

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS**

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday next that notwithstanding rule 3:

This Assembly shall, following the adoption of this motion, meet from 10 a.m. o'clock until 12 a.m. o'clock and from 2 until 5 p.m. and from 7 o'clock p.m. until 10 o'clock p.m., with orders of the day being called at 10 a.m. and routine proceedings being called at 2 p.m. each day; and in addition to regular sitting days, the Assembly shall sit on Saturdays.

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Under the notices of motions and questions I give notice that I shall on Friday next ask the government the following questions:

Regarding the Minister of Education: (1) the names of all persons currently employed by or accountable to the minister directly or indirectly excluding only members of the Public Service Commission who were employed prior to November 1, 1991; (2) for each person listed in no. 1 the (a) details of employment including compensation, (b) job description, (c) qualifications including employment history, (d) the name of his or her immediate superior, (e) the authority under which the person was hired, and (f) the actual date that the person started work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Friday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Minister of Health: (1) the names of all persons currently employed by or accountable to the minister directly or indirectly, excluding only members of the Public Service Commission who were employed prior to November 1, 1991; (2) for each person listed in (1) and (a) details of employment including compensation, (b) job description, (c) qualifications including employment history, (d) the name of his or her immediate superior, (e) the authority under which the person was hired, and (f) the actual date that the person started work.

And I'll have some others, Mr. Speaker, that I'll just table to save time.

**Mr. Britton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next, regarding the Minister of Highways and Transportation, ask the following questions:

(1) The names of all persons currently employed or accountable to the minister directly or indirectly, excluding only members of the Public Service

Commission who are employed prior to November 1, 1991; (2) for each person listed in (1), (a) details of employment including compensation, (b) job description, (c) qualifications including employment history, (d) the name of his or her immediate superior, (e) the authority under which the person was hired, and (f) the actual date the person started work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Minister of Community Services: (1) that the names of all persons currently employed by or accountable to the minister directly or indirectly, excluding only members of the Public Service Commission who were employed prior to November 1, 1991; (2) for each person listed in no. (1), that (a) details of employment including compensation, (b) job description, (c) qualifications including employment history, (d) the names of his or her immediate superior, (e) the authority under which the person was hired, and (f) the actual date that the person started work.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Minister of Energy and Mines: (1) the names of all persons currently employed by or accountable to the minister directly or indirectly, excluding only members of the Public Service Commission who were employed prior to November 1, 1991; (2) for each person listed in (1), (a) details of employment including compensation, (b) job description, (c) qualifications including employment history, (d) the name of his or her immediate superior, (e) the authority under which the person was hired, and (f) the actual date that the person started work.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Minister of Rural Development: (1) the names of all the persons currently employed by or accountable to the minister directly or indirectly, excluding only members of the Public Service Commission who were employed prior to November 1, 1991; (2) for each person listed in (1), the (a) details of employment including compensation, (b) job descriptions, (c) qualifications including employment history, (d) the name of his or her immediate superior, (e) the authority under which the person was hired, and (f) the actual date that the person started work.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources: (1) the names of all persons currently employed by or accountable to the minister directly or indirectly, excluding only members of the Public Service Commission who were employed prior to November 1, 1991; (2) for each person listed in (1), (a) the details of employment and including compensation, (b) job description, (c) qualifications including employment history, (d) name of his or her immediate superior, (e) the authority under which the person was hired, and (f) the actual date that the person started work.

I so move.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Sonntag:** — I would like to, to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you today introduce some family and friends in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

Decking your halls today we have my sister, Armella Sonntag and her husband Kim Paisley, and his father Bill Paisley. Armella and Kim are here today from Peru and they're on their way back to Peru. They work for an organization out of Toronto, Mr. Speaker, Scarborough Foreign Mission. They work very much with social action groups and with the setting up of small co-operatives and stuff.

One of the requests that they had of the Assembly here is that we would join them in a couple of yuletide choruses of "Come on Ring Those Bells", but the members opposite did six hundred verses of that the other day. So if you would join with me in welcoming them today here.

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

**Mr. Knezacek:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly three guests seated in the west gallery. I'd like to introduce my father-in-law, Eric Moller and his brother Roy, and also Mr. Gugulyn, who is a former student of mine. Please welcome them.

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

**Hon. Ms. Carson:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly two very good friends and supporters visiting Regina from Melfort today, Garry and Trudy Jackson in the west gallery. I'd like the Assembly to welcome them.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to the Assembly a guest who was making a presentation this morning to myself and others, Garry and Marg Christian who are in your gallery. And I would like you to welcome them and thank them for their interest in agricultural policy and the contribution they're making to the development of it. Thank you.

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Alteration of Employment Contracts

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, if it is appropriate for the government to proactively change employment contracts that it finds unacceptable, then no logic can argue that it is not also appropriate for private employers. Mr. Minister, will your government introduce similar legislation to allow private employers to retroactively alter employment contracts and engage in personal attack in the course of altering those contracts?

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — No, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — I have another question, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. Mr. Minister, do you believe that all contracts entered into by private employers are right? And if so, will you introduce a law that allows them the same powers to persecute employees that you yourself are giving yourself?

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, there are many restrictions on the right to contract with respect to employment matters, and those are well known to the members opposite. They exist for example in The Labour Standards Act. They also exist in some respects in legislation such as the Human Rights Code. So that there are many restrictions around. The member will know that the purpose for the piece of legislation that was introduced into the House yesterday is to deal with a particularly unusual situation involving contractual provisions which are simply not found in the private sector to any significant degree at all and which are matters that the public of Saskatchewan just insist be addressed by this legislature and be changed.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, if you do not intend to give private employers these powers of persecution, you must believe there is no such thing as nepotism, unbalanced negotiations, unfair contracts, or excessive claims by private employees. So I ask you simply: is that what your position is going to be in relation to what the government is going to do, and also to private employees?

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, there's no element of persecution in these contracts — none at all, none at all. This is just a question of treating public employees in a fair and reasonable way; not doing it in secret but making those contracts public and making them conform to some kind of standard. That's what the legislation's all about. That's what we're trying to do by introducing it into this House.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday you gave first reading to a Bill to suspend the rights of individuals to protection under the law. First your government suspends the rules of this Assembly and now you're suspending the law of the land itself.

Mr. Minister, I'm asking you: can you give this Assembly any precedent whatsoever of a government introducing such a law as this one that you did yesterday?

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I dare say that never has a government been faced with the situation with respect to employment contracts that we encountered when we took over the government of this province.

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — The extraordinary provisions in these contracts, all of which were secret, all of which were not known, none of which were known to the public of Saskatchewan, created a very unique situation which required not that we deprive them of their rights under the law but that we put the matter to the law and ensure that the courts are the ones that will determine what is a reasonable and what is a fair amount, in the event that these employees are terminated.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — I'm going to ask the minister the question again about whether he has any precedent of it ever happening in the history of the Commonwealth, Canada, or the provinces across Canada.

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I thought that I answered that question directly. I don't know of any precedent because I don't know of any government that has been faced with the extraordinary situation that we were faced with when we came to power.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — A new question, Mr. Minister. The law is unprecedented, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister. Such a law has never been introduced in this country or in any province in this country. And therefore your government is hitting a thousand on setting democracy on its head. You're just right up there ahead of all the rest.

First of all, no constitutional provisions will be allowed to stop you on the basis of your budget or assumed budget. Now no law will be able to stop you as it relates to the court.

I want to ask you specifically, Mr. Minister, after watching your interviews with the media yesterday, is it your position today that this law would allow all government employment contracts to be open to public scrutiny? Is that your opinion? Yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a question for a specific kind of information, the interpretation of the Bill that is in front of this House. And the member can ask that specific question that he had

during the committee study of the Bill clause by clause.

The minister can read the Bill. The minister knows what the Bill is aimed at . . . or the member. And, Mr. Speaker, that is a unique situation in speaking of democracy, in the democratic traditions of this country, for a government to come into power and find practically the whole of the senior public service as parties to employment contracts, none of which had been made public, all of which are secret, and all of which contain provisions that are practically unknown in employment relations in this country.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the question again. Would you allow all the contracts to be opened by scrutiny by the public or just the ones that you want to?

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, the Bill is quite specific on the matter. The member can read it himself.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. I know this is difficult for you, Mr. Minister, because I know personally that you're one who believes in justice. But the fact remains that you have provided this Assembly with no reasoned approach to have that law introduced in this Assembly. At least in my opinion you haven't.

If you look through the Bill, you will see that it contains provisions to keep contracts of the new government secret. Why have you, as minister, allowed several sections in the Bill to maintain a state of secret . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I think the member knows well that you may not, during question period, refer specifically to sections of Bills that are before the House. I simply say to the member that that question is out of order and will not be accepted. So if you can rephrase it, I will accept your question.

**Mr. Martens:** — Will you agree, Mr. Minister, that the provisions of the Bill before the House today maintain a state of secrecy for NDP (New Democratic Party) contracts, but retroactively expose all of the others.

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — No, I do not agree with that, Mr. Speaker. The Bill is quite explicit that these contracts are going to become public. There's provision there as to the way in which they will become public. They will become public as soon as the legislation is implemented, and that will continue to be the law until such time as it no longer is the law. But that will apply to the future to all contracts that are mentioned in the Act.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. Your observations are accurate, but there are some glitches in

there that don't allow for certain people to have their exposure the same as the others have. And therefore I want to ask you this question: if you are interested in letting the public in on your little arrangements, why does not the law cover all employment arrangements and why have you hidden behind the guise of no contract and no exposure?

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — I was not aware that I have ever hidden behind that shield, Mr. Speaker. And accordingly I just have no idea what the minister's talking about.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, just a point of clarification. There are places in that Bill that do not allow for . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I have just ruled that we will not accept questions on specific sections of Bills that are before the House. We're getting ourselves into an argument of discussing aspects of the Bills which are not pertinent or will not be allowed in question period. New question.

**Mr. Martens:** — A new question, Mr. Speaker. Will you stand in your place today and confirm it is your opinion as the Minister of Justice that slander, defamation of character, and psychological abuse are proper and useful and should be legal if they are used to get rid of people's jobs?

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — I just have no idea what the question . . . what information the question attempts to elicit. If the question is a general sort of open question, you know, no problem. I mean, the answer is obvious.

I must say, Mr. Speaker — and I want to make it clear to the House and to that member — that I am prepared to stand and discuss this Bill in detail all day. We can go straight through second reading into third reading without any problem at all. And I'll be happy to do that. But it's a little difficult to address those questions in the format of question period.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — The fact, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, is this. This Bill makes it legal to engage in any manner of extreme personal attack so long as those attacks are intended to make someone quit or done in the process of firing someone without cause. That, Mr. Speaker, is the fact, and you can read that in the Bill any time you want, and there are a number of places that I would refer to but I'm not allowed to.

You suspend the rules, replace tenured boards with political appointees to suit your needs. Considering all of that, is it your intention to remain the highest officer of the law of this province when your own government is overthrowing the very justice you are sworn to uphold?

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, that really is an

outrageous so-called question. I'm prepared, as I say, to stand during committee study of that Bill and discuss it clause by clause and answer any questions that that member or any other member may have with respect to that Bill. The fact is that nobody is going to be slandered, nobody's going to be attacked. Those questions aren't going to arise. And I have no idea why the member would draw that interpretation from this Bill.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, the observations that I would make about the Bill are those that it does exactly that. And that's why I'm raising the question about the method that you use to deliver it, and also the method that you use of talking about it in the Assembly.

I really want to ask you one more question about it, and that is this: do you intend to introduce any other laws that expand this policy of the NDP first, and everything else up to and including the lives of individuals, last — absolutely last?

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, we have done no such thing and we will do no such thing.

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — It's absurd for the minister to be making such outlandish allegations as this. We can get into a full debate on this Bill and I hope to be able to demonstrate to him and to his colleagues and to the people of this province that this Bill is the only response that the government could make to this absurd situation that we found on taking office.

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

#### SaskPower Executives' Salaries

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the minister responsible for SaskPower. And, Mr. Minister, as a preface to my question, I was glad to hear the Minister of Justice espousing upon his desire for full public disclosure on the details of employment.

Now, Mr. Minister, I would ask you this question. I'm not asking about contracts; I'm just asking for the details of the employment. Can you tell us today, Mr. Minister, can you tell the public the details about how much you are paying Jack Messer and Carol Bryant, the two NDP campaign managers — how much are you paying them now to run SaskPower?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to answer . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Answer the question — how much? No speech, just how much.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes . . . if the member will give

me the opportunity, I want to indicate to the Assembly today that Mr. Messer, who was hired to replace Mr. Hill who was earning at that time over \$400,000 a year, was hired for \$400 a day during the period that he worked as a special advisor to the government. At \$400 a day he was earning about one-third of what Mr. Hill was earning.

We are now in the process of setting salary scales for the heads of the Crowns and departments. Mr. Messer's salary has now been set and I want to inform the Assembly today that over the next while we'll be establishing the whole range for heads of Crowns as well as department heads; but his salary will be far less than Mr. Hill's, at \$150,000 a year.

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

**The Speaker:** — Order. I would ask the members in the gallery please not to participate in the activities on the floor.

### Freedom of Information

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a new question for the Minister of Justice.

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Mr. Swenson:** — It seems we have mini-ministers over there, Mr. Speaker, or ministers that hope to be.

Question to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, you stood in your place in this legislature last spring and voted for freedom of information. Your government could have proclaimed that Act. By that Act, all of these contractual arrangements would've been available to the public.

Matter of fact, the very first initiative your government should've undertaken, sir, was to release that Act, to proclaim it. You have not done so because of your political agenda. Do you not agree, Mr. Minister, the only reason that that was included in this Bill is because you do not have the courage of your convictions, sir?

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — This is the day for great questions, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — The minister will know that the Department of Justice has been working on the implementation of the freedom of information Act for some time, including during the time when he was a member of the previous government. It continues to do so. It continues to consult with other departments and ready all of the machinery of government for the implementation of the Act.

