

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

Clauses 1 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

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

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

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

Clause 1

Mr. Swenson: — I have only one question or perhaps a series of questions, Mr. Chairman, to the minister.

In view of the fact that — and I'm particularly talking about the Wakamow Valley Authority — has had access to both Saskatchewan Works and the New Careers Corporation in order to carry on with their endeavours, and it looks like Saskatchewan Works has been shut down and we don't know what the future for New Careers is, can the Minister assure the House that there will be some contingency in place, some other area perhaps of government that would be available to Wakamow if these ones are taken away from them?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chairman, I've had discussions with the Authorities and we are looking at other avenues to establish other programs or allow them to tap into work programs. The name of the program we haven't decided. But we're in consultation now and we realize that avenue for them was a good avenue for work and we are exploring what is possible.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I would like to thank the opposition members for their co-operation and I look forward to it in the future. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, thank you for your time in answering our questions. And also thank you to your officials for coming in this evening.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 16 — An Act to establish the Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation

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

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce Mr. Doug Burnett, a solicitor for SaskTel.

Clause 1

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to have the minister outline a few of the impacts that this holding company will provide — or the benefits that this holding company will provide — as it relates to negotiations with the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) and its reasons for setting it up. I'm aware of some of them but I'd like you to outline how you perceive this to go.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, as these matters had been considered previously by the members opposite when they were in government, they'll find that they're fairly familiar with the issues, I believe, and they really haven't changed in that the CRTC or the federal government does have the authority to regulate SaskTel, the integral portions thereof; they have signified their intention to proceed with that legislation on a federal level.

In fact, they had set a deadline of mid-December, but the federal House has prorogued for the holiday without bringing it forward. But we do expect them to be introduced early in January in the federal House, and the purpose of the legislation, as outlined in the reading, was to establish the holding company which will hold the assets or the portions that are subject to regulation, being the basic service and the long distance portion of the telecommunications company in the holding company and in the main company, and to form a holding company into which to transfer all the non-integral assets, being the mobile portions, the real estate, the shares in WESTBRIDGE and assets of that nature.

The parts of the operation that are exempt from the regulations that we anticipate so that expansion and flexibility in responding to the new technology in the telecommunications industry will be more easily accomplished, with the goals of public ownership and the objectives of provincial systems more easily accomplished within that structure.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, I guess that the resolve with which you hold those observations, I guess, is what we would like to see you commit yourself to, and we know that because of the scattered nature of the telephone service in the province of Saskatchewan, that it's almost an absolute necessity that you do that, and we want to know from you your resolve in making sure that that happens and so that we have a level of consistency on how our rates are being charged.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, that's one of the objectives. As the members opposite realize there's been an intense amount of competition in the long distance

area and at the time when SaskTel was an integral part of a network and the technology was at that kind of a stage, we were a requirement of the bigger players in the system if you like, because they needed us to get to where they wanted to go. But with satellite technology, if we don't try to play ball, if you like, and be good partners in the Canadian system, we can be just skipped over by satellite.

So I guess what we will do and, as I said in the previous reading, we will still continue to oppose the federal regulation with the most intense vigour possible, but with the full knowledge that the federal government does retain the power to regulate if they wish to do that.

So what we really would like to do is to have these Bills passed and in a position to proclaim, but not to proclaim them unless the federal regulations take effect. And we feel that it's better to be prepared in anticipation of the regulations — even though we intend to oppose their application — than it is to wait until the federal regulations are in place and then be seen to be attempting to evade them after the fact. So that's the purpose of this exercise, is to prepare ourselves to protect the integrity of our own system and our own objectives in terms of serving rural Saskatchewan and the local telephone rates as much as possible, but at the same time be prepared for what others might foist upon us that we don't particularly desire, but they are in a position to do.

Mr. Martens: — One more question, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, could you explain to me how SaskTel International will be a part of that. I think we're partners with that on western Canada. Would you explain some of that, how it's going to work.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, that was my omission in describing the non-integral assets that would become part of the assets of the holding company. I mentioned the share holdings in WESTBRIDGE, the mobile operations, and I failed to mention our interest in SaskTel International where there is a great opportunity for expansion into other markets in the world, and particularly the eastern European bloc and South America and other parts of the world that the members opposite will be acquainted with the opportunities that are there for us to expand and compete and make profits which will help us to maintain a reasonable rate structure for our subscribers at home, which is after all the objective of a Crown corporation.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 24 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 17 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act

Clauses 1 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — I want to just thank the minister and her

officials for their presentation here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — I thank the members opposite for their co-operation, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1915)

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

The Chair: — Will the minister please introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have on my right Mr. John Wright, who's the deputy minister of Finance; and behind me, Mr. Kirk McGregor, who's the executive director of taxation and intergovernmental affairs.

Clause 1

Mr. Swenson: — Just a few short questions for the minister, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, how much revenue, now that you've had time to reflect properly, will be lost by passing this particular Bill?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We anticipate there will be a loss of 72 million in the remainder of what is left of the fiscal year since the PST (provincial sales tax) was eliminated. As I indicated to the members on previous occasions, we have implemented cost-saving measures to compensate for that loss and have taken other measures which have been actually dealt with in this legislature, which will even bring further savings and reduce the projected deficit.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, is that 72 million simply on the goods side or did that include the services side that was supposed to come in with January 1?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — It includes all of the otherwise what would have been anticipated revenues — that is the total amount that is anticipated that would have been revenues for the remainder of the fiscal year had the PST remained in place.

Mr. Swenson: — How much revenue was collected under the harmonized sales taxes up to the point of when you stopped collecting it?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — 79.1 million.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, how much revenue was the department projecting would have been garnered in the next fiscal year under full harmonization?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I am informed that although for this fiscal year it's projected that there would be revenues of about \$140 million, in the next full fiscal year because of announcements that were made since the announcement in February of the PST, the revenues

would have been in '82-83 \$118 million.

The reason for that is because subsequent to the original announcements there were announcements of certain input tax credits, MUSH (municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals) rebates — that's municipal, university, all those kind of things — tourist rebates, housing rebates, Indian exemptions, and all these kind of things, so that revenues in the next fiscal year actually would have been less, I am informed, than they were projected to be in this fiscal year.

Mr. Swenson: — I'll have another series of questions. Mr. Minister, the numbers that you gave me on the reduction in this fiscal year, did they include the lowering of the consumption tax? Were those figures included in there?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes. Everything is included in that figure. The reduction of that and as well as other cost savings, which the member will have because he will have the technical appendix which we provided to the public, and to the members opposite and the media, when I released the statement on what the projected deficit was going to be.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, you obviously, in making the decision to cancel the harmonized taxes, did some cost-benefit analysis and I understand that your party made some analogies that said that people were taking . . . there was more being taken out of the system than there was benefit. And I find it a little strange that if the projections from the department were that the amount of money collected would actually drop in the next fiscal year even with full harmonization — in other words, both the goods and services side as compared to this year — obviously the net impact on the economy would be less, not more.

I believe at one time there were projections of up to \$240 million being garnered. You're telling me that there was only going to be 118. Obviously some of the pain that was talked about around the piece wasn't going to be quite what you were projecting, sir. And I'm wondering how you square these \$118 million with both goods and services with the figures that you were throwing out to the public a little earlier in the year and about the damage that this particular tax was going to do upon the public of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I guess the problem with the rationale that the member provides opposite is that the pain that he talks on would have been all in the wrong places. The consumer would have had to pay. People who go to work every morning and come home after work, they would have had to pay.

The distribution of this PST was such that, Mr. Chairman, the analysis that we did showed that in four years the province would lose 7,500 jobs. Under the conditions that we are today, fiscally and economically, that was just unacceptable to this government.

We did our analysis. We thought it was a tax that was inappropriate. We consulted the people of Saskatchewan. The people said — well in the area of about 75 per cent — that the tax was unacceptable. And

we decided as a policy decision, that the PST was not the kind of tax that this province could sustain; because of the state of the economy, that it is a tax that had to be eliminated. We made that commitment and we carried out that commitment.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, another question to the minister. Mr. Minister, has your department done an analysis of what this Bill will cost the average farmer with its passing?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I think it would be helpful to the House because members will be familiar that there is a current education and health tax exemption that is very wide and very broad. I have it here if the member wants me to go through it. It is several pages long . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I will give that to you. It is several pages long. Therefore benefits to the farm population of the province of Saskatchewan, because of the exemptions of the E&H tax (education and health), an annual benefit of \$150 million a year, which is very significant.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, whether there are any net losses to farmers because of the elimination of the PST --I suspect very little. I don't have a precise number.

But although the farmers would have had some rebates because of the additional items that were added, the farm population would have also had some extra and additional costs which would not be rebated because farm people would have had to pay the PST on every single item that they purchased, including services and labour that they might hire to do some work on the farm if they did some work on construction or anything else. So the net loss to farmers because of the elimination of the PST, Mr. Chairman, is negligible.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, I find it a little strange that you would not have that figure because I know for a fact that that particular figure was calculated by the Department of Finance during last spring's budget preparations. There was a figure of what the savings would be, by sector, for all types of business in this province and, with all due respect to the Finance Minister, I remember going out with officials from the department talking to citizens of the province and talking about those numbers, so I know that you have them.

I know that you have what will happen with an average farmer with simply the goods side; I know what you will have with the goods and services side, the same that you will have with a fuel dealer, and you will have with all sorts of sectors because the department calculated those figures.

And sir, I would simply ask you to ask your officials and give us those figures because they have been calculated.

(1930)

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I think responsible taxation measures mean that you can't just

look at one sector of the economy, you have to look at the whole economy. And if you looked at the impact of the PST on the economy as a whole, it was damaging. It was going to create the loss of 7,500 jobs.

I have here, and I can get into them, although I don't think it will be necessary, people who have testified in statements through the media and reports that they've given, indicating how devastating the PST was to a wide range of industries in the province of Saskatchewan, from service industries to people who were selling reading materials, a whole wide range of industries — how every consumer including the farm population was going to be impacted by paying a massive new tax which was going to reduce the amount of consumer dollar that would be available.

You can't therefore, Mr. Speaker, look at one sector of the economy without looking at all of the economy and how this kind of a tax would impact on it. The impact of this tax, of \$440 million as the members opposite had estimated, over four years, was a very devastating impact on the economy of the whole.

The farm population still maintains a \$150 million benefit because of the exemptions under The Education and Health Tax Act. That remains, and I think that that's a very substantial benefit.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, we may have to be here a while, because agriculture today in Saskatchewan is still one of our largest sectors of the economy. It is in a very difficult income situation. As a matter of fact, I believe your officials have shown you the graphs that show where net farm realized income has dropped below the zero line and in effect is in a loss position. Any added increase in cost to that sector only makes that graph dip further down.

And I know, sir, that your officials have those figures. And I'm just asking a simple question. I don't need a long dissertation on your calculations about what the tax did. I asked about farmers and what the average loss per farmer will be in Saskatchewan as per this Bill. Simple.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, if one were to, only in isolation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's what you're asking, but that's not what I'm talking about. Because, Mr. Chairman, tax policy should be geared to make sure that it works in such a way that the whole economy is working in the best possible way.

The farm population of Saskatchewan, if the PST had remained in place . . . We don't have an average per-farm figure and I don't think the former government had an average per-farm figure. There may be a modest difference, but I'm telling the House, Mr. Chairman, that when one takes into consideration the amount of tax credit that an individual farm operation would have got, depending on the farm operation, compared to the increased cost because of the wide range of taxes that the farmers would have to pay, on which the farm family would get no rebate — everything from restaurant meals to services that the farmers would have had to pay after January 1 — the amount would have been negligible.

But there are other costs that would have been imposed

on farm communities, like on everybody else, because of the PST. Because they don't only pay the PST on goods they buy. They would have had to pay increased taxes to their municipalities because the analysis showed that, for example, the school trustees association indicated that the new provincial PST would have cost up to \$6 million a year additionally. Where would that money come from? It would have come from increased taxes on farms and homes in Saskatchewan.

The rural municipalities would spend more than \$9 million per year on gravel, Mr. Chairman. Where would that money come from? That money would come from increased property taxes.

So when you add all of that up, Mr. Chairman, the amount that a farm family would have saved — so-called as the members tried to argue — because of the rebate or the tax credit on the PST, as I indicated earlier, would have been negligible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, the minister is trying very hard to make this sound plausible. But unfortunately, he's talking to a practising farmer with two sections of land plus a little bit. And I do dabble with the books a little bit and I do know what my GST (goods and services tax) rebates are. And I do keep very close track of what we buy and what we sell and what the costs are. And in my particular farming operation it is running anywhere between \$1,500 and \$2,000 a quarter.

Now, that's simply my GST. In adding up what would have happened with the other situation, that would have nearly doubled on my farm. And I don't consider myself to be that different from a lot of my neighbours.

Now I realize on a straight grain operation it may be slightly less because I'm diversified. But the minister cannot sit here tonight and tell me that there was no net benefit to agriculture by harmonizing the two taxes.

And I have simply asked the Minister . . . There are 60,000 farms in the province. He must have a number that he could say that these farms will lose because, sir, I will lose. And you can add it up any way you want with any kind of excuse you want — I'm going to lose on my farm.

Now I just want you to tell me, sir, what that average loss will be.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I am informed that when this PST was brought in, even then there was no calculation by the former government on the so-called benefit on the average, to the average farmer, that there might have been. There was no calculation then. It is not something you can calculate that simply.

But along with that, Mr. Chairman, it is important to note something else — that under the PST farm peoples' cash flow was being affected in a very significant way. The farm population was asked — as everybody else who might have got a rebate — pay, wait several months, apply, and then get the rebate, so that the cash flow of individual farmers, because they had to pay the tax up

front, was a detriment.

By removing the PST, Mr. Chairman, that cash flow problem is removed, because the E&H tax exemptions which are there now are right up front at the point of purchase, when the farmer purchases his piece of equipment or whatever it is that he's purchasing which is exempt. So in a number of ways there is a better benefit by a direct exemption as exists under The Education and Health Tax Act which exists now, which provides benefits of \$150 million.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I guess we're going to have to desist on this line of questioning because obviously the minister doesn't have an answer.

Mr. Minister, the effect of harmonization meant that your particular department had less employees and there was less cost to the taxpayer in running the Department of Finance. Now with changing horses in mid-stream, can you tell the Assembly what new costs you've incurred and how many people you're going to have to hire to replace the ones that would have changed through harmonization?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, nothing changes with the elimination of the PST. There was no change in the numbers of personnel. Down the road there would have been. There would have been some provincial employees who would have become employees of the federal government instead of the province — not in a significant way. But because this had not gone all the way through the system, none of that has changed. Therefore there is no change in the number of employees who are involved in the Department of Finance.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, if those changes had occurred, would they have amounted to approximately 40 people and about \$5 million?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I am told that if this thing had been fully completed it might have involved somewhere in the area of 40 people. The net gain would have not been in a major way because we would have shared 50/50 with the federal government, even though the employees would have been working under the federal government jurisdiction.

We may have lost some of these employees to other provinces because of the way that the federal government is administering this program and therefore there would have been that loss to the economic activity in the province of Saskatchewan. But it is true. The member is correct. It would have saved some amount of dollars in administration but not the full amount because of the 50/50 cost sharing of the administration of the program.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, with the passage of this Bill the federal government will no longer collect the tax at the border. Does the minister have any plans to compensate for this loss in the border shopping situation?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I have no plans at the present time to announce. It is a matter of great concern

as the member well knows. I'm sure it was a matter of concern under the former administration and it's a concern to ours. We are actively pursuing whatever options may be available to us in order to deal with this.

But I might remind the House that one of . . . the PST being in place was certainly not of any benefit in trying to deal with that situation, because I have statements made from business people in Moosomin and business people in Estevan and business people who formed an organization along the border communities, along the United States border, who make presentations to me and other members of our caucus when the PST Bill was being introduced, very concerned that the PST was going to drive more people to go shopping south of the border.

I thought one of the most telling comments was by Mr. Symons:

. . . Marv Symons, who owns a hotel and convenience store in Estevan (who said).

It's one thing for the Americans to be aggressive. It's another thing to spoon feed 'em our business.

