these questions a number of times in this legislature, and I remind you, Mr. Premier, we have direct and clear conflicts of interests. We have Saskferco having its competitor peering into its business. We have Printco with the same situation. We have the Husky upgrader with people . . . possible competitors looking into their business; the Wheat Pool investigating itself in Biggar malt; potential clients of WESTBRIDGE looking at WESTBRIDGE. And finally we have active supporters of the NDP passing judgement on something which you find philosophically wrong and that is privatization — not doing a comparison between nationalization and privatization — passing judgement on privatization.

Mr. Premier, and I ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker, will you now do the right thing in the face of all of that evidence and disband this commission?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I repeat again to the hon. member the conflict of interest forms have been signed. The detailed guide-lines have been either prepared or will be prepared and determined by the commission. The commission is a stellar, first-rate group of men and women who have the confidence and ability . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — They have the confidence and the ability of this legislature to do the job. The model that we followed was a model that was used by the former administration of the day. They set up the Wolfgang Wolff inquiry under The Public Inquiries Act. No public hearings were held at that time, but public submissions were received in the interests of expediency of time. The report was made public. This report was made public. Everything is virtually identical to the Gass inquiry by way of procedure except one big difference. At that time when we were the opposition, the NDP, we actually appeared before the Wolfgang Wolff inquiry and made a submission. I invite you, sir, to ask your leader to do the same thing and to co-operate with what the people want — an opening up of the books and a futuristic look as to how to improve the operations of government from now on in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskPower Employee Contract

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to address this question to the Premier, and it's actually two points. One, Mr. Premier, I'm going to ask you if you would yourself apologize to the House on behalf of the minister of Economic Development and Trade for misleading the public and the House. And then going on, Mr. Premier, and saying that — after he mislead he House

and the public — saying this is the kind of thing the Gass Financial Review Commission is hired to do. This is your right-hand man the minister of Economic Development, misled the House.

He said that Arden Knoll is being paid 30,000 a year, and that's not true. He said that he's paid just to golf with the former premier, and that's not true. And he said he had nothing else to do; in fact, we're paying him to golf in Florida. And you said that, and that's not true.

So I'm going to ask you, Mr. Premier, if you would apologize to the House and to the public for the misleading comments from the member from Elphinstone.

And secondly, Mr. Premier, wouldn't you agree if this is . . .

The Speaker: — Order. One question at a time, okay?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to clarify remarks I made in the House on Wednesday — or Tuesday. I want to make it clear to the former premier that in my remarks and in the document that I tabled in the House, I clearly indicated that what we were dealing with here was a case of waste and mismanagement. That's what we are talking about.

In the words in the Assembly, Mr. Member from Estevan, I want to say clearly that I said \$30,000 a year when I should have said \$30,000 for 36 months. That's true. And I tabled the document immediately after in writing that clarified that statement. That issue I think we laid to rest.

I want to tell you one thing, sir, that what we're talking about here is a government that wasted taxpayers' money, and that's what we're opposed to. And I tell you that over the next months we in the opposition are going to lay out to the public examples of where the \$14 billion debt come from. And you can try to cover it up and you may not like it, but that's what we're going to be doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the reason I'm asking the Premier these questions is because I asked him a couple of days ago if he would apologize for the comments made by the member from Regina Albert South, and he didn't. I ask him today if he'd apologize for his cabinet minister for misleading the public because he was absolutely false, absolutely wrong. And I quote: he said that the man's being paid 30,000 a year just to golf, and it's not true. And he's been paid to golf and that's what he's doing today in Florida. And that's not true; being paid to golf with me, and that's not true. And he owes that member . . . that individual an apology. And you should apologize for him.

But the more important question that my seat mate has been raising is that your minister stands up and says that's the kind of thing the Gass Commission is going to do.

Mr. Speaker, the problem, and Mr. Premier, why I want you to apologize and why I want you to stand on your feet is that I want you to defend the Gass Commission and

your minister who tied this partisan misleading information to the commission. That's the kind of thing they're going to do and you sit in your place and won't defend it.

Mr. Premier, stand in your place, apologize to that member, apologize to the Assembly for the member from Regina Albert South, and say, Mr. Premier, that the Gass Commission will not follow the kinds of guide-lines in the example put forward by the member from Regina Elphinstone.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear to the Assembly that I clarified my comments about the method in which the \$30,000 was being paid. There's no question about that.

But I want to say clearly that contracts that are being signed with individuals that waste the taxpayers' money, like a contract that I have here with Mr. Sid Dutchak, former cabinet minister for \$1,000 a day to a maximum of \$50,000, we are going to uncover and we're going to release to the public because we've made that commitment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I'll tell you one thing, Mr. Premier, I've apologized for the fact that I misread a document. I ask you if you will apologize for wasting \$14 billion of taxpayers' money.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, what I want the Premier to do, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I would ask the government members again: please do not interfere when a questioner is on his feet.

