

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

#### Special Committee on Rules and Procedures

**The Speaker:** — I table this morning, as chairperson of the legislative Committee on Rules and Procedures, I table this morning the *First Report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly*.

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I propose to move a motion that the first report, which has just been tabled, be concurred in.

Before moving the motion I want to make a few brief remarks to outline to the members and to those of the public that may be viewing at this time as to what these changes are all about. And I'll try to do it as briefly and succinctly as possible.

The committee was set up — the Committee on Rules and Procedures — was set up in December 1991 to review the rules, procedures, practices and powers of the Legislative Assembly. This is the first report, and the report contains a number of recommendations of interest to the members.

The committee, I might say, Mr. Speaker, met on seven occasions for approximately 40 hours. In addition to meeting, I think all members of the committee also consulted widely with other members of the Legislative Assembly. The meetings were open to the public and to the media. And I might say that some of the media did attend for brief periods of time to comment on some of the proceedings.

The report also suggests that the committee continue to meet to monitor changes. I might point out that most of the changes that will be proposed today are provisional ones. We propose to operate these changes on a trial basis and adopt them later on day 50, and I'll move a separate motion later on, Mr. Speaker, should the report be accepted, to that effect.

Mr. Speaker, most things in life change and from time to time it's appropriate to examine the rules. The sheer passage of time, certain events, changing expectations by the public of members and how they should behave and what they should be doing, technology, the increase in changing work-loads for members within the Legislative Assembly, all suggest there may be occasion to review our rules. And that's what we've done.

And getting right to the rules themselves, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a few minutes to briefly go through these. First of all with respect to sitting hours, I point out that there has been no change in the specified hours of sitting in this Assembly since 1976.

And the committee considered ways to enable members

to use their time more effectively, and while retaining the weekly number of sitting hours at 24 hours. That is to say, although we think that the Assembly should continue to sit for exactly the same number of hours, we propose that one of the night sittings be dropped and that the hours then be added to other times throughout the week.

We feel that by dropping Thursday night sittings, it would provide members more of an opportunity to meet with delegations, interest groups that place demands on members and that want to meet with us. And I think the most dramatic example of that was just a few days ago with the real estate association that wanted to meet with members while the legislature was in session.

I might point out that it would also accommodate legislative committee meetings, should those be necessary, on Thursday evenings. The rule changes, I might point out, also provide an extra hour of time for private members as opposed to government business time.

And the specific hours, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to starting at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, it is proposed that the Assembly will convene at 1:30 in the afternoon. And as opposed to going to 10 o'clock on Monday and Tuesday nights, it is proposed to go to 10:30 p.m.; the same number of hours — 24 hours — will continue to be the case.

It is also proposed that the Assembly observe public holidays. As it now stands, the way we observe these is by way of motion to agree not to sit on public holidays. We think that it's appropriate that these holidays be observed in the rules.

We also propose to abolish the requirement for seconders of motions. We have a rule that requires seconders, but we've modified that over time. In committees we no longer require seconders, and Bills at various stages no longer require seconders. And a number of other legislatures, including the British House of Commons and the Australian Senate, have deleted the requirement or abolished the requirement for seconders.

The consideration of estimates. As it now stands, all estimates — and this is a very important part of the work of the members of the Assembly — is done in this Chamber. We look for ways to make that process more efficient and utilize members' time more efficiently and to conduct government business more efficiently. And we are making a recommendation that the Committee of Finance be enabled to sit in two different places at the same time and consider two sets of estimates — so in a sense, to have a split Committee of Finance, Mr. Speaker. And I might point out that any such innovation would be done upon agreement between the Government House Leader and the opposition House leaders.

Television guidelines, Mr. Speaker. We're proposing some changes to the television guidelines. These guidelines have not been changed since 1981, I believe when they were adopted, and we've looked at them and feel that there should be . . . there is some opportunity to change these. The present guidelines are restrictive.

Those at home can only see, I guess, this part of my body and see me speaking, but have no sense of my relationship to the rest of the Chamber, have no relationship . . . no sense of relationship of me to the Chair. And we propose to, from time to time, provide establishing shots so that the people who are watching might know where it is that the member is speaking from.

Also during Committee of Finance, as it now stands, ministers will confer with their officials for answers, but the camera remains on the table in front of me, Mr. Speaker, and it gives the people at home some distorted view of what is going on here. And we propose to show, from time to time, ministers conferring with their officials.

We also propose that if there are distinguished visitors to our Assembly such as ambassadors and government officials from other places that these officials, when they're introduced during question period, also be shown on camera, Mr. Speaker. And I might point out that the House of Commons, I note reading in the *Leader-Post* just the other day, the House of Commons has also agreed to make some of these same changes that we are proposing for the House here today.

Mr. Speaker, other changes: statements by members. Many legislative assemblies provide an opportunity for members to make brief statements prior to question period on issues of concern to them. We propose to introduce the same innovation here in Saskatchewan so that members will have an opportunity to speak for 90 seconds to make a statement of concern to them, and that this statement period not exceed 10 minutes.

We also propose, Mr. Speaker, to enable the time for the answering of written questions to be extended from two days to five days to enable the government to answer the questions that have been put to them. It's felt that two days may be too restrictive and may lead government to convert these written questions into motions for returns (debatable).

We also propose, on the other hand, that these motions for return (debatable), as opposed to being open-ended as to when they should be answered, that they now be answered within 180 days, as opposed to the previous practice where there is no limit. And it did happen from time to time that these questions might not be answered until the last day of the session. And we propose in this way to hold government more accountable, Mr. Speaker.

Also we propose that the order of private members' business be rotated in a way so that private members will have a better opportunity to debate Bills that they want to put forward, as opposed to Bills that the government may want to debate, and also to provide more of an opportunity for members to in fact debate motions for returns (debatable) and in this way hold the government accountable.

Private members' motions, Mr. Speaker, we are proposing some changes. As it now stands, these motions must be submitted near the beginning of the session and stand on the order papers and some months later some of these motions may come forward for debate, even though that they are no longer timely. So we are now proposing

that these motions be submitted to you on the Friday preceding the Tuesday that these motions are to be debated, and therefore make the debate more timely and hopefully more interesting for the people that may be watching and following the proceedings here.

Mr. Speaker, we also are proposing another innovation on private members' day. Motions under rule 16, which are debated every second Tuesday and which is a time limited debate of 75 minutes, we propose that the last 10 minutes of the 75-minute debate be a question and comment period where any member of the Assembly might . . . or has the opportunity to rise and to ask questions of any of the previous speakers or to make a brief comment on the speeches that they've heard. And we hope that this will help to enliven the debate and make the debate more interesting for the members and also for those who are following the proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, also the priority of debate, that is the emergency debate procedure, and I won't go into the specifics to try to explain just how complicated this process is, but suffice to say we propose that this matter be simplified, that it be a straight ruling of the Chair as to what constitutes an emergency, and if there is an emergency, that the members will then debate the priority of debate or emergency motion.

Mr. Speaker, there is also some suggestions with respect to a legislative internship program in that you'd be instructed to explore alternate means of funding a program.

There is also suggestions with respect to smoking in the Chamber, Mr. Speaker, that smoking no longer be allowed in Committee of the Whole.

Some other innovations — use of lap-top computers. Those who are watching may after a point see members using lap-top computers to do their writing in the Chamber during committee.

There's some changes to the election of the Speaker, some changes that are necessary. And finally we propose that the election of the Deputy Speaker be held by secret ballot.

Mr. Speaker, those are the changes. Some of those changes will enable the government in conducting the public business, such as the split Committee of Finance and a five-day deadline for answering written questions. But many more changes will enable private members to make contributions to debate and to fulfil their roles as members — changes such as the abolition of the requirement for seconders, statement by members, the rotating order of private members' business, more timely private members' motions, questions and comments period, and the election of the Deputy Speaker by secret ballot.

Mr. Speaker, these changes are modest but should help restore public confidence in the role of people's representatives and improve the ability of all MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) to act directly on their constituents' concerns. I say these changes are modest, but changes are not made very often. I believe

that the last substantive changes to the rules were made in 1969, 1976, and last, in 1981.

Essentially these rules have served us well. Yes, Mr. Speaker, our debates — and you draw our attention to that — our debates are sometimes raucous. But we do have debates in more or less a civilized fashion, unlike others who choose to resolve their differences in much more violent ways, and others even in some legislatures, Mr. Speaker, who don't seem to be able to deal with their differences in a civilized way.

And I point out to the South Korean National Assembly, there was a report that the Speaker resigned after a stormy final night of the session that ended with legislators pushing, punching, and shouting obscenities. I note that in *The Globe and Mail* there's an article out of Italy that the Neo-Fascists and Christian Democrats traded punches at Italy's parliament yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, yes, we do debate things in a civilized way in our Chamber. Some outside of this Chamber say that we should be making many more radical changes in the way we operate. But I say that the rules that we have, have in the main served us well, recognizing that there is a need to update them from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank all those who have been involved in helping the committee to do its work and to prepare the report — all the members of the committee, other members of the Legislative Assembly who have been interested in the proceedings, the people from the broadcast office, the library, even the Legislative Counsel, and especially the Clerk and her assistants, without whose help we would not be, I suggest, providing an annual report today at all. And finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your guidance and your patience in these matters.

And now, Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to move, seconded by the member from Morse:

That the *First Report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures* be concurred in.

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to just have a few brief comments regarding . . .

**The Speaker:** — Sorry. Why is the member on her feet?

**Hon. Mrs. Teichrob:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave, for the introduction of guests.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mrs. Teichrob:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my honour on behalf of my colleague, Tom Keeping, to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly a group of 35 students from the Carrot River School together with their teachers, Mrs. Beth Ferguson, Miss Diane Higgins; the chaperons, Mrs. Muriel Green, Larry Ernst and Jim Kiteley; and their bus driver, Irene Enns.

They will be gathering on the stairs for a photograph after . . .

at the time they have to leave. It gives me particular pleasure to introduce a group from north-eastern Saskatchewan, Carrot River being the town where I was born and went to school myself. So we wish them a pleasant stay in Regina and a safe trip home, and I know the Assembly will want to join me in welcoming them.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — With leave for the introduction of guests, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — We'll do all the introductions of guests now. The member may proceed.

**Mr. Boyd:** — I would like to introduce, Mr. Speaker, to you and through to the Legislative Assembly a group of 43 grade 7 students from Elizabeth School in Kindersley, Saskatchewan, seated in the Speaker's gallery.

The students are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Dave Burkell, Mr. Lane Peterson. Their chaperons are Mrs. Carrey Howie, Mrs. Nancy Torry, Mrs. Heather Sears, Mrs. Darlene Hogan. And the bus drivers are Mr. Jim Baker and Mr. Cliff Gunness.

Mr. Speaker, I will be meeting with the students following question period for pictures and refreshments. Please join with me in welcoming the students from Elizabeth School in Kindersley.

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

## PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

### Special Committee on Rules and Procedures (continued)

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to on behalf of the opposition speak to the motion as presented by the member from Regina Victoria. I want to begin by saying that the rules and procedures as a part of a committee of this Assembly have been meeting for a long time in trying to undertake some significant rule changes, some minor rule changes. Many of the suggestions raised by the committee and by the Clerks of the Assembly were suggestions that have transpired through the committee over the past number of years. And I want to make a point of that; that many of these suggestions have not just arisen in this past six months but have been brought forward by the government when they were in opposition and us when we were in government.

And the consensus that came through in the committee as we spoke about them, and as we address the various points of view with each of the areas that we discussed, I want to say that your leadership, Mr. Speaker, was frank; it provided consensus; it provided an atmosphere of a willingness to participate; and basically I believe it was because you made the observation that if there was disagreement the rules would not proceed. And I think that that was a benefit to the committee and a benefit to the discussion.

I want to say that the Clerks and their staff did a commendable job in relation to assessing the material.

And at the back you will see a long list of the material that we had. It was done by the staff, it was done by Mr. Speaker's staff and others in the Assembly, and I want to thank them for that.

I think that the committee worked well together. I think it did some significant changes. I want to point some of them out that deal with some of what I would call democratic reform kinds of things.

Many people in the province and in other places do not even realize that this Assembly has been sitting three evenings of the week for the past number of years, ever since I've been a part of this Assembly. I think that that's a step forward when we begin to realize that there is an opportunity for us to deal with our constituents in the evening, deal with committees, and deal with other things that are very important. I think that's an important part of the role of a member of the Assembly and his relationship to his constituency.

One of the other things on democratic reform that I think are important is that we will be putting forward where motions in this Assembly do not need a seconder. I believe that that says that individuals who are elected from their constituency will have an opportunity to present a motion that will give them freedom of speech in this Assembly for private individuals to express their opinion. And I think that that's an extremely important part of what we have here today.