I don't mean to use that frivolously, but I think that that reflects quite accurately the concern that business people near the border of the United States and clearly near the border of Alberta were expressing when this tax was coming in. We listened to them as part of our decision making, when we were deciding what position the New Democratic Party was to take on the PST, and we thought that they had a good point.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, your department must've done some analysis of cross-border shopping. I'm sure that they have an idea of what the value of the loss is to the province. I'd ask you a combined question: would you give me your department's best estimates of what the province is losing and also tell me are there more sort of consumer goods purchased by people going across or do they go across to eat hamburgers — the nature of the goods? I mean do they buy more TVs or do they buy more hamburgers — this tax loss that we're suffering — which is it?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the loss is in consumer goods. It's not in services, by and large. So the loss is clearly because of the purchases of consumer goods. The amount of tax loss to the province of Saskatchewan is in the range of between 1 million and \$2 million. As members will understand, it's difficult to be precise in that, but I'm told by the people in Finance that the loss is between 1 million and \$2 million a year.

(1945)

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, were most consumer goods already taxed at the 7 per cent E&H level prior to harmonization?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, most were.

Mr. Swenson: — That's sort of what I thought. Mr. Minister, has your department done any analysis on the impact of deharmonizing as far as the resource sectors go? I would ask you to be . . . I'll be generic; I don't ask you

to go through oil, gas, mining, but put them all together and I'm sure they must have some type of an idea of what that loss would be.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We have not done a sector analysis, Mr. Chairman. But we did say, and the member will find it in the technical analysis which was provided, that:

The removal of the . . . Education and Health Tax base expansions will result in an overall reduction of the provincial tax burden by \$72.0 million . . .

And here are some of the things that come as a result of that.

(There will be) an increase in personal disposable income of \$112 million (at the consumer). (There will be) an increase in personal expenditures on goods and services of \$99 million. (There will be) an increase in the provincial Gross Domestic Product of 0.4 per cent or \$76 million; and, an increase in employment in the Province by approximately 2,000 jobs.

That is a very significant impact that comes about because of the removal of the PST, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm trying to be as brief with the minister as possible, but the minister keeps refusing. I did take the time, Mr. Chairman, to read the same list that the minister just read. That wasn't the question I asked.

The question is that Saskatchewan is a primary producer of resources — oil, gas, uranium, gold, you know, potash — all of those sorts of things that we sell in the world market. I just want to know what the best estimation of his officials is of the effect that passing this Bill, deharmonizing, will have on that particular sector.

The minister is the Minister of Finance. He's trying to design a budget; he knows what the revenues are, or he will project what the revenues are from oil, gas, potash, and all those things. He must have an idea.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — By the previous government's analysis, when they did the sector-specific analysis it was done on information provided by the federal government. We want to develop our own information. We don't find that the federal government's information in these kinds of things is particularly reliable for our purposes.

So we have not at this point of time done a sector-by-sector analysis, the kind of which the member is looking for. But as we develop our budgetary process for the next fiscal year, all of that will be taken into consideration. We will look at where we need to do certain things on different sectors in the economy, where we need to look at where we might make the tax base more fair, where we might look where we need to provide some incentives.

That's a process which we will be going through. But we'll be doing it on the basis of the information that we develop here in Saskatchewan rather than relying strictly

on the federal government's statistics, which sometimes are accurate and sometimes are not.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, if it wasn't getting on and Saturday night, one would almost have to laugh. What the minister's trying to tell this House tonight, that bean counting on the federal level is different than bean counting on the provincial level.

Mr. Minister, the only reason that you don't want to give that answer is it flies in the face of the arguments that you've been trying to make for months in this province.

Anybody involved with the resource sector knows that there was a net benefit; and that net benefit is calculated in many ways, and that net benefit can do various things for your province. So I guess I agree with you on one thing, sir: you calculate that net benefit and compare it to what you can achieve in other areas.

But, sir, you know it's there, and I don't know why you don't stand on your feet and be truthful with the House and just say the net benefit was estimated at — I don't care if you want to qualify it as federal, provincial, or whatever — just tell this House what it was calculated at.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, in the long run there obviously would have been some benefit from this process to the resource industry. But there would have been a net cost — a negative net cost — to the consumer. There would have been a negative cost to the small-business people in the province of Saskatchewan. And that's why I repeat, as I said earlier, Mr. Chairman, that when one looks at the impact of a tax measure, one has to look at the overall impact on all of the economy. And when you look at the overall impact of the PST, it was very damaging to the Saskatchewan economy; it was damaging to the Saskatchewan consumer, the working person, the farmer; it was damaging to the small-business people in such a way, Mr. Chairman, that the only appropriate thing to do was what the people of Saskatchewan wanted us to do, and that is eliminate the PST.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, if the minister wishes to give me a net hurt number, I'd like that too. Give me the net hurt, and give me the net benefit. Okay? Give me the two of them, side by side. And then we'll let the folks at least compare them. You give the one for the resource sector and then give me your worst-case scenario on your consumer sector and we'll let the folks out there compare the two and judge for themselves. Okay?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well as I said earlier, we don't have a sector-by-sector analysis, but I can tell . . . but I'll get to the global . . . okay, here's the whole thing.

The cost to the Saskatchewan economy would have been over \$440 million in four years. The cost to the Saskatchewan economy would have been 7,500 jobs. That's the global figure that the member is looking for.

If he wants to know the so-called net benefit to the resource sector, I can't provide it to him. We have not done that kind of a sectoral analysis, but we will be doing a review of all of the tax measures and how they impact

on different parts of the economy as we do our budgetary analysis between now and the next budget.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, I find it quite strange that the minister has taken the time to do the calculations for the numbers that he wants to give, but the other numbers that were probably calculated long in advance of the minister's numbers, he can't seem to find or they're missing or he . . . I think the minister probably has more of a mental block as far as giving them out in comparison to his own rather than the fact that they don't exist, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Minister, what is the department's estimate of the impact on jobs with synchronization and without it? I know your party has said that getting rid of it, as you just said now, is going to create 7,500 jobs. But I do know that prior to the election — and I do know this for sure, Mr. Finance Minister — the department did do some calculations about the net benefit job-wise with synchronization. I have a fairly good memory and I do know that that was there. So would you please ask your officials what that was.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, there are two ways to look at it. The only analysis the former government done was an alleged analysis of the long-run impact of the harmonization — the new term members use opposite is synchronization when it used to be called harmonization — that the harmonization would have in the long run, according to that analysis which I personally question, would have in their opinion brought about some development of some jobs in the province of Saskatchewan.

But when you take into consideration the kind of impact that the PST and the harmonization would have had in the short run, then I submit that the catch-up that would have been necessary, because of the damage that would have been done in the short run, it would have been impossible to make up for that short-run damage.

It was brought in at the wrong time. It was brought in at a time when it was extremely detrimental to the economy. It was brought in only months after the GST. It was going to result in a massive reduction in consumer spending. It was most certainly going to result in the closing of many small-business operations in the province of Saskatchewan. And it was going to in the short run eliminate, in four years, 7,500 jobs.

That's the short-run impact of the PST. Now according — as the member says and I take him at his word — according to the analysis that the former government did, in the long run there may have been some positive impact. But then I was told the same thing when the government said that there was going to be a positive impact out of the Free Trade Agreement. And I have yet to see it.

I have yet to see it in Ontario where they have lost somewhere in the area of 300,000 jobs because of the Free Trade Agreement, and where in Saskatchewan there has been a very negative impact because of the Free Trade Agreement. The same arguments were used in the FTA (Free Trade Agreement), the same arguments were

used in the PST, and in both cases those same arguments were flawed.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, once again the minister has an aversion to giving us a number. My recollection of estimates in this House over the last six and a half years was that the former opposition used to sit and ask the Finance minister questions all the time about simple numbers. And this minister likes to stand and talk politics.

Well I can assure the minister, as far as this particular topic goes, we can stand and talk politics for days in here if that's his desire. But I think in the spirit of co-operation I simply asked the minister for a number, not a whole bunch of qualifications. If he wants to talk about free trade, I'll talk about free trade. I can assure the minister I can talk on it as long as he can.

But that's not the question at hand. The question at hand is some simple answers on this particular Bill, and I've asked the minister for that job number. Would he please give it to the Assembly and would he please table the two analyses.

And one final thing, Mr., Minister, before I take my seat on this question. You said you doubt the numbers put together by the former government. Well, sir, you must doubt the numbers that the same officials have put together for you, because the same folks are spinning the same story, only two different ways. So if you're personally doubting, Mr. Minister, I suggest that you may have to change things over there.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I think, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, that it is really quite inappropriate for any member of this legislature to say those kinds of things and make those kinds of allegations about officials who are not able to defend themselves, whether it's in this House or whether it's outside of the House. And I regret that the member opposite is doing that.

An Hon. Member: — Get off the rhetoric and answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — It's not the rhetoric. You may call it rhetoric, Mr. Chairman, but I will stand here at any time, at any time, as long as you want, and I will not allow to go by, a member of the opposition or a member of this side of the House, to allege that officials are giving wrong information.

Now all I'm saying to the member opposite is that the analysis that was provided by the former government when they brought in the PST, was an analysis that was hurriedly put together when the pressure and the heat was on from the public in order to try to justify the implementation of the PST.

If the member wants, I will get for him the analysis which he has, I know, that the former government put together, because they tabled it in the House. But I'm saying that I want to develop — by careful research, which is the way this government works — my own analysis and this government's own analysis.

The part that we have done already is that the PST, brought in at this time, would have been damaging to the economy and would have lost 7,500 jobs in four years. It would have taken consumer spending . . . a big blow to consumer spending. There would have been a price increase, according to the former government's analysis, of 1.7 per cent. People will buy less because of the reduced amount of consumer spending they would have. There would have been an impact on cross-border shopping.

When we considered all of those things, we decided that we had to find a better way. And we're going to be looking at a better way in which to address this overall problem of taxation, a way that's going to be different than the PST, because we really could not live with it.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, the minister makes it very tempting for this side of the House also to launch into a self righteous tirade. That minister was the one that said he took issue with his officials. It wasn't me. It was he that stood in his place and said he took issue with the information provided. I simply reminded him that he was working with basically the same deck.

Now you say, Mr. Minister, that that analysis was hurried, it was rushed, there was no thought. Well I suggest to you, sir, that there was a whole lot more thought went into it than the all-of-a-sudden switch in the NDP (New Democratic Party) Party's stance on this particular thing from the member from Churchill Downs right through the summer into an election campaign. Well all of a sudden, you had some magic figures in your hands.

(2000)

Now we've had two months since the election and I guarantee you that's a shorter period of time than in the analysis done by the Department of Finance prior to harmonization. So come on, Mr. Minister, don't try and lead the public on about your splendid analytical ways.

Now, sir, I asked you a simple question, a comparison of the numbers on jobs created with synchronization and without it, and would you table those two studies in the legislature please, sir?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry to take so long on this one, but I wanted to make sure that I provided the best numbers I could have for the member opposite so we don't get engaging into debate again here.

But I want to put it in the context of the way it has to be put. The former government, in the statements that they made, said that in the long run there would be a benefit in jobs. Now there was never any comment made about what long run meant. It could be 5 years, it could be 10 years, it could be 20 years. And that was never stated, because I'm not sure . . . and I'm not critical of that because I'm not sure how you can accurately state that, because that really depends on the time when the economy settles down — when all of this has run through, when things have turned around, and then you might have this benefit.

And according to what the former government said, that

in the long run there would have been a net impact of 5,000 jobs. But if you balance that off on what was happening in the short run during this transition, at which time the former government said that there were going to be significant problems — they admitted that; said it publicly — there would have been a loss of 7,500 jobs.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it doesn't take a mathematical genius to understand that if you lose 7,500 jobs in the transition period, and you hope that you might gain 5,000 jobs in the long run, whatever that might be, you really haven't gained anything. And so when you even put it in those kinds of terms, Mr. Chairman, the appropriate thing was to eliminate the PST.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we are making progress. Will the minister table those two particular analytical studies to this Assembly so that all members may become apprised of all of the diligent research that went into the both of them.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I want to tell the member that those studies have already been tabled in this House, as well as have been already tabled the economic offsets which I released a month or five weeks ago. They've been tabled in the House and they're already available.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can assure the member that there was a lot more research went into what harmonization would do for the economy than what this document provides to members of this House or this province of what deharmonization will do for the economy.

And I would hope that the Minister of Finance is a little more diligent in his undertakings than what he has provided in this particular document for people to truly understand the financial choices that are available to us in this province.

Mr. Minister, if you don't have anything more significant than this to table, I think I'll leave it up to the people to judge as to the job you're doing.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

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

Clause 1

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just have a simple question for the minister if he could keep his answer in simple terms.

What effect has your analysis . . . or your analysis has determined the effect that this Act is going to have on child tax credits, in terms of the low income people and also those individuals that are on social assistance. Could you tell the Assembly the impact that this will have on

those individuals?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, first of all there is no change of . . . in any way for people on social assistance. There is no impact one way or the other. There is some impact on low income people with children. That is being addressed. There is a net benefit in a major way to single people, to low income senior citizens who have no children. So there obviously is a need therefore for a review of the income support programs that are provided by governments for low income people.

The Minister of Social Services several weeks ago did announce that the government is undertaking a review of assistance programs for low income people so that we can provide a reasonable, rational, equitable system of support for low income people which we will be doing when the review is complete.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, are you aware of the . . . is your department aware of the study that was done by an all-party committee of the House of Commons that looked at this whole situation and the best way to place money in the hands of low income people and that the most cost effective, most effective way to enhance the buying power of people in this situation was indeed through a family or child tax credit system? Are you aware of that, sir?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, obviously the department has seen it. I have yet not had time to study it myself. There is a need for us to look at this as we do the study which we are undertaking and the review which we are undertaking on income support programs for low income people and the poor which I have indicated that the Minister of Social Services has announced we are doing at the present time.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, if after you take the time to read this particular document and study, would the minister look seriously at implementing the recommendations of that particular committee if they make the most economic sense for Saskatchewan and also some of the other recommendations that go along with it.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We will take into consideration all of the information that is available and develop some of our own. This is not an area in which I think governments, no matter what their political stripe or where they are, should be taking lightly. We are not going to take this area lightly. We think it's important. And we will do all that we have to do in order to make sure that what comes out of the other end, when we're in the position to make decisions, are the appropriate kinds of things that address the problem in a meaningful way.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, I'm glad to hear that answer from the minister because if there is a very significant benefit in this area that is achieved through the child tax credit system . . . the family tax credit system, and it points squarely at reintroducing some synchronization of our taxation system, would the minister be prepared to, in conjunction with the family tax credit study, as prepared by Social Services, to reconsider, if that makes the most sense?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We'll certainly be taking that into consideration as part of the larger study. There are some benefits. I agree with the member opposite in providing this kind of assistance on a more regular basis than on an annual basis, that's . . . the principle I do not argue with. And that's going to be part of the consideration that we'll be undertaking.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, would the minister give us the volume of dollars, that impact, as it relates to the total cost the family tax credit would have been.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The original estimate indicated that it would involve \$35 million; the revised estimate indicates that it would have in fact been \$26.5 million; and the amount that has been paid out, up to the last quarter, the first three quarters, was \$19 million.

Mr. Martens: — Do I understand you correct that you paid in the third quarter, or the fourth quarter of this year?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — No. Just the first, second, and third quarter. The first, second, and third quarter, and the amount that has been expended in those three quarters is \$19 million.

Mr. Martens: — How many families are affected by the expenditure of those \$19 million?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — About 70,000.

Mr. Martens: — And how many children would that have been?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We estimate about 120,000.

Mr. Martens: — So in my observation of this, that there's 70,000 families with about 1.6 children per family. What would that average out at a per family . . . At 1.5 how many dollars would they get? Can you give me that figure off hand?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We can do that, but I just wanted to add, mention something about the statistics I'm giving you because I don't want to mislead the House or the member.

We don't have the exact numbers because we have to wait for the federal government to provide them, because the way the system was set up, everything is relied on the federal government doing the work on this kind of thing. That is not provided until when, the end of the fiscal year? That is not provided until the end of the fiscal year.

So I'm giving you estimations as best as I can, but when we do get the federal government numbers, I will give you an undertaking that I will provide them to you.

Mr. Martens: — On that payment for the family tax credit, that's the fiscal year end, not the calendar year end then. Is that it? Okay.