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My point and my question to the Premier is: Mr. Premier, you want this review of taxpayers' money to be open and honest and clean and above-board. You want it to be straightforward, open to the public.

And you see what's happening, Mr. Premier, is your ministers, in their partisan attitude, are tainting it already by saying the kind of misleading comments they make are exactly what the Gass Commission is going to do. That's my member's whole point. Why not open it up to the media so it isn't a partisan game? We believe in privatization, we believe in taking PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company), and getting rid of the \$150 million debt that the NDP had. We believe in share . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Would the member put his question please?

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Premier, will you now acknowledge that if your minister says that this is the kind of partisan game they're going to get into, that you need to change the rules of the Gass Commission and make it less

partisan and more open to the public to be perfectly fair to the taxpayers of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the hon. member from Estevan that the terms of reference for the Gass Commission are very clear. We have left the interpretation, if needed, on the terms of reference to the Gass Commission. They'll come back to us if they need further clarification. These are four people of high integrity. They know how to handle the terms of reference and to do their job well.

When the hon. member opposite talks about tainting the Gass Commission, I'm sure that they can rise above any comments that are made on this side, or for that matter, any comments made from your side, sir. They know what their duty is. Their duty is as set out in the order in council and in the terms of reference.

And I say to you, sir, that what you should do is what we did in 1982: co-operate with the Gass Commission as we did with the Wolfgang Wolff Commission.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier for responding to my question. I want to go back to the Premier again. If a member of the public, a well-known athlete who has been representing the province, is smeared as a result of your cabinet minister, and his reputation hurt as a result of the fact that the minister stands and says this is the kind of thing the Gass Commission is going to do, then, Mr. Premier, don't you believe and don't you agree that that's exactly the kind of attitude that the public doesn't want to see?

What about the companies that were mentioned, what about the shareholders, the investors, the people? If one lonely athlete in Saskatchewan can be treated that way by that minister, who doesn't care, the very individual who was accused of going out and buying votes in Elphinstone to win the nomination, Mr. Speaker, then, Mr. Speaker, don't you think . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Can we please have order. This is turning into a speech making session. I ask the members on both sides, let's have our questions short and let's have the answers short. I ask the member to please put his question.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Premier, don't you think the first few examples of your ministers exercising the Gass Commission as an excuse, picking on the public, is dangerous? Who, Mr. Premier, is going to protect the innocent in your witch-hunt?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take, with your permission, as I'm sure you will give me, the equal amount of time in answering the question as it took to ask the question.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the former premier, the

issue of Mr. Arden Knoll is not at stake here. What is at issue is the fact that the administration of the government opposite, when it was sitting on the treasury benches, entered into all kinds of expenditures which in our judgement were wasteful and wrong.

And I say to the hon. premier that we are not going to stop governing — not going to stop governing whether Gass is working or whether or not other activities are awaiting outcomes. We have to take the decisions that we have to take.

For example, when we find out that there's \$20,000 a month being paid to spruce up the former premier's public relations image — \$20,000 a month — we are going to make that public and take the appropriate position. We are here to govern. And the member may not like it, but the people of this province have elected us to do something which you for nine and a half years refused to do, and that is open the books. And that is precisely what we're going to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The ministers were not able to hear the Clerk call one of the ministers. I don't know who she called either. I ask the members, please come to order. The Clerk did call a minister for an introduction of a Bill. Would the Clerk please repeat.

Bill No. 14 — An Act to amend The Mortgage Protection Act

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Mortgage Protection Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 1 — An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of this Bill, The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 1991. Three years ago The Northern Municipalities Act was amended to permit municipalities in the North to take an active part in municipal economic development corporations.

I understand it was intended that the 1988 amendment would put northern municipalities on a similar basis with rural municipalities in the South. As you know, under The Rural Municipality Act, RMs (rural municipality) can take part in rural development corporations. However a technical problem with the legislation was discovered. Specifically an old section of the Act prevents municipalities from participating through share

ownership in these local corporations.

This Bill that is before us today was drafted to resolve that problem. This Bill will provide clear authority for northern municipalities to participate through share ownership in municipal economic development corporations.

Since the Act was amended in 1988, several northern municipal economic development corporations have been established in the North. At this time they are engaged primarily in forestry related activities in northern Saskatchewan. And I understand they are pursuing economic opportunities in construction, mining, and the use of other northern resources.

These economic development corporations in turn will be able to carry out industrial or commercial activities. Because some of these economic development corporations in the North are fairly well advanced in these industrial and commercial activities, this Bill makes this amendment retroactive to January 1, 1988. In this way the original intent of this legislation will be restored. In summary, this Bill will help ensure that northern communities have the opportunity to take part in economic development in the North.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to support this Bill at this time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have heard the minister's comments and we've reviewed it very carefully. Essentially we have no problems with the Bill and would encourage it to pass.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly . . . oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see . . . could I ask members to please be seated so that I know if a member is standing in his or her place, if they wish to speak.