In consideration of the estimates — and this is where it's going to be extremely unusual for us to consider with the acceptance of the Government House Leader and the Opposition House Leader where we have a committee outside of this House — we are going to have to do some experiments, Mr. Speaker, to see how this works.

We'll have to have some flexibility on the part of members as a part of what they do in relation to this Assembly and to the meetings that are being held in committee of estimates outside of this House. And it's going to take a great deal of effort on the part of members and the Clerk and the committee chairmen that it's going to have to take some time to realize all of the quirks that may occur as a result of various kinds of procedural processes that we have to go through in order to accomplish what we want to do in speeding up the agenda of this Assembly.

The television guidelines I think have been highlighted adequately by the member from Regina Victoria.

I want to say something about statements by individual members. Here again is a part of democratic reform — democratic reform by individuals being able to say something about their constituency, about how they view a particular policy relating to their constituency as it relates to themselves. They'll be able to make these statements and for 90 seconds they will be able to provide that to the Assembly. And I think that that's a process of democratic reform I think that is important.

Deadlines for written questions and expansion of time for the government to answer the questions from two days to five days. Again, I think a measure of consensus and

agreement from opposition and from the government side to extend that part and also to shorten the time line in relation to the length of time that they have to answer the questions from no time limit to 180 days — I think that's an important part of making democratic reform in this Assembly.

The order of private business on private members' day as a rotation, I believe is another aspect of democratic reform where individuals who are members of this Assembly will have the opportunity to address this Assembly on the basis of providing an agenda that speaks to their own initiative being brought forward as a part of the agenda.

To this point it has been a part of the government's order of business to dictate the volume of business accruing on private members' day. And this will provide private members the opportunity to deal with it on the basis that they will have their orders of business brought forward on a rotational basis. I think they're very important.

Private members' motions and private members' debate day, I think, are also a part of the rule changes that provide an asset so that things are current, things rotate on a current basis, and I think those are important.

The rest of the items, I believe, are significant. I won't take the time of the Assembly at this point to talk about them. I want to point out that members should feel free to approach members of the committee about what they perceive adjustments need to be made in some of these items. Because we're experimenting, we're dealing with new territory for this Assembly, both on the Speaker's part and on the Clerks' part and on the members' part. And I think we want to be open-minded. We want to have suggestions brought forward to streamline the activities of this Assembly.

I want to point out too that these are provisional changes for 50 days to see how it works. And we will probably be beginning, Mr. Speaker, a week from this coming Monday and these provisions will be in place for that time. And I want to say that this side of the House, and I would expect that the other members on the committee from the other side of the House, would value your suggestions as a part of the opportunity to work together.

I want to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that it was a pleasure to work on the committee and we will be anticipating that we would be able to work very well with providing the official recommendations after the 50th day.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Stanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to speak on some of the changes proposed by the Rules Committee. As a member of the Rules Committee I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for providing leadership and for helping us to co-operate together to come to some degree of changes of the rules.

Also I want to thank all the members of the committee as

this is an all-party committee that joined together, and I, the same as the member opposite, enjoyed the work very much. And I feel that your leadership helped a great deal in the co-operation and the consensus that we came to.

Also I'd like to thank the Clerks' office and Mr. Speaker's office for the help that they gave us in compiling all the information that we needed.

One of the concerns that we had was that private members' motions often never got debated during the session. The motions that were considered were usually adjourned and never resumed, and the remaining motions stayed sitting on the order paper for long periods until the end of the session. The consequence of these delays was that the subject matter of these motions became dated so when they finally came . . . and when they finally came to the House, were of no consequence often. So to make private members' motions more relevant we are making rule changes.

I believe that private members must have an ability to speak for his or her constituents, so it is imperative that private members are given the opportunity to introduce debate, and also to comment on immediate and current concerns. My constituents would view this change as progress towards democratic reform. I believe that changes will make private members' motions more relevant in our legislature.

(1030)

I endorse the continuation of the current practice of the Assembly with respect to debates of motions under rule 16. This provides private members an opportunity to a forum to debate topical and timely subjects of great importance to themselves and their constituents.

Now to complement this ability to speak on important topics will be a procedural innovation which provides for a 10-minute question and comment period after each member's speech in regular debates. And I'm really looking forward to this because I think it will enhance the debate, make private members more accountable for what they say in debate.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that members of the legislature will join with the Rules Committee to make changes that will make our House more relevant, more accountable, and more interesting.

Thank you very much.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to just make a few short comments on the report of the special committee that was tabled in the Assembly today.

I won't speak to the substance of the report because others have done that in a very appropriate manner. My purpose in speaking to the report is only by way of congratulating all the members who worked in a spirit of co-operation, and you yourself, Mr. Speaker, along with the staff.

Having been on the Rules Committee for the last number of years and on this Rules Committee, I know we spent a great deal of time over the past five years looking at the rules. And some of the effort of the previous Rules Committee I'm sure was used. But I think, in terms of getting work done, in the first six months of this term this committee was able to put together and bring before the Assembly a set of rules that I think that will greatly enhance the operation of the Assembly, and in particular the role of the private members in the Saskatchewan Assembly.

And just on that point, I want to conclude by saying that this spirit of co-operation, I think, in many times goes unnoticed by the public and probably will in this case. But I think there should be an attempt to extend this to other areas of the Assembly because I think it's important, not for the government and not for the opposition, but in terms of democracy.

And I just want to say congratulations to all those who were involved in getting this report before the Assembly in such an efficient manner.

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

Motion agreed to.

## MOTIONS

### Trial Basis for Implementation of Rules and Procedures

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to move a motion with respect to the provisional basis and trial basis for implementing these rules that have been talked about and just point out that many of these rules . . . I think it's appropriate to test them and then in the coming days and later on in the session, as is proposed here on day 50, to assess whether or not they have worked the way we hope that they will work and to entrench them if they are suitable to put them into the rules on an ongoing basis. There are some exceptions to this, rules changes that are one time only and are not really appropriate ones to test out, such as a new filing deadline for candidates running in elections, Mr. Speaker, and the like.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I'll move, seconded by the member from Morse:

That the modifications and amendments to the practices of the Assembly, the television guidelines and the rules of the Assembly, recommended in the *First Report to the Special Committee on Rules and Procedure* presented to the Assembly on May 15, 1992, be implemented effective May 25, 1992, on a provisional basis for a period extending to the 50th sitting day of the current session, except the following proposed amendments to the rules which are hereby approved and adopted and which shall come into effect immediately:

- (1) new filing deadlines for candidates running in an election of Speaker;
- (2) eligibility of an incumbent to be a candidate in

an election of Speaker;

(3) election of Deputy Speaker by secret ballot.

Motion agreed to.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Farm Foreclosures

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Food. In last fall's session, December 1991, the government gave in and allowed the Minister of Finance to answer some mini estimate questions.

I ask this question to the Minister of Finance: how many farm foreclosures were there in the period, election day October 21 till that date which was December 21, '91? And if I may, Mr. Speaker, just a short quote from *Hansard*. The Minister of Finance:

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

Mr. Speaker, to the minister. The government then placed a freeze or a moratorium for 90 days ending on March 31, 1992. My question: how many foreclosures by Agricultural Credit Corporation took place, if any, during that period?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I do not have the exact number before me, if any at all. The facts of the results of the interim measures that happened from January to the end of March is that the numbers of foreclosures reduced from something in the vicinity of 5 to 600 in the three-month period comparable in the previous year, to something around 50 in this year, of which about . . . a significant number would have been voluntary arrangements and the others would have been deemed by the institutions to have fallen into the exceptions of the voluntary agreement.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I'd also like to ask him: since the freeze had been lifted on March 31, 1992, how many have taken place since the freeze had been lifted, if any?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I also do not have the specific numbers on those. The understanding though that was reached with the financial institutions in the period following the end of the interim agreement was that they would begin to act on notices that had accumulated during the three-month period, but that they would offer leases to people who had not yet had leases offered for the year, until our jointly proposed program that was put forward by the Farm Debt Advisory

Committee could be implemented.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't think he knew what I was talking about. He was talking about voluntary notices. I'm talking about notices of intent to realize on security from ACS only; that's all I asked you.

And I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that the minister realizes that he is responsible for the Agricultural Credit Corporation which is one of the largest lenders in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now I'm not going to give him the figures because that's up to him to get. I can get them every day; he should be able to get them. In January there was some; in February there was quite a few more; in March there was a lot, and the total is . . . There's quite a few and you should know that.

And what I'm saying to you, Mr. Minister, you've been head of this big organization and you're dealing with the banks; does it show good faith to have any foreclosures at all in that period? Do you believe that is fair to the farmers and to the banks you're dealing with to have any foreclosures whatsoever when your policy, stated by the Minister of Finance, was before the freeze there wasn't any, and then while the freeze was on you had any at all? Does that show a good intent to the lenders when you're dealing with them?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, the daily business of the Ag Credit Corporation has been in keeping with the agreement that we had reached. I want to say that the institutions have been loyal to the agreement. When you say that there should be no foreclosures at all, I appreciate that. We also believe in spirit that's the case.

The fact however is that there was room in the mutual agreement for exceptions in a narrow band of activity when farmers were seen to be not dealing in good faith with the lenders. And there has been a very good compliance with the financial institutions, including ACS, with the agreement that was joined in by all institutions in Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, to the minister again. I think it's an absolute shame that the member from Estevan asked this question on budget day: how many farm foreclosures in total in the province with the Farm Debt Review Board and the Farm Land Security Board to mediation services. The Premier couldn't, he tried to answer for you, and there wasn't any answer. And today you do not know. And I think that's absolutely an unbelievable situation when the Minister of Agriculture does not know.

My new question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure you must realize the seriousness of the farm debt. If you don't you should, Mr. Minister. The farmers are daily losing their land, losing their machinery, being put off

their farms, losing a lifetime of hard work. Many are giving up everything they've ever had. Some people have started in the turn of the century.

Your government set up a farm debt review panel to investigate all farm debt problems. That was the group of 12, Mr. Speaker. At the end of March, you, Mr. Minister, held a press conference and stated that there was only one solution to end the farmers' problems and that was to ensure that farmers after foreclosure would be able to obtain a six-year leaseback. You stated at the press conference you were negotiating with all the lenders for a voluntary commitment for the program.

My question — they want my question, they'll have it, Mr. Speaker. Would you inform the Assembly how these negotiations turned out? Did you get an agreement from the lenders?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member opposite that any specific numbers that he wants, I can bring. I don't happen to carry an encyclopedia of numbers around in my head.

I want to also comment on the question that was asked on budget day, that both in the question and the manner in which it was asked attempted to be . . . convey a truth that may not be exactly a truth, in that the suggestion was that there had been a large number of foreclosures. Notices going out to farmers are not foreclosures, and the member opposite knows that quite well.

The fact about the income stress in Saskatchewan however is also well known to the members opposite, and is well known to be associated with the policies of the federal government and their off-loading to the provinces and their inadequate income support to farmers.

There has been in the last year, two years, in excess of \$900 million in accumulated financial stress to farmers because their income levels have dropped so substantially below the regular numbers that are required to operate the system.

The Farm Debt Advisory Committee, when it met, said that we need to come to grips with the farm debt crisis in Saskatchewan because it's the only province in Canada where the farm debt crisis continues to deepen, and it's a result of the policies that were put in place by your government prior to our coming to office, and we are implementing policies to address that. And the Farm Debt Advisory Committee will be implemented . . . the report will be implemented in this session, and those discussions are ongoing. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, in the prelude to my questions I just made comments about how he didn't know anything about the figures, he didn't know the amount, and he doesn't understand what's going on in the department. He never even got close to answering my question.

The question that people hurried me up to ask, Mr. Speaker, and that question was, and I ask you again: after I said the disastrous situations the farmers are in, would you inform the Assembly how these negotiations turned out with the lenders? That's what my question was. You never even touched it. Please answer the question.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to answer how those negotiations have gone with the lenders. I want to maybe remind the member opposite of a little bit of history. We began those discussions with the lenders last November with not very much co-operation from the members opposite. And as a result of those negotiations, I think achieved an unprecedented agreement between financial institutions and government on behalf of farmers that there would be actions that would guarantee farmers access to their property in an intervening period while other measures were being discussed.

I want to say that the process established for reviewing the farm debt question in Saskatchewan was the broadest process that has probably ever been engaged in in terms of analysing the question with representatives from the farming community, the legal community, and the financial community. The member has had access to that report and understands the comprehensiveness of that report.

The report indicates that the farm debt crisis in Saskatchewan is building and needs to be addressed. The fact is that the discussions that carried forward after March 31, lenders agreed to continue to offer leases for farmers who had not had leases offered for this year, assuring them access to their land for another year. And the discussions that are now ongoing . . .