How many of them . . . do you have that split off in any way in rural families, in urban families?

(2015)

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We don't have it. We have to wait until we get, as I indicated, the statistics from the federal government.

But I can assure the member opposite that if he wishes — it's better if he reminds me in the letter, but if he wishes — as soon as we get them from the federal government I'll make them available.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, is the federal government paying the equivalent amount to the exact dollar in the GST on the family tax credit on the same basis?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm informed that the answer is no. The federal government provides some tax credit for individuals, the provincial did not. So the answer to your question is no.

Mr. Swenson: — Well I just have one final question for the minister, Mr. Chairman. How is it, Mr. Minister, that you will rely totally upon the federal government for figures as far as the expenditures for 120,000 children and 70,000 families and so far \$19 million in a harmonized tax system, and yet on resourced revenue, you just discredit the feds totally. You don't accept their numbers; you don't care what they are.

I mean we got the same guys on the federal side, sir, calculating for 120,000 kids and you won't accept their figures on 8,000 oil wells and a few mines. It just seems kind of a contradiction, Mr. Minister, that we needed to get clarified here. Why is one set of numbers all right from the feds and the other not?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The answer's very simple. Because one is hard data, one is hard data. It's the statistics, that's the numbers of children, numbers of families and so on. The other number is an estimation based on an economic model which is provided by the federal government.

You take three economists and you ask them to give you an economic model and you at least get two different economic models. So although one is hard data, the other one is simply an estimation based on an economic model. That is a very significant difference and that's why I say what I say.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, before the officials leave I would just like to thank the minister and his officials. And I'd like to say to the minister that I do respect your officials a whole lot. I had the opportunity to work with all of them on several occasions and they are very competent people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I thank the member for those comments and I accept

what he has just said. And I want to . . . let's put aside the other comments we both made. And I want to thank the members opposite for the questions. They were good questions. And I look forward to the next time when we can engage in this kind of debate again.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 15 — An Act to amend The Municipal Board Act

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bill No. 16 — An Act to establish the Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move Bill 16 now be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 17 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act

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

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

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

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 3 be now moved a third time and passed under its title.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 4 now be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 2 now be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

(2030)

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Government Financial Procedure

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

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure again to resume debate on the supply motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — This is such a fundamental question of process to the opposition and a great deal of discussion regarding this motion is needed. We believe, in opposition, the only way for proper process to move forward was in a budgetary process. We agreed to limit the discussion in the budget process and go directly into estimates, but so far we have not seen any answer from the government side. What is wrong with us asking questions of the various ministers regarding their respective departments?

I had a number of questions specific to each ministry from my constituency, some of these which were concerns in the health care areas, concerns about the facilities in Eatonia and Eston; concerns in education regarding the high school, for example, in Eston, Saskatchewan; the low enrolments in rural schools.

Some of the other concerns centred around the recreational complexes in various communities in my constituency, the rec plex in Kindersley for example and the rec plex in Eston. And we had a number of concerns specific to Highway 317 which is in my constituency and it joins the Wilkie constituency; concerns regarding the community college in Kindersley as well; the Sask Works program; environmental concerns relative to the oil industry; a number of questions specific to Saskatchewan

Crop Insurance; a number of concerns and questions specific to GRIP (gross revenue insurance program); questions specific to the oil and gas industry; questions regarding rural hotels and electronic gaming; and primarily, I guess, the question is tax revenue and where is it going to come from for this new government.

Because of the serious concerns about the supply motion, we have a lot of questions that need to be answered. We don't believe the Finance minister would be able to answer all of those specific-type questions relative to the various departments.

Mr. Speaker, it's at this time I'd like to move an amendment to this motion, seconded by the member from Morse. The motion is as follows:

That all words after the phrase "fiscal year:" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

(1) The government shall table Estimates for each department, crown corporation, board and commission consistent with the constitutional conventions of Saskatchewan and the rules of this Assembly;

(2) when tabled in the Assembly, the estimates are hereby referred to the Committee of Finance and shall be dealt with in the normal manner except that the government will call estimates on a daily basis until they are approved or the Assembly is prorogued;

(3) the time provided for the budget debate shall, for this procedure only, be limited to 15 minutes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to point out a number of things in this discussion on the supply motion and the amendment that I find rather interesting about why we are where we are and why we're doing what we're doing.

There's a number of things, Mr. Speaker, that I find substantially interesting. We had tabled in this Assembly a book called *1991-92 Financial Report*, and in it there were some things were significant that I think should be drawn to the attention of the public.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance stood earlier in this House and said they had time for this or they didn't have time for that. It was convenient for him to hide behind the role of a new government when it was to his benefit and not say anything about facts and figures that dealt with things that I know that the Department of Finance had, and I believe that he could have easily had prepared himself for answering those questions in a way that would have been open and would have provided this House with the information that was pertinent to establish some of the things that we wanted to talk about.

Mr. Speaker, in this book is a summary of income, and it deals with two columns in this book. One, it deals with what was forecast for 1991-92, and it deals with it very

close to what we would have dealt with on a budget-line basis from the spring of 1991. And when we look through that, what they have alongside that table is another of what actually happened in 1990-91.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's what they did on that one. They didn't want to show to this Assembly what the real income was, because in fact, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance would have had to justify his creative arithmetic in relation to the estimates on the deficit that he brought forward. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that is one interesting point.

The second thing that he did is when he came to expenditures, he knew that he would have to justify the expenditures that he had had to this point, and in that case he brought in two . . . four lines actually, one on actual for '90-91. And in the light of what he provided for us, he did put in actually what was spent from April through to this point in time. I'm not just sure of the exact date when this would have been issued for; however that is what he brought in. Through this process, he could increase the cost and decrease the income without having to justify it in the House.

And, Mr. Speaker, that causes us on this side of the House, as an opposition, a considerable amount of problem, because we could not ask, we could not come to any kind of realization on what each individual line department had for income, what each individual line department had for expense, nor could we inquire of him how these related to the kinds of things that we thought were pertinent for what is going to be spent from here to the end of this fiscal year. We have no way of coming to that realization of those numbers.

And, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Finance, through the discussion he had here on the E&H and the family income tax credit . . . is what he's going to provide us for in his review and his overview of the estimates as it relates to Rural Development, Agriculture, or any of the other departments — of Health — he's got to be kidding not only himself but the whole of the province of Saskatchewan. Because I don't think he can do it.

The second point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is this: that throughout this book he took the time to put together exactly what it would have been considered in a mini budget. He put the subvotes in, he put all of those information items in here on what he is going to cost out. And that, Mr. Speaker, is what you would normally find in a budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, those points tell me that, number one, he did have the time to put together the actual figures. He did have the time to do that, but his constraint was that he didn't want to have the ministers of the Crown answering the questions that were going to come from this opposition, because he knew that we knew what was in those departments prior to him taking over office. And he also knew that we knew what the answers were, and therefore could quiz his ministers in a way that they wouldn't be able to give the answers in a proper fashion.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is why the department . . . or the Government of Saskatchewan decided they weren't

going to allow the royal opposition, the loyal opposition, to deal with the estimates in the proper fashion. That's the reason why that minister decided that he was going to change the way things have traditionally been done through custom and precedent for over 400 years in the parliamentary system.

He decided to change it and, Mr. Speaker, it's an example of the kinds of things that this three weeks of government and Legislative Assembly process have been subjected to by a government that said they were going to be open and honest, reveal the things that were there.

And, Mr. Speaker, they have been less that realistic in an honest approach to the focus of providing a budget. They have been less than honest with us in its relationship to some of the Bills they brought forward.

And to top it all off, Mr. Speaker, they wanted us to approve the amount of spending that we're going to be doing in this last quarter. They want to have us from last . . . from this week Monday to now have all of the assessments done, to have an understanding of all of those estimates, and he wanted us, six days later, to have a review of all that process.

Top that with, Mr. Speaker, some very, very crushing, fundamentally wrong kinds of Bills that they put into this House. It is, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, a very, very sad day for Saskatchewan that this Finance minister would provide this kind of a financial statement to this Assembly and not even let the members of this Assembly discuss and review the expenditures that he's going to have in his budget from here on.

This, Mr. Speaker, is a budget. He presented it as a financial paper because he didn't have the courage to have his ministers and then this government stand there and defend what they were going to spend their money on.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wish to make a few comments pertaining to the amendment before the House on this particular motion by the Finance minister.

Mr. Speaker, I would say through you to the Finance minister and all the members of this House, that if the members of that government truly believed the rhetoric that they have put out in the province of Saskatchewan, this business about co-operating, about changing the ways that things are done, then I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance would have approached the opposition and explained the bind that he was in.

The minister stood in his place in this House and gave all sorts of reasons of why he had to suspend the rules of this legislature, why he had to change many years of precedent, why the things that our forbears in this House and in this province . . . took and earned as their right.

And instead of coming to the opposition and saying, because of the unique circumstances, we would ask you

to be co-operative, that we know we have new ministers who would not be totally conversant with the previous financial picture as laid down by the previous government; we wish to come before this Assembly and put our stamp on the final quarter spending. And by putting our stamp on that final quarter spending we're going to need to have some co-operation, we are going to need to do things a little bit different than perhaps we have in the past.

And I am sure, Mr. Speaker, with that type of approach that this opposition would have been most co-operative. Probably time limits could have been worked out for each minister. Probably certain criteria could have been worked out where the remarks and the questioning would have been limited simply to the expenditures made by the new administration and have nothing to do with expenditures made by the previous administration. And if that line of questioning had to be fairly narrow that the two House leaders could have sat down, Mr. Speaker, in co-operation, and worked upon a line of questioning, narrow in its focus, but still all-encompassing and still allowing members of this legislature to exercise their traditional rights and privileges. And we would not have had to have a Bill with the heavy hand of setting aside the rules and regulations that have been developed over time, that I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, have a lot of credibility and credence attached to them. And instead the decision is to come in and use the heavy hand of the New Democratic Party majority in this House.

(2045)

And it brings me back, Mr. Speaker, as I have suggested on so many other occasions in this House, on so many of the matters that we've had to deal with here in the last three weeks, and that is the only rationale that I can possibly arrive at, that any thinking person in this province can possibly arrive at, and that is the government has a political agenda which doesn't have anything to do with the sound financial management of this province. This government is on an agenda — a vindictive one I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker — and the way they wish to accomplish this is to set aside the things that we have taken as our rights as citizens in this province and supersede those with an agenda by this particular government.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Kindersley pointed out why it is absolutely fundamental that members of this legislature have the opportunity to question ministers of the Crown as always has happened in this legislature vis-a-vis their various areas of concern. And I said, Mr. Speaker, that could have been done in a narrow frame, agreed upon mutually, so that we do not have to go through the exercise of having on the books of this province this heinous motion brought in by the Minister of Finance, which takes away the rules and precedents and procedures of this House. And, Mr. Speaker, I find that reprehensible, that we have had to go through this particular debate on this Bill when probably all of the questioning of the various ministers could have been handled in a much shorter time.

I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that those things could have been agreed upon and handled in a very different manner than

what this government has presented to this House. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment. And I would urge all members of this legislature, before we set aside what has been proven and true in this province, that we all support this amendment.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Just two or three very brief comments and I will not take a great deal of time of the House.

I want to say to the House and to you, Mr. Speaker, that there indeed is an interest on the part of the members in the government, and I am sure that there is an interest in the members opposite, in sound financial management. That is one of the reasons why it's important to dispose of this supply Bill by the legislature, in a vote of the legislature, rather than continuing to fund the operations of the government in the last fiscal year through special warrants.

That was clearly an option that was available to the government. We could have used it. But we decided that there was enough concern in the public of Saskatchewan, and certainly concern on the part of the members in the government side of the House, about special warrants, that we wanted the legislature to vote on a supply Bill which is really — I guess this is not an accurate analogy but in some ways a voting on a special warrant — is a supply Bill to pay for the expenditures that are necessary to complete this fiscal year by the end of March of 1992.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, what I have tried to do, and what the government has attempted to do, is provide the supply that is being requested so that the members can deal with it and vote on it. We will have a right, this legislature will have a full right, to review those expenditures when the next budget is brought in for the next fiscal year because during the debate on that budget not only will the proposals in the budget be debated and not only will the estimates of that budget be debated in committee, but so will the supplementary estimates be debated which will be the estimates for this fiscal year that were paid by special warrant and by interim supply.

So all of that will be available at that time and ministers will have to justify the expenditures for this fiscal year, as they should, even though those expenditures were made under the budget of the former government.

But rather than, Mr. Speaker . . . finally I want to say that rather simply continuing with the special warrant situation it is important in our view that it is this legislature who deals with the supply as I think is appropriate.

That doesn't mean, Mr. Speaker, that at some time in the future there will not be special warrants. They are there for a purpose. They are there for the purpose that in case of emergency or special circumstances a government may from time to time have to deal with special warrants. But when there is an opportunity for the legislature to deal with supply as there is an opportunity here in this short session, then I think we should take advantage of it and that's why this supply Bill is here today.

And so, although I understand the members opposite concern, I want to make it clear that it was our view that

under the circumstances and the shortness in time there really was no other alternative but to proceed in this form and that's why it's here and that's why I think, Mr. Speaker, that the amendment is . . . I cannot support the amendment and I will ask the House to instead support the main motion.

Mr. Neudorf: — Point of order. Are we talking about the motion or are we talking about the amendment? I understood you to say motion, sir.

Amendment negated on division.

The division bells rang from 8:53 p.m. until 9:02 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 31

Van Mulligen	Lorje
Wiens	Lautermilch
Simard	Calvert
Tchorzewski	Hamilton
Lingenfelter	Johnson
Koskie	Trew
Shillington	Scott
Anguish	McPherson
Goulet	Kujawa
Kowalsky	Crofford
Carson	Harper
Mitchell	Renaud
Cunningham	Langford
Upshall	Jess
Hagel	Haverstock
Bradley	

Nays — 9

Devine	Martens
Muirhead	Britton
Neudorf	Goohsen
Swenson	D'Autremont
Boyd	

MOTIONS

Substitution of Member on the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Regina Dewdney, by leave of the Assembly:

That the name of Mr. Langford be substituted for that of Mr. Anguish on the list of members on the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Motion agreed to.

Substitution of Member on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Hillsdale, by leave of the Assembly:

That the name of Mr. Anguish be substituted for

that of Mr. Langford on the list of members on the Standing Committee of Public Accounts.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Mr. Goulet: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for leave to introduce some visitors.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, and members of the Legislative Assembly, it's indeed my pleasure to welcome from my constituency Mr. Steven Ross, who is here supervising some young boxers. They've entered a boxing card here, a provincial boxing card here from right here in Regina hosted by the Regina club. So along with Steven Ross, our three young boxers, Greg Naytowhow, Curtis Munroe, and Duncan Bird.

And along with the boxers are of course Pearl Stockdale, who works for Touchwood File Hills Tribal Council. And please welcome these people. And before we extend the House welcome, I would like to say a few words in Cree also to the young boxers.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

Okay, please welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Chairman, I would also ask for leave to welcome the guests.

Leave granted.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Chairman, it's my pleasure to join with my colleague from Cumberland to welcome Steven Ross and the boxers. And I especially want to welcome to the Assembly a former colleague, teaching colleague of mine, Pearl Stockdale, with whom I spent several years at Carlton Comprehensive High School in Prince Albert — not only in the class-room, but also on many committees. And it's good to see you again, Pearl. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I beg to inform the Assembly that Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the subject matter of the resolution, recommends it to the consideration of the Assembly. And therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the last quarter of the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, the sum

of \$954,534,200 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question for the minister. And I suspect, given the exercise we went through a little earlier in the House, I'll get about the same answers, but we'll give it a shot here and see what happens anyway.

Mr. Minister, in the Department of Economic Diversification and Trade — I believe it's page 27, item 4 — you have allocated a sum of \$1.1182 million. Can the minister please tell us what portion of that was gained by closing down the trade offices in various centres around the world — and I refer to Minneapolis, Hong Kong, and Zurich — what contingent liabilities he still has there vis-a-vis his office space, and what other contingent liabilities he would have vis-a-vis employees, foreign nationals, that were employed in those various trade offices?