I will tell the member that the implementation course is still on schedule and that we intend to implement that Act as soon as it's possible to do so, as soon as all the administrative arrangements have been made. We are not trying to slow it down or to hide anything behind it. When that Act goes into place, it applies to all

government information, past and present.

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

**Mr. Swenson:** — Supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you know full well that that Bill was passed unanimously in this House. And the reason that you have not done it is because of your track record over the last two months. We have had the Gass Commission, a quasi-judicial tribunal, sir, without access to the public or the press.

We have had the example of your government setting aside the rules of this legislature to do its will. And now, sir, and I ask you, now we have a Bill before this House which sets aside the right of the individual to seek court action. When, sir, when will the political thirst for revenge by the New Democratic Party be quenched in this province, or shall you override more individual rights before you're done?

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, that is a collection of absurdities.

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — The member knows perfectly well the complexities involved in implementing the freedom of information Act. They had it on their plate for the last six months of their government and didn't get around to implementing it. And he knows the reason they didn't was the complexity of preparing government for the implementation of the Act, because on the date the Act is proclaimed the information has to be in shape to be produced when people call upon the government to produce the information.

We picked up that Act as soon as the transition took place, as soon as we took over the government, and we intend to implement as soon as possible. It can't possibly be used as any kind of a weapon to cover up anything, and the member knows that perfectly well. And that's what makes his question so absurd.

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

### Government Hiring of Lawyers

**Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice as well. Will the minister tell the Assembly what private lawyers the government is currently using and how much per hour, per day and per month he is paying those lawyers?

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the member is referring to, what lawyers that he is referring to.

**An Hon. Member:** — The ones doing your dirty work.

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — The member says from his seat an insulting question. The answer to that is that we have no

lawyers doing dirty work at all. As to the other question, if the member will perhaps put his question more specifically as to what particular lawyers he's talking about or what legal work, then we can address the question. May I respectfully suggest that he submit a written question on the matter, Mr. Speaker, and I'll be glad to answer it.

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

#### **Government Use of Consultants**

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A new question for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell us today how much they are paying Don Ching for his esteemed services, and what other benefits does he receive for his employment?

**Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you. The question would have been better directed to me because Mr. Ching is the . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — You mean you've got the answer?

**Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski:** — I most certainly do, as I always do, member.

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

**Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Speaker, the question is better directed to me because Mr. Ching is the acting chief executive officer of the Crown Management Board. He has been acting as my advisor for some time. During that time he was paid \$400 a day; he now is acting chief executive officer and is being paid at a far less rate than the former chief executive officer at \$150,000 a year.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the minister for SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) tell the House how much he paid Frank Quennell for all arrears of compensation, and what were the terms of his employment?

**Hon. Ms. Carson:** — Mr. Speaker, Frank Quennell was the special advisor to SPMC for a short period. He is no longer with SPMC and I don't have the answer that he seeks, and I'll certainly take notice of it and reply in written form.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Will the Minister of Agriculture tell the Assembly if his employee, Marg Benson, did consulting work for any other departments; and particularly, did she advise who should be fired or hired in other departments?

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Your question was previously asked in written form and answered, and she acted in an advisory capacity to me for a period of a month when she arrived.

Thank you very much.

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

#### **Compensation for Ranchers**

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Rural Development. Mr. Minister, some time ago I wrote you regarding the matter of oil and gas lease payments to Saskatchewan ranchers. Your political assistant replied to me that your officials would look into the matter and that you would get back to me.

Would you tell the House when the ranchers can expect the back payments currently being withheld, particularly in light of the very difficult income situation out there for all of our agricultural producers?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cunningham:** — Mr. Speaker, as the minister opposite well knows, there's a little background to this particular problem. In March of 1991 when the previous government wrote the budget, they removed all compensation to leaseholders for gas wells. And this was the situation that I faced when I first came to office, was the fact that people who had been expecting their cheques since April had heard nothing.

And since that time we have been reviewing within the department and trying to juggle some numbers to find some money. And we are coming to . . . in the process coming to a resolution of the problem very quickly and the ranchers will be notified immediately.

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

#### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

##### **Impact on the Meat Industry in Saskatchewan**

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, as minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation, I'm pleased to announce a package which will assist two meat processing companies affiliated with Intercon Packers Limited. They will undertake development which will have a major impact on the meat industry in Saskatchewan.

The package will assist the purchase and expansion of the Moose Jaw packing plant of Maple Leaf foods and reopen an upgrading of the Norex Foods hand-processing operation in Saskatoon.

The developments that will be made possible by the package we have approved will have the potential to provide a total of nearly 160 new jobs in Moose Jaw and Saskatoon.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, these developments will have an impact on the province's entire economy, both in terms of economic development in jobs, as well as the agricultural sector.

In addition to the jobs these projects will provide, they will add badly needed new opportunities to the livestock sector of Saskatchewan livestock's industry, increase foreign exports, provide work in construction trades, and create other spin-off job opportunities.

The financial package by SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) consists of two parts and it totals \$5.5 million. The first involves Western Canadian Beef Packers Ltd., which will purchase and expand the Maple Leaf plant in Moose Jaw. Western is owned by Western Canadian Equities Ltd., an investor group controlled by the Mitchell family. The Mitchells are also principals in the Intercontinental. Under the agreement SEDCO will purchase \$4 million worth of shares in Western Canadian Beef Packers.

The second phase of the package is a 1.5 million term loan to Norex Food in Saskatoon, an affiliate of Intercontinental. The loan will assist Norex to reopen and upgrade the ham processing plant, formerly operated by Empire Meats. The improvements will be designed to increase capacity to meet market demand.

The plans for the Moose Jaw facility involve the purchase of new equipment, upgrading, and addition of a boxed beef facility. The plant currently employs about 185 workers, slaughters about 2,000 head of livestock a week. It is expected that the boxed meat expansion would add another 100 employees and more than double the slaughtering rate. The reopening and the upgrading of the Norex plant are expected to provide about 57 new jobs and provide an expanded market for Saskatchewan hogs.

Mr. Speaker, Intercontinental has identified a growing United States market for lean imported hams from Canada, and will use the Norex facility to meet that demand.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity today to congratulate and thank the Mitchell family and Intercontinental for the initiative they have shown in taking up the challenge of what they foresee as an important opportunity for Saskatchewan meat processing and the livestock industry.

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

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to compliment the Mitchell family with the following through an agreement that was principally done under the previous government. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, any time that the red meat industry has value added alternatives in Saskatchewan it's a plus for the province. This has been clearly recognized for a long time by the previous government.

I might also like to say that I'd like to congratulate the former head of SEDCO, Mr. Douglas Price, who had a great deal of impact on how this deal was put together, a member who these people dismissed for being incompatible, but one certainly who they took enough confidence in to basically take the same agreement the previous government put together and put it through.

As I said, it's a good day for the farmer, it's a good day for

Moose Jaw, it's a good day for the meat packing business. And we congratulate the Mitchell family for having the fortitude to be part of that, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day I would like to ask leave of the Assembly to make a brief statement regarding one of my constituents.

Leave granted.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Saskatchewan Order of Merit Recipients

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate Yvonne Hassett who is unable to be in the legislature today. Yvonne was awarded the province's highest award, the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, on November 25, 1991.

Mr. Speaker, this award recognizes achievement, excellence, and outstanding contributions to the well-being of the province and its residents.

Mrs. Hassett is a nurse who has worked with the native people, the disabled, the elderly, and schools for many years. She is active in the Canadian Cancer Society and plays a major role in the CanSurmount organization. On her own time and at her own expense she visits seniors, shut-ins, and the bereaved.

Mrs. Hassett is well respected and is indeed an inspiration to many people to whom she has provided her support. I ask all members to join with me to congratulate Yvonne Hassett on this award and for her lifetime commitment to helping others.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

(1445)

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to take an opportunity to add my words of congratulations on behalf of the government caucus to Yvonne Hassett, a person who is well known in south-west Saskatchewan and I guess right across the province, to say congratulations here on her achievement.

I think the other thing that I wanted to mention and to say here is that the opportunity of the member to bring this name forward I think is a . . . should be an important part of the working of the Assembly, and I want to say that we join with him and the members of the opposition in congratulating Yvonne on the achievement.

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to have leave to acknowledge another individual who received the same award.

Leave granted.

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, the city of Swift Current has

been honoured on many occasions by people who have received the award of merit and one of those was a gentleman by the name of Art Wallman, who received one last year, and very worthwhile recognition.

This year a researcher at the research station in Swift Current, Dr. Ronald DePauw . . . He was born in Kamsack in 1944, went to the University of Missouri and the University of Manitoba where he received a degree in plant genetics, and during his studies, worked for three years in Kenya.

He was a plant breeder at Ag Canada in Alberta from '73 to '78 when he became a research scientist in the Agriculture Canada Research Station at Swift Current. He has served the Swift Current Separate School Board as a judo instructor and has raised an Ethiopian refugee child himself.

Mr. DePauw has acquired an international reputation for his achievements in plant breeding. He has developed a number of varieties of wheat and other cereal crops which are resistant to disease, moisture, and insects, and have a high yield and protein content.

He has worked closely with the Canadian Wheat Board and the Canadian Grain Commission, has introduced a new class of wheat called "Canada prairie spring," which has greatly expanded the market for Saskatchewan farmers and is . . . particularly those people around the Lanigan area where the feedlot is there. His nine wheat cultivars now account for 28 per cent of the pedigreed acres of wheat in Canada.

He worked closely with producers and industry in agriculture research and technology transfer, has published numerous articles, and is much in demand as a lecturer.

Mr. DePauw received a distinguished agrologist award from the Institute of Agrologists in Saskatoon in 1988. And I would like to have this Assembly acknowledge his work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

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

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of attending the banquet and the function at which the Saskatchewan Order of Merit was given out this year, and on that occasion had the pleasure of meeting Dr. DePauw and talking about Swift Current and his experience living in Swift Current and working at the experimental farm. We have a great many mutual acquaintances and had quite a lengthy and enjoyable conversation that evening.

I certainly acknowledge, as we all do on this side of the House, the enormous contribution that Dr. DePauw has made to agriculture in this province and in this country, and in particular his work in the area of plant breeding. And we also on this side of the House extend our congratulations to Dr. DePauw and thank the member for his comments about him.

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And

I too would ask leave of the House to have a few comments, a couple of minutes on the passing of a great Canadian.

Leave granted.

## CONDOLENCES

**Mr. Neudorf:** — I thank the members for their indulgence, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that this House would be remiss if one of us did not get up and pay tribute to the passing of one of the greatest Canadians that Canada has had the fortunate privilege of having. And of course I refer to the hon. Joseph Robert Smallwood of Newfoundland, who although I did not always agree with his procedures or perhaps I could say his antics, was certainly someone whom all Canadians learned to recognize as being one of great stature, particularly as being the last surviving Father of Confederation.

I recall many days of my school days when the premier of Newfoundland certainly was the topic of conversation. He was the leader of the Confederation with Canada movement which resulted in Newfoundland joining the Confederation. He had many, many orders of merit, Companion of the Order of Canada and so on; I'm not here to recite all the things that he was able to accomplish.

But I'm very proud in one sense to say that Joey and I had something in common. And that is that besides being in politics, he also was a hog farmer. And it says here that he operated the largest hog farm in Newfoundland from 1943 to '46. And I just want to indicate to members of this Assembly that when I became a hog farmer, I bought out the largest hog farmer in all of Saskatchewan, and there's no doubt in my mind that he weighed at least 380 pounds. So that Joey and I do have something in common from that point of view.

Certainly he was also . . . Mr. Smallwood was very interested in reading, in writing. In fact he is said to have said that politics was an interlude for him between his love of reading and writing. And I think all hon. members would join with me in saying that we are certainly very, very fortunate that he chose to have an interlude from his first love and get involved in politics, and for the contributions that he made to Canada.

And on behalf of Newfoundland and Canada, I'm sure all members join with me in congratulating him.

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

**Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member and all members of the House in extending a word of appreciation on the contribution of the hon. Joey Smallwood, the contribution that he made to Canada as one of the Fathers of Confederation.

Mr. Smallwood was indeed a great Canadian. He was one of those people who made a significant contribution to bringing this country to the greatness which we experience today. We are now going through some stressful times as a nation, Mr. Speaker, but I'm assured,



because of the foundation that was laid by people like Mr. Smallwood and people like him, that this country will come out of this difficult time even stronger and make such a great place for people of this country to live.

Mr. Smallwood was a colourful man, he was committed, he was dedicated. And he was proud to be a Canadian, as I know all members of this House are proud to be Canadians, and can look to the example of people like Mr. Smallwood as we work towards making this country the country we want it to be.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### MOTIONS

##### Government Financial Procedure

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance on Monday introduced a motion which has been described as a blatant and unprecedented attempt to bypass democracy to the suspension of the province's constitution.

The NDP motion rescinds the rules and procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and the usual procedures for tabling, referral, and consideration of estimates and for the presentation of a budget and the budget debate in order to appropriate taxpayers' money to fund government operations. The NDP government is trying to hide its political agenda, including the partisan hiring and firing of government workers which would normally be questioned in the estimates process.

The government is unilaterally changing the rules of the legislature and turning all back-bench and opposition MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) into rubber-stamping machines. It's a flagrant attempt to postpone democracy to suit the political needs of the NDP. Obviously this government is on an agenda of suppression and dissent.

The NDP are doing precisely the things it said it would not do, Mr. Speaker — exactly what they said they wouldn't do. But the opposition will do whatever to prevent the NDP from abusing this Legislative Assembly. We will do, Mr. Speaker, anything we can in opposition to keep these people honest and straightforward over there. That's what we're here for, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I never thought when I came into this legislature in 1978 that we would have two Bills come . . . a motion, Bills come forth like has come forth this week. This here interim supply Bill that they call a . . . I call it a budget, just as plain and simple a budget. They just trying to get around those words. And also Bill 18.