**The Speaker:** — Next question.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, as usual the minister is not answering the question. And the question I've been asking, and what the people and the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan want to know . . . or are you afraid to answer that question. Because you said very clearly at your press conference last fall that you are out negotiating with the lenders. Please bring us up to date — did you get an agreement with the lenders? Don't both bother with the speeches; tell us the facts. Did you get an agreement with the lenders?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I was in the process of telling the member opposite the agreement with the lenders. You know there was a January 8 agreement at which point we also indicated that further discussions would take place.

The financial institutions were represented on the committee which brought forward a report at the end of March, indicating agreement one more time on the broad analysis of that.

They agreed one more time after that to offer leases to

farmers who had not yet accepted leases for the intervening period while the report was being implemented. And they have agreed now to continue discussions until the implementation of the report and legislation.

If that's not adequate update, I would give you further information.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, what the member's really telling us, that he hasn't been able, or his government be able, to panel the big lenders. They haven't been able to make a deal with them. That's what he's really saying here.

So my question, a new one, a new question, Mr. Speaker: In the throne and the budget speech your government said there would be legislation introducing a six-year lease program. Do you believe that it's fair to farmers to hold back information what the particulars of the legislation will be so they can plan their lives?

The need to know whether you're going to keep them on the land, or are you going to break the promises and throw ... break another promise and throw them off their land too?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I would answer the question again and hope the member opposite would this time listen.

In the period from January to March, lenders offered farmers leasebacks in cases where they had previously had leases so all farmers would have access to their land if they didn't fall within the narrow band of exceptions. And they offered after March 31 to offer leases to those farmers who had not yet received leases. And they have agreed to do that because this gives farmers the access to their land for this year.

In the intervening time we are going to be introducing the implementation of the Farm Debt Advisory Committee report in legislation. And I don't think the member opposite believes that legislation was ever taken out to the public before it was introduced in the legislature.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, what the Minister of Agriculture doesn't understand, that every second Monday in Moose Jaw and every other Monday in Regina there's a court case dealing with farmers, and they are losing their land.

And there's been many, many lost their land since the 31st of March. And he did not have any action whatsoever to take place, to take care of these people. This government believes in retroactive legislation. Now when you bring this Bill in about the six-year lease, will there be retroactive legislation to protect these farmers that have lost their land?

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, the agreement that was reached with the financial institutions was that those

farmers would be offered leases for this year, and I would invite the member to get in touch with my office for cases where that agreement has not been held.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the minister. As far as the farmers in Saskatchewan is concerned and far as the people on this side of the House is concerned you have betrayed every farmer in Saskatchewan. Will you just tell us one quick answer: when will you introduce this farm legislation? When will it be introduced?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, the agreements that were reached with the financial institutions were reached in such a way that farmers would have access to the land for the 1992 cropping season and the timing of the introduction of the legislation then is of not the most importance relative to this year. The measures will be introduced so the appropriate procedures can be put in place and farmers will have access to the rights given under the advisory committee report.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture states this legislation is not important just as he looks at all agriculture, at all the farmers out there. He doesn't seem to take it as important.

A new question. Mr. Minister, this government continues to dance around the issue of farmers are literally being kicked off their farms and others are just packing up in sheer desperation.

Your Premier said during the last election that he could do a better job of standing up for farmers than the Devine government and what do we see so far? The GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program is gutted, no debt restructuring plan, no cost of production, foreclosures are rampant, absolutely no cash after expensive trips, no fuel rebates. The Premier and the minister are failures to farmers in the rural communities.

My question: will the minister stand in his place and tell the people of this province that he knew all along that he couldn't keep those promises and that he owes farmers in all of Saskatchewan apologies for his lack of action to keep the farmers on the land?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member opposite, if he does not remember on his own, that the major agenda of government since we have been in office has been review of agricultural programs put in place by the members opposite. We have been in a position to listen to farmers, to make adjustments, and to try to live within the financial flexibility that's been left by the devastation of the members opposite when they were previously in government.

Our province has dealt with the issue of GRIP. We've



dealt with the issue of farm debt. We are dealing with the transportation policy of the province which you or which members opposite were at the edge of undermining.

Saskatchewan farmers know that the integrity of our transportation system in Saskatchewan, the rail transportation system, is dependent on the method of payment of the Crow. And members opposite participated in putting that at risk. And we continue to see you not challenge your federal minister when your federal minister says that he's opposed to the method of payment that's presently in place.

**The Speaker:** — Next question.

### Crop Insurance Contracts

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the farmers of Saskatchewan would be very disappointed at the answers that we've had from the Minister of Agriculture this morning. But a new question, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Agriculture stated inside this House and outside the House that the member for Arm River was one of the new contract holders of the new GRIP program. My question: where did the minister receive this information regarding my confidential crop insurance file?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, the information that that may be true was a result of bantering in the House, and I think it came from the member opposite.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — You banter with farmers' lives? Mr. Speaker, the only statement I ever made, and it's in *Hansard*, that I put crop insurance on . . . There was nothing, no statement ever made by this member about putting on GRIP. So my question now is to the minister responsible to the Crop Insurance Corporation. My question, Mr. Speaker, is: have you revealed information about my personal file to other members of your cabinet?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cunningham:** — Mr. Speaker, I have not.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, final supplementary to the minister of Crop Insurance. This government has been known for budget leaks, now I ask the minister is it going to be a policy of this government to have personal files also leaked — of MLAs — in this House? Answer that question, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to the member for Arm River, and I want to refer to where the minister got the idea of his participation in government programs, but basically on page 168 on May 4, and I refer to the speech being given by the member for Arm River. And I just want to quote from *Hansard*, he said:

Mr. Speaker, the member from Elphinstone asks what program did I sign up for? I had no choice, I had no choice. I didn't have (and then there's a blank) . . . the member from Rosetown-Elrose made the statement the other day, I am so proud to announce that there's 300 . . . people signed up for GRIP.

He goes on to say:

You know maybe there are 300 new farmers like me because I didn't have (and then there's another blank) . . . (Then he goes on to say) I could have nothing to do with it whatsoever, but I put crop insurance on this year so I had to take (up) . . .

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to understand what the speech was about, but the assumption is that he was saying that he's taking out crop insurance and GRIP this year and he didn't take it out last year. And the leak is here in the House on page 168, the leak that you talk about is your speech. That's the leak.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the member . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The members have been doing very well this morning being Friday morning, and I appreciate that. I will not allow this House to deteriorate into a standard that we have become used to.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — The question to the member from Elphinstone. It's very clear here this morning he doesn't understand the difference between crop insurance and GRIP. It's very, very clear.

I had two choices, and I said very clear that I put on crop insurance. Crop insurance has been there since 1962, and GRIP is a new program. I had two choices — crop insurance or GRIP. That's the only two choices.

Do you not understand the difference between crop insurance and GRIP? I ask the member that.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well first I want to say to the member that in reading his speech very carefully, and I might add it's a confused statement, but you referred to the 300 new people who signed up for GRIP. And in that you were talking about you signing up. It's easy to see here that the 300 people who signed up were GRIP people.

Now I'm not sure what your speech meant, but the assumption that many people would arrive at, having read this, that you were the one of the 300 that you referred to that were new GRIP sign-ups.

This is the leak. If you want to talk about all the leaks you've been finding, this is yet another one, and it's on page 168 of *Hansard* out of your speech.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — A final question to the Minister of

Agriculture. The member from Elphinstone has just said we're talking about assumptions. Does the Minister of Agriculture use assumptions to use the member from Arm River's name in this House and outside that House? Is that what this government's all about, to use assumption? Will the minister promise that he will use facts from now on instead of assumptions as the minister from Elphinstone said?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I can't resist getting back in to answer this, but I really think this is a new low in question period and also in speech giving.

The member is obviously upset that he didn't get any press on his speech, and I can well understand why. So he goes back to his speech, he finds a section, calls it a leak, and gets up and asks questions about it.

I think I'd go back to the *Leader-Post* to do your research because it's much, much better than what you're getting out of here.

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

### Cancellation of Saskatchewan Pension Plan

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had an opportunity to meet with a grade 8 student delegation from Kindersley. When I had the opportunity to speak with them, they had a number of questions that they wanted to ask of me as well, Mr. Speaker, and they dealt with the Saskatchewan Pension Plan.

They asked a simple question, one of the students: why was the pension plan cut for her single parent mother? That was the type of questions that we dealt with, Mr. Speaker. They went on to ask things such as: were there any alternatives that the government looked at for the pension plan rather than just slashing the pension plan, Mr. Speaker, and especially in light of the fact that the Justice minister on May 12 of this past few days has said that the government will be pursuing significant pension reform?

I won't go into the release in the interest of time, Mr. Speaker, but I think the release is concluded by the following statement:

"We need to protect the pension benefits of the province's workers and allow those workers greater control of their pension plans."

My question is for the Associate Minister of Finance: will they now reinstate the Saskatchewan Pension Plan and allow the women of this province an opportunity for a pension and for greater control of the pensions as the Minister of Justice has promised?

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

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I say to the member opposite that like so much of what the former administration implemented, this was not on a very sound financial footing. This program, when it was implemented, was actuarially unsound. It was

costing this government \$12 million. And in a space of a very few years, it had accumulated an \$80 million unfunded liability.

I say, Mr. Speaker, any program . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I hate to do this, but I have to call the member from Rosthern to order. Will you please not continuously interrupt when ministers are trying to answer the question.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I just add for the benefit of the member opposite, any program which you don't have to pay for is a very attractive one. We determined that if you've fully paid for it, it will be a lot less attractive.

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

(1100)

## TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

**The Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, I would like to, pursuant to section 222(1) of The Election Act, I'd like to table the election expenses of candidates and their business managers and of the registered political parties at the twenty-second general election held on October 21, 1991.

And in conjunction with that I would also, pursuant to section 222(1) of The Election Act, table a report respecting the annual fiscal returns of registered political parties for the fiscal year 1991. I so table.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 8 — An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 8, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act.

As many members will know, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act establishes the level of provincial assistance to be allocated to both urban and rural municipalities. Accordingly, the amendment gives legal effect to decisions reflected in the 1992-1993 budget.

The amendment provides for overall reduction in funding through the revenue-sharing program to urban and rural municipalities. This funding reduction in revenue sharing and similar ones in other sectors are hardly desirable, Mr. Speaker, but I might add are necessary as a result of the massive deficit this province now finds itself in.

Nevertheless the provincial government has inherited this kind of a fiscal mess and problem of immense proportions and we intend to do what the people elected us to do, and that is bring down the ever-increasing size of the provincial deficit.

For the sake of Saskatchewan's future, it is vital that the

province's debt crisis be brought under control. And I ask the members opposite who were responsible for this huge deficit to join with us as opposed to fighting and trying to continue the drastic increase in the deficit of the province.

Major funding reductions are a necessary part of the situation we face. The province, its communities, and its individuals will be tested to find new ways of achieving common objectives as we begin the significant challenge of rebuilding Saskatchewan. More specifically, the Bill provides an overall 14.8 per cent reduction for urban municipalities. I would like to describe what it contains in this figure.

Firstly it includes a global 15 per cent reduction in unconditional revenue-sharing funding for 1992-93. However, in discussion with SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) they felt that a funding safety net should be put in place to buffer the impact of the revenue-sharing distribution formula for communities in particular need. Three hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars has been injected into the program to provide a degree of funding for 168 communities, and this has been done in consultation with SUMA.

Also contained in the funding decision is the discontinuation of an intermunicipal fire protection program. The conditional program was operated for more than a decade as a very small component of revenue sharing. Historically the program provided a small financial incentive for municipalities to join together with other municipalities for the provision of fire protection. Most communities are now part of such an intermunicipal agreement and the funding incentive can be considered to have in fact done its job.

In the coming days we will have more to say about the new approach to fire prevention and training and new methods of promoting intermunicipal co-operation. These changes, when taken together, are reflected in The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act of 1992.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to support the Bill, and I move second reading of Bill No. 8, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act.

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about it, and then I will be adjourning the debate.

The minister raised some very significant issues here, I believe, about deficit and deficit reduction. I want to ask the minister in Committee of the Whole whether \$517 million deficit in his budget is a deficit reduction. I want to ask the minister about off-loading. He mentioned off-loading as a part of the reason why we have the problem with the budget deficit. Is the off-loading by the federal government any different than the off-loading by the provincial government? What are small businesses going to respond to in this off-loading? Who's going to take care of the small-business tax that the businesses in the province have to deal with?

Yesterday the Minister of Finance, in his closing address here, said that the economy in this province is strengthening, and he tabled a report that said that it

maybe was. And if it is strengthening, the consistent overview of the revenue-sharing component as a part of its tradition has been that the municipalities and the various agencies that are in the revenue-sharing pool, municipalities and urban municipalities, have access to that revenue sharing as a part of the economic strength of this province. You're saying now that you're off-loading to the municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, we want to be cognizant of the impact of the deficit in the province of Saskatchewan, but to continually blame other agencies, other groups for the kinds of things that you did in your budget is not fair, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to ask you a whole lot of questions, not only in the discussion, but in the Committee of the Whole we're going to be asking a whole lot of questions in relation to that.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, because of a lot more to say and we want to review what the minister has said, I'm asking for adjourned debate.