Mr. Goulet: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to speak on behalf of this amendment to The Northern Municipalities Act. Many of the communities in northern Saskatchewan have looked at their own institutions and their own frameworks in regards to what has been happening throughout the province.

When initially the municipalities Act was changed in '88 and then other amendments were made in '89, the full powers of industrial and commercial activities were provided for the rural development corporations in the South, but the North was forgotten at that time.

During that time the North was basically there for social and economic development but they were not able to partake in the share offerings, the buying and selling of shares in the system. So this new amendment makes it very clear that the northern municipal development corporations will be able to partake in the industrial and commercial activities in the North.

As a member of Cumberland, I'm strongly supporting this particular amendment. And I think many of the activities, whether in mining development or whether in forestry development or whether in fishing and wild rice and many other economic activities that are taking place, the people that are involved in it will be very pleased of this amendment.

So I'm glad to see that this was the first Bill of this legislature. And being from northern Saskatchewan, a lot of people during the election had asked for this specific amendment because it had been dropped in the previous legislature. So I'm very pleased that our government has been able to say the North comes first when it comes down to decisions in this legislature. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Bill No. 3 — An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks I will move second reading of Bill No. 3, An Act to amend The Education and Health Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill will in fact officially repeal what was known by the former government or as the former government's expanded PST (provincial sales tax).

Members will remember during the campaign that many of the people in the province raised with us grave concerns about what the expanded PST was doing to the province and the economy in the province — many bankruptcies. We have as of today introduced and will be giving second reading to a Bill that will in fact repeal officially that portion of the PST.

Mr. Speaker, the tax included such items as clothing, footwear, non-prescription drugs, restaurant meals, residential electricity, natural gas, and books. As of January 1992 this tax would have included almost everything else, including services.

Disclosure of this year's deficit at almost three times the deficit announced last March is a further indication of how the former government managed the financial affairs of the province.

Another important thing which made this tax so unacceptable was the way in which it was imposed on the people of the province. Mr. Speaker, normally increased taxes or new taxes are announced in a budget presented to the legislature. Legislators or MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) consider the tax measure within the context of the overall budget, there's an opportunity for a debate, and then a democratic vote takes place here in the Assembly. The right of grievance before taxation is protected.

Unfortunately the government of the day chose to ignore this important principle of our system of government. On February 20 of this year, the former minister of Finance

announced the imposition of this tax at a press conference.

In the future, important budgetary measures should be announced in a budget in the legislature where the members of the Assembly, on behalf of their constituents, can debate and ask questions, where the government is required to provide answers and explanations as to what the tax will be and what the money will be spent on.

(1445)

When the legislation to implement the PST was finally introduced in the spring session, its unpopularity was inevitable and I think clear. Over a hundred thousand people signed petitions in opposition to the expanded PST. People said the government had no mandate to introduce such a massive tax in the dying days of its administration. They were again denied their right to be heard when the former government imposed closure and forced the closure of the legislature last summer.

When Saskatchewan people voted on October 21, they said the expanded PST should not be implemented. New Democrats listened to the people. This government is keeping its promise. This Bill puts an end to the former government's harmonized PST. But it does more than that. It signals clearly to the Saskatchewan people that from now on they will be heard. Their views will be expressed by their elected members here in the legislature. A new era of strengthening democratic principles of government is beginning to unfold in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan understand that. In these tough times governments must occasionally make difficult and unpopular decisions. In fact, our taxpayers and our economy have shown a great deal of resilience in the past when governments have called on them to tighten their belts so that adequate funding is available for necessary programs and services. But this tax, I say especially to the member from Estevan, was unfair, and the people told him that on October 21.

This tax was particularly harmful to low income people without children, such as senior citizens. They were not eligible for the family tax credit. Over the next five years, resulting in a loss of 1.37 billion worth of economic activity over that same five-year period, our economy was being severely damaged by this tax.

Other sources of revenue would have been greatly diminished as businesses were forced to close, economic activity slowed down, and people lost their jobs. We hope and believe that the elimination of this tax will help kick-start our economy, that more consumer spending is being made available to be spent in our businesses, small businesses, throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, taxpayers expect their governments to lead by example and to exercise fiscal restraint before asking people to pay more taxes. Mr. Speaker, the previous administration did not do this and that is why the taxpayers of Saskatchewan rejected the PST, and on October 21 rejected the Conservative government.

Returning the education and health tax base to the way it existed prior to April 1, 1991 will result in \$72 million reduction in the Saskatchewan tax burden in 1991-92.

Mr. Speaker, we expect to be able to offset this year's revenue loss by increased government efficiency measures such as cutting advertising, self-serving government advertising.

Mr. Speaker, after the repeal of the expanded PST was announced, this government passed a remission order to temporarily legalize the removal of the tax. The purpose of this Bill is to amend The Education and Health Tax Act to reinstate the tax exemptions that were removed last April by the previous government.