The Chair: — I wonder if the Minister of Finance might introduce his officials — I neglected to ask him to do that earlier — before he answers?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Basically the same people are here: our deputy, John Wright, who's seated on my right; Kirk McGregor, executive director taxation, intergovernmental affairs on my left behind me; and John Law, executive director of the Treasury Board branch on my right behind me.

Now if I may respond to the member's question opposite. The savings will only be nominal in this fiscal year, but taking into account the closure of Zurich, at the end of this fiscal year, savings of about \$1.8 million will be realized. In subsequent years these savings will be reduced by expenditures for contractual agents as we need them from time to time. But the savings in a full fiscal year, which will be next fiscal year, will be \$1.8 million — this year very negligible because pretty well the expenditures have been made.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, as part of that question I asked if you had any contingent . . . as part of the question I asked, did you have any continuing, contingent liabilities vis-a-vis office space and foreign nationals that are continuing to cost the Government of Saskatchewan money in those particular locations?

(2115)

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — In response to the member's question, yes, there is office space. We're in the process now of arranging sublet leasing of the office space so that we can cover that off.

There is obviously some staff that has been let go and there is a process of working out the arrangements for the appropriate severance that will be made. I don't have that, but as soon as it is available, I can assure the member that I will provide it to him. And I am asking my officials to keep track of these kinds of questions so I can do that.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I should make the point immediately, Mr. Minister, that

this is exactly what the opposition has been pointing out during this debate for some time.

No one on this side of the House expects that you will have any of these answers. And I'm sure your officials will be very diligent in trying to provide us with information.

But the very fact is, sir, you've said to me that you have contingent liabilities of one million eight hundred dollars . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well, a portion of that, a portion of that, you just said, was tied up in trying to sublease office space; that you still have foreign nationals that you're dealing with; so obviously, sir, a portion of the money that you have on this particular line is involved with those trade offices in dealing with the former employees.

Now can you tell me, Mr. Minister, in this fourth quarter of spending by your government, what portion of that figure allocated in the area of trade will go to those contingent liabilities that we have to deal with?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — So that the House and the member doesn't misunderstand, when I said the 1.8 million, I said that 1.8 million we'll be saving next year, not this year. I also said that in this year, the amount of saving will be negligible because there are certain commitments that have been made because of the fact that the offices existed there.

So there are basically no savings in this year. The \$1.8 million is the benefit of the saving next year because the offices in the next fiscal year will not have to be budgeted for.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, again to the minister, and I'm sorry this is taking so long, but I specifically asked the minister, of the amount allocated in the fourth quarter spending of your government, how much of that figure you have allocated there is tied up with these contingent liabilities, sir?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I am told that the total budgeted there for January to March is \$1.1 million . . . is \$1.18 million — how much of that is going to be required to deal with the questions that you raise? I'm not able to give you the answer to that one because of the lease . . . subleasing arrangements which are being attempted to make. So we have to know what happens there out of that, what we can cover off, maybe all of that cost of the lease that we're committed to.

And secondly, I can't tell you about the severance because I'm not sure that that's all completed. But when it's completed, I can tell the members opposite I will provide you with that information in the form of correspondence.

Mr. Swenson: — Obviously, Mr. Minister, there will be some portion of what you have allocated for trade used up in some of these areas.

Now, Mr. Minister, Saskatchewan trades a lot in order to survive in the world today. Don't you agree, sir, that given this fairly small amount and the work that was done by the trade offices in garnering new trade opportunities for

Saskatchewan, that it would not have taken a great number of transactions to in fact pay for the continuing operation of these offices, at least in the short term? Because you're going to have to pay for the subleasing of these offices probably anyway and you're probably going to have to live out the contractual arrangements of the people being severed.

And, sir, would not have you have thought it more prudent, perhaps, to continue through to the end of your budget year with the offices in place, doing work on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan and being competitive. Because I know, from visiting the Hong Kong office myself, that there were opportunities there that need exploring. And if there is no one there, sir, those opportunities won't happen. Would you not agree that perhaps it would have been wiser to continue to the end of your fiscal year, continuing on with those operations, and, I suggest, you having a net benefit to the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well obviously that was not the view of the government because we made a different decision. I am informed by the minister, as the government has been informed by the minister, that there were not very significant benefits from these trade offices on a value-for-dollar basis. We're obviously, as a government, going to have to explore other alternatives. We're going to be using co-operative approaches with embassies of the federal government. We're going to be looking at contractual arrangements where we will target certain pursuits that we will have to take. Because there is no question, and I don't disagree with the member, that trade is very important to Saskatchewan as it is important to Canada. And we will just be developing more cost-effective ways in which to pursue that trade and develop trade for Saskatchewan products around the world.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Mr. Minister, would you agree or disagree that most provinces in Canada have trade offices in most of those locations?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I believe Alberta, B.C. (British Columbia), Ontario, and Quebec have offices in those provinces . . . offices in different parts of the world. Yes indeed, that's true.

But the province of Saskatchewan is not Alberta, Ontario, B.C., or Quebec; it is the province of Saskatchewan. And we think we can do a better job by using alternative means by which to do the pursuit of trade in parts of the world where we think it's important to do that.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, I'll make one final comment and allow one of my colleagues to ask questions.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that what you're telling this Assembly tonight when we look at your allocations for trade in the fourth quarter of this budget year, what you're saying is that Saskatchewan is indeed smarter than all of these other jurisdictions, and that we will do better in the international trade situation than those provinces will.

And I would like you to confirm, Mr. Minister, when we next review this subject, when you present your budget, that you have figures to show that Saskatchewan indeed is doing better than all of these other jurisdictions which do have trade offices.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I can assure you that when I present the first budget of this new government that the minister will be in a position to explain fully, Mr. Chairman, to the members opposite who may choose to ask precisely what the government has initiated to pursue trade around the world for Saskatchewan products, other than through this arrangement that was there before, which we decided as a policy decision was not the most cost-effective way in which to do it . . . but I can tell the member, I repeat again, that when we introduce the first budget of our government in the new fiscal year, that opportunity for asking the questions and the explanation will be made available to him.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I also direct my question to the Minister of Finance. And I would just like a short response to this, Mr. Minister. How many hungry children are there in Saskatchewan as we speak?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm not sure that I can at this point in time provide that kind of detail. I know for example that just the other day the federal government released some statistics which I don't have with me. I don't have that with me but once again we'll provide that to the member since he has asked the question.

Mr. Neudorf: — But, Mr. Minister, what is the point whether the federal government has statistics for you or not? Just previously you told my colleague here that you didn't trust any of the figures from the federal government. And here you are now saying that they're not supplying you with figures. There's a lack of consistency here.

And I find it strange, Mr. Minister, that you can't answer the question that I just asked you. Your battle cry has always been 64,000 hungry children. Can you confirm that figure now, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Just to make it clear to the member . . . the statistics I trust; the forecast I don't want to rely on. And that is the difference I remind him once again.

There is no doubt that the number of hungry children or people living at a poverty level in Saskatchewan is high. That is something that has developed over the last several years. It's of concern. That's why we are developing policies to address that. We will announce those policies in due course.

The Minister of Social Services has announced a review of all income-support programs because it may very well be that the way the system works now is inefficient and is ineffective and does not provide the kinds of support that are needed considering the needs that are there.

We need to do with income-support programs the same

thing as we must do with all programs in government, faced with the fiscal situation that we inherited, and that is review them to see that they meet the needs within the financial ability of the province, but meet them more efficiently, more effectively, and more cost efficiently.

There needs to be a major restructuring of these kinds of programs if the province is to be able to deal with its debt and deficit problem, and at the same time, deal with the needs of the people, such as the people the member comments on opposite.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did not ask for political rhetoric. I asked for an answer. And while you're doing all this wonderful planning and stabilizing of your plans, children are going hungry.

Mr. Minister, specifically in this budget of yours, how much money is directly allocated for the hungry children?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I want to tell the member that because this is only the implementation of the former government's budget that the number that was in . . . the amount of money designated in that former budget is the amount of money that's in there now, and if I am correct, I believe it was something like 700,000 that the former government had budgeted. That's exactly the number that's being provided because all we're doing here is putting in that former government's budget.

Mr. Neudorf: — But, Mr. Minister, you are the saviours of the hungry. You are the ones that are going to eliminate poverty in Saskatchewan. Are your priorities no different than ours? And specifically it was \$740,000 that we put into it. Now you're telling me . . . How much of that money is left, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Let me assure the member that indeed the priorities of this government will be different. They will be different and they will be reflected when this government has had an opportunity to do all of the budget preparation and the analysis that is required to provide an adequate budget.

Now, Mr. Chairman, in response to the member's question about the amount of dollars, it will be one quarter of what was budgeted because we're providing money for the final quarter.

The Chair: — Order, order please. Order, please. Order, please. Mr. Minister, there's been an official who has arrived since you've introduced the officials, and I'd ask that you introduce the official to the members of the Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Just arrived, Bill Jones, associate deputy minister seated over here.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Neudorf: — Could you indicate to me how long it's going to take for you to get your plans in place?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, all of the provisions in the operations of the government, such as income support, Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, the

money that's specifically budgeted to do specific programming is there. We are in the process of reviewing as has been announced earlier, a complete review of income-support programs so that when we are able to implement a new approach and a new program, we are able to do it appropriately and adequately and it will be announced in due course. It will be announced by the time we are prepared and ready to introduce a new budget.

(2130)

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Minister, I'm asking on behalf of the hungry children of this province. They have a right to know. How long do they have to wait till they get a specific response from you?

Mr. Minister, I don't want a long, political rhetoric answer. Answer one month, two months, four years. How long?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — And I'm responding on behalf of the hungry children of Saskatchewan and on behalf of this government. And they will not have to wait nine and a half years, Mr. Speaker. They will only have to wait until the next budget is introduced.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — All right, Mr. Minister, I finally got somewhere. I finally got the answer out of you that the hungry children of Saskatchewan have to wait until next April when you have decided to come down with a budget. Thank you for that answer, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's exactly what you said.

How much, Mr. Minister, have you budgeted in this budget for the next three or four months to fight forest fires?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Just for the information of the member, there is in the financial report which we are considering here, 1.6 million that is identified as fire suppression. But I want to add some elaboration to that. Here is why those expenditures are required.

There's 0.5 million for the costs of fire fighting administration including full-time staff costs, training of fire-fighters, and equipment maintenance, which is essential to prepare for the 1992-93 season.

There is five hundred and sixty-four hundred thousand for a radio communications building which was not paid previously because it was payable to the commercial revolving fund, and it was not deemed to be urgently required as stipulated in the special warrant funding arrangement. There was .6 million northern air services late fuel charges and other miscellaneous expenses for which late billings have been received. That's what that allocation of money is for — it's for existing continuing administration and for bills that have been incurred at the previous time.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Chairman, since the minister was quoting from that document, I would ask him to table that document now.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Income security, Mr. Minister, could you indicate to me exactly what income security and the \$569,800 is all about. Vote 36 on page 52, ordinary expenditures to help your officials find it.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — That's strict administration costs for the purposes of being able to carry out those responsibilities in the last quarter.

Mr. Neudorf: — I thought so, Mr. Minister and Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that answer.

On community living I have a concern. In my constituency, Mr. Minister, we have a lot of group homes that are sourced from community living in Rosthern, in Hepburn, in Hague; independent living in Waldheim. Can you indicate to me the community living budget of almost \$5 million there, whether that will be adequate to ensure that those facilities will continue to exist.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — It's the same amount of money as was allocated by the previous administration. We're simply completing the fourth quarter. It's no policy change. If it was adequate to do that as was then announced, it's certainly going to be adequate to do that. It's the former budget, and it's the same number.

Mr. Neudorf: — So essentially, Mr. Minister, what you are telling me now is that you have no idea whether it's adequate or not.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — All I can say is that if it was adequate for the member opposite when he was minister of Social Services, that I would hope that it would be adequate as provided here.

Mr. Neudorf: — Again, Mr. Chairman, I ask the minister whether he is not the government, whether he has not got the responsibility to ensure that moneys are adequate and properly spent.

This idea of the minister saying, well this was what the former government did. You have your set of priorities, you have your set of responsibilities. And I say now that you are government. Accept that responsibility and quit pawning off everything on the previous administration.

Mr. Minister, on article 9, line 9, Saskatchewan Works, the previous minister has, on numerous occasions, said in the media and in this Assembly during question period, that Sask Works is on hold. It's on review. There will be no more money spent until that review has been completed.

There's \$1.046 million in your budget. Could you explain that?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I can tell the member that, just as the Minister of Social Services reported to the House during question period, that the Saskatchewan Works program was previously budgeted at \$3.6 million. It is overexpended. It is now going to . . . the full allocation will be \$3.8 million. This is for the final quarter to provide for that funding. Even at that rate, it is overexpended and money is provided to make sure that that's all covered.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Minister, there's a very, very

important project going up in the North with the Garson Lake road, the La Loche road, and so on. And the community of La Loche is certainly depending on that. Does this mean now that you are making a commitment to see that project come to fruition?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — No, this doesn't mean that at all. I mean if the member wants specific information on that, once again, I will make sure the minister knows about the member's question and we will provide you with the information.

Mr. Neudorf: — Well, Mr. Minister, that's not good enough. The people of La Loche want to know. Their winter livelihood is at stake here. We need answers. You're not giving us answers. You're pawning it off on a minister that's not here, that cannot answer. That's the fallacy of this whole process that we're undergoing here. That's the problem that this side of the House has with this. No one seems to be answerable for any of the expenditures going on. We're not sure whether there's going to be enough.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, the fire-fighting crews that are being established and have been established over the last number of years in Buffalo Narrows — will that continue under this assessment that you've made of 1.046 million?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — To the extent that it's required in the last quarter, the answer is yes.

Mr. Neudorf: — So you're prepared to, up that amount if that's necessary, to keep that project alive. Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I remind the member that all we're dealing with is a supply Bill for the period January through to March. All that was provided for in the proposed budget of the former government under that budget will be provided for with the funding that's being provided during the period January through March.

If you want to know about a specific project, it's very simple. You can write to the minister in charge . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Indeed, I can guarantee to the member opposite that if he is really interested in the answer, rather than simply just having a discussion here, he just needs to pursue it with the minister and the minister will provide the answer. If he wishes to ask me, I will have a record of it made. We will read, answer it, and I'll see that the minister provides him the answer.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Chairman, what we are doing here is an utterly useless exercise. Opposition is getting no satisfaction. There are no answers, there's no accountability. We don't know what's going on. Whether this budget is actually going to be able to accomplish those things that need to be done.

I ask you again, Mr. Minister: line 16, payment to the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission, \$1.8 million. Is that the total expenditures that the Legal Aid Commission would be expending?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — That's right. That's the last quarter commitment. It's the total expenditure. There's no

policy change. Nothing has changed.

Mr. Neudorf: — Then, Mr. Minister, what are you guys doing on that side of the House? Nothing has changed. The world goes on as always. I thought you were the elected government. I thought you had the big ideas. I thought you were going to put this province on a different track. And yet everything goes on as if we were sitting there. Well, Mr. Minister, let's trade seats. We may as well do that.

That amount for Legal Aid, Mr. Minister. Does that take into consideration user fees?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I know that no new policies have been initiated since the budget was announced so that there is no change from the point of view of user fees that may have existed before. There has been no change whatsoever.

I want to tell the member opposite though that he says that nothing has changed. Well nothing could change. You don't make those kinds of changes in seven weeks. If the former government had passed the budget as it was required to be passed, then we wouldn't have to go through this exercise today.

But I can tell the member that while we are going through this process, the budget for the next fiscal year is being prepared. All of the policies and programs are being assessed so that we can adequately deal with all of the issues and provide the kind of budget which this province needs.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I think we on this side are experiencing a mounting frustration. No answers, no answers. No answers from the man in question period the other day who made this statement, Mr. Chairman. I would like to quote from *Hansard* on page 330 where the Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski says: "Thank you. The question would have been better directed to me because Mr. Ching is the . . ."

Interruption by an hon. member: "You mean you've got the answer?"

Mr. Tchorzewski: "I most certainly do, as I always do, member."

Well you always do. We were expecting then that because you have set on this big policy here of circumventing the rules of this legislature so that we could not have access to your ministers to ask any questions directly, that indeed you might have the answers. I've spent, sir, with you at least 15, 20 minutes now and I don't think I've gotten any answers at all.