Debate adjourned.

### **Bill No. 5 — An Act to amend The Wascana Centre Act**

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Wascana Centre Amendment Act. This Bill amends the legislation pertaining to statutory funding for Wascana Centre for 1992-93 fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, it too reduces the level of funding by 5 per cent relative to the level of funding provided for in the 1991-92 fiscal year, implementing the change already announced in the budget.

The members opposite will know that this comes as no surprise to the municipality or to the park. It's been debated and discussed. Under the former government, the Wascana Centre Authority suffered through several years, with funding being frozen at a level originally set in 1986 and '87. Now because of the deficit accumulated by the same government, we have had the need to implement a further reduction for this year.

The government remains committed to seeing that the Wascana Centre continues to perform its unique, combined role, both as a setting for the provincial government and as a major amenity for the residents of Regina and also for the whole province. Some adjustments will be necessary in this financial difficult time, but the commitment remains.

Funding in future years will be subject of discussions with the other participating parties of the Wascana. And, Mr. Speaker, I would therefore move second reading of this Bill.

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to again move adjournment of the debate at the conclusion of my remarks. I want to point out that the member responsible for the actions of the minister responsible for Community Services is not present today and will be wanting to review some of the aspects of the Bill.

And I also want to point out, as I will in subsequent motions, that he has . . . again attacking everybody else

but not involving himself in his own decisions. And I again want to point out, the \$517 million of deficit that you put on the books is your responsibility. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that that's second highest deficit in the province of Saskatchewan's history. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a part of their legacy — not only ours but theirs — because they made the decision to do it. They cut and cut and cut, and yet, Mr. Speaker, I believe they cut fairly.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the premise that I think that you should have reassigned yourself the opportunity, when you had it, to deliver a better opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan and where you place the emphasis.

I move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 6 — An Act to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act**

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of The Meewasin Valley Authority Act amendment. Mr. Speaker, this Act includes changes in a number of areas for the Meewasin Valley Authority.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that the opposition is giving up on their argument that they're not responsible for the debt, and are now saying we should come forward with our own proposals. But at least now they're accepting that they ran the deficit in the province to close to \$15 billion, when you include loan guarantees along with the debt. But I can tell you very clearly that when you try to shift the onus of your responsibility on an ongoing basis and hope people will forget about it, that won't happen.

Just as things done by previous governments, for example the Thatcher government back in the 1960s when they put deterrent fees on all of health care . . . and you remember the payments for going to the hospital, some dollars a day and every time you went to the doctor. That is still a legacy of the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan. And I say to the member from Morse, when you try to say, look, quit talking about the debt and who's responsible for it — the public know why you want to get off of that topic.

The member for Arm River last night went to great lengths to try to get people to quit thinking about it and quit talking about it because we don't like it. Well we know why you don't like it because you're guilty of having driven this province to the extent where the new government now has to come in and make small changes across the piece — to oil companies, to potash companies, to banks, to farmers, to storekeepers, to politicians, 5 per cent cut for cabinet ministers. All of this is being done in the name of solving the problem, Mr. Speaker, that these people created. That's why the Bill is being brought here.

I want to say to the member from Morse very clearly, we did have options. We could have continued to run the deficit up even higher. That's true, we had that option. That option was followed by you people for 9 or 10 budgets — I believe 10 budgets — where deficits were introduced in the House in much easier times.

But I want to say to you that that would be totally irresponsible — having run a total campaign on attempting to get the deficit under control — to continue to drive it up. So what we're doing here today is attempting, in a small way by moving an amendment to the Meewasin Valley Authority, to come to grips with the ever increasing deficit in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that first the Bill amends the provision of the Act relating to the statutory funding for the Meewasin for 1992-93 fiscal year. It reduces this funding by 5 per cent relative to the level provided for in 1991-92. This implements the changes as I mentioned that were announced last week in the provincial budget. I, like many other colleagues and cabinet responsible for urban parks, find this, and I'm speaking on behalf of my colleague, find this most regrettable in the context of the reductions to and freezes of the Meewasin Valley funding implemented by the previous government for four or five or six years.

(1115)

However the fiscal situation leaves this government little option but to look at all opportunities to make small savings which we believe will add up to a balanced budget during our first term in office.

Discussion with the other participating parties for funding Meewasin Valley Authority in the future years will be taking place over the next several months to determine how best to ensure Meewasin continues to meet the high expectations that all of us have of it.

I hereby, Mr. Speaker, move second reading of The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act.

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks I will move the motion to adjourn debate. We had the minister speak about deterrent fees. We had the minister speak something about doing something about it, about the budget deficit. And, Mr. Speaker, he has said in this House that it's time to do something about it. He's even committed that in his first term of office he's going to have a balanced budget, balanced on the basis of tax increases, horrendous tax increases to every sector of society starting at the small business, in Power, SaskTel, SaskEnergy, government insurance programs.

And then he concludes by saying that he's going to cut these spending in Meewasin. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, again that because the member will be addressing — who is the critic — will be addressing later, I move the adjournment of the debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 4 — An Act to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act**

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, this will be the last of the Bills that I will be dealing with today, and it is basically the second reading of The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act. And I say this Bill changes the statutory funding for the Wakamow Valley Authority, restoring the formula to that which existed prior to the 20

per cent reduction instituted by the provincial government in 1983, if you remember back to those days when the Tories were first elected.

The effect of this cut, compounded by the freeze of the provincial funding since 1986-87, has been bringing Wakamow close to the point of no return. A recent review by the participating parties and Wakamow's independent auditor found the Authority in debt and likely to be unable to survive another year without steps to address its financial situation.

Here again I say that in light of the terrible debt situation that the province now finds itself in, we're trying to do what we can to salvage programs, parks, and those kinds of things wherever we can. But I must tell you that it's very, very difficult.

And I know the member is upset with the tax increases and the cuts. And many people in the province are not pleased with the cuts and the tax increases. But I think the vast majority know full well, and indications are when I travel around that they know full well, who is responsible for the fact that we have to go through this major overhaul of the economy in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I compare it to a family where they may have had a family income of \$80,000 and all of a sudden due to lay-off or due to loss of jobs they end up with a job that earns half of the 80,000 and have 40,000. They have a choice to make. Do they continue to spend at the salary they were before the change in status or do they sit down and figure out how they're going to manage on the new income.

Well we're a government that has been left in dire straits. The \$517 million debt that we have presently, if it were not for the massive interest on the debt, the member from Arm River will know that we would not only have a balanced budget but we'd have a surplus of over \$200 million given our budget that we brought forward.

I say to you that this is a small part of it, the changes that we're making within the park authority amendments that I have announced today. But I say these small moves are going to bring the province back to fiscal stability.

And, Mr. Minister, I would please ask you and your colleagues, rather than being doom and gloom about the future of the province, to join with us and tell us what your options are, because for the past 10 years it's amazing to me, we saw none of them. And all of a sudden you get on the opposition benches and you have all these bright ideas about how you would solve the debt problem.

Well I say, Mr. Speaker, that it's the height of hypocrisy to watch the members opposite talk about what they would do to solve the \$15 billion debt problem when they were the architects. And that member opposite who is now sitting and talking about how he would do it, voted for the exact debt that we have in this province of \$15 billion, and now has the audacity to stand here and say that he has the answers of how to solve it.

Mr. Speaker, with that I would move second reading of The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act.

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, an observation I want to make about all these Bills — The Meewasin Valley, Wascana, and Wakamow.

I sat in this Assembly year after year after year when we stabilized, when we stabilized the expenditures to those park communities. And, Mr. Speaker, on every occasion, on every occasion as I sat here and listened, the members from Moose Jaw, the members from Saskatoon, and the members from Regina who were in opposition at that time continually said spend more, spend more, spend more. And that, Mr. Speaker, was consistent with their theme all the way through.

And when you place responsibility on each one of these members, then they have a change of heart. They begin to realize that it's necessary to balance the budget. They begin to realize it's important to do that. And, Mr. Speaker, I know absolutely for sure that every one of those members spoke in favour of spending more. And now when they have the responsibility to manage the affairs of this province, they say, spend less.

And, Mr. Speaker, the members from those communities should hang their heads in shame for driving the budget in this province to the point that it was because they said, spend more. And the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow and the member from Moose Jaw Palliser said that over and over and over again. And they had very significant speeches, standing in that corner of this Assembly and saying it. And from the back row I can distinctly recall them saying, spend more, spend more, spend more.

And now, Mr. Speaker, the chicken has come to roost. And that, Mr. Speaker, we said, hold it flat; and you said, spend it more. Now, Mr. Speaker, you are forcing the people of Saskatchewan to spend less, and that is the result of your pressure on the wrong side. And, Mr. Speaker, we are going to find out how many more places these people are going to have to say, we can do it better. But before they said no, spend more, spend more, spend more. And they did it in every facet of their departments.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask, because I have more to say, to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

### **Bill No. 9 — An Act to amend The Mineral Taxation Act, 1983**

**Hon. Mr. Penner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Mineral Taxation Amendment Act, 1992. This Bill will change the rate of the mineral rights tax currently being assessed from \$1 per acre to \$1.50 per acre, a necessity brought on by the current fiscal situation of the province.

The mineral rights tax is paid by more than 600 individuals and corporations, however large corporate entities which hold large tracts of mineral rights pay most of this tax. Approximately \$5.7 million in mineral rights tax was collected in 1991. The increase in the tax rate is

expected to generate an additional \$2.1 million in revenue for 1992.

An amendment of a housekeeping nature is also included in this Bill to clarify the conditions which apply when mineral rights are being transferred from a taxable entity to an individual who is exempt from tax under this Act.

With those brief comments, I move second reading of The Mineral Taxation Amendment Act, 1992.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, because this Bill was just presented to the House yesterday, we've not yet had an opportunity to review it and to consider its implications. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move that we adjourn debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 10 — An Act to amend The Crown Minerals Act and to make consequential amendments to certain other Acts resulting from the enactment of this Act**

**Hon. Mr. Penner:** — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to move second reading of The Crown Minerals Amendment Act, 1992. This Bill amends various provisions of The Crown Minerals Act which was last amended in 1990.

The Crown Minerals Act applies to all Crown minerals and the granting and acquiring of interests in Crown minerals and Crown mineral lands. The main elements of the Bill address the ability of the province to manage its mineral resources by doing five different things. First, is strengthening and protecting the Crown's authority to collect royalties; secondly, providing greater ability to address environmental concerns; thirdly, improving the province's capacity to address Indian land settlement issues; fourthly, modifying land tenure practices as relate to unexplored deep oil and gas rights; and finally, refining the provisions pertaining to Crown acquired lands.

Mr. Speaker, the minerals belonging to the people of this province are valuable assets, and it is incumbent upon the government to ensure that appropriate benefits flow to the Crown from the development of these resources. Provisions of this Bill strengthen the Crown's authority to assess a royalty in various forms, including that of a tax on incomes or profits.

Furthermore, a general royalty-avoidance clause is being added to prevent the erosion of Crown revenues as a result of arrangements or transactions designed to unduly or artificially reduce the liability of a Crown lessee to make royalty payments. The Bill will also strengthen the ability of the minister to determine the appropriateness of a price which is reported for royalty calculation purposes.

Environmental protection, Mr. Speaker, is a priority of this government. We must recognize that environment protection imperatives may ultimately preclude the exploration and development of Crown minerals in certain areas. In the event Crown minerals have been disposed within an area of high environmental sensitivity, the minister will have the authority to cancel such dispositions following the completion of an appropriate

environmental assessment process. If mineral dispositions are to be cancelled for the environmental protection reasons, the holders of those dispositions will be provided fair and reasonable compensation.

Mr. Speaker, the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada and the province's Indian leaders have made considerable progress with respect to the negotiation of outstanding treaty land entitlements. Our government is committed to this process. I am pleased to advise that this Bill includes provision which expands the province's ability to transfer Crown minerals and Crown mineral lands to the federal government to satisfy Canada's obligations with the Indian bands of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has developed a mineral land tenure system over the years to facilitate the exploration and development of its valuable non-renewable resources. In recent years, there has been renewed interest in the exploration of deep oil and gas rights, particularly in south-east Saskatchewan. To encourage further deep exploration and allow greater access to deeper oil and gas rights, we are adding provisions to allow for the severance of deeper rights associated with the gas and oil leases if those rights remain unexplored for a period of more than five years.

(1130)

These provisions will apply to oil and gas leases granted in the past as well as all future leases which are granted. This will ensure that players interested in this type of exploration will have access to those rights.