It reinstates the exemptions for such items as adults' clothing; footwear under \$300; books, magazines, and newspapers; children's clothing and footwear; non-prescription drugs; residential electricity and natural gas; food and drink, including snack food; tobacco products; and other goods. All of these amendments are retroactive to October 21, 1991.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would now move that Bill No. 3, An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act be read a second time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be making a few brief comments on the particular Bill and then moving that the debate be adjourned.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I'd like to remind the member that the deficit that he refers to is the deficit of his government, not the previous one. The previous government, Mr. Speaker, brought in a financial plan that included the synchronization of the E&H (education and health) tax along with federal taxes. That was a very integral part of that plan in order to achieve a budget figure of \$265 million and to meet the deficit reduction plans that are absolutely necessary for the province of Saskatchewan.

I might remind the member from Elphinstone that that particular piece of legislation did come before this legislature, it was passed by this legislature, and it was certainly debated very roundly. Because I clearly remember, Mr. Speaker, the three months in the last legislative sitting where members opposite, led by the member for Elphinstone, did everything in their power, as they said, to make the province of Saskatchewan ungovernable.

And certainly the presenting of petitions, as we saw them, Mr. Speaker — petitions, by the way, which in my own constituency I found to be somewhat erroneous in many cases with people's names appearing on them that didn't actually sign them — that those members had a great deal of opportunity to debate this particular Bill. And it did pass the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, we've got to go back to some very basic principles when we're talking about balancing budgets in this province. The \$5 million alone that would be saved each year by synchronizing our E&H tax with the federal

taxes, that \$5 million is twice the amount of money that would be necessary to put over \$200 million extra in the pockets of farm families in this province before this Christmas.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Speaker, no matter what rate was set on that synchronization process, just the fact of drawing the two together to make things simpler for the business community, for the farming community, for people that have to do books on a weekly basis, would have generated enough money to put all of that money back into our economy that farm families would then spend on Christmas presents in every town and city and village in this province. And the members choose to ignore that.

Mr. Speaker, this government has clearly said that we do not need nearly \$200 million in revenue in order to meet the expectations of people in this province. They have clearly said to farmers and business people and industry throughout this province that we don't believe that we need to be competitive in either Canada or the global economy that we operate in today.

Everyone knows that on either side of us people are looking to the tax system to make their province or their state more competitive in today's world. Every person out there that could have had tax credits flowing through will not have that opportunity now.

And I clearly say to the government, how you are going to help those business people, how you are going to meet the expectations of farm payments, and how you are going to generate enough money in this economy by not raising any taxes to fulfil the needs and the promises that you have so clearly defined, lead to many more questions in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. And with that I move to adjourn the Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 4 — An Act to amend The Income Tax Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise and move second reading to Bill No. 4, An Act to amend The Income Tax Act.

Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party firmly opposed the previous government's expanded PST initiative. We oppose this measure for two major reasons. First, the crippling effect that the tax was having on the provincial economy; and secondly, the manner in which the tax was introduced by press release rather than through the Legislative Assembly with the appropriate debate.

Today a New Democratic government is introducing legislation that will abolish the harmonized PST. As a result of this decision, the Saskatchewan family tax credit is no longer necessary. The family tax credit was introduced to offset the additional tax burden experienced by low income families as a result of the harmonization of the E&H tax with the federal GST

(goods and services tax).

The introduction of the family tax credit itself was an admission of the hardships Saskatchewan families would face with this new expanded tax. As well, Mr. Speaker, the design of the family tax credit was flawed. It was particularly harmful to low income people without children, such as senior citizens, for they were not eligible for the family tax credit.

In the final analysis, Mr. Speaker, this was a highly unfair tax which was imposed without proper consultation and with no legislative authority. Our government is committed to a fair tax system where the level of taxation is based upon ability to pay. The tax system must provide a stable revenue source in a manner that is fair to people in all income groups. The expanded PST and the accompanying family tax credit did not meet those criteria.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to move that An Act to amend The Income Tax Act be now read a second time.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The family tax credit was an integral part of synchronization of the E&H tax with federal taxes. Mr. Speaker, it was absolutely necessary that people on the low income scales in our province not be penalized by having a new type of tax in our province which obviously had many benefits to various sectors of our society, but if this tax credit was not in place would have impacted greatly upon those people in the lower social economic strata.

The concept in this province that those that have the ability to pay so that those that don't can be supported has always been strongly supported by this party. And that is why if one looked at the tax credits available to low income families both through their GST and the synchronization of E&H with the federal tax, one saw that they in fact were better off then they were before where they simply were paying on most articles the E&H tax as they are paying today, Mr. Speaker.