I want to ask one last series of questions — Social Assistance Plan. You have under the SAP (Social Assistance Plan) allocated \$56.237 million for the last quarter as you were saying. On what client load is that based? What's the case-load?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I want to tell the member that there's an increase in \$13 million in 1991-92 unemployment. I am told that the unemployment

increased from the department's original forecast of 34,400 to 37,000. This has increased the SAP case-load by 550 and that's the nature of the increase.

(2145)

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, this last few . . . two months, in fact two months today, since you won the election and you've been firing and hiring — and I'm sure that this will be an easy question for you to answer because you said everything you're going to do is going to be better than the last government, it will be all to save money and you're going to save money — I want to ask you this question: of all the people you've fired and the people that you've hired what has been your net saving?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I can't respond to the member on all of what . . . in specific detail, but I can tell him this, that since this government has taken office, by efficiency measures which we have initiated — because we said all along that there was waste and mismanagement that had to be addressed — having only three, four months in which to deal with it, where most of the expenditures, discretionary ones, already have been made, the opportunities for that are limited, but I can tell the member quite precisely that the efficiency measures which we have implemented will save in this fiscal year \$58.7 million. And that's a very significant saving considering we only have one quarter in which to do that.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Chairman, I noticed that you noticed too that the member was quoting from that document and I would ask him to table that, please.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I write notes and I make notes and that was simply my notes. It was not a document.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the minister answered my question — attempted to answer — you didn't give me any figures because you said you didn't know. Are you telling us tonight here that, the members of the opposition, are you telling us that you hired and fired people and you have no figures and you didn't know where you were going? Is that what you're saying? Because if you're doing it and don't have figures, then it's for no other reason than political purposes. Now answer me that question very clearly. I want an answer.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Let me give the member opposite an example which will help him, I hope. Mr. Member, the member from Arm River, should know that previously there was a president in Saskatchewan Power Corporation who got paid \$408,000 a year. There is now an acting chief executive officer, president of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, who gets paid \$150,000 a year.

That's the magnitude of the savings that are there. But most of these changes, the member will know, have been made in the Crown sector side for which we are not discussing here. But I can assure the member that when there are savings made and each opportunity that presents itself . . . I've already told the member that we've, in efficiency measures, saved \$58.7 million. In the new year when we do our further cost-saving measures, I will

be in the position to announce them further.

The member will know very clearly the kind of savings that have been made because of fewer cabinet ministers, because of fewer staffs in cabinet ministers' offices, because of reductions in the kinds of salaries which I gave you the example of.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, that answer about \$150,000 being compared to \$400,000. Who are you trying to kid? Because George Hill's salary was \$208,000; he started at \$120,000. Now I want to ask you, seeing you got into it then: what is the president of SaskPower, the temporary president of SaskPower, what will be his built-in percentage of profits? Because that's where George Hill's money came — 208,000 to \$400,000 for percentage of profit. Do you not expect a profit in SaskPower? And if you do, how much will you be paying him of that?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I really think we're out of order here. We're dealing with the supply Bill, not with a Crown. But since I did raise that one particular case, I want to assure the member that the bonuses and all those kinds of extra arrangements that were made to inflate salaries of individuals, as was the case here, no longer exist.

The Chair: — I'll ask members from both sides. We've had both the minister and the member from Arm River providing information, asking questions about Crowns. And if we could remain to the supply Bill.

Mr. Muirhead: — I thank you. I'm really glad to hear that answer, Mr. Minister, that that will never happen under this government — that'll be whatever salary that the person is paid just working for this government, that that'll be it. So we have the minister on record.

Now I want to ask you a question and see if you have these kind of answers. The Minister of Health, she fired the deputy minister. Do you know the salary that the deputy minister was getting at the time of the firing?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I do not have the information that the member asks. He can ask that of the Minister of Health, and I'm sure that the Minister of Health would be quite happy to provide it to them.

I've made a note of the minister's question, the member's question. I will relate it to the Minister of Health, and I can assure the member that the Minister of Health will respond.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well, that's real good. I appreciate that, Mr. Minister. And while you're asking her that question, we'll want to see what the net gain is here, because they fired the deputy minister and they hired . . . replaced with a new deputy minister and a new assistant deputy. So they fired one and replaced him with two. So I'd like to know what the net loss or net gain in salary is here. So also ask that question to the minister and she can notify me. Because, Mr. Minister, if this goes on all over government, you start firing one and say the big figure is gone and hire two, I don't think you're going to have much of a net gain in . . .

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Not to coin a phrase, Mr. Chairman, but the proof is in the pudding. And I can tell the members opposite when the supplementary estimates come, when the next budget comes, all of that information will be in the supplementary estimates.

The minister will be able, the members will be able, to ask the ministers and the information will be provided and I'm sure that the member then will be satisfied.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, I'm sure we will be satisfied because we won't be 10 at night, just almost Christmas Eve, and we won't be pushed into that position. We'll have time and you'll be giving the answers all right. I guarantee you will be.

Now maybe you can answer this question. Maybe your officials can give you this answer. How many farm foreclosures since November 1?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, we wouldn't know that in the Department of Finance, but I can tell you that through the ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan), because of the government's policy decision to freeze, there have been none.

Mr. Muirhead: — I didn't ask you about ACS. I said farm foreclosures since November 1. A Deputy Premier of this province for two months should know exactly. I was just a back-bencher over there, a legislative secretary, and I knew every day exactly what the update of farm foreclosures. You should automatically know that. Do your officials not know it? If they don't know it, I won't pursue it.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I assure the member opposite, as the Minister of Agriculture has clearly stated in the House during question period, that the government is making every effort, co-operatively with the lending institutions and farm organizations, to work out an arrangement where there will not be any foreclosures until a long-term program is put into place. Because there's nothing that's needed more, I believe, than long-term programs where farm people in this province, the producers, know where they stand under long-term programs.

We have got to get away from the ad hoc-ery that has existed in the past because it is, as the numbers will show you, and the hurt out there that will show you . . . ad hoc-ery has not been very successful in meeting the need.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, I don't know why you'd be asking the Minister of Agriculture for information because he hasn't been able to give any for three weeks here. And you're not going to get a proper answer from him anyway. He doesn't even know whether there was a moratorium on or whether it wasn't, or whether you promised one or whether you didn't. So you better ask somebody more knowledgeable.

Do you know this question, Mr. Minister? Do you know when ACS — maybe he told you this or maybe some of the officials told you — when did ACS first put the instruction through for no foreclosures? When was the

date that you first instructed for no foreclosures?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I don't know when that date was. But I'm sure that the Minister of Agriculture can provide it to you and that he will since you've now asked the question.

Mr. Muirhead: — That's the problem with this whole process, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Speaker, that's the problem. Instead of us sitting here debating for days and days and talking about this motion and we had to have speeches around the clock and . . . (inaudible) . . . we could have had a couple days talking to your minister instead of that wasted process. Because it was a wasted process that you made us stand here and debate and give speeches and speeches and speeches and amendments. It was a wasted process. If you had done what we asked in the first place, is to bring six to ten ministers in here and let us answer the questions, then we'd be going home knowing.

Mr. Minister, I know for sure you'll be able to answer my last question. There isn't a doubt about it. There's been nothing but talk for the last two years about a moratorium and then we know for sure, regardless of what the minister has been saying the last three weeks, that there was a promised moratorium, so I'm sure that some officials some place have figured out what the cost of a moratorium will be to the taxpayers of this province.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well as the Minister of Agriculture has said in this House that we're looking at . . . we're working with . . . the Minister of Agriculture is working with the lending agencies and with farm organizations to work out that arrangement for the long term. When they have concluded their analysis we'll have that information and it'll be made public and the member will know opposite. But that discussion has not yet been completed.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got a question about land bank. How much liability have you still got in land bank? My question is to the Minister of Finance. How much liability do you still have in land bank?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The member will find on page 16 of the financial report, an item called investment in agricultural land, which is at 184.436 million. That investment is recoverable from the sale of land that could take place from the agriculture division of the Heritage Fund where all of it went when the land bank was abolished by the former government.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I was actually hoping you wouldn't find it there because that is exactly the point I want to make and the discussion that we want to make here. Because of your personal incompetence in dealing with the kinds of things that your Minister of Agriculture should be standing in this place with his department officials and giving us the answer that they could provide for him . . . That's no reflection on the help that you've got here today, because I believe that they're adequate.

But your Minister of Agriculture should be standing in his place and telling us what those estimates should be, and

what their money's going to be spent on. I read it, I knew where it was, and it took you three or four minutes to find it yourself. And I was hoping you wouldn't because then I would stand up and tell you exactly where it was. And it's not only on one page; it's on two pages.

And I would just ask another question. How much is owing on the Beef Stabilization Board?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We'll get it for the member opposite. We have a record of the question but in order for the . . . in the interests of time we'll be doing the work on it while he goes on to another question.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, this is exactly the reason that this opposition wanted to know what it was . . . grievance before supply for the people and individuals in this province and in this Assembly . . . would understand and be able to deliberate about what the Queen is going to spend her money on. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the fundamental reason why we permitted this exercise to proceed to this point — because we wanted to demonstrate to the people of Saskatchewan your incompetence in delivering the answers to the questions. That, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what we're proving here.

And I'll ask you another question. How much money did you guarantee to Southern Railroads? And how many dollars are you going to guarantee to those extensions that they're asking for in their role in continuing the short-line railroads?

(2200)

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Because of the unfortunate circumstances under which we have to bring in the supply Bill — because there was never a budget passed, with a time that was limited — I don't have that information. But we will provide it to the member since he has asked. I can assure the member that it'll be made available to him later.

Mr. Martens: — How much money have you already put into the supply for the GRIP program in crop insurance?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The premiums that have been paid out, as I'm told, are 146 million. There's nothing provided in the fourth quarter because all of the required payments have already been made.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, there is another — and it's not 146, it's \$46 million on page 49 of your book — it's another reason why I'm demonstrating the incompetence of the system that we're demonstrating here today. That, Mr. Chairman, is exactly what I want to point out.

The minister responsible for Crop Insurance should have been standing in here and able to tell us what was going on, and that's the same thing that I could ask you about Sask Water Corporation, Ag Credit Corporation or any of the others. And so, Mr. Minister, I think this . . . the theme that you have demonstrated to the public of Saskatchewan is despicable and I don't think it even is a proper function of this House to demonstrate how this House really works because it doesn't work this way in a

normal fashion. And you have done it.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I agree, Mr. Chairman, that this House does not work this way in a normal fashion but this is not a normal situation, and therefore the things aren't normal.

And I want to make sure that the member understands what the situation is. The number he referred to was total for Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation ordinary expenditure \$46 million, but the total for GRIP is \$146 million I want the member opposite to know. And that is what the figures are.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, I wasn't going to get into this but once again the minister can't possibly know, but the minister sitting off to the side will know. He just said in this Assembly that there is no allocation in this fourth quarter because all of the GRIP payments were made.

Well unfortunately, I as an irrigator went in to see my Crop Insurance agent the other day and told that we're all going to be done manually and we will not be done until after the end of December, and therefore our GRIP payments, because we happen to be irrigators, won't occur until sometime in the quarter that we're dealing with, sir. And that's precisely the kind of question that that minister could have answered, which you just gave to the House, which was totally erroneous and every irrigator out there would have been misled by the answer that you gave, sir.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I think the member is not correct because the government has made an allocation to the GRIP for \$146 million, the government's contribution therefore is in place. If the member is talking about his payment of his premium, that's a different question altogether.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, what I'm talking about is what I am owed as a producer, which won't occur. That calculation . . . When I phoned them the other day, they said they hadn't got any of it in the frigging computer even; that my allocation can't be made.

An Hon. Member: — What kind of computer?

Mr. Swenson: — A frigging one. A frigging one is one that jumps like this, you know. That those calculations haven't even been done, Mr. Minister; that they won't be done for all of the irrigators in the province until in this quarter that we're discussing; that that minister can't answer those questions, because, sir, we're going through this exercise.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the supply Bill does not require any allocation because the budgeting has been done for the GRIP premiums. That budgeting not only was done, but the money has already been allocated. That's why the \$146 million is the number that I gave to the member opposite.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, my question is fairly simple, straightforward, and really has no politics involved in it. On December 19, 1991, I have a communique here from Canada and

Saskatchewan dealing with participation funding for environmental assessment review of mines. It says: phase one, funding for public participation in this joint federal-provincial environmental assessment and review of uranium mine development in northern Saskatchewan was announced today. How much funding is the province putting into that review, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — That answer to the member opposite is that the federal government is funding all that money up front, and therefore there is no requirement in this supply Bill to provide any funds for that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Can the minister then explain what vote no. 9, subvote 17 is about?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — That's the amount that is outstanding and needed in the fourth quarter for various grants the Department of Environment gives to various organizations. I assume in there would be the environmental society of Saskatchewan, and such. But it's not any money involving this panel, the uranium study panel, which is undertaking its review, which I understand will take up to 18 months. The money for that panel in this year is being funded by the federal government, and therefore there's no need for any funding for that purpose in this supply Bill.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Minister, have you received any presentations or representations from the oil and gas industry concerning your taxation policies?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm told that in the time that I've been here we have received nothing that I'm aware of at the present time. There have been some pre-budget submissions to the federal government that have been provided, but that's all.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Minister, is the budget going to have, or are we required to put into the budget, some money for the healing lodge, for the prison that is going to come into the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Not in this last quarter. It's not that far advanced, I understand.

Mr. Martens: — Is there going to be any?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We'll know that when we have put together the budget for the next fiscal year. And at that time I obviously will be able to state quite definitively whether there will be any.

Mr. Martens: — Will at the same time the minister be able to provide us in this House with some direction as to whether there'll be a saving for the province of Saskatchewan in relation to having that facility in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm sure that when the budget comes down, Mr. Chairman, that we'll be able to provide that information, whether there's a saving, whether there is a better delivery of services, whether it meets the needs which have been raised quite publicly and quite legitimately with the fact that that kind of a facility is not available.

Mr. Martens: — Has the Department of Justice been told where it's going to be located?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I guess we'll have to wait for the budget when that happens. I don't think that that's been fully determined.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I have a question to the minister. You have said here over and over again this evening that you are basing this interim supply on the previous budget, while presented and the budget debate passed, obviously the estimates weren't passed. But you're basing it on that.

Is it true that the last time you presented a budget, Mr. Minister, in 1982 you made a forecast of revenue in that budget? And that revenue was something like 4 to \$500 million shy of the target in the budget that followed when the new administration came in and forecasted the revenue? And if that's true, Mr. Minister, would you say that the budget that was presented in the spring obviously has had some various significant changes made to it, because I'm sure that you'll recall that there might have been some in 1982.

For example, not harmonization, which is a couple of hundred million dollars, no equity, transfusions of equity, Trans Gas for example, nothing from the Crown corporations because you say that it's not there. And yet you're going back and saying that this budget on interim supply is based on that previous budget, but you've taken a large part out of it.

So two questions: number one, was your estimate of the revenue different than the estimate in 1982 in the fall after the new administration was in? And I believe that you know the answer to that — something like \$400 million. Number two, if that's the case, don't you think that four or five months — November, December, January, February, and March — five months out of twelve, would give you sufficient time to come up with the justification or budget and debate and estimates that would provide the public, and indeed this House, the answers to why you've modified the figures and had the credit rating changed, and other things that are here before us this evening?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In response to the member opposite, there is a significant difference between 1982 and 1991. I remind the member opposite that in 1982 the election took place in June. The former government, when it was then a new government, had six . . . April, I'm sorry. The former government had six months in which to prepare a budget and they did bring one in in November. Six months, which is the normal period of time in which it takes budget preparation.

In 1991 there has been — the election was in October — six weeks. That is a very significant, fundamental difference between 1982 and 1991. There are some similar situations. The economy during that period of time fluctuates and changes. And so some of the projections that are made from time to time or made by governments each year don't always come out exactly the way that they are made. Because they are after all,

estimates, based on best information that is available at the time those estimates are put together. So there are those fluctuations. And there were some in 1982. And there are some in 1991.

But the magnitude of the difference in 1991 in the deficit of — we've now brought it down to \$851 million — to the announced deficit of \$265 million is really what the true story is all about. That is a very significant spread between what the estimate was and what the real final number is.