These two Bills and motions I never thought would ever happen. I never thought as I grew up . . . And I had five uncles in my family, Mr. Speaker, who went to war. Two of them stayed over in Europe, are buried. They give their lives for this country in World War II. And then in World War I, I had three uncles over there. And they wanted things right for this country. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, they never thought in Saskatchewan this legislature would ever come to something like this where we'd have something that's jammed down our throat.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, if we could just be asking questions, but it can't because they don't want to answer. Why we're even doing here this fall? Why are we in here at all? Why did we come here? We only came here so they could justify a budget that they won't call a budget. That's all they're here for.

**An Hon. Member:** — Their political agenda.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Right. As the member from Thunder Creek says, their political agenda.

In 1978, in 1978 when I was elected in the same time in October, the hon. Allan Blakeney did not bring the House in till March. He didn't bother fooling around with this kind of stuff. And I don't know why we're here. There's no reason whatsoever to be here.

If we're going to be here and you're going to present, Mr. Speaker, if we're going to present a financial report which, as the member from Estevan, our leader, said the other day is exactly a budget, and you said it's exactly ours, it's not, Mr. Speaker. I've been through it and they've changed it. It's not the same figures that we had. So then why isn't it a budget and why couldn't we have had at least a couple of days, a couple or three days to ask the ministers questions?

I wanted to ask the Minister of Finance if I could. And I should have the right when he goes around this province saying that the deficit and this government now is nearly \$975 million. That's the deficit for this year. Almost a billion dollars. That's what he's been saying.

But, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that statement. I have hard time with that one. I think somebody's been playing with figures. Somebody's been playing with figures, and they have a plan, Mr. Speaker. They have a real good plan. But it's going to backfire on them, because the people of Saskatchewan will see by spring how shallow this plan is. They'll see through it.

They started out with their plan with a trek to Ottawa because all through the election campaign they kept trying . . . they seemed to feel they were going to win, those last couple of weeks of the election. They practically were talking as if they were the government. And they said, Mr. Speaker, that soon as we are the government we're going to trek off to Ottawa and we're going to get all the money we need from the Prime Minister of this country to save the farmers in Saskatchewan.

They, Mr. Speaker, knew before they went down there there wasn't any chance of getting any money. They

knew that. I think every individual in this province knew, after the member from Estevan when he was premier just got \$800 million, that they weren't going to go down there before the ink was dry on the paper that gave us the \$800 million, that they weren't going down there and get some more.

But they had a plan. The Minister of Finance had a plan. And his plan, Mr. Speaker, was to try to reflect all this here problem onto the federal government. They want to take it off themselves. And then they kept talking about all the money, all the money that has been spent. And we've got such a deficit that we cannot do anything for you in Saskatchewan. We can't do one thing because the pot is dry.

That's what they wanted to create. And what the Minister of Finance is trying to do here, Mr. Speaker, is to create a thinking in all the taxpayers and all the individuals in this province, that we are really broke; to be able to come out next spring with a deficit budget, not a balanced budget as he promised the people of Saskatchewan. We know that they went throughout this province saying at election time, we will balance the budget, lower taxes, create jobs, get money out of Ottawa, improve the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program . . .

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

(1500)

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Which we all know that it's an impossible thing to do.

I challenge, over the next four years, if this Minister of Finance and his cabinet can balance the budgets, create jobs and lower taxes at the same time. I challenge him, Mr. Speaker, because he can't. Because what he has in mind is have everybody all ready next spring for this balanced budget. Then he's going to say no, Ottawa wouldn't pay the farmers, and the Tories left us in such a disastrous situation. He's going to create this 900 . . .

I want him to be able to stand and I want this right before next March. I want this right now to be able to have him show and table and show the media and show everybody in this province exactly where this \$975 million is, because I don't believe it's there. I just don't believe it's there, and I know that he knows it's not there.

I want the right to have estimates in this House, Mr. Speaker. I want to be able to ask the Minister of Agriculture what he's going to do for farmers in this province of Saskatchewan. Why haven't we got that right, because in the book here, this little report, he's saying that he's going to spend some money. We don't know where it's going to go, but we, Mr. Speaker, need that right to get the Minister of Agriculture on his feet and say, are you going to live up to the promises that you made for the farmers in this province of Saskatchewan?

You went throughout this province for the last nine and a half years saying, Mr. Speaker, that we have a plan for farmers and business men. We have a plan that's going to keep them on their farms.

But where is that plan? We thought for sure we would hear it in June. Then we thought we would hear it in July, and then when the House prorogued we knew we would hear it because he kept saying we have the plan. And then by August he said this plan is coming together, but then they'd come out saying to save the farmers, Mr. Speaker, they'd come out to say, we will put a moratorium on farm land while we're putting the plan together. And I thought for sure when this House came in this fall . . . that's why I said a while ago, Mr. Speaker, in my remarks that what are we doing here? What's the most important thing?

When they went out in rural Saskatchewan to win this election they said the most important thing was farmers. Now we haven't had one thing from them. This House is just about ready to go home for Christmas. We haven't had a Bill; we haven't had a moratorium; we haven't had a promise from the Minister of Agriculture what he's going to do. He just stands up in his seat a couple of times and he told the independent member, and he said to me one day, oh, we've been to visit the banks and we're discussing with the banks and we're going to work out . . . what governments all across Canada have been doing on behalf of farmers, visiting banks.

If you think, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Agriculture thinks for one moment . . . I'd like him on his feet answering questions in an estimate. I'd like him to stand up here and say, why do you think a bank is going to help you out to solve this problem?

**An Hon. Member:** — We're all in it together, Gerry.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — He says we're all in it together, Mr. Speaker. Well I'll tell you, he'd better get all in it together because the Tories, when we were in government, we were in it together with the farmers. And I've got farmers phoning me — not just a few a day but many a day, Mr. Speaker — saying, is the new government coming down with some protection for farmers? What are they doing in ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan)? Are you asking these questions in the House?

They're asking me, are you asking these questions? We don't get a chance to, Mr. Speaker, to ask these questions in the House. We don't get a chance because we haven't . . . they got their budget but we've never in the history of this country, ever, ever had a budget come down and can't ask questions . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The Minister of Finance has already said, I'll answer every question but I'll not answer for any ministers; I'll not answer on behalf of the ministers.

So we have been stifled on this side of the House. And I want all the people in the province of Saskatchewan to know that if they didn't want to answer questions, if they didn't want estimates, then they should not have brought this House in till next February, March, brought down a proper budget, and everything would have been fine and you wouldn't have had us so disturbed on this side of the House. And you wouldn't have had the people of Saskatchewan so disturbed, which they're going to be when they find out that we've not had a chance to ask questions.

I guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, that when we ask the

Minister of Finance, if this ever gets into . . . this motion gets passed, if we decide in this House to let it pass, because it's up to us. It's up to us, Mr. Speaker, if we decide to do like they did many times over there — talk and talk for days and days and days.

And if they think, Mr. Speaker, that the members on this side of the House, the 10 of us can't sit here and put amendments in and talk for days and days and days until we get some answers . . . And I feel like it inside here, Mr. Speaker, until we have something solid for farmers, either a plan or a short moratorium or whatever, whether it's a short or a long, we have one or the other to help farmers.

Because if this House goes out now and there's nothing in place in a Bill, there's going to be hundreds and hundreds of farmers will not be there by seeding time. They will not be there.

When we were in government they stood up over here and kept saying, unless you people do something instantly we're going to lose those farmers, like by the hour. Now over here when you ask the question in question period they say, oh well, we're talking with bankers; we're discussing it with bankers.

Well I'll tell you, what this government here when we were out on the campaign trail, what we promised for farmers . . . And I want to ask the question to that minister in estimates. I want to ask him why he can't put this here lease to own in, that we on this side of the House and when we were government promised the people of Saskatchewan.

I want to ask him in estimates what's happening to this here Bill that we were trying to get through last summer in June and July — and they filibustered the House and we had to just give it up and go home — that were going to protect the farmers with the first right of refusal on leases. We had it all ready. And you know it was ready to go and you didn't let it get through. We were going to protect farmers out there. I want the right to ask the Minister of Finance these things.

I want the right to ask him what he's going to do in estimates, Mr. Speaker. I want that right and I have that right. I have that individual right as an MLA representing my constituency and on behalf of people in the province of Saskatchewan, to ask him what they're going to do. They've been in government now for almost two months — and maybe you could say that's not a long time — but boy, when you had nine and a half years to plan your plan to what you're going to do in this province, and can't say one word except bring in something that's unprecedented, this supply Bill and then Bill 18, I mean that's all you can think about. There's just no reason for it.

I want the right to be able to ask the Minister of Health. There's a big, big figure here in health, Mr. Speaker. I look down here in the Department of Health, three hundred and one billion, two hundred and three for the entire year, but on the last quarter, \$390 million being spent. And I haven't got any idea, Mr. Speaker, what in the world that \$390 million is. Nobody in this House has any idea what that \$390 million can mean. How do you just put \$390 million is going to be spent on the department. Is that

going to be for the nursing home in Hanley? Nursing hospital in Macklin? Is it going to be for additional hospital space?

You sit here and you complained and you complained that we were letting people die for the lack of hospital beds, closing in Regina and Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. But what have they done? They've been there two months; you don't see them doing anything more sensational out there. But they do have \$390 million they're going to spend, and I want to know what it's for. I want to know whether it's going to be for their campaign promises, Mr. Speaker. Because boy, they could sure make them at election time. They made them all summer.

We can go back to the Department of Education. I want the Minister of Education in this House answering some estimates. If it's only for even 15 minutes, could get a lot of questions answered from all these ministers, especially if we had a half an hour with her for three or four basic questions to give us an outline where this money's going.

In Education, \$142 million in the last quarter. What's it for? Is it going to be for the new school that they're trying to build in my town of Loreburn, or my constituency of Loreburn? Is it for that? Or is it for department salaries? Or what is it for? I mean it's there.

And we can't get the answers because the Minister of Finance says he'll answer any question — any question. Mr. Speaker, this here will never get into committee because it's a motion. It's not a Bill. It won't get into committee. If this Bill could get into committee and we could talk about it, it would be entirely different thing. We could get some answers. But, Mr. Speaker, we won't be able to get the answers because it's not going to go to committee. This is going to be done a different way.

The Minister of Finance just said, I'll stand up and I'll answer all of your questions, but don't ask me one question that's going to be to an individual minister because I won't answer it.

Now I'm telling you if the people of the province of Saskatchewan only knew what was going on here, and if we had a press that would put the proper news out . . . but they don't even have enough fortitude about them to even look into what's going on. I think they just want to get home for Christmas like you people. Our media . . . I haven't got any great love for the media. I'd say that most of our people in the press gallery here are not too bad. They try. But they go back to the *Leader-Post*, they go back to the CKCK TV and the radio and they said, aw that's not important. And they won't even dig into it.

This morning . . . I know some lawyers in this province were getting . . . or in the city of Regina were getting phone calls; can you interpret what this Bill 18 means? Well the lawyers didn't know what it means. The press didn't understand it. If the media, our smart media, didn't understand it, how come they had to go and find out? They're trying to find out today the dangers of this.

Anyway I can't talk on that Bill here because we're talking about a supply Bill. I want that right, Mr. Speaker, to have the Minister of Health here. My critic position is Health,

and I have many others like Labour, and I want that right. I want the right to ask these people these questions. I've got questions that I'd like to ask the Minister of Labour, many questions. It wouldn't take very long, but I want that right before you start spending this kind of money.

Mr. Speaker, these people aren't taking this serious. They go out to the media and they make up their nice little comments and what the past government done.

Well I'll tell you, when you're just closing off getting ready for an election in the summer of 1991 and when this NDP opposition filibustered so much that this House got unmanageable because . . . Didn't they, Mr. Speaker? They said they wanted to make the House unmanageable. They wanted to make government unmanageable. They said that. And I got to give them credit, Mr. Speaker, they did a good job of making it unmanageable.

I've sat in this here House here for 13 years, and I'll tell you, I've never screamed and hollered and bellowed like some of these people have and walked out and rang bells for nothing and filibustered with 10-day speeches and all that. Well I'll tell you, when I . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — You're doing it now.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Well I think maybe 15 minutes in 15 days is two different things, Mr. Speaker. It's two different times. If I ever, ever try to stand up in this House — which I can do it — I could stand up and say nothing for 10 or 15 hours. Absolutely nothing.

I can remember when the minister from Moose Jaw sat right about here, Mr. Speaker, and he went on for, I'd say and I believe it was nine hours, and then another one of the members from Regina did outdo him by about an hour. And you've got to admit, Mr. Speaker — you were sitting over here — that boy, they didn't say absolutely nothing.

Well I'm going to be speaking for just a little bit longer and I've been saying something here. I've been saying something serious, and you know I'm serious. And don't laugh because it's not a laughing matter to the people in Saskatchewan that we can't have you cabinet ministers . . . never, ever did you ever see our government or ever before in the province of Saskatchewan you've never been known . . . it's never been known that a budget comes down, whether you call it a mini-budget or whatever it is, that you don't bring forth estimates to at least start out and try.

We could have asked a few questions to cover some of these important questions we're asking to the ministers, but no, you've absolutely stifled us. The Minister of Finance walks around this House here with his hands in his pocket . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. I know the member knows that we are not to refer to other members in this House, regardless of whether they are walking around or sitting in their desk. And the member knows that's unparliamentary.

(1515)

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize. The Minister of Finance has said very, very clearly that when this motion is ready for you to answer questions, that he would answer questions — any questions, any questions we ask. He said it, I can show him in *Hansard* where it says: any questions, and then he went afterwards, he went to relevant questions. And then afterwards he says, well not on behalf of my ministers, I can't answer. So this has never, ever, ever happened before.