And I think it was with a great deal of consternation that a number of those people in our society have now gone to the store and found that they are paying that tax. Because I think they were slightly mistaken I suppose, Mr. Speaker, by some of the advertising that they saw during the last election campaign. And a number of them are quite upset when they find that they are back paying that tax again when it was finally . . . that burden was finally removed from upon their family.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of questions that need to be raised on this particular Bill and I would move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 11 — An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act (No. 2)

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading on Bill No. 11, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 1991. As many members will

know The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act establishes a level of provincial assistance to be allocated to both rural and urban municipalities. Accordingly the amendment gives legal effect to the decisions reflected in the 1991-92 Hepworth budget. The amendment provides for overall reductions in funding through the revenue sharing program to urban and rural municipalities.

I regret these reductions because we all know the difficult situation that municipalities face today. But I note that they were introduced by the previous government. With the difficult fiscal legacy we have been given by the previous government it is necessary to proceed with this amendment. They have left us no other choice.

Today I ask members to support this Bill. Accordingly I move second reading of Bill No. 11, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 1991.

Mr. Goohsen: — Mr. Speaker, as we just had first reading yesterday and there may be some rather deep implications here that we don't really understand just yet because we haven't had our research put together, we would suggest that maybe it would be better for all of us if we had a little more time to study this matter. And in view of that, we would move that we adjourn this for the time being.

Debate adjourned.

(1500)

Bill No. 12 — An Act to amend The Assessment Management Agency Act

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Assessment Management Agency Act, 1991. As many members will know, the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency is an independent body established to conduct property evaluations for municipalities.

In the Hepworth budget proposals introduced last spring, the provincial contribution to SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) was cut by 10 per cent. I want to make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that this budget reduction for SAMA was the initiative of the previous government. This is not a choice our government would have made because our government is committed to an effective property management agency.

This Bill affects the funding only for the current fiscal year. Funding needs and alternative funding mechanisms for 1992 and beyond are currently under review by the SAMA board of directors.

Our government is committed to the principles on which the original funding formula was established, and we look forward to discussions with SAMA representatives on how best to comply with that agreement in the future. We hope to have an opportunity for meaningful consultation with regard to future budget needs and will endeavour to meet the expectations that additional funding needs should be shared on a 50/50 basis.

In the current year the province's overall level of funding

will be about \$7 million which represents about 75 per cent of SAMA's financing.

While the previous government had a well-deserved reputation for down-loading on to local governments, our government, Mr. Speaker, will try to avoid funding mechanisms which will have this practice.

Given the need for restraint in the current fiscal environment, unfortunately it is necessary to proceed with this previously planned, budget cut-back. While it would have been desirable to avoid this reduction, the fact that we were left with a deficit of almost \$1 billion means it is not possible to avoid this adjustment now. I expect it will be possible, however, to find ways to partly offset this budget reduction with other adjustments that will reduce SAMA's expenditures back to the province. We are currently investigating those possibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to support this Bill to implement the funding allocation previously set forth for SAMA. Accordingly I move second reading for Bill No. 12, The Assessment Management Agency Act.

Mr. Goohsen: — Mr. Speaker, we are quite happy to hear that this government doesn't want to down-load on to rural municipalities and other agencies in this province. But for the same reasons we expressed in the last motion, I would move that we adjourn.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 13 — An Act respecting Certain Payments to the Meewasin Valley Authority, the Wakamow Valley Authority and the Wascana Centre Authority

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to reluctantly move second reading of The Urban Parks Financial Arrangements Act, 1991. This Bill was introduced in the last session of the legislature but died on the order paper when the session was prematurely ended by the previous government. The Bill maintains a level of funding for Wascana Centre Authority, Meewasin Valley Authority, and Wakamow Valley Authority at the same level as in previous years for 1991-92.

This Bill implements a proposal in the Hepworth budget introduced last spring by the previous government. Funding for these three organizations has been frozen by that government annually at the 1986-87 level over the past several years.

These payments to urban parks are statutory in nature and the level of funding defined by this Bill applies to all of their participating bodies. In the context of the current worsened fiscal environment now faced by our provincial government, urban parks funding will again have to remain at the same level for 1991-92. Although we would like to be announcing increases, this is just not possible at this time.

However, this government is committed to Saskatchewan's urban parks. A review of their funding formulas which was interrupted last year by the former government's budget decision has been reactivated by Community Services. While the accumulated provincial

deficit admittedly restrains the potential for major improvements, we will be taking a close look to see what can be done for the 1992-93 budget. The urban parks need fiscal stability and predictability rather than an annual budget time surprises from the past several . . . like the past several years.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this Bill to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act, The Wakamow Valley Authority Act, and The Wascana Centre Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in response to the minister, certainly we are all concerned with the financing to many of the other organizations in our province, organizations that look to government for financing. And I'm sure that the Meewasin Valley Authority, the Wakamow Valley Authority, and the Wascana Centre Authority are looking very closely and keeping their eyes open to see where the government will be going and heading regarding financing and funding of their individual programs.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, we need to take a bit more time as well to review the Bill, so at this time I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 2

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Simard that **Bill No. 2 — An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981** be now read a second time.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As critic for the Department of Health I'd just like to say, Mr. Speaker, and to Madam Minister, that I pursued through the Bill and I can't see that there's anything wrong with it at all. It looks like it's just an amendment, a housekeeping Bill for now. I do have a few questions that I may want to ask you, Madam Minister, in Committee of the Whole, but to speed things up, I'd just like to say thank you, Mr. Speaker, and let this go to Committee. Thank you.