Two years ago, Mr. Speaker, The Crown Minerals Act was amended to limit the compensation payable to former mineral owners whose rights were acquired by the Crown in 1974. A cap of \$50,000 per year per owner was imposed. This action was taken to reduce the expenditure requirements of the province. The need to contain government expenditures is even greater today, and therefore we will protect the expenditure savings resulting from the limitation on Crown acquired compensation payments introduced in 1990.

One weakness of the compensation limitation provisions introduced two years ago is the failure to recognize and address the existence and impact of encumbrances which may have been registered against the mineral titles at the time of acquisition. Because the former owners of Crown acquired minerals may have significant obligations with respect to these encumbrance holders, we are introducing provisions to also limit the owners' obligations to make payments to these interests consistent with the revenues they are receiving in the form of compensation from the Crown.

Other provisions of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to remove sand and gravel from the definition of the Crown mineral, to strengthen the authority of the Crown to lease sub-surface reservoirs and caverns for storage purposes, and generally clarify and improve the regulatory powers of the minister as they pertain to the administration of Crown minerals.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I move second

reading of The Crown Minerals Amendment Act, 1992.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again because this Bill was presented to the House yesterday, we've not had an opportunity to review it and to study its implications. It's a fairly complex Bill. It covers not only Crown lands but also private lands. I was glad to see, though, that the minister has taken into account native land treaty settlements which the previous government put into place; and also that he is taking into consideration the drilling of deep wells.

Mr. Speaker, because we haven't had the opportunity to study this Bill, at this time I would move that debate on this Bill be adjourned.

Debate adjourned.

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### Consolidated Fund Expenditure Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Vote 53

**The Chair:** — Mr. Minister, will you please introduce your staff.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Seated with me is Mr. Don McMillan, who is the acting president; to his right is Barry Hilsen, the assistant vice-president, human resources services. Immediately behind Mr. McMillan is Norm Drummond, the corporate comptroller. And immediately behind me is Rob Isbister, director of financial planning.

#### Item 1

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Firstly, just a comment pertaining to the House Leader. We're off to maybe not too good a start in estimates. Yesterday our House Leader was not in attendance and the member from Moosomin was making agreements with the House Leader and they were going to bring in Public Service Commission. And then at 10 o'clock last night he brings over a document to change his mind. If we're going to have agreements . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It's absolutely a fact. And then at 10 o'clock last night — just before 10 — he brought over a folder saying that it's going to be SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) but never said it had to come in that order.

So if we're going to go through estimates in a right and proper manner and bring things forth, we got to have a little bit of come and go. There has to be, Mr. Chairman. We have members on our side and we have . . . Like today you couldn't bring on Women's Secretariat because the minister is going to be away.

So we expect, when you can't bring on as it's on here . . . It's on today's agenda that Women's Secretariat is on but still you can't have it because the minister's away. And that is fine.

**An Hon. Member:** — On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** — What is your point of order?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — My point of order is this: that for 10 years as House Leader of the opposition, I never got one written agenda from that group of people over there — not one. And I'll tell you I won't stand by while you talk about your lack of information or consultation on the operation of the House, because it's completely unfair and inaccurate. I give you an agenda every day early enough for you to provide . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — 9:30.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes, 9:30 on Fridays. I'll tell you when I got them from you when you were House Leader, Mr. Member from Rosthern, I would get them when I'd sat in my desk and you would bring your officials in. That's when I would know who was coming. And for you sanctimoniously, as you have on every occasion in the House for the past three weeks, lectured us about how we run government, I'll tell you, you are the biggest hypocrite that I've ever met.

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** — May I speak on this point of order?

**The Chair:** — Yes.

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I think the public of Saskatchewan has just seen, Mr. Chairman, some of the problems and some of the difficulties that we as an opposition are facing when we're looking at an arrogant government, that because of their majority, thinks that they can run roughshod in this House.

**The Chair:** — Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the speaker and I ask members to observe some decorum.

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I think it's extremely unfortunate for the Government House Leader to come, stand up, and in such a tirade undo much of the good will that this House has been experiencing for period of time from this morning on when you as a matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, gave the report . . .

**The Chair:** — Order. You should not involve the Chair in any of the debate.

**Mr. Neudorf:** — I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. And of course I realize that and I apologize for commending you on the job that you are doing.

But I think it's very unfortunate that the House has deteriorated so rapidly, so rapidly right at the beginning of our session. And we had high hopes that we were going to continue on this harmonious type of path that we had embarked upon.

But if the Government House Leader is going to continue on in tirades like that, then I don't think that this augurs well for the future of the proceedings here.

Now I grant you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in response to this point of order, that I was not here in the House during the

afternoon yesterday when my Deputy House Leader informs me that this was a commitment that was made that we were going to be looking at the Public Service Commission as opposed to this particular one, because my member was going to have difficulty.

Now we have to work in a spirit of co-operation here, otherwise this House will not work. We have to have that form of communication. And if I get a document showing that it's going to be a certain one, that's what we expect. And if things are going to be changed, then we're going to run into difficulty.

Now our only recourse as members of the opposition is going to be to talk, to give speeches. But we will ask our questions. We will ask our questions when we are properly prepared . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member asked, who's stopping us?

We are working under the burden of 10 members to take care of the entire . . . so therefore we are going to do a good job. And we will not be rushed, and we will certainly, Mr. Speaker, not allow the massive weight of 55 members to steamroll their way across the opposition.

We promised the people of Saskatchewan that we will be an effective opposition, and we will do an effective job. And the only way we can do that is to have the time to prepare.

Now, Mr. Deputy Chairman, all I am saying here is that today we will go on with SPMC, but I do not think that there will be much progress made.

**The Chair:** — The item under discussion, although is an interesting item of debate, is not strictly speaking a point of order, and therefore I encourage us to move on.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There wasn't really a problem here. I don't know why we got into such a hustle bustle.

Because I say to the member, I say to the House Leader, Mr. Chairman, in due respect, I say to the House Leader that it was my true understanding that if it has to be SPMC, that's not a problem, but when you start changing the rules in the middle of the game . . . and that's what he's done. And I'm sorry if that isn't what I understood. But I was told by the member from Moosomin that it would be Public Service Commission. And that's what I understood.

Now to make it very clear that it also says on here that today the Women's Secretariat will come up today also if we move along fast. And I just want to make this . . . if there's going to be for one, it can be for the other side.

The Minister of Health is not here so we're not going to be able to do it, regardless. So they put it on the agenda for today knowing that she couldn't be here. So I ask for the same courtesy. I'll just be asking for the same courtesy if we have someone on our side that has to be out seeding or away on business or whatever, that we have the same courtesy, that theirs won't come up if they can't be here. We ask for the same courtesy and that's not a problem. That's all I ask. That if someone on our side of the House,

the same as the Minister of Health, is not here today, and that's not a problem. But why put Women's Secretariat on the agenda at all for today if you know that she wasn't going to be here? Why put it on?

Mr. Chairman, the minister responsible for SPMC has been around for a while. He's not like one of the new members that are ministers. Just to have it for the record, I'd like for him to give all the responsibilities your department, SPMC, is responsible for, in detail please.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — That's a rather unusual question. I guess I could read the annual report. I'll try summarizing it and perhaps if there's some detail that you're particularly interested in, you could ask me.

The function of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation is to provide space, supplies, goods and services to government. It is now the function of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation to supply those at the least possible cost.

It used to be the function of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation also to act as an appendage of the Progressive Conservative Party with respect to patronage. That, Mr. Minister, is no longer part of the function of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. It now serves the taxpayers and not the Progressive Conservative Party.

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

(1145)

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, I wasn't asking for him to get into all the details. I understand that. But he didn't even cover the highlights of that department, what they're responsible for. But we'll let him get away with that. That's all right. If he doesn't know what is the responsibility of his entire department, I guess the people in TV land will know that this morning. Because if that's all that they're responsible for, why such a large staff?

Mr. Chairman, let's start with your own staff. Give us a list of all persons working in the minister's office or otherwise who report directly to you.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — If I could get the attention of one of the pages, I will send it over to you . . . have it in writing.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, I thank the minister for his quick response in sending those over. And now I ask if he has their titles and . . . I see he's got the salaries here, but their titles and their job descriptions.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — The first named — Darlene and Myrna and Karen — and perhaps the member will forgive me if I don't use the last names here; I think that'll sufficiently identify them since you have it in writing. Darlene and Myrna and Karen provide stenographic services. They are . . . Darlene being the senior of those. She's in a sense the minister's secretary. Myrna and Karen provide additional stenographic services.

Heather Padfield is the senior ministerial assistant responsible for managing the office in a sense, also



responsible for ensuring the orderly flow of work through the office, ensuring that reports and responses are drafted.

Bill Davies joined our staff somewhat recently. He has, in addition to his other qualifications, a doctorate in English. He is there primarily as a writer. His responsibilities are primarily to write letters and so on.

Tim Whelan is there primarily with respect to communications in a sense. He's responsible for the communications of the office.

That I think roughly, Mr. Member, describes the responsibilities of these six people.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Could you also give us a little run-down on their employment history including their last place of employment?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I'm not entirely sure I can give that to the member. I can undertake to provide that in writing. I frankly don't know that information offhand.

These are people by and large, Mr. Member, who came recommended to me by Executive Council. I simply took the recommendation without making any extensive inquiries on my own. I can say in all respects I've been well satisfied with them. However, if you want their previous employer, I will undertake to give you that in writing; I just don't have it with me.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, yes, I'd appreciate if we could have that, and no hurry today, but if we could have that some other time.

I'd just like to ask a question about the statement you sent me over here. It's just not clear to me. You've got the three people — Heather, Darlene and Myrna — working in the Department of Finance and the others the Public Service Commission. We're not doing Public Service Commission. Do they work for the Public Service Commission or is it SPMC? Could you explain that please, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Yes, I can. Actually, as a matter of interest, the SPMC doesn't pay for any of my office staff. If the member were familiar with the comments of the auditor, in a special report took exception to the practice of funding staff for the government out of the Crown corporation. In order to comply with that, we have funded three out of Department of Finance, three out of Public Service Commission.

I recognize we're not dealing with those. However, I thought the substance of the minister's question is, who's working in your office, so I provided that. As a matter of interest, none are funded actually out of SPMC.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — But my question in the first place, Mr. Minister, was, let's start with your own staff — the list of all persons working in the minister's office or otherwise. So that's all of them? Is that . . .

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Yes, there are six people. Yes.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — So I'm of the understanding that that's

the six that work for you completely, whether it's what departments they're involved with.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — That's correct.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you. I'd like to know if any worked or were paid by any other part of government before being on your payroll.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I didn't catch the member's comments. I'm sorry, I didn't hear you.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I'd like to know if any of those six individuals that you gave me here worked or were paid by any other part of government before being on your payroll.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I think Darlene, Myrna were working in Executive Council before they came to work for my office. I think they were employed in Executive Council. The answer to the others is no.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Okay, the ones that . . . You're saying that three have worked for government before and three are brand-new?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Two; Darlene and Myrna had worked for Executive Council before coming to my office. They came on the recommendation of Executive Council; it's the second and third of the Department of Finance. The others, to my knowledge, had not worked for government immediately before coming. I don't know what their past employment with the Government of Saskatchewan might have been.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — All right, Mr. Minister, if you could just tell me when they started — the ones that didn't work for government before — what dates did they start?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — It's in the second column from the right. The columns aren't very clearly listed, to be fair to the member. It's the second column from the right. You'll see that Ms. Padfield started on March 23, etc.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Now, let's go to the department of SPMC — a list of all positions that have been eliminated in the department since November 1, 1991.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Again, if one of the pages would assist me. Perhaps the page can come here for a minute. The list which the page initially left with, entitled position abolition, is the list of positions that were deleted in the budget down-sizing. The member from Arm River will be aware there were some positions, some terminations, on March 5, '92. That is on a separate sheet which will be delivered to him as well by the page.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, I haven't had a chance to go through these. But my next question would be: a job description of each of these people that are eliminated. It just says, permanent or otherwise, in here. It doesn't say a job description. Will you be able to supply the job description of each and every one that's been eliminated?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I rather thought it was on the sheet that I gave you. I thought the job title was on there. If

the member wants a more complete job description, we can certainly provide that to you. But the job title is on the sheet which you got.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, it'll take a little while to go through this, so maybe I'll just ask another question and then I'll get a chance maybe to glance through that. It's hard to look through that and be able to ask a question right away on it or respond to it.

So if I may, could you tell us what was the reason for any of the people that got fired or eliminated since that . . . (inaudible) . . . What was the reason for it?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — The reductions on March 5 had to do with a corporate reorganization, with one exception which I'd rather not get into in a lot of detail, although I'll give the member information in writing — with one exception they were without cause.