(2215)

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, just a specific question. What was the spread between your estimate in the spring of '82 and the estimate in the fall of 1982?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — That's a long ways back. I don't have the information from 1982 other than what I can recall and what some of my officials, who were not senior people in the department at that time, can recall. But it is true that the 1981-82 budget had a projection of a modest surplus. It is also true that between the April election and the budget which the former government then introduced in November, the former government made some very significant policy changes which made a difference including, including the removal of the gasoline tax so that they brought their budget in at over \$200 million in the deficit.

The only change, before the former premier gets too excited, the only change that we have brought about here, is the removal of the PST, which is costing revenues, I agree, of \$72 million, but which we have already accounted for by cost-saving measures, so that there is no net change from any measures that this government has taken. And all that we're implementing is measures which the former government implemented.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister of Finance will need a little bit more applause to keep his spirits up once he's responded to this. Please answer the question. How much were you out? What was the difference in your estimate of the revenue and the estimates of the revenue in the fall of the same year? Could you please answer that question?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, we're dealing with this year's financial report and we're dealing with this past government's budget. I don't have the budget from 1982. That's many years ago and I'm certainly not able to answer that kind of a specific question.

Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Chairman, would the minister . . . And this is the year that you lost your election, you lost your seat. I'm sure it's imprinted on your mind. You'd remember 1982. You were the Finance minister. Was it 3 or \$400 million, which would give the House and the public some idea. Was it several hundred million dollars that you were in error in estimating what the revenues for the province of Saskatchewan would be, April 1982 versus October when we brought in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I can say to the

former premier, the member from Estevan, that that was the first year of a consecutive string of deficits that had brought this province to a cumulative deficit of \$6 billion and a debt situation of \$14 billion.

That's when that began — because of major policy changes made by that government, those people when they were in the government, on this side of the House.

The estimates that I made as the Minister of Finance at that time were not significantly out other than because of the fact that the government made some major policy changes in that period of time, including the removal of the gasoline tax which cost many dollars, and therefore brought about in that first year, a deficit in excess of \$200 million.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I'll just make the point one more time and maybe again if we have to.

You know and we all know that you were out 3 or \$400 million in your estimates. You were going into an election, you forecast the revenue and you were wrong. You overestimated, for the sake of whatever you were going to do in the spring of 1982, the revenue coming into the province of Saskatchewan, by \$400 million plus. Now that's close to half a billion dollars in 1982.

Now you stood up and said, well, you're going to rely on this budget that we came in with in 1991. But what have you done to the budget? You took out harmonization.

Harmonization, in total, is \$400 million. You know, you allocate some out and some comes in. And there's a benefit to the province of Saskatchewan. Now, you said you're going to base that on there, but you gutted a portion of that budget. Yet you're going to go back on supply and say but this is based on that.

Secondly you've said, well you're not going to take over \$200 million from the Crowns. Therefore, 200 million plus another 200 million is \$400 million.

Number three, for the sake of your political hide, you're saying I'm not interested in equity. For example you have to borrow \$200 million to have money put into Trans Gas so IPSCO can build the pipelines and so forth. That could be 2, 3, 4, 5, \$600 million.

And you don't tell the public where you're going to get that money. You let the credit rating fall through the floor. And you come down . . . It's a triple B, right? You said it's a triple B. You went to New York and you said I'm not taking this revenue, I won't take money from the Crowns, I won't take equity. I'll accept 8 or \$900 million deficit. And then I'll say, well I guess I have no choice but to put my tail between my legs and come home and say the credit rating is a triple B in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, can't you see our point here? In 1982 we brought in a budget, had the minister of Agriculture, the minister of Finance, the minister of Health, all the ministers go through their portfolios. And you said that question after question, you said, I don't have the answer to that, but the minister will, the minister will. You have five months of administration, five months of

administration.

You've got 200 million in harmonization. You won't take money from the Crowns, you won't do equity. And you've got a triple B credit rating, and you won't put your ministers up.

Mr. Minister, if you can be out \$400 million in 1982 and demand that we stand in our place as a new administration, don't you think the average person in Saskatchewan or in the British parliamentary system would only think it fair that you put your ministers forward?

And if you don't, we'll say this is a sham. This whole exercise that we're going through here on interim supply is nothing but a political exercise. It's a sham, because you don't have the courage to say, I will put a budget together and stand before the people and put my ministers up, and defend those arguments point after point after point.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I believe that the people and the public of Saskatchewan have certainly witnessed this evening an historic aberration in the British parliamentary system. The point about not having the answers means that we cannot know whether we should let the supply Bill pass or not. Time and time again the minister said that the various ministers would have the information, but they're not here, and you can wait till spring.

So essentially, after an election which you can call any time, we have in the province of Saskatchewan no budget, no grievance before supply, no ministers on their feet, nobody defending it, and the minister saying: trust me; I'll get the information in the spring; it will be in supplementary estimates.

Well that's our whole point, Mr. Chairman. The whole point here tonight is that we haven't got answers. You can't expect to have answers. And no disrespect to the officials, because they are not professionals in agriculture and engineering and in health and in highways and all of those things. These are Finance officials. And with great respect to them, the minister is putting them in a very embarrassing situation.

The first time it's ever happened in the history of Canada, that you'd go through a complete fiscal year and have an election where the budget is presented and not have a budget.

And the officials are here to defend department after department after department, and obviously they can't. So our point has been made, Mr. Chairman. And I'll simply say this, that this is an exercise that will go down on the political backs in the history of the NDP.

The New Democratic Party is the party of the people and the party for professionalism and the party that's going to bring fairness and openness, and they wouldn't even have the courage, with five months out of seven, to answer questions, come before the people, and have their

ministers on their feet.

So I say to the minister: Mr. Minister, you'll remember this day. You'll remember this day. We all will, and the people of Saskatchewan will — the fact that you would not even allow the information to come forward, portfolio by portfolio, minister by minister.

And I'll just say to the hon. members in the legislature, because you couldn't answer the specific questions, and because you can't even argue the point, and because you wouldn't even acknowledge that you were out in your estimates, for all the reasons that I've brought here, because the new government has the option, that, Mr. Minister, you and your colleagues should be ashamed of this procedure. You should be ashamed of this procedure. We don't acknowledge it. We don't accept it, Mr. Chairman, and the only way that this is passing here tonight, or even acknowledge that it will pass here tonight, is the fact that you are sitting here saying that regardless of how the British parliamentary system works, you were above it and beyond it, and you will do it anyway.

Mr. Chairman, the NDP Party of Saskatchewan and the public of Canada will remember this night in Saskatchewan politics.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I will just take a couple of minutes to outline what we have done here. Because there was no budget this year, special warrants had to be used to fund government from July to October 22. And a special warrant had to be used for the month of December because members who were elected did not become members until the official count and that was pretty close to the month of December, so there had to be a special warrant at that time.

It is the intention of this government to restore parliamentary control and ask this House to approve funding for the fourth quarter. That's what this exercise is all about: to restore parliamentary control and to ask the House to provide the supply for the fourth quarter rather than deal with special warrants.

It is clear, Mr. Chairman, that very little can be done this year to turn around the established spending practices that have been put into place over the first three quarters of this year, 1991, 1992. Because of the limited time, Mr. Chairman, all we can do here is provide supply for the final quarter. That's why this motion is here. That's why we've had this debate. And that's why we hope that members on this side of the House . . . I hope all the members of the House will deal with the motion so that the legislature can provide the supply rather than special warrants provide the supply, which would be a case of the cabinet acting in isolation from the legislature which we find quite distasteful.

Motion agreed to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Before I recognize the Minister of Finance I wonder if I might have leave just to introduce a guest.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Van Mulligen: — I would draw the attention of the members to a visitor in the Speaker's Gallery, Justin Vaive. Justin is the son of the Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. He's a grade 11 student at Dr. Martin LeBoldus High School in Regina. He takes a very active interest in politics and I would tell the members that he will be here in this Chamber hopefully during the period of between Christmas and the New Year to attend the Saskatchewan Youth Parliament. And I wonder if you might join with me in welcoming him here tonight.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply (continued)

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As members will know, there are three more motions that have to be introduced into the House and dealt with. And I will deal with them one at a time. This one is:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$954,543,200 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the last quarter of the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992.

I so move.

Motion agreed to on division.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dealing with the Saskatchewan Heritage Fund:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the last quarter of the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, the sum of \$254,145,200 be granted out of the Saskatchewan Heritage Fund.

I so move.

Motion agreed to on division.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$254,145,200 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the last quarter of the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992. I so move.

Motion agreed to on division.

(2230)

Mr. Swenson: — Before the committee rises I would like to thank the minister and particularly his officials for being part of this exercise, and wish them a Merry Christmas.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I just want to join the member in thanking my officials as well. And I will have another opportunity to wish them a Merry Christmas, but I put on the record that I also join him in

wishing them that as well. I thank the members opposite for their comments and their questions, and thank the House for disposing of these resolutions.

The committee reported progress.

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the resolutions be now read the first and second time.

Motion agreed to and the resolutions read a first and second time.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move:

That Bill No. 19, An Act for Granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the last quarter of the Fiscal Year Ending on March 31, 1992, be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly and under rule 15 and rule 51(2), I move that the Bill be now read a second and third time.

Motion agreed to on division and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill read a second and third time and passed under its title.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, The Appropriation Bill requires the following form and I want to move that form at this time:

I beg to inform the Assembly that Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the subject matter of the resolution, recommends it to the consideration of the Assembly.

And I so move.

The Speaker: — The royal recommendation is received.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave I move that Bill 18 now be reviewed in committee.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 18 — An Act to Provide for the Public Disclosure of Crown Employment Contracts, to Prescribe Provisions in Crown Employment Contracts governing Payments and Benefits on Termination or Expiration of those Contracts, to Void Provisions in those Contracts respecting those matters and to Extinguish any Right of Action and Right to Compensation for any Loss or Damage resulting from the Enactment or Application of this Act

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to introduce the officials. Seated beside me is Craig Dotson of the Executive Council. Seated behind Mr.

Dotson is Mr. Darryl Bogdasavich of the Department of Justice. And seated behind me is Mr. Doug Moen of the Department of Justice.

Clause 1

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, as I've outlined previous to this, I have a great deal of difficulty in accepting this Bill before the Assembly. I really find it difficult to proceed with it. I've talked about the things that I don't like about it. And there are things in the title that just rip at the insides of justice and freedom of access to the courts. And I really find it difficult to have this kind of a legislation proceed in this House.

And so I'm going to proceed with it anyway because I know that in the context I can stand in the way all I like. And I'll let the public decide when I tell them about what's in this Bill. I'll let the public decide on whether they value their rights and freedoms as much as I do. And I will discuss that with them in that context.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask a few questions in relation to the Bill. And the first question that I have is, has the minister engaged outside legal assistance in drafting this Bill?

(2245)

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, the Bill was drafted by Department of Justice officials. During the policy development process we did in fact consult outside counsel.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, if I could, I'd like to ask you to give this Assembly the information about who that counsel was.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, the outside counsel that were consulted during the development of the policy reflected in the Act were Mr. Tom Waller, Mr. Bill Howe, and Mr. Gerry Kraus.

Mr. Martens: — Could I ask the minister if he would be good enough to table some of the opinions that were given by the outside counsel that he had, to the Assembly?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, we will not table any opinions from counsel. That is not the practice and we don't intend to depart from the practice at this time.

Mr. Swenson: — Excuse me, Mr. Chairman, but I need to ask the minister to clarify for the House Mr. Dotson's position, please.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Dotson is employed in the Executive Council of the government. He is a special advisor.

Mr. Swenson: — Is the individual a political person or a civil servant? Would the minister clarify that?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Dotson is appointed by order in council.

Mr. Martens: — Does the minister have any idea how many people that this law will apply to on the basis of all of those people who have contracts with the government, have an order in council or administrative assistants and out of scope people? Does he have any idea on that volume of people, how many people this Bill could apply to in some way, shape, or form?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, in answer to the member's question, the legislation does not apply to any employees who are out of scope but within the classified public service. It does not apply to any order in council appointments in the public service unless they are a party to a written contract. And so far as I am aware, the numbers of people to whom it will apply is about 60.

Ms. Haverstock: — Yes, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, if the government wanted to roll back severances or deal with separation contracts, why did it not pass a simple two- or three-section Act that extinguishes separation or severances from former employees and substitutes recourse to common law practices? And in that way you could base severances or whatever — according to how long they'd been employed by the Crown or the Crown agency, the level of responsibility that they had, the size of their benefits, etc.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, with respect to the question asked by the hon. member, we think that is basically what we've done in this Bill. There are complicated issues that arise however, which required it to be twelve sections instead of the two or three that you mentioned. But we have tried to keep it basically as simple as your question suggests it should be.

Ms. Haverstock: — The government requires . . . I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, to the minister — the government requires section 6 to obtain its objectives, and if you could turn to section 6. But what I find very odd is that it includes an exclusionary clause at the end of that section that excludes everything, to my knowledge, that's in sections 7 and 8.

Section 6 defines the payments and the benefits and rolling these back is the primary purpose of the Bill, is my understanding.

So if you can take section 6(2) of the Bill, the government fulfils its aims by stating, and I quote, everything from:

All provisions in Crown employment contracts respecting:

(a) making any payments; or

(b) providing any benefits;

by the Crown or a Crown employer resulting from the termination or expiration of the Crown employment contract are void.

However, if you go to section 7, there are exceptions that are outlined to such an extent that it appears as though the Bill concedes most of the payments and benefits that it attempted to eliminate.

Now why would the government include section 7 with extensive exceptions and recourse to common law principles in this Bill, if what you really wanted to do was to make all payments and benefits listed in section 6 void?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, to the member. As I understand your question, I will try to answer it; and if I didn't understand it correctly, you can try me again.

Subsection (1) of section 6 is a definition section which defines the two terms "payment" and "benefit." And the concluding words of subsection (1) makes it clear that the term "payment" as it's defined in subsection (1) does not include any payment that may ultimately come due under section 7. Okay?

So then in subsection (2) of section 6, the provisions respecting any payments or any benefits, as those terms are defined, are declared to be void. And section 7 then follows through by providing what is the right of the Crown employee that is affected by the Act.

I hope that answers your question.

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Chairman, to the minister, if we can go further to section 7(3) and particularly 7(3)(a), I'm wondering if you can help me in this because I had some confusion.

You have here that:

If a Crown employer terminates a Crown employment contract without cause, the Crown employer shall provide the Crown employee with:

and I now state:

(a) written notice equal to the least of:

Now there are several points beneath these. I'm wondering if you can help me to understand what this really means to someone. I mean one of the concerns that I've had about this is that it appears as though — and you can correct me if I'm wrong — that someone whose contract is coming to an end could in fact not be informed by government of such an end to his or her contract, and that indeed what may happen is toward the very end of the contract they may be told, I'm sorry, you don't have a contract any more and not be given proper kinds of notice.

If you could comment on that please.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — I will try, Mr. Chairman, to explain the provisions of section (3)(a) dealing with written notice.

Subsection (3) deals with two situations where notice is given to the employee, and (b) where the period of notice is not given, so a payment in lieu of notice becomes payable.

First dealing with the written notice, you are correct that the first alternative is a notice that is equal to the remaining term of the contract. And that covers a situation where the employee's employment is going to

come to an end at a time that's defined in the contract. Some of them have provisions for renewal, an automatic renewal, and there are many different scenarios there. But that is fair because the employee knows when the contract is ending anyway. And that's the first alternative.

The second is the period of notice provided in the contract. Some of these contracts contain a period of notice. I'm not sure what percentage, but some of them do. And it's defined in the contract as being so many months — six months or two months or what have you.

And the third alternative is where you turn to the common law and say to the common law or ask the common law, look to the common law for the definition of what is an appropriate period of notice without considering the provisions of the contract, and if the contract is for a definite term, as if the contract were for an indefinite term.

And then as you have observed, the written notice that is required is the least of those three. And I think that that's probably fair in light of the explanation that I've given. Does that answer the question?

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Minister, in section 5(5) the onus is placed on the employee to file their contract with, I believe the Clerk of the Executive Council. And if they do not, the Crown may in fact make the contract void. Now I really question how fair this is, to place the onus on the employee as, through no fault of their own, they may in fact be not aware that they're obliged to follow their contract.