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

Bill No. 5

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter that **Bill No. 5 — An Act to amend The Liquor Consumption Tax Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I think everyone knows, this Bill is one that arose from the previous government and the reduction in tax to liquor and hotels and beverage rooms went from 10 per cent to 7.

The opposition supports the Bill and indeed I would encourage the government to pursue a means of supporting our hoteliers, particularly when addressing the triple taxation situation that many of them now face in our urban areas.

There is, Mr. Speaker, one important aspect of this Bill as being presented by the Minister of Finance however though, that does need some discussion. The reduction to 7 per cent was a result of the synchronization process which I believe the minister is soon wanting to undo.

Therefore in proceeding with this particular reduction in the face of cancelling that synchronization, the government is incurring additional costs for the taxpayer — costs, Mr. Speaker, which the government did not explain in this particular Bill how they were going to handle.

I think it should be noted for the record, Mr. Speaker, and by the media, that the government has not announced the cost of these measures. And in committee I will be seeking a few more detailed answers in this regard. Other than that the opposition is prepared to allow second reading to proceed expeditiously and have the Bill recommended to the Committee of the Whole at the pleasure of the House Leader.

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

Bill No. 6

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter that **Bill No. 6 — An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act** be now read a second time.

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

(1515)

Bill No. 7

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 7 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make a few observations about this Bill and want to raise a couple points. In a general sense, Mr. Speaker, we're in favour of the message and the intent of the Bill, however there are two things that we would like to raise as points to consider.

We have asked the legislative clerk, Law Clerk, to deal with an amendment for this Bill that would deal with how a term of office of a government was almost to the end and then when, let's say, it was six months before the end of its mandate or seven months before an assumed end of its mandate and at that time the seat would become vacant. Then, Mr. Speaker, you would have, one month before an election was called, you would have an election in a community or in a constituency

and that constituency would in effect have two elections within two or three months, and that would cause some problems. So we're working on an amendment for this Bill that would address that.

The second point that we make in relation to this, that deals in some ways with the same kind of concern, is that we have in this province whether we like it or not, some very severe weather conditions that exist in the winter time. We have times from the middle of December, when there's Christmas and all of those things, until the end of March when I really think that we would have some difficulty in dealing with the kinds of things that exist.

As rigid as this Act is and with no discretion by the Premier to call an election, I really see that as a major concern. I recollect having a federal election in February, I believe it was one time somewhere in the early '70s, and that caused a good deal of concern for people in this province and especially in the North. And I would think that you would have an opportunity for some measures of discretion on that part.

In the general sense, the attempt to move by-elections along is not a concern of ours. And it's in this light that we are asking the Legislative Law Clerk to take a view of presenting an amendment to this Assembly that would deal with that.

And I lay this out to the minister responsible in light of the fact that we want to move in a co-operative kind of a way, and we're not trying to disrupt the Bill from moving forward. However in order for us to have time to do that, I would like to adjourn debate so that we can have the time for us to consider that and have the Law Clerk of the legislature prepare that for us.

And so I'm moving that on that basis today and then when we get it we will be moving that forward as an amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 8

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 8 — An Act respecting the Tabling of Documents and Certain Consequential and Other Amendments to Other Acts resulting from the enactment of this Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have a few comments to make on this particular Bill. Mr. Speaker, the opposition agrees with the principle of streamlining and improving the tabling of documents procedures, both in this House and its committees, and therefore we'll likely be supporting this particular Bill.

However, Mr. Speaker, this Bill does require some improvement and fine tuning. And there are some specific areas where we believe the government has not gone quite far enough. In particular, Mr. Speaker, if we are to be consistent of the principle of open and accountable government, then this Bill must embrace the fact of openness as to great an extent as possible and not

simply provide mechanical changes that in the end result in no more access for this Assembly than has been past practice.

We are seeking amendments, Mr. Speaker, that will enhance the role of the Provincial Auditor in regard to financial information that is to be tabled, amendments to provide more ready access to documents when the Assembly is not sitting, and amendments to improve the ability of committees of the Assembly to influence the tabling of documents and others of a similar nature.

I will be asking the members across the way, the government members, when it comes time to move the Bill to committee, Mr. Speaker, that they agree to refer it to the committee on Public Accounts, which is the Assembly's primary mechanism of ensuring accountability.