The positions which were eliminated last Thursday on budget day were a matter of down-sizing and reducing staff. And that is the case in all cases without exception.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, would it be fair in asking you if you know or if you can get me the information of how many of these people were just let go or fired or eliminated just because of cut-backs. How many are straight political firings?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Oh I think none were straight political firings. None were political firings. I can't entirely, Mr. Member . . . in the case of the terminations of March 5, all of those were terminations, although I'm not entirely sure of all the in-scope people.

The in-scope people have the right to bump. That's why all your question's difficult to answer. The in-scope people have the right to bump, and they may bump and go elsewhere. Out-of-scope people generally do not have that right.

Thus with respect to the positions which were down-sized on budget day, I can't give you that because it will still be undetermined; they will still be exercising their options. I'm sure I can tell you — I'll give it to you in writing another day — which of the in-scope positions on February 5 were resolved through bumping.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — My question was, your . . .

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I'm informed that — if I can interrupt the member — I'm informed by my officials that none of the in-scope terminations on February 5 were resolved through bumping. They all departed.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, you'll be able to supply more detail on all these, and then ones that are March 5, you'll be able to soon supply that information. And when could you exactly supply that information?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — With respect to the ones on February 5, I've given you that, I think. None of them were resolved through bumping, or they've all departed.

With respect to the ones on May 7, we will give it to you as soon as it's available. I don't know precisely how long it will take for the employees to determine where they are going. Certainly at the end of the day when everybody's settled I will give it to you. I'm reluctant to give you a firm date because I'm not sure how long it takes for those positions . . . I'm certain before the session comes to an end we can give it to the member. I can give you that commitment I think.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — That's a pretty . . . before the session ends. That's a long time. I understood that you said before the end of the session.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — The problem is, though, you asked which of these were resolved through termination. I don't know that yet and it isn't determined yet. And it may be some weeks before it is, given the nature of the collective agreement under which employees have the right to bump and to be re-transferred to other departments.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, will you undertake then as your department . . . there'll be somebody that's already been taken care of today. There'll be some of those now that have new jobs or whatever or moved the province; a lot of them have probably left the province already. But as each one comes to you, will you commit to get that information to me?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I have no objection to doing this. It's an enormous amount of work. I would prefer to simply give the minister the commitment that as soon as we can after they're resolved . . . It depends when the session ends too. I might have been a bit optimistic in thinking I could do it before the session ends; it depends when it ends. Some of these aren't resolved until July 3; some of them don't actually take place till July 3.

So perhaps I could undertake to give it to the minister as soon as we can collect the data. We're happy to provide it with you. To give you a firm time limit actually is very difficult, Mr. Minister.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Minister, just to leave it open-ended like that . . . and you can understand what I'm trying to get at here. We know there's been massive firings by this government. And I want the names and I want to know . . . you gave me the names here, but I want to know where they're going and what jobs, if they've got bumping rights or they're even allowed because I think there is political firings here. You said there wasn't any, and I'm sure that you would . . . It would be almost impossible, this many names, to have somebody not included was their own political stripes.

Can you stand up here and say, Mr. Minister, very clearly that there was absolutely, to your knowledge, that there was on this list . . . there's no political firings, that no one got put on there. Nobody got bumped in your department's knowledge? Ask them. Is there anyone that you know of, because we know that there was massive firings that had Progressive Conservative political stripes.

(1200)

So I'm just asking if you . . . because I don't know these names. I haven't been through them yet, and we will. But I want to get to the bottom of it and find out because your promise always was that . . . and there's quote after quote from your Premier, quote after quote from many of your ministers, quotes from yourself that we'll never do this, that there'll be no political patronage will ever happen in our government, just will not happen.

And last night when I spoke in the House here, Mr. Minister, we talked about 200 OCs (order in council) — 200. And then we had another 500-and-some appointments. You can't tell me those aren't political appointments. I want to know, and I want it assured from you and said as the minister stated in this House, that there's no political firings.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I was not a member of Executive Council on February 5. However I'm assured that's the case with respect to those . . . that those were . . . it was legitimate reorganization.

With respect to the firings, with respect to the down-sizing on May 7 on budget day, I don't have to ask the officials now because I asked that question in advance of it happening. I wanted assurance that this was being done for legitimate reasons of down-sizing, and not for any political or other crass reasons. I was given assurance by the officials who are with me that it was legitimate, and the only reason the positions were being deleted was for reasons of budgetary economy.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, you still haven't stood up in this House and said, I absolutely guarantee you that there was no political firings. That's what I want you to say — there was absolutely any. And if you can't say it, well then I guess it must have been.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — There were absolutely no political firings. Will that satisfy the member?

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Maybe the political firings are this way. They said it wasn't a political firing when they fired George Hill and put Messer in his position. That's happened all the way through. That was just down-sizing salary, it wasn't political.

They give an open-ended . . . to Jack Messer, he ends up with an open-ended contract. Voluntary, no contract, so we don't know. But your government says that these kind of people, the George Hills of the world . . . And I can see why you'd want to put your campaign manager in a good position like that. Why wouldn't you? But why don't you, why don't you admit it?

And in every department . . . because I still believe that there's political firings in every department that you had down-sizing, whatever. You've picked them out because there's departments right in this government where you've reclassified their salaries. And you know it's happened. But you'll never admit it because your department's done it for you.

And I want to be assured . . . you give your assurance that there's no political firings. I'm going to hold you to that. Because when we can find someone in there in that

department, when I go through these names, I'm telling you, Mr. Minister, you're going to be in a lot of problem when we find out there's someone in those departments that has brought us a Conservative card publicly, and he knows he got fired because of those reasons. Because it's happening every day.

You didn't even make a good job of your firings. When you were doing it, you missed some of the people who spoke out against the government the last few months. And they got . . . They were your own people — NDP (New Democratic Party) card holders. And they got cleaned up in it because you kind of thought maybe because they spoke out against your government you better get rid of them.

Everybody has to be on your side. Everybody has to be more than . . . They got to more than have an NDP card, Mr. Minister. They got to more than have an NDP card. They got to be out there, never say a word against this government — can't say one word. You speak out against the government, your job's in jeopardy. They know that.

So anyway, Mr. Minister, I've had your commitment there's been absolutely no political firings in the department of SPMC. So we'll take some time. We'll wait on your information.

But I don't like that open-ended date you give us. So I think what I'll ask you again on that one is what I asked you before. As each one is available — you may have some available today — will you send that to me in my office as each individual has been decided upon where they are going, or what new jobs or whatever, or haven't been any, as you have it finalized? Because you might hold it off for four years on me if one or two people in the department hasn't . . . didn't know where they were going or whatever.

I don't like that open-ended. Will you just commit, as the department has the answers to these, whether it's all or in full, that I get it? Because I understand that you can't pin you down to having it all right on July 1 because it's not a reasonable request. But would you commit that as your department gives you the information, as it comes in, that I will get it as it comes in?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — If the member has questions about individuals, I'll certainly answer them. I'm reluctant to give him a commitment that as each individual bumps, we will notify them.

First of all, it's an enormous amount of work. And whatever the member may think, we are not overstaffed. We are going to continue down-sizing and economizing.

But separately, Mr. Minister, there is a question of the privacy of the individuals here. They will be bumping . . . and it sets off a chain reaction — one bumps, another bumps. Until the process is complete, I am reluctant to make the information public. And I can understand how the member might be somewhat suspicious of an open-ended commitment because I suppose you're going to have difficulty holding me to it.

All I can say to the member is, I am trying to be as

forthcoming as I can. We will provide the information as soon as you can. I respect the right of opposition members to information, legitimate information. I think this is legitimate information. I'm just not sure I can provide it on the basis that you ask and I'm not 100 per cent certain I should until the bumping process is complete.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, you make me believe that you don't want to because . . . you just finished saying, Mr. Minister, that you're not too comfortable of giving individual information out. But still when the whole package, you've already agreed when the whole package is finished you will. Are you just trying to delay this so it'll be maybe a year or two down the road that we'll get this information?

What difference does it make whether I get part of it tomorrow, another part in June or another part in July and the rest whenever you have it. What's the difference does it make? Why do I have to have the whole package? I didn't ask for that. I've asked for it as it comes to you. As your department officials knows these requests, I want them turned over. There's no reason to say, we want to wait till the whole package together. I'm not satisfied, Mr. Minister. It's open-ended because you can go on for ever. We'll never get that information and we want that information.

When you were on this side of the House, I've seen you hold up for days and days and days when you couldn't get some information. I have no intention to do that. I want to make a commitment here for right now, because you're the ones that said you're going to be the open government. We're going to have books wide open. There is nothing that isn't going to be available to the public. Well if it's not available to us, it's not available to the public. So if you got nothing to hide — as it brings that information in, turn it over to me.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I regret very much that the member from Rosthern assumes that this government is conducting its operations the way you did when you were in office. We are simply not doing that.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Member, these positions were deleted for budgetary reasons and had nothing to do with the politics of the individual. You may well find people with Conservative memberships on that list. I don't have access to that list so I can neither deny nor confirm that.

I can tell you, if you had access to the NDP membership list, you'd find people on that list who have NDP memberships. That was not a consideration in why they were terminated. They were terminated for legitimate reasons, something I know you would have difficulty understanding having watched the former administration in operation for 10 years, because legitimate motivations had precious little to do with your terminations.

I say to the member opposite — having got that off my chest — I say to the member opposite that the positions are eliminated. They then moved elsewhere in government. I don't think I am able to provide it on a move . . . each time someone moves I don't think I'm able to provide it. It sets off a chain reaction.

I would expect within a matter of weeks following the end of the session, I would be able to give you the complete list. And I think that's the best I can do is to provide you with the complete list as soon as it's available. It will not take four years; it will take a matter of weeks.

I say in closing though, Mr. Minister, please don't judge everybody by the abysmal standards which your government set when they were in office. Very few governments sink to that level.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Now that's quite an accusation, Mr. Minister. But this is the accusation I'm giving to you: that some of these people that's been eliminated from their positions and you don't want to say where they're going or what's happening to them or whatever, is happening because you're afraid that we'll find out how many of the people with NDP cards get a job some place else in government. Because I do believe you'll be taking care of your own. The NDP have been known for that for ever — take care of your own people.

And don't say that the way this government handled it . . . because I can take you to department after department after department where we did not do that. Go to the Department of Agriculture, go to SPMC, and see how many of the average people that we kicked out and brought in — we didn't do that. It's you people that's doing that.

It's you people that's laying off all over this province. You've laid off and you've laid off and you laid off. And we're going to follow where those people go. Because if they're your card-carrying people, they'll get a job some place else in government. That's why I want to know where they're going, what job did they go to next. I want to see the people that are out of scope that are your people, and find another job in government or the people that had the bumping rights.

Mr. Minister, you're saying to me you will not provide the package until you have it completed. Are you saying you will not give us a breakdown as information comes in?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I am saying when the process is complete, which I expect will take a matter of a few weeks, I will give it to you. You will have it in time for my estimates next year, if I still have this portfolio. And I think that's all that makes sense to you.

Frankly, I don't know why the member wants it item by item, piece by piece. Surely when you get the whole picture, then you'll be in the position to judge it. Or is the member going to continue doing what members opposite have done for so long and that is run half-cocked with ill-conceived information and make false judgement? Surely you'll want the whole picture. I'll give you the whole picture.

I've every expectation you'll get it before the estimates come up next year. And you can return to the subject if you think the public servants weren't fairly dealt with.

As for rehiring people, there's no particular reason why the member should know this, and it's not actually part of these estimates. But when the Public Service Commission

estimates come, you will be told that everybody goes on a re-employment list. All the ones who were laid off go on a re-employment list and they're given first dibs at jobs as they come up.

And that's true whether they hold Progressive Conservative cards, NDP cards, or what is the case in 99 per cent of them, they don't hold a card at all. Everybody goes on a re-employment list.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, it's just not good enough. The minister stands there and says, I'll be able to supply it to you, I think, in a few weeks, but I won't guarantee that. And you'll have it in plenty of time to ask more questions a year from now in estimates if he's still the minister. Now that's a pretty open-ended answer to my question. You double-tongued yourself when you were talking.

You said, I'll have the information maybe in a few weeks. All right. I haven't seen you ask your officials when that information could be available. If there's one or two or three you don't know, ask your experts there when will that information be available. What's the last date that they're saying? You said July 3 once. I want a date put on it. Will it be in July or August? I don't want it open-ended when this session closes this year and I don't get a chance to ask questions about it. I don't want it open-ended.

We must have it while this session's still sitting. We'll stay here all day and again another day until you commit that I'm going to get those answers before this session ends — well before — in case there's something we want to come back on in some other method, even if we're through with this department.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I don't need to ask the officials the answers to the questions you've asked. I know the answers. I've been trying, with as much patience as I can muster, to explain to the member opposite that we have no way of knowing precisely when the process ends. One person bumps. That will cause another person to bump. That may cause another person to bump. And the process goes on. It's a complex process.