I want the right, Mr. Speaker, to ask the Minister of Labour, I want my right to ask him what . . . is he going to bring in a . . . money . . . or is it going to happen this winter, that without the legislature — that you don't even need it — that they can raise the minimum wage to 7 to \$10 an hour? Is that going to happen without the legislature? Could it happen, Mr. Speaker? Yes, it could happen.

When I went throughout this province all this summer, people were quite put out . . . restaurant owners, and they were put out because people had to pay a 7 per cent PST (provincial sales tax) tax on their meals. Most of them tried to understand it the best they could, that we had to have the money and they knew we had to have that money. But they said, people are not coming to the cafes as much as they used to. Well now what happened? They took that PST tax off. It just went off like that on October 31 and I've had many restaurant owners say that we never even lowered our prices. We left it exactly the same because we had it included. People are all coming back; they eat their meals and don't know the difference. They weren't worried about it at all because these people, Mr. Speaker, went throughout this province scare tactic people about your just . . . this money . . . You're misleading them about what that money was going to do that they paid in the cafes.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want the right in estimates to ask the Minister of Labour . . . I want my right to ask him what's going to happen to the cafe owners and the people that walk in to buy their meals in the . . . all restaurants in the province of Saskatchewan, What is going to happen if the minimum wage goes to 7 to \$10? I want my right in estimates to ask him these questions, if that's going to happen between now and spring. Because I feel it can.

Now if you put a minimum wage \$2 to \$3 increase per hour and the employee of the cafe has to . . . restaurants pay this, that will be . . . 7 per cent would be small peanuts — be absolutely small peanuts.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go back and say a few more words about the Minister of Agriculture . . . if he understands the seriousness of how serious this situation is with the plight of the farmers out there. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if he really understands how many names are at the Farm Land Security Board, Farm Debt Review Board, mediation services; that they're at the end of their road now. That they're right at the end of that road. Unless a moratorium comes on or cash help from this government, there's going to be thousands of farmers won't be there by spring.

Mr. Speaker, this is going to be so serious that this province will never ever forget what could happen between now and spring. It could be as serious as 1935. There could be so many farms foreclosed upon, and people have to vacate their farms. And I want that right to be able to ask that Minister of Agriculture.

We have some big spendings in here, Mr. Speaker. There's Social Services, \$98 million. Well I don't know what kind of spending that is, whether that's increasing social service funding to social welfare people or is that for staffing, or what it is, I don't know. That's why we need to be able to ask these questions. And I want that right, Mr. Speaker, to ask these questions.

We've got some departments in here that aren't spending anything and I want to know why, Mr. Speaker, that they aren't spending some on that department and why they're spending so much on another. We need that right. That's our right in opposition.

You people when you were in opposition took that right and you were rightly so. You had that right and we always had a minister here to answer your questions. Always. There never was once in the history of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, never once was there not a minister here to answer questions in estimates — and I would venture to say probably in the history of this province. This is going to be the first time.

See now, Mr. Speaker, they're starting to chirp because that bothers them. They've set a precedent for the first time, the first time.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — With leave, I'd like to introduce some guests before they leave.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — I've recognized in the gallery and I hope I haven't missed any, but I'll recognize Jake Bendel and Dan Kachur and Mr. and Mrs. Yaworski who also participated in the meeting this morning. And I would like to thank them again for their contribution to the discussions this morning and welcome them to the legislature.

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

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

**Mr. Upshall:** — With leave, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would also like to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise to also welcome the people in the gallery. I've worked with them over the last number of years in Agriculture and understand the desire and compassion they have for this problem in this province, and I'm glad to see they're continuing their work. I'm sorry I couldn't

meet with them this morning, but welcome to the legislature.

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

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### MOTIONS

#### Government Financial Procedure (continued)

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's also the Department of Community Services. That's quite a large figure here. And then they got . . . It's just \$23 million, and that's just for the last quarter, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we're not going to ever have a chance to ever find out where this money's going to go. We'll have no way of finding out.

Some members are shaking their heads over there. Unless some minister will tell us these in estimates, we won't know till next spring when we come in in the next budget. On item 1 we'll be able to come back and ask after the fact.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's got to be wrong, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's got to be wrong that these ministers sit over there now. Several days has gone by. We could have asked a lot of questions of these ministers. We've had two or three days just absolutely wasted here. There's no way that I should have to be standing here at my feet . . . and we're going to have some other members talking about this.

We'd be far better if you would just turn it into estimates. Bring your estimates forward. Let it go into the Committee of Finance so we can ask the ministers our questions. I mean what was wrong with that? Because we're going to lose some time here. We won't be able to have any answers of where this money's going to go. And we're talking about a lot of money in the last quarter.

And they're trying to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, oh it's just because we haven't got time to make up a budget. Well if they haven't got time to make up a budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then why are we here? Why did we come in here? What are we wasting the public's . . . They want to save money. They went and cut back and froze their cabinet ministers' salaries to make them look like . . . which the Tories did since 1982, I believe. We froze the cabinet ministers' salaries to show the people we had a heart.

So they followed through with the same thing to save that money and then they bring us in here for three or four weeks, and talk about how much money that costs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. How much did it cost? I'd like to know what it costs for this House to open up for two or three weeks to pass absolutely nothing. There isn't anything that's . . . one thing that's . . . I can't see one Bill that couldn't have waited till spring. Not one thing. Not one Bill.

And if we don't get some answers, that's what's going to have to happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We'll have to hold it up. And then we don't have anything passed until spring until we get our answers. You can, the heavy-handed

government can, just up and prorogue the House any day they want. And that's going to cost more money, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It'll cost more money because each member gets a per diem. They are allowed up for 70 days in a year — 70 days in a session, I should say. But they can make this into two sessions. And you watch, that's what they're liable to do.

When they get ready for turkey they're just going to prorogue this House and then that means everybody got their hundred-and-some dollars a day. Then we'll be coming back in the spring and a brand-new session and that way we get another 70 days. Shouldn't have bothered with this here three weeks right now. No way we should have — unless they had have brought something forward like they said.

Because I had to hear it for months and months that there's going to be a plan for farmers and while we're putting the plan together we'll have a moratorium; it's the first piece of legislation. Did I see legislation for a moratorium? The only way you can bring one in is you have to give notice like today to be able to even talk about it on Friday. And I see we got extended hours and then . . . But I'm sure if you brought a Bill in, regardless whether it's a moratorium or whatever it is, that you'd get co-operation from this side of the House, that we wouldn't make you . . . we'd give you leave if you'd bring one in tomorrow. We'd give you leave to discuss anything if you want to help farmers. But for goodness sakes, get it here. If you got something that's going to help a farmer out there, get it here.

I've heard through the rumour mills right from your own departments that the Bill is being put together, a Bill for farmers. That's come right out of your own departments, from leaks, that they're worrying about how they're going to keep the credit unions exempt and they're going to do this and they're going to do that and bring ACS in.

We keep hearing it through members that sit on the different boards and what not. And they tell us that it's happening. But I don't really think they're serious. I think that you're just trying to get through and then blame everything onto the Tories, that we held this House up and it didn't happen.

Well I want to put on the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if they go out of this House here at Christmas time and say that the Tories filibustered in this House and they didn't get a farm Bill through, well I'll tell you, you've had almost three weeks to put a Bill in here about farmers. So don't ever try that one on us. Don't ever try that one on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I've still got a little bit of hope, because there's some members over there I've got a great lot of respect for, that they're going to come in with something, something for farmers for Christmas.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there isn't something comes forth before we go home for Christmas that's going to give some farmers that's being put off their land a feeling of security at Christmas time, boy, the respect I had for those members will sure disappear fast.

I'll lose all my respect, all of it, if one of you people that's involved — there's three or four people that are the power in this government . . . and if there isn't a Bill come forth to save farmers . . . you can't save them all but you can sure try to save as many as you can, and you're not doing anything — not one thing but a trek to Ottawa, that's all you did, and even that was a good start on the money. You took the leader of the Liberal Party with you and she thanked you for it, and she was quite happy about getting a trip to Ottawa. And I would have likely went if they had have asked me, but I would have been asking different questions than you people did.

Mr. Speaker, the next time that they go to Ottawa I'll ask them to take me with them. I'll go with them any time. I've been quite successful, Mr. Speaker, in my trips to Ottawa.

There's been a lot of changes, Mr. Speaker, in Crop Insurance when I was the minister of Crop Insurance. And I'll tell you, when I went to see the minister of Crop Insurance — federal minister of Crop Insurance — I tell you, we got changes. So I want to have the minister of Crop Insurance in this House under estimates and answer some questions. I want him answering questions — how much he's saving by the 271 firings, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to know how much money he saved and how much it's going to cost the people of Saskatchewan.

I want to know if the 271 people that were just blatantly fired, the ones that were at 44 days . . . they didn't even pick 45, because in my constituency they made a mistake and fired two adjusters at 45 days, apologized two days later on the phone and said you can come back to work; we made a mistake. So they were only trying to get rid of anybody that wasn't into the union yet. Soon as you hit the 45 days, oh, our unions will protect you; you're protected by this government; there isn't any problem if you belong to a union. As long as you belong to a union, we don't care what your . . . even what your politics is as long as you belong to a union. That's the whole thing right there.

Two hundred and seventy-one farmers out there . . . basically, farmers that needed money for Christmas themselves were fired just like that. Like Bob Larter, who used to be the member from Estevan, said sitting right here years ago, he said, where is the socialist sickle going to strike again, where is the socialist sickle going to strike again?

Well I'll tell you, you've got a lot of socialist sickles that sure struck this last few weeks. It's got a lot of heartaches at Christmas time. We got somebody that works for the government in . . . an individual that wrote me a letter this morning, that he worked for SPMC for 21 years — 21, 22 years — and he was just fired like that without cause.

There was a little bit of cause. He took 30 days leave without pay — without pay, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and took a chance — I thought he could in a country that's . . . where you have freedoms. It was the campaign manager for a Tory. He made his mistake. But he took . . . after 21 years, go home and tell your wife you've got no job and see what that did to their Christmas.

We talked about it in question period, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, and there was many, many, and you said none — whoever minister answered — there was none that we hurt. We didn't hurt anybody.

Well I'll tell you we can bring in . . . I'll bring you around 300-and-some names that you hurt bad. Then I heard some of the ministers go out to the press, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and say, oh the PCs when they took over from us in '82 that they just fired and fired. Yes, in that first three or four or five months we got 27 — 27.

(1530)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that to me is wrong information. Ministers who walk out there should look at the facts, they should look at the facts. Well how many did the PCs fire? I remember bringing in when I was sitting over there in government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember bringing in the facts what the NDP did in '71 after they beat Ross Thatcher. I remember when they came in here and the man from Pense, Jack Nichols, his picture on the front page of the *Leader-Post*, that one of the ministers came in and gave him 15 minutes to clear out his office. Well they did it in '71, they're doing it in '91, 20 years later. They don't care. And we need our right, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need our right to be able to have our ministers lined up over there, and we should have been doing it. Instead of me standing here talking, we should be asking ministers question.

**An Hon. Member:** — Well then sit down.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Well can we ask them . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, the House Leader just said if I sit down we'll have the right to ask questions to the estimates to the ministers. Is that what you heard? Because if they will go to Committee of Finance, I will gladly sit down.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I thought for one minute that the House Leader was serious, if he was serious, if he would ask me and ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and put his light on and ask me that question, I'm sure we'll say we'll do it. All he has to do is . . . It happened before, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's happened many times in this House where a member stands up and says would the person talking entertain a question.

Well, if he wishes to stand to his feet, the House Leader, if he wishes to stand and ask me any question, I will give an answer. If he wants to go to Committee of Finance . . . now I think he wishes he hadn't have said that.

Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — I would like to ask the member a question. And the question is, if we could get him to sit down and if we could move to committee on this resolution, we could wrap it up here very shortly.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Does the member agree to take a question?

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, he already . . . he asked the question, and he said if we could move to the

Committee of Finance. And naturally we would if he got up there and guaranteed that all the ministers will stay there and sit there and answer our questions. We will do it, but not in the way he done it. He said it when the light wasn't on. He said exactly what he would do; if I would sit down we would get at it because I was talking specifically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, specifically about asking ministers questions. And he said, sit down and we'll do it. But when his light's on and we asked the question, he wasn't quite able to do it, was he, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

We know where we're at. We want to ask a lot of questions. My questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be going in estimates to the Minister of Agriculture, to the minister responsible for Crop Insurance, the Minister of Labour, and the Minister of Health — that's my main critic position. And I've got a lot of questions and we all have. And we want our right.

And yes, as soon as . . . if that's on tomorrow's agenda, we hope that the House Leader, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that he's serious what he says. We hope he's really serious and tomorrow we see where we're going to have estimates in this House. Then democracy will be back in Saskatchewan. There's what we want. That's all we've asked for. And that's not much of a request, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to ask of a new government.

It isn't our fault, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the now Premier picked about six or seven people from his ministers that had no experience. It's not our fault that he's a little bit worried about putting them up to answer questions. It's not our fault because we, as the minister . . . The member from Estevan said the other day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he said it very clearly. Maybe we have to allow a four or five months kindergarten for these ministers.

I think that the . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, I realize that the Minister of Agriculture has been a person that's been throughout this province, involved in a lot of things, and he can talk pretty good, but he can't say anything. He will learn by spring. He'll know enough of the problems of agriculture that he'll be able to stand in his seat, stand beside his seat with his light on and he'll be able to answer questions because he'll learn something over the winter.

But right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he doesn't know or the first day of business would have been a Bill tabled for farmers in Saskatchewan. He didn't do it because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he has not been there long enough to be able to go to the power-house and say: Mr. House Leader, and Mr. Premier, this is what I demand for the farmers in Saskatchewan. He's just a little boy sitting out there waiting to be told.