I think all of us know what it's like to be in contract with someone and you have endless fine print, if someone were to come to this province from elsewhere only to discover that it had been up to them . . . I know that you do have in here that in fact the employer can be responsible as well. But I would like your comment please regarding why the onus is placed not on the Crown, or the Crown employer specifically to undertake the task of filing these contracts.

(2300)

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, and to the member, the provision is . . . I would point out with respect to the provision that it is not . . . in a situation like that the contract is not *ipso facto* void, if I could use that. It's not automatically void; it is voidable at the option of the Crown.

It is intended to cover situations where there are contracts of which the government is unaware, of which the Crown employer is unaware. We don't know for a fact that there are such situations of course because, as I say, we're not aware of them. But there have been a surprise or two, and this is to cover a situation where there is a contract out there of which we are not aware because it has not been drawn to the attention of the new government.

So the effect of it is that if the Crown employee fails to file that contract in accordance with the Act, then the Crown has the right to treat that contract, to elect to treat that contract as being void.

I want to say that the permanent heads will — all of them — will be informed of the provisions of this Act and of the filing requirements immediately upon proclamation of the Act, so that the government system will be aware of the filing requirements, and the permanent heads will ensure that the other people who are caught by the definition in the Act will also be aware and will have an opportunity to file their contracts.

And in the case I had mentioned — if I can just add one more thought to it — in the case of people who have contracts and the existence of those contracts are not known, they will then have an opportunity to produce them and to file them in accordance with the Act.

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Chairman, I guess I still do have some difficulty with this. It seems like you're taking a sledge-hammer to hit a mosquito.

If I may, in section 9 which has undergone some discussion today, 9(1) and 9(2) when read together with the term "application," I find the word "application" very ambiguous here. Also used in section 9, may prevent an employee from making a claim for loss or damages even if the Crown employer were to have falsely defamed him or her.

I'm wondering if there's a way in which you could describe to me, please, a word that might be less ambiguous than the term "application." I believe that that's something that should be clarified and I hope that you'll take it under some consideration.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, and to the member, we have tried hard to find a formulation that would be more clear to people who may read the Act as to what is meant by the term "application" and we can't find a legal term that would do any better than this term.

The term "application of an Act" is a term that is often used in legislation and therefore is well understood. A term of art is one way of describing it, so that judges will know and lawyers I think will generally know what is meant by the term, application of the Act.

And if you look at the Act, the application of the Act will include the obligation to file the contract and do the other things that are required under section 4 . . . pardon me, the obligation under section 4 is to publicly disclose the employment contracts. Section 6, as we discussed a few moments ago, talks about voiding the provisions. And section 7 talks about how severance will be calculated under the Act.

Each of those sections will be applied, if you follow me. They will be applied. People will file their contracts. The contracts will be available for public inspection.

The provisions of section 6 will be applied, and similarly section 7 will be applied when the situation comes to the point where section 7 is to be applied. And it is in that connection that the term application is used.

And therefore if there is no action or proceeding against the Crown; or a Crown employer; or a member or former

member of a Crown employer; or a member or former member of the Executive Council; or any officer, director, employee, or agent, or former such, based on any claim for loss or damage as a result of enacting this Bill or applying those sections.

That's a very narrow protection in our opinion and based upon the advice of our officials. And so we have regarded it as such. We wanted this particular protection to be that narrow. We were prepared to consider amendments to try and reinforce that idea, that it was only that wide and no wider. And I wanted the opportunity to say this tonight so that it would be on the record of this House that this was the intention of the government in enacting section 9.

Ms. Haverstock: — I have a final question, Mr. Chair. I'm just wondering, Mr. Minister, if you are prepared to place a sunset clause on this legislation. I made it quite clear last night, I believe, about my serious concerns that in fact this Act seems to be being brought forward to deal with many things that no one in this province would argue are outrageous, when in fact what it does not do is to protect the innocent.

And I'm wondering if you would consider that. I want to be on record since I'm going to sit now and listen to you, that I do want to commend section 4(1) that makes contracts public. I think that people in the province would welcome it.

But I have some concerns about this being ongoing, and it's something that I'd like to see being considered by you.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, and to the member, we're prepared to consider the suggestion that you made last night which we have discussed with you today. We are particularly cognizant of the fact that section 4 and section 5 ought to be covered by the freedom of information Act, which we intend to proclaim on or about April 1.

There's been a lot of work done before the change in government towards the implementation of that Act, and there's been no break in that work. It is continued. And I think that the original time line was for April 1, more or less, and it remains April 1 more or less.

And I think that section 4 and 5 will be caught by that so that the sun could set on those clauses because they would be redundant.

So far as section 7 and . . . well, so far as the rest of the Act is concerned, we're prepared to give that serious consideration. We're sympathetic to the point that you make. And, well, we would have to give it some very careful consideration but we are prepared to do that.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, I understand the role of the Bill in reducing the severance. And my question is: if you want to reduce severance, why didn't you arbitrate it? If you wanted to reduce severance, why didn't you put a Bill in here to deal with arbitration that said: this is what you have to arbitrate for?

What I really want to know is: why does it legalize unjust dismissal, breach of contract, induced breach of contract,

interference with a contract, mental distress, loss of reputation, defamation, or any other cause of actions tort or equity? Why does it legalize those, what I believe, fundamental rights of individuals to have them appear before the . . . to bring them to the court?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, and to the member, with respect to your first point concerning arbitration, it is an alternative that we considered very carefully and for a long time.

And we didn't . . . I mean it is a viable option, there's no question about that. The better option seemed to us to be to apply the common law standards which are . . . they're complex but they're well known, if you know what I mean. I mean the factors that go into the calculation of a severance entitlement are complex but they are well known among lawyers and judges and some consultants. And the system is accustomed to dealing with these kinds of cases. So while it was a close call and while your option of arbitration is a good option, we elected this rather than the arbitration model.

Mr. Chairman, and to the member, the other part which is a substantial question I want to deal with . . . and I want to make it clear that we are not legalizing defamation or inducing breach of contract or causing a loss of reputation in the terms that you suggest. Now I understand the difficulty here and I covered this in my answer to the hon. member from Saskatoon Greystone, but this is an important point and I want to try and give it again.

This section 9 is a narrow idea and I want to repeat it. First of all let me say this to the member from Wilkie. Let me say this. Section 9(1) contains a number of different ideas and they are all drawn from elements that have been applied in unjust dismissal cases in the courts over the years.

(2315)

If you pick up a textbook on unjust dismissal or textbook like the firing line, for example, or that book, Harris on unjust dismissal, you will find these are the heads of damages under which the court has from time to time awarded damages for what we call unjust dismissals — dismissal without just cause. So the reason for the inclusion of that is to make it clear that all of those elements which are from time to time considered, are included in the claims that we're dealing with.

Now having set up that definition, subsection (2) then says that you can't sue the people who are mentioned there for that loss or damage in two situations: as a result of the enactment of this Act, which means what we're doing here passing this law; or as a result of applying the Act, as we will apply it if it is passed by this legislature, when sections 4, 5, 6, and 7 are applied, so that an employee cannot complain or cannot sue people, cannot sue a minister or an official or the Crown or what have you because section 5 was applied and a contract has been required to be filed, and therefore, may have breached a confidentiality provision in the agreement.

That cannot form the subject of a cause of action, but, if a

deputy minister were to fire an employee, and during that process defames the employee, then the employee has a cause of action for that defamation.

If the circumstances are such that, in the process of dismissing an employee, there is a . . . something has happened as a result of which you can say that a breach of contract has been induced, inducing breach of contract in such circumstances that it amounts to a tort in law, to an actionable wrong, then the officials concerned are going to have to answer that claim. The employee's claim is not taken away. We tried to draft 9 in such a way that it would apply only in the two narrow circumstances that I talked about.

And we're not trying to give anybody any protection against actionable wrongs that they may commit, including defamation and other such things like inducing breach of contract, interfering with the contract, mental distress, loss of reputation, defamation, and so on.

And I'm glad to have the opportunity to try to repeat that in this House, because these two answers that I've now given will be important in interpreting what the intention of the legislature was in passing this provision, if that turns out to be the case.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, I guess I could say that in some ways I would believe that your intentions are honourable and some ways I could say, well maybe they're not. And I'm not being disrespectful to this Assembly. But it's a choice that people make, and legal counsel will sit on both sides.

The concern that we have on this side is exactly opposite to the one that you were . . . not opposite to what you were describing — the situation is opposite. What if the union has defamation of character as its goal and says about a deputy minister that that is what I want to have that deputy minister, and I will defame him.

But we have instances of the head of the union talking about scabs, and you know the incident. If that would happen from a union towards the deputy minister, the deputy minister then upon termination would have no recourse to the court because they're excluded from the very fact of prosecution, because they're not involved in it. That's the problem that we see.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, I can say to the member without equivocation that if a defamation has occurred in the circumstances that he describes, an action would lie. This Bill would not protect the particular union leader that you're talking about. That's my view and it's the view of my officials.

The Chair: — Why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Lorje: — I want to raise a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Chair: — State your point of order.

Ms. Lorje: — My point of order is I would like to know if it is appropriate if a member declares under section 37 that she has a pecuniary interest in a matter under

consideration in the legislature whether or not she should then speak to the matter. It seems to me that by questioning one could make the case that a member is seeking to influence. And it would seem to me that this is . . . if indeed there is a conflict of interest that by questioning, even while we're in committee, that this is certainly imprudent, shows a certain lack of caution and possible disrespect for this House.

So I would like to know whether or not when a member declares a conflict under section 37, he or she is then allowed to speak to the matter. And if it is appropriate, I would like to know then what the remedy may be in the event that this may arise in future occasions in this House.

The Chair: — Order. I thank the member from Saskatoon Wildwood for her point of order. I would draw members' attention to rule 37 or our *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly*; 37 states clearly that:

No Member is entitled to vote upon any question in which he has a direct pecuniary interest, and the vote of any Member so interested shall be disallowed.

The rule in all of our rules are silent on the question of members speaking or a member asking questions about the matter in which he or she has a direct pecuniary interest. So our rules are silent on that point.

In terms of practice in parliaments elsewhere, refer members to Erskine May *Parliamentary Practice* Twentieth Edition. And although Erskine May is silent on the particular point, Erskine May does state that although a member with a pecuniary interest may be disqualified from voting, he is not restrained by any existing rule of the House from proposing a motion or amendment.

Inasmuch as a member has not been precluded or disqualified or restrained from proposing a motion or amendment, the Chair assumes that it's parliamentary practice, or it follows that the member would then also be able to speak to the motion or the amendment.

Similarly in the House of Representatives in Australia, which we do refer to from time to time, the House there in 1984, and I refer to the *House of Representatives Practice*, second edition, where it states on page 176:

In 1984 the House resolved, inter alia, that Members must declare any relevant interest at the beginning of a speech (in the House, in the committee of the whole or in a committee), and if proposing to vote in a division.

So their practice is that relevant interest must be declared, but at the beginning of a speech. And therefore it follows that the member is in a position to make his speech.

But again I go back to the *Rules and Procedures* of the Saskatchewan Assembly which state that although a member is not entitled to vote upon any question in which he or she has a direct pecuniary interest, it is silent on the question of a member being able to speak to any motion or amendment in which the member may have an interest. So I find the point of order not well taken.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I accept your definition that you've given to the House on clause 9 tonight, because as I have said before in debate in this legislature, I think the minister is a fairly honourable man. But the very issue that has caused this Bill, Mr. Minister, is politics. It is a decision by a political body of government to change the way in which severance is paid to its employees whom it wishes to dismiss either with cause or without cause.

And, sir, because politics are involved, I think one of the things that members of the opposition have a great deal of difficulty with, given your explanation of the very narrow application is that, sir, other members of your political party will be as honourable as you in maintaining that very narrow definition.

There are a lot of people, I would suggest to you, sir, working for the Government of Saskatchewan in various capacities. And I pointed out to you today you have 401 under the Department of Justice alone that are either OC (order in council) or out of scope employees who must feel a little bit of trepidation about this particular Bill and the scope that you have outlined under section 9, where someone who is out to settle a score using many of the things available in this Act, someone who may be very close to Executive Council and the desire by Executive Council to protect that individual, would then — and, sir, I know how the political system works — would then the temptation not be to use this particular section to cover off?

And, sir, as I said, I respect you as an hon. person, as the highest law officer in our land, but I guess what I'm almost saying to you, sir: can you be absolutely sure in confirming to this Assembly that others are as honourable as you in this particular application and its narrowness?

(2330)

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — I can, Mr. Chairman, I can give the hon. member assurance that all members of this government are at least as honourable as I am. I don't want to make light of that though.

I want to say to the hon. member, I want to say to the hon. member that we regret having to bring this Bill to this legislature. And I want to tell the member from Wilkie that we do regret having done it.

We were surprised to learn, as I said earlier in this House, we were surprised to find what we found, and we had to make a decision as to whether we didn't do anything about it or whether we did something about it. And members of your side of the House have agreed during the debate that the severance provisions are appropriate, as I understood the remarks of some of your hon. members, that the issue was not the severance provision. And I mean I'm not saying that all members opposite share that view but I have heard the view expressed. And I . . . that corresponds with my own view of it.

Some of these contracts are unconscionable. Members opposite know it; we know it. The question then becomes whether a government does something about that or

whether it simply pays up. And there starts the policy discussion. And we are in apparent disagreement on it and that's the way it is.

We intend to apply this Act rigorously. We intend to proceed exactly in accordance with it, and in particular we don't intend to expand the shield of section 9 beyond what I've said in the House tonight.

Now this is the third time that I've said it. We will apply it strictly in accordance with its terms and the shield will apply only in respect of claims that are framed as being a result of the enactment of application of this Act.

And that that's the third time I've said it and I'm glad to have the opportunity to say it. This is a narrow protection that does not allow anybody to defame anybody or to slander anyone, to interfere with any contract, to induce any breach, to damage any reputation, and so on.

And I will apply it as such, my department will so interpret it to the government, and my colleagues will respect it. And I give you that assurance.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, I never intended that it would be directed at any member of this legislature, my comment. But as you know there are a lot of other people besides hon. members involved in Government of Saskatchewan. There are people that have positions of significant power that are not elected members of this particular legislature. People in fact that have the power to hire and fire individuals that work for the Government of Saskatchewan.

And I guess, sir, as has been outlined . . . and I know you have repeated it over and over again, but because it is an issue of politics and that many people out there I believe are perceiving that the only ones that are involved in this particular action are in some way associated with the former government in a political way. And I suggest to you, sir, that that is simply not the case in some circumstances. And if that is not the case, then this can apply I would suggest to you, sir, to indeed hundreds of individuals. Because without the clause that the member from Saskatoon Greystone has suggested, members of the opposition are not absolutely assured that this thing cannot continue to go on and broaden its scope because there are more than hon. members involved in this exercise.

And, sir, I don't know if the court is going to maintain your absolutely narrow definition on this one because it has never been tried before in Canadian law. As I understand it, these particular rules and regulations as you have outlined in your Bill, they are different than anything that has been attempted before. And you are going on the supposition that that narrow definition will be applied in all circumstances. And, sir, because of the magnitude of the thing that we're talking about, I'm not so sure that you can ensure that to this Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, and to the member, of course somebody may get off the rails, you know. And if they do, they have to answer for it. The protection is only the protection that's afforded by the Act. And if any such person as you mentioned goes off the rails as I say

and defames anyone or otherwise commits a tort or actionable wrong of any kind, then that person's going to have to answer for it. And this Bill will only afford the narrow protection that it affords that I've described before.

We're going to try and prevent that. There's no cause to defame people. There's no cause to commit actionable wrongs when you're trying to behave like a responsible employer, which is how we're trying to behave. And if anyone violates those rules, then they're going to have to answer for it. And they'll have to answer for it ultimately in a court if it comes to that.

Mr. Martens: — I suppose, Mr. Minister, that if we here were the only ones that were going to define what this was really going to mean, then we would be able to define it. But we are not always going to be able to define it in the context of how we're describing it here because some justice may in fact interpret it different than that one has. And that's what causes us a concern. Because it is so very narrow that it might deal with a concern that is on line with what that individual feels and may not in fact deal with it. I'll just leave that because we've had it explained to us a number of times.