It doesn't in a real sense begin until July 3. And I would be pleasantly surprised if it were over by the time the session's over, but I frankly don't think it will be. It goes on longer than that. I can't give you a precise time.

I can give you an undertaking as one veteran member of this legislature to another veteran member of this legislature, you'll get it as soon as I can make it available. And that's the best I can do for the member.

(1215)

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Well, Mr. Minister, it's quite easy to see what you're talking about, all this bumping and moving around, and you got the bumping privileges. I guess we'd be able to put a date on here much easier if we knew exactly how many NDP card holders were there, or supporters, so when the bumping's done they all got the positions. That's really what you're saying, when the bumping is all over and the NDP people all got their positions.

I'm not going to leave this, but I'm going to get off it for now because I'm not satisfied. We're going to come back on it before we're through. I'm going to go ahead with some other questions, Mr. Minister, because I'm not just going to have you stand up here, Mr. Minister, and say, oh we're going to be different than the other government. We're just going to hand you anything; it's wide open. And then the first estimate that's up, the first one up, I asked you these questions and you're going to leave it open-ended for another year.

It's not good enough for you to say it's just going to be a few weeks. You've never asked your officials. Mr. Minister, if he knows the answers, I wonder, Mr. Chairman, I wonder why he bothered with his officials. Because maybe they're sitting there telling him something they can take care of.

Mr. Chairman, will you provide in respect of those persons not terminated due to the elimination of their position?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — That's the same question as you asked the last time. I've given you the undertaking it will be available as soon as possible.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — I want a list of all employees fired, laid off, retired, or otherwise terminated since November 1, 1991 — of all. And they're not all here in this list. Or did I misunderstand you that they were all here?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — No, these were all the positions that were eliminated in this department. That's all I can answer for. In this Crown corporation, these are all the positions that were eliminated.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Okay, I didn't understand that. This is all of them. I'm sorry, okay, I understand. The salary and benefits associated with each position including related costs such as office equipment, furniture, and space costs.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — We can give you the salary. That's easy; that's a matter of public record. I'm not sure we can give all of that information. Perhaps I'll ask the minister to repeat it. You're asking for an enormous amount of detail here. And I might say, there's a cost to providing the detail. Members opposite, when they were in office, might not have been conscious of the cost of running government. We've tried to be.

I'll say to the member again, I can supply the salary; that's not a problem. I'm not sure if all of that detail is available.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I just sat in that side of the House over there while you people just got into every detail of this expensive, elaborate furniture we had for all our departments and what not. And so I don't see anything wrong with asking, questioning. You should be able to say, and your department should know that.

And I'll go through it again. Salaries, fine. I understand you can get that to me very easily. But including related costs such as office equipment, furniture, and space costs. Now that shouldn't be a difficult question for your

officials to answer.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — No, I think that's almost impossible to answer. For one thing, it changes while you're preparing the list. With this many employees, they'll move, they'll use different equipment, jobs will change. I think . . . I'll give you the salary. I can give you the standards which are applied to positions of this sort. But to give you the detail of each employee, first of all, it would be of encyclopediate length. And secondly, it's going to change as you prepare the list.

I will undertake to give the minister the salary. I'll undertake to give you the standards which are normally associated with positions of this nature. But to give you the detail of each individual one, first of all I think it's unreasonable; secondly, I don't think the list could ever be completed. It would be changing as you completed it.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — That's not good enough, Mr. Minister. You can cut off as of today and your department could say . . . You don't have to change it as you're doing the list. Just say, we'll pick a date, and give us the costs at that date. Take June 1 or May 15, whatever.

You know that's just an excuse, saying that it may change while we're getting the answer for the next two or three months. That's hog-wash. Mr. Minister, you can have your department cut off and give us that information because I've . . . There's nothing wrong with us asking that question. If you've had cut-backs in expensive furniture — maybe you've bought a bunch of new furniture. Maybe you have, maybe you haven't. But how are we going to know?

So I don't think that's an unrealistic question to ask, including the related costs such as office equipment, furniture, and space costs. If you don't know that, you have no idea where your department's at. That shouldn't be a difficult one at all.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Is the member asking for the furniture and equipment before they left SPMC, or are you asking for that in their new positions? If you're asking for it in the new positions, I don't know that we have that. I mean that's . . . They go to other departments. They're gone; they're somewhere else. I don't know that we have that information or would we have access to it. If you want the equipment and furniture and fixtures which they had before they left, I guess we could provide that, although I want the member to be conscious of what you're asking. That is a very great amount of work.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Well, Mr. Minister, each and every person that was eliminated, either they did or they didn't have office equipment, furniture, etc. Okay, somebody came in and either replaced that job, or that furniture is not being used. That job has maybe been deleted.

So there should be a statement . . . We'll say it this way. If a job has been eliminated and the furniture's not needed any more, who has it and where's it going? You want to sell, or did somebody come in and replace that? Well the members laugh, but if you've eliminated a job, where's the furniture going to go? And the office space — I said office equipment, furniture, and space. So there's three

things there. And that's not an unrealistic thing to ask. So the people that have been eliminated from their job and what's their saving there, or the people coming in, what is left there for office equipment?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — As I now understand the member's question, I think that's not unreasonable. We will tell you not only the positions but what furniture and space we were able to save at the same time. I think that's not unreasonable, and when we answer this, we'll provide that to you.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you. Could you also, when you're going through all these people that have been terminated, could we get a breakdown on whether the employment was by way of a contract or salary, contract or salaries.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — There were no contractual employees. I want to say to the minister again, we eliminated the positions. These were all public service appointments.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

All right. I'd like to ask now the names of the people replacing the terminated employee.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — There are none. The positions were eliminated. There were no replacements.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — So you're saying this entire list, Mr. Chairman, they've all been eliminated then?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Yes. That's accurate.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — And, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, they've been eliminated and there must have been positions there that they had duties, and who's doing the duties of these people that you've eliminated? Where's it going? Can you explain that? Who's looking after all their duties?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Well I say to the member . . . I should clarify, with respect to the terminations on February 5, the top four named are vice-presidents and the positions have . . . those positions may not be eliminated but may reappear in a different form as we reorganize.

So of the list of March 5 — I want to be perfectly candid with the member — as the reorganization occurs, there may be some vice-president positions reappear. But of the ones of May 7, those are all abolitions. Nobody will replace them. And the work will be shared by others.

When we took office we found in some areas the government was overstaffed. In some cases people seemed to be hired more with a view to giving friends of the government a job than with a view to providing services to the taxpayer. And these positions recognize that latter problem.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — See, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, that's what bothers me. Just what the minister just said there — that we've eliminated these positions. That's it.

But then through reorganization we maybe need the four presidents back and then we'll have to bring in some of these, bump people, and start all over again.

That's what scares me, of all this elimination of jobs. They were doing something. And you're just reorganizing to fool the public, is what I believe.

And you pretty well just summed it up right there. First the minister got up and he said very clearly that they're all eliminated. Then he got up and said, and I appreciate that, he got up and said . . . that he probably realized what he said. He got up and said, except for the four presidents, that it depends what happens on the reorganization.

All right. What I'm asking, in the new organization, is the same thing going to take place exactly? Is there going to be more employees, less employees, or a different type of organization taking place in SPMC?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — No, I say to the member, there are going to be fewer employees. We think that we can provide better service with fewer employees, and these positions are not going to be refilled. This is a permanent down-sizing. The reorganization of May 7 was a permanent down-sizing. I want to make that clear that those positions will not be refilled.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Okay, that's fair enough. We'll take the minister's word for that that they're going to definitely be down-sized. But the job has to be done by someone. And I got nothing against that, if you can reorganize and still give the same service to the public. We'll watch, and if they do, I got nothing against that. If you can get by with less people, then that's fine. But we're going to watch you very carefully to make sure you do, and see how much down-sizing.

You don't get rid of all the people on this list and then bring them all back by three or four or five in such a big down-sizing and then do the same thing you done before. So we'll watch you very carefully.

In your department, will you provide a list of all positions that's been created since November 1, 1991?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — There are none.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Minister, will you provide a list of any space rented, leased, and owned by the department, and the purpose of which that space is being used. Have you got any . . . I'll repeat that again. A list of all space rented, leased, and owned by the department, and the purpose of which the space is being used. Do you have a list of that under the department?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — We can provide you with the list you request. And we'll get that to the member as soon as it can be churned out. It is spit out of a computer. As soon as it's churned out, we'll send it to you.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — When can you provide that information? I'm talking about all space throughout the whole province of Saskatchewan that's under SPMC — rented, leased, or owned by the department. When can you supply that?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I understood the member's question. I'm informed by the officials they can have it ready at an early date next week. It is on a computer, and we'll generate a computer list for you.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you. Would they also be able to supply all costs associated with each rental agreement or lease?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — No, I think we can't. It's been the practice of both governments, both the Blakeney government prior to 1982 and the administration of which you were a part, not to supply the lease figure, not to supply the lease rate. Well I'll answer the question to the member from Morse.

In determining what questions we would refuse to answer, we decided that if it wasn't protected information under the freedom of information Act, we were going to give it.

This, we think, would be because it would operate to our commercial disadvantage. We negotiate with landlords. We are afraid — as I think previous governments have been — that if the cost of all leased space is available, the rental rates will tend to gravitate to the highest rental. And sometimes you can negotiate a better deal with one than you could with another — one landlord may be hungrier. For a variety of reasons, the cost of space may differ. We're afraid if we made the cost available and it was available to those with whom we had to negotiate, everybody would want the top rate.

That's been the practice of governments during the 17 years I've been a member of this legislature. So we can't provide you with the cost, I think, Mr. Member.

(1230)

**Mr. Muirhead:** — What about the total? Like, say you haven't got a breakdown on all your leases, the cost, and so you're not . . . could we have a breakdown or just to have a figure what all leased property is costing?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — We'll certainly give you that.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Yes, one of my colleagues says maybe we should have on it what it would be on an average square foot.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — No. We can give you the total now, I'm told. I don't think they can break it down. It takes a bit of mathematics. The total cost of the leased space — and keep in mind, Mr. Member, no leased space has been added from the days when your administration was in office — the total cost is \$44.231 million. I think in a moment we can get to the total leased space.

I'm told that may be more difficult. It may take more than just a moment so we may have to . . . if you want the average per space figure, I can get it to you first of the week. I think they just don't have it with them.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Okay, I'll take a commitment that we'll be supplied with the average square footage. Okay, the

operating and maintenance cost of all space occupied by the department, broken down by the owned, leased, or rented space.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — We inherited from . . . I just want to remind the member what he's asking for. We inherited from your government over 1,000 leased spaces, if I recall the figure correctly. To provide the details of each one is a mammoth task. I wonder if . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — And they would embarrass you.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Yes indeed, the member might not want to read or hear it all. I wonder if the member would be satisfied with global figures that we could provide without unduly burdening the officials. I'm afraid the information you ask for is truly gargantuan in size.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — No, I think I'm brave enough for you to come up with that answer. I wanted operating and maintenance cost of all space occupied by the department, broken down by the owned, leased, or rented space.

Now if it's been so terrible under the past administration I'm sure you've already done something about it. You've been in government six, seven months, so it's today. We're not talking election day. We're not talking here, Mr. Minister, about the previous government. We're talking about today. You've been in government six or seven months. I want to know what it is today. And it's your problem, not ours.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I'll give you what is available on the computer. I'll make this arrangement with the member. I'll give you what is available on the computer. What would have to be assembled manually, I will ask him to consider the cost of it. I'm told that the following is available on the computer: breakdown with respect to owned space, that's available. With respect to leased space, with respect to each space we have the total cost. We don't always have the breakdown because sometimes the arrangements of the lease are we simply get that from the landlord.

I'll give you whatever's on the computer. You can have it, and I think that's a fair arrangement. I'll give you what's on the computer, what might have to be assembled manually. I'll perhaps ask you to address a letter to me if you have some specific questions which aren't on the computer print-out.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Minister, when can you . . . what's on the computers, when could we have that?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I am informed by the public servants that it will be available at an early date next week; it's just a matter of us getting a computer run.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — All right. The names of each principal leasing a renting space to the department.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Yes, I think that will be provided as well on the computer run.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you. And the member from

Morse is going to have a few questions.

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I'd like to have you tell us the policy on your CVA (central vehicle agency) fleet as it exists today. Give it to me for ministers, for presidents of Crown corporations, for administrative staff in whatever form they come, and for the ministers too, if you don't mind.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I assume the member meant CVA executive air. Did you? No? You want, oh, for the vehicles. Oh, okay. So far as I'm aware, I genuinely think this has not changed since I was a minister back in the '70s. I think it's exactly the same policy.