And he'll be able to talk all right, but now when he stands up in this House, he says nothing. And I'm hoping by spring when this House comes in that he'll understand when the farmers told him that it's too late. It's been too late. We have lost our farm — we have lost. That the big farm credit and the big bank walked over top of us — the great big bank. And this here union government didn't do nothing about it Not one thing — not one thing. Because I don't think they're really going to.

Yes, absolutely nothing in this throne speech.

**An Hon. Member:** — What happened before October 21, Gerry?

**Mr. Muirhead:** — I heard a heckle from over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What happened prior to October 21? Well I'll tell you, a lot of things happened.

**An Hon. Member:** — Not much.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Oh yes. I'll tell you that it wasn't . . . an NDP government was against when the federal government brought in a Farm Debt Review Board. They were against the Farm Land Security Board. They were against mediation services.

But I wonder if the Minister of Agriculture, why can't he be here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and answer for estimates. Because if I asked him what does the Farm Land Security Board and what does mediation services work, and in what order? And what is section 16 and section 20 of the Farm Debt Review Board mean? He hasn't learned that yet. I know he doesn't know. I know he doesn't understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's why they're trying to get this thing through. They're trying to last till March so they can answer a few questions after the people and the farmers of Saskatchewan inform them.

As I said here the other night in my throne speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we, the Tory opposition, are still speaking on behalf of farmers in the province of Saskatchewan. It's proved by the vote count.

I don't know whether I said this or not, but I'll say it now in case I didn't, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there was approximately 600,000 voters in the province of Saskatchewan — approximately 600,000 — 150,000, 25 per cent, went to the Tories. We did get 150,000. There's about 110,000 voting actual farmers in this province — about 110,000.

So where did that percentage come from? It didn't come from Saskatoon and Regina and Moose Jaw and Prince Albert, it came from the rural farmers of Saskatchewan. So we say that we're still talking for farmers.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I challenge the House Leader that just left . . . sorry, I withdraw that almost what I was going to say. We challenge the House Leader and the Premier of this province, tomorrow when I look at the blues and look at the agenda that there'll be estimates and a Committee of Finance is going to be on the agenda. That's what I ask for. And that's what I expect that we're going to get because he said it very clearly. I hate to repeat it again, but you've got to repeat to this bunch many, many times so they understand.

But your Deputy Speaker, he said it very clear: if I would sit down it would happen. So he got up and asked me the question. His light's on, he's on the record, but he changed it from what he . . . but he's thinking. He changed the way he had it worded, but I think we're getting him to move.

I think that if the media would just do their job now and they would jump right on this here government, if the media would get their mind off and get a little card from them that they're having a Christmas party or something — if they can get their mind on the people and the province of Saskatchewan and get their mind on you people and ask you some of these questions, maybe they can move you a little bit. Because it's the media and you that were together for nine years. That's why we got defeated.

I hate to put down the media too hard. But boy I'll tell you, I don't think the media does their job of reporting as good as when I came in here in 1978. When I came in here in 1978 that was full from door to door and members would be called out for opinions; and they would come back in and they would sit there the better part of the day, because you can't tell me watching on a screen back there or reading in *Hansard* is exactly the same as listening in the House. Because the odd one that come in and listened would get what's really going on; he would understand what that person's saying.

And we need the media. I challenge the media to go after the Premier. They're back in their little rooms watching on television. They might learn, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister of Finance and the Premier of this province and the House Leader are the three powers in that government over there. And it's up to them, it's up to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to decide between now and tomorrow — because tomorrow is Thursday and we're getting out of time. Because I see the pressure is being put on for longer sitting hours on Friday, longer sitting hours continuing on Saturday and also is going to be continuing on Monday and the long sitting hours are going to continue on Tuesday, and I'm afraid we're still going to be here on Wednesday.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've had many people say in this province, well what in the world are 10 people going to do in opposition to scrutinize this big, powerful government? Well I'll tell you, these 10 people that sit here in opposition are going to do a lot to scrutinize you people.

You may be able to use your power; you may be able to outvote us. You may be able to do those things, but I'll tell you, there won't be anything that you're going to push over this here opposition without the people of Saskatchewan knowing what you're doing.

We're going to remind them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there's been no change from 1982 to 1991. We had nine years of Tory government, and the NDP went out there for this last year, saying you're going to get brand-new government, you're going to do all these wonderful things.

Well I'll tell you, two of these Bills that came in here is more than . . . I said when I started out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I couldn't believe that we had to sit here in this province and we had people that never, ever thought — like my five uncles that fought in World War I and World War II, and two of them gave their lives — whoever thought that this would ever happen in this province of Saskatchewan, that we would lose our



freedoms.

And when we have Bills like have been brought forward . . . there's even one on the municipality Act here that I never thought I'd ever see. You never seen Bills like that under a Tory government.

So if you think you're smart over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they think they're smart bringing in these type of Bills. I'll guarantee you by spring they'll be at about a 35, 40 per cent on the polls. And look out, because I also said many times in the last six months that if we lose this government, if we lose this election, we'll be losing government. But if the member from Riversdale, the Premier of this province, now Premier, had have been in government and defeated us four years ago, he would have been gone with the wind, exactly the same as we did.

If you think that for one minute that it's any different in Texas and Oklahoma and North Dakota and Kansas than it is right here, because it isn't. Because what you hear farmers say down there, they're against whoever's in government. And they're going to be against you and awful fast.

I've got people, Mr. Speaker, I've got people in my cafes in Craik, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are saying, what is this government doing when they won't let you ask questions in estimates? They won't let you ask them, and they voted for you. They voted for you or for the Liberals in this here province. They voted for you, but they've already got second thoughts. They've already got second thoughts. So that happened in two months.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I watched the polling very carefully in this province, as it happens. Well I tell you we were sitting two years . . . In 1984 we were sitting almost as high as we were on election day. So if you people the way you're slipping right now in the first two months and bringing these kind of things in . . . And if it wasn't for Christmas time, you wouldn't get away with it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's because of the season. Everybody's out there shopping and . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — I thought they didn't have any money.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Well the union people . . . The Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Deputy Speaker, says they haven't got any money. Well I'll tell you, the farmers aren't out there doing much Christmas shopping. It's your union boys that's doing the shopping with the big wages. They're the ones that's doing the shopping.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so some of my other colleagues can have something to say on this motion, my last words are that I challenge and I expect between the media and the three or four main power-houses of that government to get together tonight. And we see on the blues tomorrow that we're moving into Committee of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

(1545)

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy this afternoon to address the supply Bill. The actions taken by the government through the motion before the House today are unprecedented and of grave concern. The very principles of democracy are at stake here, Mr. Speaker. The principles of our constitution are built around freedom of speech and the rights of individuals and on the accountability of those elected to serve the people.

Long-standing traditions of grievance before supply must be observed if a government is to remain accountable to the people it serves. These very basic rules date back to the Magna precedent and are fundamental rights, Mr. Speaker.

The motion before this House today suspends those very rights. It eradicates the accountability of government; it eradicates the opposition's right to voice their opinion. And, Mr. Speaker, it eradicates the very essential rights of democracy.

The principles set before us through the constitution include holding government accountable for the spending of public funds. And, Mr. Speaker, accountability is necessary. The government must outline where the moneys are to be spent. The government must answer questions about where the funds are to be allotted and why. And, Mr. Speaker, through the democratic process every member in this House is allotted six days to debate the spending, to exercise a very important right allowed to us in a democratic nation — freedom of speech.

Mr. Speaker, the motion before us today takes precedent over the rights of the people, over the rights of the members of this Assembly.

Never before has a government in Canada stripped the basics of democracy from the pages of the very constitution written in order to safeguard its own political agenda, in order to erase any questions of why hundreds of innocent people have been fired by the NDP for political reasons; in order to discuss and dismiss questions that would expose the NDP government for using totalitarian tactics to fulfil a socialist mandate; in order, Mr. Speaker, to undermine the very principles this Assembly was formed to protect.

No other government in Canada has ever abused a huge majority of members in order to suppress the rights of the individual and . . . (inaudible) . . . inherent in each of us by democracy.

But then again, Mr. Speaker, the NDP members have already stated that the rights of the individual aren't as important as the institution. That is evidenced by the Draconian legislation before us today.

This motion, Mr. Speaker, makes it impossible for me to ask the NDP why they have allotted 1.3 millions of dollars to fight forest fires in Saskatchewan in the middle of the winter. Well we all know there are no forest fires in Saskatchewan in the dead of winter. So where is the money really going? We have no way of finding out because this motion makes it impossible to question the

minister.

I would also like to ask the Minister of Social Services where the remaining \$300,000 went that funded the Sask Works program. But am I allowed to pose my question? No, the new Minister of Finance has tried over the past couple of days to take the spotlight off of this motion and place it on the former government. Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough.

If he recalls, the former government presented the budget before the House and also went through estimates. Questions were posed by the opposition and answered. Answers, Mr. Speaker, that is all we are asking today — answers to important questions. Mr. Speaker, we have already told the members opposite, we are willing to give up the budget debate in order to have the estimates. We are also prepared to give them quick interim supply if they should allow us to pass through estimates and get answers to the people of Saskatchewan, answers the people deserve to have.

But the NDP will not allow us to pass through estimates because they have much to hide from the people of Saskatchewan. What other reason could the NDP possibly have for not allowing estimates? The NDP form of open government, Mr. Speaker, is the kind of government Lenin would be proud of because it is not open, Mr. Speaker. It is anything but open.

In fact I am watching the Bills from the NDP, looking for a wall to be constructed around our province. After motions like the one before us today, fencing people in will be the only way the NDP can maintain a population in Saskatchewan. Since it will take over four years to build a wall of that magnitude, the NDP will cram other totalitarian tactics down the throats of citizens in the meantime.

What the NDP, through its motions, are trying to do is totally unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. They are taking money directly from the people of Saskatchewan and excusing themselves from any accountability, any questions whatsoever. Mr. Speaker, they are putting themselves above the reproach of their official opposition, above the reproach of this Assembly, above the reproach of the people of Saskatchewan.

What is the use of meeting in this Assembly if the NDP are going to use a swollen majority to exploit the principles of democracy and place themselves above the principles this country was built upon? The members opposite should be ashamed, Mr. Speaker. If this Assembly bows to the pressures of the NDP vast majority and this motion, we may as well change our province and name it to the People's Republic of Saskatchewan.

In addition to forcing totalitarian methods upon this Assembly, the NDP have also asked the official opposition to nominate members to a special rules committee the government is forming to rewrite the rules after this act of suspension. If the NDP government is willing to suspend all the rules whenever conveniently required, then it matters not a whit what the rules are.

How can such members be appointed in the current

climate where the government has proven conclusively it has no regard for the role of the opposition or the rules themselves?

It's inadmissible, Mr. Speaker. It's also inadmissible for the NDP to act as if they are fulfilling the will of the people by putting this motion forth. The will of the people, Mr. Speaker, is to have as much say in government dealings as possible, to make decisions for themselves.

The motion before us is making it impossible for the public to know what the NDP government is doing. The motion makes it impossible to get answers for the over 250 crop insurance adjusters that were fired by the NDP; makes it impossible to learn the details of the Gass tribunal and their political mandate; makes it impossible, Mr. Speaker, to find out any details of estimates and expenditures of any minister in the government.

When is the NDP government going to honour promises of open government? Is it possible to have open government when no questions may be asked; when no answers are received? How can the public and the opposition have a way of finding out what secret deals are being thrown together by the NDP? When are the members opposite going to begin to take responsibility that comes with being government? When are they going to stop blaming the former government for their own inability to run this province?

Mr. Speaker, the NDP claim to be moving this motion because it will be the answer to what the public wants. I would like to ask the NDP why they haven't honoured the answers given in the recent election if they truly desire to honour the wants of the public.

What happened to the plebiscite on abortion funding? Or balanced budgets? I have received letters from constituents asking me to push the government to enforce the voice of the people. But I'll tell you what has happened to the plebiscites, Mr. Speaker. Nothing. The answer is clear. The NDP do not have the will of the people foremost in their agenda. It is impossible.

It is impossible for the NDP government to have the public's interest at heart and still ignore the basic fundamentals of democracy like they are doing today. And they are ignoring the people, Mr. Speaker. The NDP are wolves in sheep's clothing, waiting for their opportunity to pounce on the public purse. They are like the child who has a hand in the cookie jar, only there is no parent to discipline the wrongdoing.

Mr. Speaker, we are here to debate a supply Bill, a Bill that I have taken to heart. And if my leader hadn't spilled a glass of water on my notes I'd know what . . .

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would entertain a question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It's up to the member if he wants to entertain a question. If the member wants to, he can say so.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the member whether or not that member from Maple Creek supports . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order, order. It's up to the member to indicate whether or not he wishes to entertain a question.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — When I finish sorting out my notes I'll see if I feel like answering a question. And I can assure you, sir, that when we form government we'll answer your questions.

Now to get back to this business of entering a supply Bill and presenting it to be a hand-off for a budget. We have many questions, Mr. Speaker, about this process. I, for example, have many questions that I would like to ask of the member of Rural Development.

We started this morning to discuss a question in question period about a very important matter to my constituents, the matter of receiving oil and gas lease money that has been owing for some time to some of these ranchers out in the country, money that these ranchers have to have in order to pay their own lease fees so that they can retain the land that they use to feed their cattle. If these people don't get their lease fees paid, it will be impossible for them to be able to make their lease payments.

We have questions like when will this money be paid, or is it available to be paid? We have questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with regards to whether or not this money has been allocated in the so-called excuse for what isn't called a budget, I guess we have to say.

Are we going to allow these farmers to charge up their lease fees until this money comes through, or are we going to see them charged interest? Or maybe they will lose their leases altogether. Now this is not a question that should be taken lightly because the cash flow in the country is such that it is so tight right now, Mr. Speaker, that many of these individuals can't possibly pay their bills unless they receive the money that the Department of Rural Development owes to them.