I am quite anxious to obtain the advice and assistance of the Provincial Auditor in regard to the Bill, specifically those sections, Mr. Speaker, that relate to the tabling of financial information. And I believe that the member from Regina Victoria has some valuable ideas in regard to the provision of information as well that could properly come through an examination by the *Public Accounts* Committee.

I would also remind the government that they do have a majority on the committee so there is no reason to fear changes might slip through that they find unacceptable and would point out that there is ample precedent for such a referral, including a recent referral of The Provincial Auditor Act to that committee.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, but particularly it is also to allow the Law Clerk to prepare suitable amendments to the Bill, Mr. Speaker, that we do need to have a little bit more time, some appropriate time on this particular Bill. Therefore I would beg leave of the Assembly to adjourn debate on the Bill to give the Law Clerk time to prepare those amendments so that we can bring them before the Assembly.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 9

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carson that **Bill No. 9 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984** be now read a second time.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a few concerns regarding Bill No. 9, An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act. We feel, Mr. Speaker, that the public's freedom of choice should be considered before the second reading of this Bill.

Did the communities want a complete ward system implemented? Take the city of Regina, for example. If the choice is brought before the city of Regina, they may well choose to implement a ward system once again. They may want to implement a partial ward system along with a partial system at large — maybe four positions based on the

ward system and a certain number based on the at-large system. Whatever the choices of the people, Mr. Speaker, we feel it should be just that — the choice of the people.

Moreover, the minister in charge has stated she would allow public input and discussion on this matter. If this is truly the case, Mr. Speaker, it would be irresponsible for the Assembly to proceed with second reading before a public consensus has been reached. It would be inappropriate to decide for the people what we . . . what the people want to decide for themselves, whether they're rural or urban.

Mr. Speaker, these discussions deserve more time than has been allowed. Therefore I beg leave from the Assembly to adjourn debate on this Bill to allow time for the consultation with the people of Saskatchewan on this matter. Thank you.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 10

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carson that **Bill No. 10 — An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've looked at this Bill and reviewed it very carefully and we have essentially no problems with it, and we'd encourage it to go forward.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Municipal Law.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 2 — An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981

The Chair: — Would the minister please introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to introduce Dianne Anderson, the director of human resources, from the Department of Health.

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 4

Mr. Martens: — I was just wondering, just for clarification — this deals with locums that would be going into communities like that I have in my constituency like Vanguard, and the hospital in Vanguard, and in Cabri. And dealing with the people who get doctors in from other places and then only have a short stay, is this going to allow them to appear there longer periods of time?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Yes, that's correct. The Bill, what the Bill presently . . . locums tenens can only get a permit for four months. And sometimes there are a series of permits that have been issued in order to allow the doctor to stay there longer, which isn't really satisfactory because

there's problems with respect to a sense of job security, and the community doesn't know what's happening and whether or not the doctor will be issued another permit.

What this enables the council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons to do is to issue permits that may go up to a two-year period. And they will be passing regulations with respect to the terms and conditions on which these permits are issued. It will give more doctors an opportunity to work for a longer period of time in rural Saskatchewan. It will happen in other places too, but rural Saskatchewan appears to be where the problem is. And it will give them an opportunity to pass their Canadian medical exams while they are practising medicine in our communities.

And it is hoped that this will assist rural communities in obtaining more medical professionals to their communities.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, maybe I should have asked this question prior, but I'll ask it now. I'm sure you won't mind. I can't see anything wrong with this Bill. It looks like it's a Bill that was before the House before, and I just want to ask: you've talked naturally, I imagine, to the College of Physicians and Surgeons people. You talked to them, and they're naturally agreeable, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I have not personally spoken to them about this, but the department has, and it's my understanding that the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, rural hospital administrators, rural physicians and locum physicians, fully support this legislation.

(1530)

Mr. Muirhead: — So, Madam Minister, you're quite comfortable that all those people that you mentioned, that they've asked for this and are quite satisfied with this, with actually the Bill itself.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — It is my understanding, Mr. Chair, that this Bill is supported by the medical community.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, yes, I haven't got any further questions I want to ask, unless some of my colleagues have some more here.

Mr. Martens: — I have one question as relates to, Mr. Chairman, as it relates to the regulations in the by-laws. As I understand it, the college will present the by-laws to the minister. The minister will agree or disagree with them, according to . . . and that's the process, the way it works.

Okay. Then the question that I have in addition to that is that will they be allowed more than the two years cumulative, or is that the total volume of the years that they will be allowed? Is this what they're proposing in their by-laws?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I don't have a copy of the final by-law. What I do have is some background on what the by-law will look like. But they are in the process of

drafting it. And you're quite right; it will have to be submitted to the minister for approval before it is effective.

Now the proposed by-law specifies that there are a number of different permits under this provision: a supervised locum permit which may be issued to Canadian interns, and it would go for a four-month period. It would be limited to one per locum physician per calendar year, and there must be a supervising physician.