With respect to the line departments, the ministers are entitled to a vehicle. The deputies are entitled to a vehicle or \$100. The departments are entitled to make use of pool cars, and in the discretion of the deputy, if the work of an employee is such that it makes sense to assign a vehicle to them rather than give him the option — him or her — rather than give him or her the option of utilizing their own vehicle, they may assign a vehicle to them. I think that's been unchanged since the '70s. The only wrinkle in the system is that the nature of this changed with its transfer to a corporation.

With respect to the line departments . . . with respect to the Crown corporations, the member might consider asking that in Crown . . . there is I think a statutory appropriation for Crown Investments Corporation. I'd have the officials there and I could answer it with respect to the Crown corporations at that time. I don't think these people will know.

What happens with respect to the Crown corporations is we receive an order for vehicles and we supply it. We simply act as sort of a purchasing agent for the Crown corporations. We don't have any role to play in the policy. And it varies from one Crown corporation to another as the member will be aware by reading recent press reports.

So that's the policy with respect to vehicles with line departments.

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, is there a limit to what the government pays for a deputy and for a minister?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Yes. Perhaps the chairman can assist me. I'm sending over with the page a written description of it rather than reading it into the record. But you'll find on that page the cost per vehicle. I think, apart from inflation, that has not changed since I was a minister in the '70s.

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, is the department . . . or the Property Management Corporation adjusted the mileage. Like when the minister reaches a certain mileage, is there a limit to that or is that . . . Can he supply that to me too?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — The member is right. That has changed. In the '70s we used to sell them at 40,000 miles. There is now no upper mileage limit. And we have some



very high time vehicles, some that are years old.

There is now no upper mileage. There's now no ceiling at which we sell them. It is in the discretion of the fleet manager. And the question which he or she must ask himself is: is it costing more to repair it than it would to replace it? But now it's done on an *ad hoc* basis, vehicle by vehicle. There is no cut-off.

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Chairman, am I given to understand then, that if a vehicle that a minister had that was costing more to operate at 40,000 klicks than a new one would at the same rate, he'd be given a new one?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I think it would be in the highest degree unlikely that the vehicle with only 40,000 kilometres on it would be cheaper to replace than it would to repair. The ones that I'm talking about are pool vehicles. Some of them have very high mileage on them. But certainly a vehicle with 40,000 kilometres on it would be certainly cheaper to repair.

**Mr. Martens:** — So my question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: do you have a ceiling on ministers' cars? As I recall — because I believe it was at 150,000 kilometres. Is that in existence today, or is the repair line and the repair cost line going to change that?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — There's no such mileage limit now. I would add for the benefit of the member that there actually have been no executive vehicles purchased since 1990. The latest executive . . . the newest executive vehicles are now 1990 models. It's been a couple of years since we replaced them.

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

**Ms. Lorje:** — To introduce guests.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Ms. Lorje:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly here today, as we go through financial estimates and try to determine the province's budget, 84 grade 7 and grade 8 students from Lakeview School in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in the riding of Saskatoon Wildwood.

They are here today — that's right, they're up there waving, obviously very excited about seeing democracy in action — they are here today with their teachers, Mike Luciuk and Judy Pidskalny. And they also have a couple of chaperons with them, Margo Rashley and Mary Ann Amos.

And as you can appreciate the logistics of moving 84 grade 7 and 8 students around, I'm sure that you will join with me in welcoming and encouraging the chaperons and teachers, and also welcoming the students to observe our proceedings here today.

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

#### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### Consolidated Fund Expenditure Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Vote 53

#### Item 1 (continued)

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has there been a process for tendering for new vehicles from SPMC to the province recently?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — There is a process which again is unchanged since the '70s, since I used to be minister in charge of this in the '70s. It's exactly the same process. A tender goes to North American manufacturers and . . . As I say, the process is unchanged. If the member has some questions . . . And it's a complex process.

As the minister may or may not know, the vehicles may be serviced through local dealers. They're not all serviced through the same dealer. It is a complex process. If the member has some questions, I can answer them. The tendering system, however, hasn't changed in the last 15 years.

**Mr. Martens:** — Was a tender called for recently?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Yes, it was.

**Mr. Martens:** — For how many vehicles?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I'll send the . . . I need the page's assistance again. I'll send you a description of what was tendered for.

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Have these been purchased already?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — The tender has closed. It was just done recently and the officials do not have the details of who got it. Delivery will be taken, I'm told, around the end of June, of the vehicles.

**Mr. Martens:** — How many vehicles do you have, Mr. Minister, on hand for the departments, and how many vehicles do you have in the Crown corporations?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I'll ask the page to take that to you. I think that page contains the information you want.

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. We'll take a look at that and probably come back with some more questions.

On average, how much is the cost of maintenance for the department vehicles on an annual basis for the vehicles that you have listed here?

(1245)

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — The total operating costs of the vehicles are \$9.270 million.

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Minister, are those for the departments or for all of the vehicles here?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — That's all the vehicles including the Crown corporation vehicles.

**Mr. Martens:** — How are the vehicles costed out to the departments?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I'm going to send the member a written description of this. It's rather complex and varies between the Crown corporations and the department, and I'm also told is unchanged in many years. I'll send that to the member.

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. We will take a look at these two and probably have some more questions on them. I want to ask about airplanes, and how many have you got that are used for Executive Council travel?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — There are two. These are Piper aircraft. Piper heavy twins. There are two Cheyenne and one Navajo which are used for executive air. There is a third Cheyenne which is used for air ambulance.

Fire-suppression aircraft, which are completely different armada, have all been transferred to the Department of Natural Resources on April 1. My colleague, the member from Canora can answer questions on that one.

**Mr. Martens:** — So the department of . . . or SPMC does not handle the Parks' firefighting equipment?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — That's affirmative.

**Mr. Martens:** — Okay. On the three planes that you have, or the four — the three Cheyennes and the Navajo — are they . . . how many staff do you have in relation to those aircraft?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — There are 19 staff. That includes air ambulance as well. That includes the pilots, the nurses who are part of this group who work with air ambulance. The positions are unchanged since October 21, 1991.

**Mr. Martens:** — Are those four aircraft the only aircraft, other than what is in Parks, that the government owns?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — That's affirmative.

**Mr. Martens:** — I'm just going to make a point on the vehicles that the ministers use. And I'll ask a question first. You indicated that there was no limit on the volume of miles per vehicle. You also said there were no vehicles beyond 1990 that were being used by ministers. However, is that policy the same policy that will apply to deputy ministers? Will they be under that same qualifier?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — That's affirmative.

**Mr. Martens:** — What kind of policy are you going to have that when ministers want to have a change of a vehicle, or deputy ministers, that you will allow them the opportunity to change?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — The best answer I can give the member is that that has not yet occurred. And I'm not sure we do have any sort of a policy as to when a minister may

come back and request a better vehicle. It's not occurred.

The best I can do, I think, is tell you that we've been in office six months. It has not occurred. The vehicles my colleagues in Executive Council drive are not lavish, to put it mildly. But none of them have complained. None of them have been back. And we have not yet determined that.

**Mr. Martens:** — Will you give me a commitment that when you do, that you will provide that to us?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Yes.

**Mr. Martens:** — I just want to point out that it's kind of a loose kind of an arrangement to have, and that when I was on that side we did have a kilometre ceiling that was first of all established at 120,000 and then we moved it to 150,000 in order to deal with some savings.

And I would just like to point out to the minister that to have no reasonable amount of kilometres for the vehicles to achieve, I think it would beg the question. And I want to have the minister assure me that some qualifier will be put into place for that to happen.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I say again, as I said to your colleague from Arm River, this government is run on a different basis. Members opposite may have viewed public office as an opportunity for aggrandizement.

The Premier has made it crystal clear that with respect to this government, austerity, like charity, begins at home. Ministers are expected to practise what we've been preaching. They're expected to set examples. So long as the vehicle is serviceable and in reasonably good condition, they're expected to keep it. We don't intend to do that. And the member from Riversdale has made it crystal clear. He expects members of this Executive Council to set an example of what we expect the public service to do and not set the sort of example which members opposite set when they were in office, which was an example of what should never have been.

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to point out to the member opposite that their Crown corporations' executives were driving Lexuses up till less than a month ago. And I want to assure the minister that this government . . . or this party, when they were government on the other side, never ever drove one. And I just want to point that out to the member opposite. And I hope that the same frugal nature applies to what you attach your executives of your Crown corporations.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Well I could remind you of the vehicle driven by Mr. Hill when he was in office. But I expect the member didn't ask it and doesn't want to hear it. I would only say to the member opposite that members of Crown corporations now are not driving Cadillacs. The car allowance has been cut.

But I can give the member the assurance that the same frugal approach which applies to members of Executive Council and deputy ministers is also going to be applied to the Crown Investments Corporation.

We inherited a system from the former administration in which executives of Crown corporations pretty well set their own limits. That's come to an end, and they will be expected to follow the same . . . set the same frugal example as members of this Executive Council are setting.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, we've just got a few minutes left, and we definitely won't be finishing this today, so I want to go back on the office space.

My question is, with the cut-backs, the elimination of jobs, there must be some changes of organization all right throughout the province. And my question would be is, what are you going to do with any space that you have left and there's already a contract on that for a long term? Or whether you may be an organization, you may need new space — what is your plan for new space? Will you — I've asked a lot of questions there at once — will you be purchasing new . . . will the government be purchasing or will you be renting it? And what will you do with the old contracts and new contracts?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — No. We anticipate, as government becomes more economical and more efficient, we'll have excess space. We in fact have leases now which we are not going to renew but which we are paying for on a month to month basis and we'll be moving out of and letting the lease go. It is our expectation that we can reduce substantially the amount of lease space which the taxpayer of this province pays for.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, okay. You've got a . . . say an individual out there, which I know there's lots, maybe has a 5- or a 10-year contract and he built a building or whatever, and there's lots of them out there. And maybe through circumstances . . . and this has been happening for many, many years in this government, prior to our administration, and there's nothing wrong with that. So if that comes to an end and you don't need that any more and he's still got four or five years left on his lease, will there be kind of a buy-out of that lease? Or could you explain just what you do with someone that's left holding . . . maybe he built a new building; he's kind of left holding the bag.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — The question asked by the member from Arm River was, what are we doing with the mess bequeathed by the former administration when they followed the dictum or the advice from the former member from Redberry who said we ought to make the leases so expensive they can't get out of it. And there are cases, I may say, Mr. Member, when you seem to have followed that advice, as regrettable as it was.

What are we doing with it? Well I'll tell you what, we are going to honour all contracts. This government lives up to its commitments and will continue to do so. We will attempt to make use of the space. We will attempt, if we can, to negotiate an end to the lease. But I can say to the member opposite that you bequeathed, you left to us, a very expensive bequest for the taxpayer when you got into some of these long-term leases. These 10-year leases which you people got into were a very, very expensive bit of patronage.

And that's all it was, was patronage.

So what are we doing with Tory patronage? We are trying to bring it to an end, but we're going to live up to the contracts.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, that was quite a speech you just made there. He's made a comment that all these here rich, elite leases and what not . . . Will you table each and every one of these leases then if you're saying some of them are so terrible. I do want absolutely individual leases that you said are out of reason. I want them tabled and I want those leases.

And, Mr. Minister, there's no reason why you can't be able to do that because you're the one that just made the statement that the past government give out some unreasonable leases. And you called it patronage. Well if we want to talk about patronage, Mr. Minister, we can talk about it. And I want to go back on some of the questions that you didn't answer here properly today. And we'll be coming back on this in a short time.

And, Mr. Minister, the questions I asked you about your department and all these people that's been laid off, and the bumping rights and all this, you think you're fooling the member from Arm River because you're not. You're not fooling the people on this side of the House. You're not fooling the people in the province of Saskatchewan because what you're doing is just having bumping rights and a time element to get your people with NDP cards new jobs. That's why you left it open-ended.

You're not fooling us over here, Mr. Minister, so I ask you when we come back on again, when we come back on this department, that you come back with the facts, absolute facts, that you can say that here's where these people are going. You just left it open-ended. You're not going to get away with that, Mr. Minister. You left it open-ended that maybe we can talk about it in the next session.

You said very clearly that it would only take maybe two or three weeks, two or three weeks to put the answers together. You said two or three weeks, but then you stood up and said, well, if I'm still minister, we'll have it to you in time to be able to . . . you can ask me questions if I'm still minister a year from now.

Well talk about arrogance. I have never heard such arrogance come from a government in my life, when they come up and said, it'll take two or three weeks, but you may be able to answer these questions a year from now, and now maybe I'll ask you again. You, Mr. Minister, I'm asking you when we come back on this department that you'll be able to give us a real breakdown of where these people that have been eliminated, where they're going, who they are, and where they ended up because that's what's important. We want to know where your NDP buddies end up, and that's . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** — It being one o'clock, will the committee grant leave to rise and report progress and ask leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:01 p.m.