It's my opinion, Mr. Speaker, that unless we have what is called a regular budget where we can come in to debate and question where this money is and whether or not it is in this document, we'll never know. And we may see a stalling tactic that simply follows the lines that they will not pay any money to the farmers and ranchers, hoping that they will in fact have to jeopardize their ownership of that land so that the government can take it back and perhaps allocate it to some of their NDP friends.

It is a serious question, this matter of how moneys are held back from farmers that need the money in order to pay off their bills. Is there some kind of a secret plan here perhaps for the NDP to try to take over this land and give it to somebody else? We want the right to ask these kind of questions and the right to have answers to them.

(1600)

In the area of rural development we've talked about a lot

of things that we need to know fairly soon. We want to know whether or not there's going to be money available to our rural municipalities that have had a problem with tax collections in the past year. Tax collections have been poorer in some municipalities than they've ever been before. We see a situation arising where some municipalities have collected less than half of the taxes that they have ordinarily coming in. In those municipalities it is impossible for them to supply the goods and services that the people of those rural municipalities need to have — roads that need maintenance in the winter time, that provide transportation not just to the people that live in those municipalities but transportation to all of the people of the province that want to travel through.

But the more specific problem is the fact that without these taxes coming in, municipalities have had to curtail plans for snow removal. And that gets down to the basic crunch of life for us. And here we have a situation, Mr. Speaker, where an awful lot of school buses may not be able to travel this winter because there's no money for the municipalities to provide snow removal.

Now it would seem to me that if we had the right to ask some questions about the funding in Rural Development and a budget were supplied to us so that we could present these questions — in fact perhaps some mistakes have been made and some errors might have occurred where people have forgotten, and we all can make some mistakes — maybe the minister would discover that he'd forgotten to include some of these very important things and he could make some adjustments. But we're not allowed to debate or discuss the thing. We're not allowed to ask the questions to possibly bring these matters to the front.

And if we are allowed to bring these matters to a focus, then the minister could take the appropriate actions and find the moneys perhaps to make sure that our school kids are able to get to school through the winter.

It just seems to me that we've got too many important things, Mr. Speaker, that haven't been considered in the way that this proposal has been brought to us. I don't suppose that the minister in charge of Rural Development really understood that some municipalities are in that much of a serious problem with tax collection.

We want to have the right, Mr. Speaker, to ask such questions as the ones I've just proposed. We also need to know things like, is there enough money to go around, or will we be running more of a deficit? If we're going to be running more of a deficit, we have to get some indication for the people who have serious concerns about where the moneys should come from to pay for the things that we need in our province.

And I've had a call from a man from Edmonton — and I won't mention any names because obviously he has the right to some anonymity on this kind of thing — but he wanted to know whether or not the NDP were going to introduce a death tax and whether or not this would be retroactive to the election date.

It's very important to these people to know whether or not

a succession duty will be placed in the province because many farmers and ranchers of course die every year. It's unfortunate, but it's a fact of life. And their families are left with the concern of how to settle estates.

And we are very concerned that we have to know whether this approach is going to be taken. And we have to have the right to ask the questions of the members opposite and especially the ministers, to try to ascertain for our constituents what they need to look for in planning in case such a thing would happen.

If you're going to have a death in the family, you want to know are we going to lose the family farm because of succession duties? Or would it just simply be better for us to walk away from the farm and not try to settle the estate and let the government have it. We haven't had the ability to find out these kinds of things, and we want that right. We're trying to preserve the right to see for our people the things that they need to know, the things that they have been asking us.

I heard the other member discuss with you the need for money for farmers, and the plight of farmers is certainly near and dear to my heart. I have worked with farmers, and I've been in many farm homes with many farmers. And I can't say that I enjoyed doing that kind of work, but I have to say that I enjoyed getting the experience that I got because it makes me knowledgeable, at least to some extent, as to what people are facing out there other than just my own farm family.

And having some record of knowing what people are going through, through that process, I have to say to this government that I am truly disappointed that you haven't come up with some type of an approach to get farm aid to farm families this year before Christmas. And if you couldn't do it before Christmas, at least you could've come with a plan that could've given the folks some feeling of security, some feeling that maybe they'd have a reason to want to get up in the morning through January and February. It's going to be pretty tough for some of the farm families to face the world through a bleak winter with no money and very little possibility of getting any.

You've given no hope to these people when you could've done that. It would've cost such a very small amount of money to be able to get quite a bit of money out of the federal government. I think it wouldn't have been that hard after taking a trip to Ottawa and spending all that time and money to get down there. I don't think it would've taken much more effort to get a commitment from the federal government that they would turn the moneys that they've promised over to you in the springtime when they determine what they allocated.

It wouldn't have been that hard for this Department of Rural Development or the Department of Agriculture or one of these other departments to find a few dollars by cutting back some place else and provide that kind of money necessary . . . to borrow the money and pay the interest so that it could've been paid out to the farmers and the farm families. Or at least it could've been promised to them by January or February, some time in the future, when it would've given them some hope that at least they might be getting it. You'd give them a reason

to get up in the morning, a reason to want to continue to go on with the business of farming for next year.

Certainly these kind of dollars aren't going to be enough to save a lot of the farms. And I have to sympathize with an awful lot of farm families. I'm sure of one thing, and one thing I'm very certain of — I honestly believe that more farmers in this province are in serious financial trouble than any of the records show.

The farm people are a proud people, Mr. Speaker. They are a very proud group of individuals. And that pride ties them to secrecy about being in financial trouble. And sometimes, even though I admire them, I believe it would be better for all farmers if they'd simply come right out and say, we've got a bigger problem here than what shows to the public, and let it all sort of be known. But that pride is important because it's the kind of pride in oneself and the pride in one's farming operations that keeps these people on the land and keeps them struggling through these very difficult times.

Where else in society would you find a group of people as tough as farmers and ranchers at sticking with things — things like depression and no profits and no income. And, Mr. Speaker, we have to be able to question the Minister of Rural Development and the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Finance to find out if there's any plan in this document to provide any funding for people so that they will have some hope for the future and for the next few months.

It seems as though we've said in this province that we're simply going to write these folks off for three or six months, and that that'll be okay because we can say the past government didn't do its job right. But that's not the point. We're living through the future now. And in those next few months it's going to be absolutely critical that these people find some hope to continue, or they're just going to simply throw their hands in the air and walk away.

And I guess I'd have to say here that I don't want to be a pessimist, but some of them may not just throw their hands in the air; they may decide to end it all. And that is the tragedy that we're in in this farming business today. And we can't find out from anyone, by not having a question approach to a budgetary type of document, whether or not this government has any plan at all to help these folks out.

We want to ask the ministers for things like their estimates and how things are going to work. We want to know the things about moratoriums, because even though moratoriums are not the kind of thing I would personally advocate because of the severe implications that are involved, for those people that it does involve, they have an absolute necessity to know if such a thing is even being contemplated.

Now if we can't ask the questions to find that out, then how our are credit unions and our banks to know what kind of future is in store for them for the next winter? Is it possible that there is a plan for a moratorium to come on that would cause credit unions and banks to have to take enormous losses? Would I as a person who puts my

money in the credit union, from my monthly wage that I now receive for being here, will I stand perhaps one day to see that credit union door closed and my money gone? Will my father, who is retired and has a little bit of money in the bank, suddenly find out that his little bit of cash that he kept in reserve is going to be gone because the bank may have to close its door as a result of having too many farm foreclosures dumped on it, and all of a sudden they find there isn't enough money to cover the losses? Will I as a farmer, perhaps next spring, wake up and find that I don't have an operating capital, that perhaps the credit union or the bank won't any more give me operating money as a loan in order to operate my business?

Those are questions that we can only find out if we have the ability, Mr. Speaker, to talk to these members and ask them the questions as to whether or not there are any financial plans for this type of thing to come into effect.

Now there are some ways that you can do some moratorium work to help farmers, but I think you would have to go and say that a different type of wording would have to be used because an outright, genuine moratorium wouldn't be the kind of thing that our financial institutions could tolerate. It just simply is not in the cards. I didn't live through the Dirty Thirties, but I certainly heard a lot about them through the years. A lot of my family lived through them and survived quite well.

They talked about a type of moratorium that was put on back in those days. And I don't know, from what I've heard, that it worked all that well. I can't see any evidence in the history that I've been able to study, that a whole lot of people really survived as a result of that. The conditions that occurred after the Great Depression sort of worked its way into a war, and I guess that probably had as much to do with straightening out the economy of Canada and the rest of the agriculture world as much as anything else.

So if we get back to the point of the moratorium idea, then we can only scare off our bankers. We can only probably cause our credit unions to go broke. And yet we don't know if that's the kind of intentions this government has. Because they won't allow us to go into a budgetary debate where we can ask questions and find out if these kind of things are being contemplated.

We have a lot of things that could be done. The lease to own option has been mentioned before, and I think it was a good idea, and I think one that perhaps the government ought to take up upon. Maybe they could call it a different name or something to make it more plausible for themselves. Obviously they wouldn't want to use something that we had as an idea. So maybe they could think of a different name for it and come up with the same idea. And if they got the notion that it was their idea, they might be able to bring it in and actually help some folks. And we wouldn't care about that. But it would be quite nice if you'd try to do something like that.

We want to know a lot of things about a lot of different questions with regards to financing, Mr. Speaker. In my constituency of Maple Creek we have a lot of tourism that goes on, and I haven't even heard that one mentioned yet.

But here we have a situation where we have the great

Cypress Hills, one of the finest tourism areas in the world. And the great Cypress Hills offers all kinds of cross-country skiing, good lodging. We have a swimming pool that's modern and beautiful up there, and yet we don't know if there's any money being allocated for some new venture into winter sports in that area. And we'd certainly would like to have the opportunity to ask the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources whether or not there are any financial commitments in this document to help the kinds of parks that we have.

And certainly there are more in this province than just the great Cypress Hills. There are those types of parks all over our province. And we'd like to know, is there any funding being made available to those parks so that they can operate through this winter and make a reasonable contribution to the recreation of our Saskatchewan people and for the people that might come in from outside of our country?

It's possible that with the kinds of tourist organizations that we have in the south-west corner of the province, that an awful lot of money might be generated through this tourism. And if we just had a little spark to kind of create it and to get started, it might all just sort of work a lot better. And that can't happen unless, of course, we find the government having allocated some funds or maybe even have a plan of some kind to go in that direction.

We don't know, for example, if any moneys have been allotted to even keep our highways' snow clear so that people can get to the parks. And those kind of questions, Mr. Speaker, have to be answered, and we have to be the ones to ask them because that's our job.

Now I could dwell on tourism for quite a while because in our area we also have the Great Sand Hills. And here we have a lot of groups that have started tours and promotions to get people to come in and tour through The Great Sand Hills to see everything from the open sand dunes to the great ranches and productive pastures that we have through that region. And we also have of course in that region the gas fields — all things that are of interest. We have things like buffalo jumps in that area where the native people used to run herds of buffalo over the edges of the cliffs. And those buffalo were used for food, and we have the remnants of that still today in our area.

And people go on tours with these bus tours. And if we could get the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources to commit himself to some dollar funding to encourage that kind of thing, it would be a great thing through the winter and especially through the summer for our area.

But we can't get to ask about the supply of money in this Bill from the minister, to find out whether he has given that any consideration or any thought. And we believe that we should have the right, Mr. Speaker, to ask him these questions so that we can find out whether or not we in fact have any kind of a kick-start plan in place by this government to make tourism work in our area, so that we can get a few dollars maybe to get some of these projects going.

If we just had the right to ask some of these questions, we might be able to not only find out the answers to what's

going on but perhaps to stimulate some thought in that direction so that new plans could be made. Even if those new plans weren't done right away this year, it might just possibly be, Mr. Speaker, that they might take up the idea and bring it into their plans for next year. And that's what the whole process could be about, is that we might plant some ideas and seed some food for thought and get something going in this province from a government that says it wants to do something, has campaigned on that basis.

Now it appears to me that what we've almost had happen here — and I have no objection to this — is that we seem to have a practice session going on here. And certainly being new here it's all right for me to have some practice because I certainly need it, and so do a lot of the other fellows.

But I'm not really that sure that that's why the people decided to elect us and send us here, was to practise all winter. And the reason that I say that it looks like a practice session is quite simply that we don't have a budget, we don't have a plan, we don't have any direction. We don't even have a decent throne speech to indicate any plan for the future.

(1615)

The only legislation that we have so far before us seems to be legislation that attacks the past government and attacks the past and tries to rip down and destroy the things that have been done in the province over the past years. And where is the future? We haven't seen one.

So it leads me to believe that what we have here is a practice session. And I'm enjoying the practice but I think maybe it's time we got down to some real business and some real work, present a real budget, give us a chance to ask some real questions from some real ministers that maybe will either say they can't supply us with the answers or perhaps that they will go home and do their homework and find out what's going on.

And I know very well that they wouldn't want to stoop so low as to ask me for any advice, but I could certainly help them to find a lot of good folks that are not terribly political out there and they'd be quite willing to help to formulate a plan so that we could go on with the future in this province.

The right to ask questions is a very important one to us, Mr. Speaker. We've talked about all kinds of reasons why we need to have these things done, and in our constituency — and I guess that's what I should dwell on because that's what's important to the people that elected me — we've got a very thriving gas and oil industry and the gas and oil industry has to know what direction our province is going in.

This is an industry that not only invests a lot of money in our province but it provides an awful lot of jobs; it provides a lot of hope for a lot of people. In our area a lot of our young farmers farm sort of whenever they can and they work full-time with the oil or gas industry.

Now those jobs are essential for these people. I don't

sometimes know why they do it, but what happens is that they'll end up making a great wage working in the oil and gas industry and then they'll end up putting that money into their farms, which are losing money, and keep them going so that we can supply cheap food for the world. And some days I wonder if some people don't deserve to starve for the way they treat our farmers.

But anyway those jobs are there, and they're very important because they give these young farmers the hope they need. And in this process that we're involved in we can't find out if that industry is protected through this budgetary process or not. We have to know whether the industry is going to be encouraged to expand, encouraged to continue to work, because the plans are long term, Mr. Speaker.