There will be another category of unsupervised locum permits which would start in July 1, 1992 and which would require graduation from an approved school and one year postgraduate training. The permit would be limited to one per locum physician per calendar year.

Now there's the conditional locum permit which is a third category which requires graduation from an approved school and two years postgraduate training. And it's my understanding that this could go up to a period of one . . . up to a period of two years. It would enable the doctor to practise for the length of time it takes to attempt and receive results from The Medical Council of Canada evaluating exam. And the physician would be required to practise in the same community for five years under this particular permit.

And this is what is being proposed by the College of Physicians and Surgeons at this time. So there would be a number of different periods of time depending on the type of permit and what the needs of the community were, obviously.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, if I could ask — what are they proposing on the interns for the one-year period? Would that be for the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) to allow an intern into a hospital — let's say Swift Current, for example, versus Vanguard — or would they be allowing an intern to come into a one-doctor hospital in Lucky Lake or in Beechy or in Cabri or that sort of thing?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — It's intended that these permits apply mostly to rural communities like Vanguard, for example, as opposed to Swift Current. And it would allow the person to go into the community for up to two years, depending on what the college, what decision the college makes, and allow them to have an opportunity to pass their exams.

And it is being proposed that there be a commitment on the part of the physician to reside in the community for a period of five years. But it's intended to apply, to deal with the situation of the shortage of doctors in rural Saskatchewan, which is our small communities, the Rocklens the Vanguards of Saskatchewan.

And hopefully this will make it much easier for doctors who are already in the community to recruit younger doctors to come and help out. And there will be categories that are supervised and unsupervised with respect to the physician in the area.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, the part that I would like to know about is the

intern and the graduate with the one year. Are they going to follow the same pattern as the one that I would assume that you were talking about, the one that is in the third category, where he's graduated and has two post-graduate degrees? Is that the group that you're talking about, or are you talking about the first two also?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — The first two categories I spoke to — that's the one graduating from a medical school approved by the council with a minimum of one year post-graduate training, would be a four-year permit . . . four-month, rather. The second one would be, that I spoke to, is four months. The third one that I spoke to, in terms of permits, the conditional locum permit would be up to two years.

Now I want to say once again that this is what's being proposed; it has not been finalized. And if the member would like some input in this, he should get in touch with me and I can pass the comments on to the department and the college.

Mr. Martens: — I would probably like to see, Madam Minister, some additions to the . . . Well first of all, I'll ask the question. On the second one that you've mentioned can you add a four-month extension on to the length of time that that individual would be able to practise in that community?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — It's my understanding that it's intended that those can be only one locum physician per calendar year. So it's only the four months, one time.

Mr. Martens: — Well if I could make the suggestion, Madam Minister, that probably that would be the part that would be able to be expanded a little. I have no problem in dealing with it as it affects the third group that you mentioned, although I think it probably could be lengthened on the first one because there aren't too many people in the third category that are likely going to go to these rural communities if they already have that kind of an opportunity or they've achieved that amount of school and then go into a small community.

So I will take your suggestion serious. And we will, on this side of the House, that we will have some input into that. And if you wouldn't mind, through the member from Arm River, detailing that to him, and then we could arrange for a time to discuss that if you don't mind.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Sure I'd be pleased to pass your concerns on to the department in the college and we can get together. If there's any other specific items like that that you want the department to take a look at, I'd be pleased to meet with the member from Arm River.

Mr. Toth: — Yes, Madam Minister, as we've heard in discussion so far this afternoon, certainly rural areas are an area that have a greater difficulty in attracting physicians or doctors to their community. And in light of the amendments to The Medical Profession Act, I'm just wondering, Madam Minister, if this will alleviate or even make it easier for out-of-province and non-country resident doctors to come into the province — the fact that they will be able to obtain a locum licence or permit longer than the four months.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — It's intended that it make the situation easier for rural communities and easier for physicians who wish to practise out in those rural communities. That's the intent of the Bill, and I believe it'll do that.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, this Bill, we've talked about it before. When we were in government this Bill was being brought forth. Is it exactly the same as in its entirety or is there some changes to it? Is this exactly the same in its entirety?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — It's exactly the same as what was proposed earlier.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6 agreed to.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to thank the minister for answering the questions to my colleagues and we thank you for bringing this here Bill forward, especially when the past government brought this Bill in. And we're just trying to show you how co-operative we are in letting you have a speedy . . . having this Bill go through in a speedy way. And we just hope that all Bills that this government brings in can go through the same way.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 2 — An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981

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

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Okay, order. I'll ask the Clerk to read the item again please. Let's have a little bit of order all right?

Okay. What's your point of order?

(1545)

Mr. Neudorf: — It seems to me that the Bill is out of committee. It was passed in committee. And the next stage would be then, I would suggest, that the Bill is going to be passed under its title now, or not?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move this House do now adjourn.

The Assembly adjourned at 3:45 p.m.