I want to raise a number of amendments and I've provided them to the Minister of Justice as well as to the independent member. And I will provide them as we go along, Mr. Chairman. I have them here with me. I'll give them as they go along. And I have two of them in section 2.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — I just want to respond very briefly to the minister's point about a judge interpreting these sections differently. I want to say first of all, as one of my colleagues has observed, that's the risk you take when you pass any law, that you might not find the right words to exactly express the idea so that a court will understand your intention and give it effect.

But we've done the best we can. We've worked hard on this clause and we're satisfied, the Department of Justice is satisfied, that we have expressed the ideas in clear legal terms. So we'll just have to see how it's treated in the courts.

And if the courts don't seem to be correcting it, or interpreting it properly, then we'll have to consider whether this House should consider the matter again. But for now we're confident that we've expressed the idea correctly.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2

Mr. Martens: — I have two amendments here, Mr. Speaker, under this section. The first one deals with section 2(e)(iv)(A) and (B), and there are two provisions in there that talk about a 90 per cent. It's our observation that there may in fact be some boards and commissions that are less than that and it would make the response by that agency not responsible to supply to the clerk of the cabinet the information as required. And that's the one.

And the other one is a broader definition of the employer-employee relationship that deals with section (g) and I'm going to provide them to the table at this time.

The Chair: — Would the member move the first amendment and then we'll deal with that and then we'll get to the second amendment.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, I move the first amendment be considered in committee.

The Chair: — It's been moved by the member from Morse:

That section 2 of the printed Bill be amended by deleting the term "90%" where it appears in paragraphs (e)(iv)(A) and (B) therein and substituting therefore the words "a majority".

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I want the member to know that we gave this proposed amendment, of which you were good enough to give us notice this afternoon, gave it long consideration and it was quite tempting to accept it because it's a workable idea.

Our problem is that we don't know what it would sweep into the Bill. We do know what we would be including with the provisions that are there where the government has 90 per cent of the shares or appoints 90 per cent of the board of directors.

But your amendment would make more Crown employers . . . would widen the definition of a Crown employer and include more agencies or corporations. And we were uncertain, for example, whether we would be sweeping in Trinitel, for example, whether we have 51 per cent of that company. I think we do. But we didn't know that this afternoon, you know with being Saturday and all, we couldn't make the kind of inquiries that we'd have to make. And we don't want to sweep in people like that, you know. They're not intended to be covered by this Bill.

So while it was a very constructive suggestion for the member to make, we are not able to accept the amendment.

Amendment negated on division.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, on section 2(G) we have an expansion of the items that we have placed before. I'll provide the Assembly with the information. It's an expansion of the role of the employer. As we indicated before, we believe that severance is a part of the disclosure that we need to take into consideration. And we are not going to stand in the way of that so what we did is we broadened the base of that to some extent.

The Chair: — The question before the committee is the amendment proposed by the member from Morse which reads:

Amend section 2 of the printed Bill by adding immediately after clause (g) therein the following

clause:

- g.1 “employer-employee relationship” means any relationship in which the executive government of Saskatchewan pays or gives consideration to a person in return for an act or a service including:
- (i) the provision of advice of any sort;
 - (ii) writing, including speech writing;
 - (iii) consulting of any sort;
 - (iv) polling;
 - (v) the design, production or placement of advertising or other instruments of communication; or
 - (vi) representation of a Minister, the Executive Council or other Crown employer in any capacity.”

(2345)

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are not able to accept this amendment, Mr. Chairman, for two reasons. First of all it would involve a major rewrite of the Act because of the differences between the employment situation, the employment contract situation which is the subject of the Bill, and this kind of personal service contract which is covered by this definition.

The other point is that when you start to apply sections 6 and 7 of the Act to the kinds of personal services that are — Acts or services, I should say — that are covered by the proposed amendment, you really get into heavy water because in these contracts you’re not dealing with severance pay as such. You’re talking about the end of a contract which may be for a specific term or which may be terminable by no notice or a notice of different lengths. And we think the situation is different enough that it would be hard to apply section 7 in particular as well as section 6 to the agreements that are described in this section.

The other point is, and I think the substantial point with the amendment, is that it is a disclosure question, the requirement to file those contracts and to have them available for public inspection. And my advice is that this kind of contract that is described in the proposed amendment will be covered by freedom of information and will be public under that Act when it’s proclaimed on or about the 1st of April. So for those reasons, Mr. Chairman, we are not prepared to accept the amendment.

Mr. Swenson: — I hate to object again, Mr. Chairman, in this thing, but don’t you see, Mr. Minister, that almost — and I go back to it again — if you had accepted this then I would have had some comfort that what this wasn’t all about was politics, sir.

But the very fact is that almost all of the arrangements entered into by your government since the day you were sworn in fit exactly into these categories. That by the time we get to whenever you feel comfortable with bringing in freedom of information legislation, a lot of these things will have become far more permanent in a different nature. And, sir, I would have felt far more comfortable

with supporting your reasoning on this particular amendment if, along with the previous government’s employees, your new employees had been subject to your Bill. And, sir, they are not.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, if these people that have been helping us so far are employees — and I think they are — the outside lawyers, for example, would not be employees, I suppose, but the bulk of the people that have been brought into government are in the position of employees — then their contracts are covered by this Act and are subject to it and will have to be filed and will be a matter of public disclosure.

The member keeps referring to the political nature of this. And I have to tell the member that we simply don’t regard it as being a question of politics, we simply don’t regard it as a question of politics. These people that have been the subject of the news so far may or may not be Tories. Some of them are, I suppose. Some of them have probably . . . are clearly so — for example, the former president of the PC (Progressive Conservative) Party, we know what his politics are — but it is more a question of responsible government than it is a question of politics.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 2 agreed to on division.

Clause 3 agreed to on division.

Clause 4

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment to clause 4(6)(a). This deals with the contract and its availability to have everyone in Saskatchewan come to Regina or provide a copy of the contract on an individual basis into Regina to the clerk of cabinet. And it’s I think a hardship for those outlying areas, especially in the North where contracts could in fact have difficulty in coming to this.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman can I see a copy of the amendment that is being made? This is the amendment about the fees to be charged. This is the amendment that’s been . . . this is the motion that’s been handed to me. Could I ask the hon. member whether this is the amendment that he wants to propose?

The Chair: — It might help . . . the Chair has the amendment by the member from Morse, is to:

Amend section 4 of the printed Bill by adding immediately after the words “fee prescribed in the regulations” where they appear in clause 4(b) thereof the following words:

“but such a fee is not to exceed the actual cost of providing a photocopy of the contract”.

I just might say that’s the amendment in the order that it was given to me, before me, so that’s the amendment that’s before the committee at this point.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — This is a proposed amendment to clause 4(b) dealing with the fees to be charged. And the proposal is that the fee not exceed the actual cost of providing a photocopy of the contract.

And this is a suggestion again that we considered rather carefully. And our problem is that we don't know how we could actually . . . how we could calculate the actual cost of providing a photocopy of the contract. So we . . . That is a contentious issue and we can estimate, you know, like 25 cents a page or 50 cents a page, but they're grabbing figures out of the air and there's no way to really prove that you can produce a figure that is the actual cost of providing a photocopy.

I can say to the hon. member that the fee to be prescribed will be a modest fee and will be geared to what we would estimate to be the cost of producing the copy, but we don't think it appropriate to actually write into the law that it will not exceed a cost that we don't feel that we're able to precisely calculate. So accordingly and with some regret we cannot accept this proposed amendment.

Amendment negated on division.

Mr. Martens: — I have an amendment here to section 4(a)(5), and it deals with the Crown employer and a definition of the . . . pursuant to section 4.

The Chair: — The question before the committee is the motion by the member from Morse to:

Amend section 4 of the printed Bill by:

(a) deleting the words "purpose by the permanent head" where they appear in clause (5)(b) therein and substituting therefore the following words: "purpose by the permanent head; or"; and

(b) adding immediately after clause (5)(b) thereof the following: "(c) the Minister responsible for the specific Crown employer, in which case the Minister shall ensure the application is forthwith delivered to the appropriate permanent head."

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, we regard the proposed amendment as an improvement to the Bill and we're prepared to accept it.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Martens: — Now, Mr. Chairman, section 4(6)(a) is the one I gave you earlier . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes. It deals with photocopying and bringing these . . .

An Hon. Member: — That one we did.

Mr. Martens: — That one we did? We'll get her here. Mr. Chairman, we want to:

Amend section 4 of the printed Bill by adding immediately after the words "to examine the contract" where they appear in clause (6)(a) thereof the words " , at the discretion of the applicant".

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are prepared to accept this amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 9

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, I have generally had a whole lot of problems with this clause 9 and I have given the minister a copy of this, and I would like him to consider that there be a removal of certain words that he uses in this amendment. They deal with things that are . . . in the words of the individual that represents Thunder Creek, we're dealing in a political world. And we deal in that political world and we deal with it . . . and I believe in a political world and I have been a part of it. However, when that confrontation between two political entities that are at odds with one another face each other, then we have rules in this Assembly that dictate to us to the extent to which we can go.

I respect the observations that you have made. However, I don't feel that I have to agree with them. And I have provided this motion to the Chair and to you, and I would like to have you consider it.

(2400)

The Chair: — The motion before the committee is the proposed amendment, with the motion moved by the member for Morse to:

Amend section 9 of the printed Bill by deleting subsection (1) thereof and substituting the following:

(1) in this section "claim for loss or damage" means any claim in damages or debt in a cause of action in contract, tort or equity arising from or incidental to the termination or expiration of a Crown Employment Contract, but does not include any claim in damages or debt for unjust dismissal, mental distress, loss of reputation or defamation.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — The member knows, Mr. Chairman, that we have been considering this clause over the day and we've been trying various formulations to make our intention more clear. And I have dealt with the government's interpretation of section 9 three times in the House tonight to put on the record very clearly what is the intention, and that is the policy that the Bill is trying to reflect. And accordingly, we're not able to accept the proposed amendment.

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 9 agreed to on division.

Clause 10 agreed to.

Clause 12 agreed to.

Clause 13

Ms. Haverstock: — Yes, Mr. Chair, I would like to have consideration of the House to amend section 13 of the printed Bill to include the following, which of course arises from the discussions with the hon. minister:

- (a) By renumbering the section as subsection 13(1); and
- (b) By adding the following subsection after subsection (1) to include the following as:
 - (2) This Act shall remain only in force for one year from the date of assent, but the lapse of this Act shall not revive any right of action or right to compensation extinguished by the application of this Act.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to say to you and to the member that the remarks that I made earlier still hold, that we are prepared to give consideration to the member's suggestion, and serious consideration to it.

As I said, we think that the freedom of information Act will subsume some of the Act, two sections in particular, sections 4 and 5. And we will certainly consider our situation under the other sections as the situation develops as time goes on. But for tonight we are not prepared to accept the amendment to Section 13.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 13 agreed to on division.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the officials and you for your willingness to participate in the discussion, and I want to thank particularly your officials for the work that they have done in preparing this. I was on legislative review committee for a long time and we got to meet these gentlemen in a regular pattern and I respect their observations. Today I may not agree with them but we will wait to see what happens with this legislation.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — I thank the member, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the officials, and I'd like to add my own thanks to these officials as well as others who are not in the room tonight who really laboured mightily over this particular Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: — Before I ask the minister to report the Bill, might I just compliment members on both sides for their co-operation that they've shown the Chair in committee in these last few days. Thank you very much. I ask the minister to report the Bill.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, I move that we report the Bill with amendments.

The division bells rang from 12:08 a.m. until 12:12 a.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 27

Wiens	Lautermilch
Simard	Calvert
Lingenfelter	Hamilton
Teichrob	Johnson
Koskie	Trew
Shillington	Scott
Anguish	McPherson
Goulet	Kujawa
Kowalsky	Crofford
Mitchell	Harper
Cunningham	Renaud
Hagel	Langford
Bradley	Jess
Lorje	

Nays — 8

Devine	Martens
Muirhead	Britton
Swenson	Goohsen
Boyd	D'Autremont

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

(0015)

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 18 — An Act to provide for the Public Disclosure of Crown Employment Contracts, to Prescribe Provisions in Crown Employment Contracts governing Payments and Benefits on Termination or Expiration of those Contracts, to Void Provisions in those Contracts respecting those matters and to Extinguish any Right of Action and Right to Compensation for any Loss or Damage resulting from the Enactment or Application of this Act

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first and second time?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, now.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

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

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, with leave, now.

Leave granted.

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

MOTIONS**House Adjournment**

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Fairview, that by leave of the Assembly:

That when the Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, it shall stand adjourned to a date and a time set by Mr. Speaker upon request of the government; and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven clear days notice, if possible, by registered mail of such date and time.

Motion agreed to.

ROYAL ASSENT

At 12:21 a.m. Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took her seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills:

- Bill No. 1 — An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act
- Bill No. 5 — An Act to amend The Liquor Consumption Tax Act
- Bill No. 6 — An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provision) Act
- Bill No. 7 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
- Bill No. 8 — An Act respecting the Tabling of Documents and Certain Consequential and other Amendments to Other Acts resulting from the enactment of this Act
- Bill No. 14 — An Act to amend The Mortgage Protection Act
- Bill No. 15 — An Act to amend The Municipal Board Act
- Bill No. 11 — An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act (No. 2)
- Bill No. 12 — An Act to amend The Assessment Management Agency Act
- Bill No. 13 — An Act respecting Certain Payments to the Meewasin Valley Authority, the Wakamow Valley Authority and the Wascana Centre Authority
- Bill No. 16 — An Act to establish the Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation
- Bill No. 17 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act
- Bill No. 3 — An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act
- Bill No. 4 — An Act to amend The Income Tax Act
- Bill No. 2 — An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981
- Bill No. 18 — An Act to provide for the Public Disclosure of Crown Employment Contracts, to Prescribe Provisions in Crown Employment Contracts governing Payments and Benefits on Termination or Expiration of those Contracts, to Void Provisions in those Contracts respecting those matters and to Extinguish any Right of Action and Right to Compensation for any Loss or Damage resulting from the Enactment or Application of this Act

Her Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these Bills.

Bill No. 19 — An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the last quarter of the Fiscal Year ending on March 31, 1992

Her Honour: — In Her Majesty's name I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this Bill.

Her Honour retired from the Chamber at 12:25 a.m.

The Speaker: — Will the members be seated, please. Before we accept a motion of adjournment, I do want to take this opportunity on behalf of all the members to thank the pages for their work in this session and also to thank the Clerks and the legislative staff. I think they've worked very diligently for us and I ask the members to express their appreciation.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I know this is unusual but I do want to take this opportunity to thank all the members for I think their diligence in attempting to improve the decorum of the House.

I've heard many people outside the House and inside the House express that opinion, and I think the honour and the privilege and the congratulations goes to each and every one of you in assisting myself in this first session and in helping to improve the decorum, and for that I congratulate all of you.

And before we adjourn, may I take this opportunity to wish all of you a blessed Christmas and a joyous New year.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I too want to join you in thanking the staff, the Clerks, pages, and others who work in the building for being, I guess, tolerant and patient with the members of the Legislative Assembly.

I want to say as well that I agree whole-heartedly that the decorum in the House I think has improved, I think in large part because of the many new members who have come here with the idea of making it a more successful working relationship. I think also credit has to be given to the new opposition and the Leader of the Opposition.

I think this idea of new co-operation in the Assembly will work well, basically for the members of the Assembly, but more importantly for the people of the province.

In closing, I too want to wish all members of the Legislative Assembly and their families, the people who work there, a very merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you some time early in the New Year.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Government House Leader and yourself, Mr.

Speaker, in thanking the legislative staff, the Clerk, the pages, and all those that work in the Assembly, wish them a very merry Christmas and a safe holiday season.

I want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on the decorum in the Assembly. I too have heard comments and bouquets coming to the Speaker's chair as a result of your rulings on both sides to keep the place a little bit more orderly. And I say that very sincerely and we look forward to that sort of decorum in the future.

And to all members in the Legislative Assembly, and particularly to all the new ones, I wish them a very merry Christmas and a safe holiday season and we look forward to the New Year. Merry Christmas, everybody.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:30 a.m.