You can't expect a petroleum company to come into Saskatchewan and invest 100 or \$200 million in drilling programs if they don't know what direction we're going to be going in. They have to know a long time in advance what their profit potentials are or what their break-even potentials are or if they're going to, in fact, lose money. And obviously if one of those companies realizes that before they start that they're going to lose money, they won't be here. And if they're not here, we don't have the jobs and we don't have the economic activity that we will need.

And this is very important to my constituency because we happen to live in an area where this, in fact, is a fact. We have the petroleum industry, very active over the years because that's where the gas and oil happens to be under the ground.

Now some of the other members here have got constituencies with exactly that same kind of condition. And we've got to know through this winter whether or not there's going to be some kind of a plan that will encourage these industries to continue to work. We've got to know, from our ability as an opposition to be able to ask the questions of the ministers in their supply Bill, which is the economic direction of our province.

And it's passed off so quickly as being something that sort of doesn't matter, just a stopgap, something that's sort of going to just be used today and gone tomorrow. And in reality it is the plan for the future for some very big industries that are so very important to so many of our people.

These young farmers need to have the work and a lot of them run little businesses on the side. I'm sure most of you know that a lot of these young farmers come up with good inventions. Little things like a Texas gate for example. A fellow decided one day that the way to keep cattle in the fence, rather than to open and close the gate every day, was to build a Texas gate. He got the plan from somebody else obviously. He didn't think of the whole thing himself, but he perfected it, he made it better. And he used some of the very basic raw materials that were around him — worn out pipes . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well of course not. We can't even see if it's going to encourage the industry to stay here — that's the problem. You see, we don't know whether this fellow's going to be able to stay here or not.

Now that was a question from one of the other members here, was whether or not this is going to help him. Well it can't possibly help him. Because he can't find out whether or not this industry's going to be encouraged to stay here.

So anyway, these young farmers . . . and I'm thinking of one specific one here, but I again won't mention anybody because I think people want to be somewhat anonymous in their life's pursuit — but he decided that the thing to do was to make these Texas gates out of old grill stem that was worn out and of no use to anyone else. And he made these Texas gates and he markets them to the petroleum industry and they put them in where their roads go into the farmers' fields and the livestock of course is kept in. Nobody has to open or close a gate and it became a very good thing. The farmers liked it. The petroleum industry liked it. Nobody forgot to close the gate. Everybody was happy because they could drive in and out without having to open a gate. And this young farmer was able to found a lucrative industry.

And these estimates you see can't do anything for this fellow because we can't find out if there's any plan in this budget to encourage the industry to continue to work. And what we have to know, Mr. Speaker, is whether or not the petroleum industry is going to be encouraged through the winter to stay in operation, so that young farmers that have these good ideas can stay in business.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — One of the members asked if I had a 13-hour speech and of course I'll have to answer that because obviously I don't have, and if my illustrious leader hadn't spilled all that water over all my notes I probably would have been able to go for at least a little longer.

But I wanted to talk to you a little bit more about what this budget, or this document rather, lack of a budget, is not telling us in terms of our ability to ask questions to find out. Once again, we've got to go back to the plight of our farmers.

I've talked about the petroleum industry and how important it is for us to have direction for that particular industry, but here again we find ourselves unable to find out from this government if it has any plan for agriculture and agricultural people.

We have just got probably thousands and thousands of farmers out in the province of Saskatchewan who need cash, and right now in our constituency, we're no different than anyone else. We suffered through some of the worst droughts that you've ever seen. We had grasshoppers so thick you couldn't get them washed off the windshield when you drove through The Great Sand Hills a few years ago, and they devoured crops like nobody's business.

Those people, of course, had to go out and buy feed, and ranchers out in that country had to buy thousands and thousands of tons of feed in order to keep their herds intact, and we had some really good government programs that kept the herds alive. We moved cattle to

the north country and that sort of thing, and we managed to make those herds survivable.

But the reality of life is that each time you go through a period of years like that — where you have to buy a lot of feed to keep them through the winter, where you have to spend money to move them back and forth up north and so on — people start to accumulate debt. And it's not just a grain farmers' debt. The ranchers in our country have got huge debts as the result of all of those years of drought. And we can't find out from our Minister of Agriculture whether he has any plans to help these folks.

What happens if we run into another drought situation? What happens if . . . Do we have any contingency plans? We don't see that any place here, and we have no way of asking or finding out.

We don't know if there was an estimate for a possible plan to bring some feed into certain areas that may have had some problems this year. And certainly while we had a good crop, there were also some misfortunes in our province where people didn't get a lot of good feed. And it's important for us to have the ability to find out whether or not there has been a contingency plan in these estimates.

And we can't ask. We can't even pose the question to stimulate the thought process so that the minister can go back to his drawing-board and say, hey maybe we should think about this; there's a possibility here we might need something. So that's part of the process of debate. That's part of the process of questions is to get people encouraged to use their minds to think about possibilities in the future.

In the Rural Development . . . well I've talked to you a little bit about the problems that we have with no taxes coming in, and school kids need to get the roads open, and not having the ability to find out if any contingency plan is built into these estimates. And we have to dwell on that a little bit longer.

What happens if we get a really tough winter? You know we've got a government across the other side that doesn't think about providing answers to whether or not we can keep our school buses going and get some plough snowed. And I pose the question . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Send snow blowers out to fight forest fires.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Forest fires, there you go. We'll fight it that way. Well the hon. member has pointed out that maybe we could do it that way and use a snow-plough attached to a water bomber, and instead of fighting fires we can blast the roads open with the water bombers. But I don't think that'll work, gentlemen. I think we better have a little more serious approach to this problem and talk about the realities of getting kids through these roads.

I wanted to mention that there's a lot of things in here that we need to know in order to be able to carry on the business of this province so that the people can survive through this long, cold winter.

And certainly it will be a long, cold winter, Mr. Speaker, with no plans for assistance to our rural people — a proud people that don't accept help willingly or easily, but have to have it through these terrible, difficult times.

We've seen an attack by our Rural Development people through the Bills that they have presented, an attack on the grants to municipalities. And here again I have to say that I've seen past governments do this sort of thing, cut these grants. But as a reeve of a municipality, I have to say to you that I was against those kind of cuts when they happened then and I'm certainly still against them happening now. It just doesn't seem to me that the right thing to be doing is cutting back grants to municipalities at a time when the cash flow to them is decreased by the result of taxes not coming in.

People need to have the kind of services that municipalities provide. We don't just grade roads in the summer time and we don't just do a little bit of patchwork here and there. We also take care of a road system for the full year. And all through the winter months we try to find plans to keep the roads open so our kids can get through.

Some municipalities, Mr. Speaker, actually employ private people to run snow-ploughs, and we would like to have the opportunity to ask the question of the Rural Development minister whether or not he's made any contingency plans for financing to be able to finance private snow-ploughing, in case the municipalities can't get enough money to get the job done.

What would be wrong with having a contingency plan where you would put up some money so that people who have snow-ploughs that do their own road work, plough their own lanes open, could go out on the roads and be compensated for their work? I don't think there'd be anything wrong with that at all.

(1630)

But how can we plant the seeds in the minds of the member if we can't ask him the questions whether or not he's already thought of it, or whether he's put up any contingency plan in his financing? So it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we have this right to ask questions in a budgetary process. Because if we don't have the right to ask those questions, we can't stimulate thought.

We've got a lot of problems, Mr. Speaker, with this budgetary process also because we can't ask questions to find out what our contractors have to look forward to. Here again, in our municipalities and in our municipal network, we've got hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people that depend on their living doing contract work for municipalities. And this year with tax money not coming in and no contingency plan to provide moneys, these contractors are going to have to be laid off.

Now it is traditional that a lot of the dirt movers and that kind of contractors are laid off in the fall and they naturally expect that they won't work a lot through the winter. But you've got a lot of contractors that move snow, a lot of contractors that put up snow fencing, people that get out and do those kind of jobs. And we don't know if those people are going to be provided with

an opportunity to work or not. Are we just going to fire everybody in the province and lay them all off and put them on unemployment insurance and have nobody doing anything and all the roads closed shut — everything shut down in the whole province? I mean we just might as well pull a blanket over top of the whole province and shut her down till spring.

It just about makes you wonder if there's any plans for anything, but we can't find out. We know very well that we've already seen a Bill coming in that's going to retroactively reduce the moneys to grants to municipalities. And I've already told you how much I was against that coming in and how much I'm going to oppose any future attempt to do more of that sort of thing. And we get the notion that there's going to be some more of that kind of thing.

And the fact that there seems to be a cover-up here, that we can't ask the questions of the minister certainly enforces my belief that maybe we're heading into that kind of a direction, that we're going to have a total cover-up here, a lot of cut-backs in the spring. Maybe next summer my local contractor who hires about five people to run his earth moving equipment to build roads, maybe he can just transport them all over to Alberta because that might be the only place he can find a job.

Do we have any contingency plans? Have we got any thought put into this process? We've got to know, Mr. Speaker, and we've got to know fairly quick because people don't make their plans next spring for what happens next summer. They start to plan through the winter.

Municipalities do their budgeting through January and February for the most part. An odd one will let it go until March of course because sometimes things get tied up financially, but the real big plans are in the people's minds now.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — I could tell you right now that most of the roads that we're going to do anything more to than just an ordinary grading for next summer has gone through the minds of my municipal council. And they're back home thinking of the things that have to be done so that we can draw up a budget through the winter where it will be balanced by next fall. And we won't run a deficit because we will have had an opportunity to plan through the winter and to plan our projects so that it will come out with a balanced sheet at the end of the year.

Municipalities don't very often run deficits, although some do, and that's unfortunate. But for the most part they do balance their books. And provincial government might take a lesson from the way municipalities run their business. And it might just be a good idea if the Minister of Rural Development would take a little time and tour around some municipalities and see how things are done. We don't just come in here with estimates that nobody debates and nobody questions and nobody can talk about. We sit down and we hash it over.

Rubber stamps — that's what the minister says we're



supposed to be. Well I don't just feel like laying down and rolling over and being a rubber stamp today. And I think it's about time that we did some forward planning in this province. It might just be time for some of the ministers to go out and find out what's happening in the real world with planning and development. What we do in this country is go out and plan what we're going to do, and then we plan it according to how many dollars we're going have come in and we don't end up with a big deficit.

So what we've got to do is get back to the basics here. We've got to start thinking out things the way the RMs (rural municipalities) are doing. But we've got to think out how many miles of road are we going to build next year and what's it going to cost? And we have to be able to have the ability in this legislature to be able to ask those kinds of questions, Mr. Speaker. Because if we can't find out what the direction is going to be for the winter, what hope do we have to ever find out what we're going to do next year through the summer?

Will there be a grant for municipalities, for example, so that 3-D construction can apply for some contracts to build some road. Or does he ship off to Alberta right now? Maybe he should be ordering in a truck and loading up and getting out of here while the getting is good because we can't find out if there's any possibility that he will be protected to get some work for next year or not.

So we have to know these things, Mr. Speaker, to protect the people of our province, not only the young farmers that work for these construction crews, that work for our gas and oil industry . . . these industries need time to plan.

If you think it's tough to plan for road building in a municipality, I suggest somebody over in the other side take a look at what it takes to run an oil company. You're talking hundreds of millions of dollars of planning. And you don't just walk into the province of Saskatchewan and start drilling oil wells tomorrow morning. You plan this for a year or two or three ahead.

Why do you think that the Department of Energy and Mines issues leases that are three years in advance? Because this kind of thing needs budgetary planning — the kind of planning, Mr. Speaker, that we can't find out anything about because we're not allowed to ask the questions because we don't get into a budgetary process that is in fact a budget. And it's about time maybe that we did have a budgetary process.

And maybe we should take one step back instead of . . . two or three back and just take a look at what's going on here. And maybe the government should replan its thinking here and throw this thing in front of us tomorrow morning and say, okay boys, we'll take a look at what you guys have suggested. We'll take our leader, Grant Devine's idea, and we'll go into this thing.

And here it is. I've got it laying here on my desk amongst all these water-soaked papers. And it says here that the opposition and the government would agree to have the motion which suspends the constitutional requirements of presenting a budget and submitting estimates without a vote here.

The Minister of Finance would present a budget. It can basic . . . I got to have a drink of water and get my mouth limbered up. It can be basically the budget document he is trying to present as a financial report. And the opposition will agree not to debate the budget speech on condition that the speech itself would not be inflammatory or political.

Now that's not too much to ask. I mean to take the partisan politics out of a budget. I mean a budget is talking about dollars and how you're going to spend them and where you're going to put them. It's the future of the province, to be exactly correct. And we've offered to do it without obstruction and without debate, and it wouldn't take as much time as what it's going to take to debate the principles that we're losing by not having it.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Now I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, that the area of taxation comes into play every time we talk about any kind of a budget. And when we go back to our municipal experience . . . And I'm certain that it has to play over into our process here at the provincial level. Certainly the rules that apply at the junior levels of government must also apply at the senior levels of government.

And I want you to know that I don't like taxes any better than anybody else does. I'm sure that nobody really likes to be taxed, but death and taxes are the realities of life that we have to face. But it's so much easier to live life if you have some idea what's going to hit you next. If you happen to know that you're going to be taxed, then you can prepare for it; you can budget for it.

But the way this process is being presented to us, we aren't going to be able to determine whether or not we're going to have to have more taxes. We've just seen the provincial government go through an exercise to eliminate the expanded part of the PST. And for those folks that might take the time to listen to this, I emphasize expanded portion because there are a lot of people in my constituency that still believe that the entire PST, the entire health and education tax is going to be eliminated by this government.

They were, as an expression was put to me a long time ago, they were snookered, Mr. Speaker. They thought they were actually going to get rid of all the tax that they were paying for health and education and that this government was going to protect them from the entire 7 per cent on everything they bought. And that turns out not to be true.

But even taking away the expanded part of that PST, Mr. Speaker, means that the government will fall short on its target for revenues to run this province unless we can ask specific questions of this document, Mr. Speaker, to find out where the money's going and why it's going there. And what's happening, we can't determine where the government's going to get the money to pay for the bills it's encountering. And if we can't determine that, how can we forecast a prediction of what kind of taxes to expect?

Do we expect for example, a payroll tax for our employees through this province? Now people have talked about maybe we would have the minimum wage go up. But even if their minimum wage goes up, what good is it going to do them if we right around stick a payroll tax on them and maybe take the whole thing back away from them.

So how do we know if the government is planning these kinds of things? And certainly they must have some kind of a plan of how they're going to pay the bills. They took all this time for the last two years and all through this election campaign to tell us that they were going to balance these books, that they're going to show us how to run this province without a deficit. And if they're going to do that without having a printing press in the basement of this building, then they're going to have to tax somebody.

Now who are they going to tax and how are they going to tax and who's going to make the plans of how you're going to live with this? That's what we have to know. That's why we have to have the right to ask these questions of the ministers with things that are as basically fundamental as a budget.

And this is not a budget. This is a statement. And we can't get to the questions that have to be answered in order for the people of this province to be able to plan their futures and to plan their direction. So, Mr. Speaker, this is extremely important.

We've had quite a lot of time to discuss the questions that relate to me directly as to why I feel we should be going into this process. But I think maybe that we should emphasize a little more the idea of our leader, Grant Devine, when he said that he would actually . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The member may not be aware that we do not refer to people by their first or last name, but by their constituency. And I'm sure it was just a slip of the tongue.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Mr. Speaker, certainly a slip of the tongue. I just had a piece of ice caught in my teeth.

The member from Estevan has proposed for us an easy way out of this whole predicament, an honourable way, a face saving way, no egg on anybody's face. The member from Estevan happens to be one of the brighter individuals that I've ever encountered in my life.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — And it has been my experience, Mr. Speaker, that this individual would not suggest to this Assembly anything that he would not himself do. When he makes you a commitment, you can bet the bank on it, you can bet your farm on it. He's going to stick to his word.

And he said to this Assembly that he would commit this group of people to not obstructing the budget in the budgetary process. And when he said that, he meant it. And we could do this and we could do it in a relatively short period of time, and we could get the answers that

people need to plan their future. And that's what we have to have.

And I suggest to the folks across the way that maybe you should reconsider tomorrow morning. Come in here and say let's take the boys up on this option. Let's all save a little face and save a little time. Let's do the job right.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — A supply Bill might have seemed like an easy alternative when it first came out. It's altogether possible, Mr. Speaker, and we're willing to concede the possibility that perhaps the members opposite didn't really think through the implications of what they were doing. It might have been a slip of the pen or a slip of thought and maybe sometimes you have to concede that we did things in a hurry and we shouldn't have. It may have far more reaching implications than we ever really thought it would have.

But in light of the fact that it does have such serious implications, in light of the fact that the media people have actually been writing some articles about the fact that it is a serious question and other people in the rest of the country are taking a look at this process — they too are adding their little bits now in the media, pointing out that they too show some concern for what's happening in this House, not just with this particular document, but with many of the other things that we've seen happen throughout this past few weeks.

And when the rest of the world starts to take note of the parliamentary procedure, Mr. Speaker, in this House in Saskatchewan then, Mr. Speaker, we must be in a situation and at a point where we should take a second look at what we're doing. And we would fully be willing to go along with the suggestion by our leader to give you folks an easy option and an easy way out, the right way out and the right way to find the questions and answers that need to be answered.

We've talked about the need to get farmers some money, Mr. Speaker. And it is so imperative that we have to repeat it again. If we don't do something to help our farmers and ranchers through this winter, a lot of them won't be there next spring.

I wonder if a lot of folks here that maybe come from backgrounds other than agriculture have any idea what a family farm is really all about and how we will be affected if we can't find out through this budget whether or not there's any plan to help the folks on the land.

If this process, this supply Bill has some money allocated somewhere to help the people to keep their family farms, then we should know about it. And we can't find out because we can't ask the questions. The Minister of Agriculture is not going to be answerable to where his money is being allocated. And we want to be able to find out whether there's any plan at all to try to help folks to save those family farms.

(1645)

And it's important that we save those farms, because it's

like having a member of your family die in the psychological effect that it has on people when they lose their land. It's not only the backbone of the economy, it's something that you live with. And the land to a lot of people — and not to everyone, but to a lot of people — it becomes a part of your heart and your soul. You live with it, you do everything with it.

There is no better person to protect the land and the environment than a farmer or a rancher who has had to pay money out of his own pocket in order to own a piece of land, except for one case, and that's for the one that inherits it from his grandfather that was there for three generations before him. And that need to protect that land is there.

The whole economy, Mr. Speaker, of this country is dependent on agriculture. Not only that, but the actual ability for people to live is dependent on farmers to produce the food that we need. If you don't have food, how are you going to live? Somebody will say, well gas and oil is pretty important, but food is important. And people that produce food with a negative income are hard to come by.

And we have to find out, Mr. Speaker, if there's anything in this supply Bill that will help to preserve those family farms that are willing . . . People that are willing to work their lives away in this province with no profit and no income are going to be hard to replace, and we've got to find out if there's anything in here that those folks can depend on to continue with their life-style and to continue serving mankind in the way they are doing.

We wonder, Mr. Speaker, after we look at this supply Bill, whether or not the gas and oil industry will in fact even be here next spring. Will they perhaps just simply say, it looks to me like this government's going to run out of money; they have no plans for any taxation to cover their financial needs . . . I was going to say something else. But they have no plans that are apparent.

The opposition in this legislature, they will say, has not had an opportunity to be able to question the reports that are put on the Table. We can't question the ministers to find out whether or not there's any plans to pay the deficit or to balance the books or to balance the budget. You can't find out if there's any incentive for the petroleum industry. And the first thing that they're going to start to wonder is, are we going to be the targets? In that question what they're saying is, are we going to be the targets so that the province running out of money will start putting on new royalty taxes onto our industry in order to make up for the loss?

Then you know very well the answer has to be that there's a good likelihood that that will happen. They're a target of industry because they handle a lot of money. And if you tax an oil industry 1 per cent, you're going to get a lot more money in the form of revenue than if you happen to tax me as an individual. Because obviously they're dealing in millions and I deal in dollars. And so they see themselves as being a target and they're worried, Mr. Speaker.

They're very worried out there that this government may

decide to turn on them as the cash cow that will be milked in order to fund the needs of this province; to balance the budget; to come through with the election promises that were made perhaps somewhat frivolously at times.

And we have to wonder, looking back, hindsight being what it is — it's pretty good — you'd have to wonder if the NDP would have had to make such costly promises in the last days through the past year because most likely they would have formed government without doing that. But now they're committed. They're committed to an expensive program of promises and the gas and oil industry are certainly going to feel that they may be the targets.

We happen to have gone through . . . We went through a situation, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency where people came to debates during the election process and they said things like, we're going to overhaul the entire revenue process with the petroleum industry.

If they're planning on doing something like that, Mr. Speaker, we as an opposition have to have the right to study the supply Bill, to find out in fact if that is what's happening. The Minister of Energy and Mines has got to be accountable to us as an opposition so that the industry out there can know what's going to happen to them.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — We know for a fact that in the past this great industry has been the target for people desperate for cash, especially in governmental areas. And we know the result, Mr. Speaker, was that an awful lot of the gas and oil industry people did in fact pack up their bags and they went home — home is either in Alberta or in Texas, but it's not in Saskatchewan. They only come here to explore when it is advantageous to do so.

And if we can't ask the questions from the Minister of Energy and Mines, then how are we to know whether or not these people can be encouraged to come in with their dollars to spend through the next winter. We have some indication, no guarantees obviously, but some indication that 2 to 300 gas wells could be drilled in The Great Sand Hills over the next winter.

Right at the moment my understanding is that those wells are not being drilled because there's a fear out in the area out there with the industry. They're afraid that they will lose whatever advantage they could gain by drilling those wells. And I know that to many members in this Assembly, that profit is a kind of a dirty word. But the reality of life is that with the gas and petroleum industry, if they can't see a bit of a profit coming, they won't be here. They're going to just not drill. They'll just keep their money and go somewhere else.

There's offshore drilling and all kinds of things where they can spend their money. I mean you've got all kinds of situations around the world where there's a lot better supplies of gas and oil than what we have in Saskatchewan — better in terms of economy at least. We have a lot of it, but it's very expensive to get and it's very expensive to process.

We have a situation with environment out in the Great Sand Hills, and the environmental assessment programs that have to go on before these industries can continue their work. It costs them hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, in order to protect that fragile environment.

And I want to pass a bouquet, if I might just in passing here, to that industry for the beautiful job that they have been doing in protecting the environment in those Great Sand Hills and surrounding area.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — One farmer told me that if his fields had been as well protected during the sand storms that we had in the past few years — in 1988 and '89 — he would have been a very happy man because his land wouldn't have blown at all. The actual fact is that the petroleum industry has gone out there, they've reseeded grass, they put up snow fences, they haul water, Mr. Speaker, to do this. But they have to know what their future's going to be.

And they can't tell, Mr. Speaker, if they have a future if we can't find out from the Department of Energy and Mines whether or not there's any contingency plan for a new taxation or even the threat of a new taxation for them.

That's what the questioning process, Mr. Speaker, is all about, is to find out what the plan is, what people can expect in the future. Can they have a future or do they simply pack up and leave? Do they provide the jobs that we need or do they run away?

I want to talk just for a minute about the people in our constituency and the kind of plans that they have and the kind of things that they do based on what we do here in this Assembly. Based on what they can predict the future to be, on the kind of questions that we would ask and the kind of answers we could get, they base their determination on what they're going to do in the future. And the kind of moneys that they think that they can spend on the land itself, protecting the land, is largely hinged on how much taxation they feel they may have to be prepared to pay.

For example, if a farmer knows that he's got to pay a whole bunch of taxes, then he's going to naturally save his money to pay those taxes because he doesn't want to lose his farm. But if he doesn't have to pay so many taxes and he can see this in the future, that those taxes won't be so high, he can take some of those very precious dollars in this tough economy and he can put them back into the land.

So who becomes the best preserver of the land out there than people who are in the agricultural industry? The ranchers and the farmers that know and love the land. And if we can have a plan that allows these people to know how to budget for the next few years, they can put into programs things like grassification and reseeded some of their soils down that are lighter, might blow. But instead of having those big black clouds that came roaring through here in the '80s, we can stop that because we can assure those farmers and ranchers that they'll have the money to work with to be able to go to work on their land.

And we can't find that out, Mr. Speaker, because in this document we can't find out if there's any plan by the Department of Agriculture to put up some moneys so that we can have programs like tree seeding. Out in our country shelter-belts are extremely important. But we don't know if there's a plan at all for the future for Saskatchewan with that sort of thing. All we can find out is that we're going to spend one-point-whatever millions of dollars fighting forest fires.

Now maybe we can put that to some good somewhere by dropping some water on some of the land out there, and maybe we can get something to grow and make some use of this after all. But it is kind of silliness to think that we could do that.

And what we ought to do is have the right, Mr. Speaker, to question this document as a regular budget, so that we could let the minister know of our concerns in that process instead of this process. And if we could do that then he could rethink his plan. He might take that section out of the budget and switch it over and say hey, we'll go along with providing farmers and ranchers with some cash.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — And maybe they could inform the people over at Indian Head that grow all of the little trees and things like that that they'd have a big program coming next year and they ought to get ready for that. And those farmers could use that money to plant some shelter-belts and some trees out in south-west Saskatchewan where we certainly could use a few more trees.

Now you know, Mr. Speaker, that when we talk about things like grassification and shelter-belts it leads right into wondering what the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources has got in mind for wildlife in our area. We've got the situation where we've had to have extended hunting licences in order to control our wildlife. And we've got to know whether there's any contingency plan in this supply Bill to finance that kind of thing. Right now we had . . . The hunting season's just closed down and there were some extended licences, and we can be thankful to the former minister for recognizing the problem.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — But we don't, Mr. Speaker, at this point have the ability to question anybody to find out even if there's a contingency plan to go out and count those animals, to see if there's still a problem or not. We've got one of the members suggesting that Crop Insurance could use a little more money probably to compensate farmers, and that's certainly a fact. An awful lot of these ranchers and farmers have lost their feed supplies from these large herds of animals and it is important that perhaps somebody take a look at the idea of giving a little bit of compensation.

You will recall a few minutes back that I referred to the kinds of debt load that some of these people have incurred having to buy feed. This is another reason why

they've had to incur these feed costs.

Wildlife has come in there and multiplied, not because the wildlife's done so well by themselves but mostly because the farmers and ranchers have dug dug-outs and supplied a water supply so that the wildlife, in fact, can multiply. You can't multiply anything without water. You have to have water to drink as well as to grow things, and as soon as the wildlife populations had water supplies, then they were able to multiply. And they've multiplied to large numbers where they eat up a lot of the feed that the ranchers depended on for their livestock. And then if you happen, Mr. Speaker, to hit a drought period, you get into a situation where you have to have a contingency plan to provide some help for those ranchers.

Now what we've got to know is, will the minister come forward through a budgetary process and show us whether or not he has moneys available for a contingency plan? We can't ask that question in this process. We have to stand here and ask it now and hope that he will consider it and maybe do something and maybe we've sparked some thought through this process of the debate, rather than the debate that we should have been doing through the budgetary process.

Now the numbers of wildlife out there, Mr. Speaker, may not be such with the measures that were taken by the previous minister. And yet we don't have any way of knowing whether or not any counts have been taken. We haven't had a chance to talk to our ranchers to see if there are still herds of vast numbers.

**The Speaker:** — Order. It now being 5 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.