

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Whitmore: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce a group of high school students today from Sonningdale School, grade 7 and 8. There are eight students seated in the west wing. The teacher with them today is Blair Frederickson and their driver is Linda Osmachenko.

I had the opportunity of meeting with them before the legislature sat this afternoon and was properly asked very good questions today on the operation of the House. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Legislative Assembly sitting in your Speaker's gallery members of the Saskatchewan Round Table on Environment and Economy.

This morning the round table presented the Premier with a conservation strategy for sustainable development in Saskatchewan. And I'll be making a statement about that strategy later this afternoon. I'd like to introduce some members of the round table to you today. There's Jon Gillies, co-chairman of the round table, an agricultural engineering professor at the University of Saskatchewan; Frank Arnie, co-chair of the round table and past president of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation; Dr. David Henry, professor of environmental design at the University of Calgary; Dr. Stuart Houston, professor of radiology with the University of Saskatchewan; John Nightingale, chairman of the Saskatchewan Mining Association; and Bert Weichel, environmental consultant, past president of the Saskatchewan Environmental Society.

In addition I'd like to introduce a former executive director of the Round Table Secretariat, Sheldon McLeod, who is now the director of strategic planning for the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment; and Jon Jonsson, senior economist with the Round Table Secretariat.

I'd like to acknowledge the round table members who can't be with us this afternoon — Bill Gaynor, Lindsay Milne, Sister Phyllis Kapuscinski, Ken Naber, Doug Chekay, and Chief Roland Crowe.

I would like to ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join with me in welcoming them this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the opposition, I would like to welcome the committee members from the Round Table on the Environment. And

we all wish them well in their work.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and members of the Assembly this afternoon a group of 13 students from St. Joseph School in North Battleford. They are seated in the east gallery. They are accompanied here today by their teacher, Denise Carignan; and their chaperons, Barbara Tatchell, Elwood Fuchs, and Susan Pruden.

I'd like the Assembly to welcome these students. It's not often we get a group from The Battlefords area. In fact in the past six years, I believe this is only the fourth group of students who have attended the Assembly. So I wish you well in the afternoon. I look forward to meeting you after the question period this afternoon. I ask members to welcome my guests here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you today and to all members, 10 students from Riverview Collegiate in the city of Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, these are grade 12 students from Riverview.

I would like you to know, Mr. Speaker, that their collegiate, RVC (Riverview Collegiate Institute) has a reputation for academic and athletic excellence, as well as a reputation for innovation and a further reputation, Mr. Speaker, in that the current mayor of Moose Jaw, the current Member of Parliament for Moose Jaw, and the current member from Moose Jaw Wakamow are all graduates of this high school.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to meeting the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And the minister from Churchill Downs. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to meeting with the students following question period, and I hope they enjoy their time and their tour of the Assembly, which I understand will be conducted in French.

Welcome to the Assembly. And I'd ask all members to join me in that welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly some 56 grade 5 and 6 students from Rosemont School in Regina. I'm standing in for my colleague, the member for Regina Rosemont, who is unable to be here today. His loss will be my gain.

Mr. Speaker, these 56 children are accompanied by their teachers, Ms. Stephenson, Mr. Ingham, and chaperons, Mrs. Miles, Mrs. Kauk, and Mrs. Cattell. It will be my pleasure to meet with the group for photos and drinks, at the expense of the member for Regina Rosemont I'm delighted to say.

I look forward to meeting with this group that is seated in your Speaker's gallery. I ask all hon. members to join me

in welcoming Rosemont School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Kowalsky: — Each year, Mr. Speaker, the organization of arts councils . . . the Saskatchewan organization of arts councils — OSAC (Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils) — with the assistance of host arts councils, presents the Saskatchewan show-case of the arts. In 1992 the annual conference of the arts will be hosted in Prince Albert. That happens this weekend.

OSAC is a provincial cultural organization which represents numerous arts councils in Saskatchewan. They have grown over the past 23 years and now represent approximately 64 arts councils. Three hundred and fifty conference participants are expected, including arts council members, performers, visual artists, art suppliers, government officials, federal and provincial arts organizations, and other guests.

Mr. Speaker, OSAC deserves a vote of gratitude from the people of Saskatchewan for their dedication to making quality performing and visual arts accessible to all parts of Saskatchewan. And I extend best wishes to the hard-working volunteer hosts in Prince Albert for a most successful Saskatchewan show-case of the arts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate two grade 11 students from the William Derby High School in Strasbourg. The two students, Gail Fuessal and Jocelyn Youck, won a gold medal in the biotechnology category at the Canada West Science Fair in Sudbury, Ontario. This fair not only had representation from across Canada, but also had projects from Sweden, Japan, Taiwan and Australia.

They won for their project, “walking on air”. And as a result of that win, Mr. Speaker, they won themselves an all-expense-paid trip to Montreal this week — which they are there now — to attend the biotechnology conference that’s being held this week. I think it shows, Mr. Speaker, that creativity is still alive and well in our young people in Saskatchewan. And I want to again congratulate Gail and Jocelyn and wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in Kelsey-Tisdale, we’re fortunate to have one of the finest provincial parks in the province. It is not only enjoyed by tourists from Canada, but also the U.S. (United States), and also many local residents from the district that make Greenwater Provincial Park their holiday spot. They wish to commend the Hon. Darrel Cunningham for his recent announcement of the ability to transfer annual park entry permits.

In 1992 users will be able to purchase a permit which provide convenience and flexibility, Mr. Speaker. Their permit can be transferred from vehicle to vehicle. To the

local families from communities like Tisdale, Archerwill, Chelan, Porcupine Plain, participating in the many winter and summer activities such as golfing, fishing, swimming, picnicking, snowmobiling, and camping, this is really appreciated.

Last week’s Tisdale *Recorder* states, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

Parks and Renewable Resources people have come up with a great new idea — transferable annual provincial park vehicle entry permits.

In the past if you had an annual provincial park vehicle entry permit it was stuck on a window and you had to drive the same vehicle to the park all the time or buy another sticker.

Well not any more, although you can still get the one-vehicle type at a cost of \$22 including GST; you can also now opt for a \$32 permit (Mr. Speaker) that is transferable. This means that you . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, starting today for a period of three days, thousands of people in Regina including many from other parts of Saskatchewan, other provinces, and the United States will celebrate the 25th anniversary of Mosaic, Regina’s annual multicultural celebration. Mosaic is a festival which enables many of the ethnic groups located in pavilions throughout Regina to demonstrate to the community their unique cultural traditions, handicrafts, dances, and food — lots of food, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Regina have responded enthusiastically over the years to this festival of cultures. Thousands make the annual Mosaic rounds to eat, drink, and be merry, but more importantly, Mr. Speaker, to learn and understand something about the cultural backgrounds for their neighbours. In a world that seems at times to be consumed by tribal and ethnic conflict, events like Mosaic in Regina and Folkfest in Saskatoon give us all hope for our future characterized by understanding, compassion, and respect for one another and never mind the differences.

Mosaic is made possible, Mr. Speaker, because many hundreds of volunteers — indeed thousands over the last 25 years — work hard to make it such a success. Mr. Speaker, I ask members to join with me to congratulate the organizers of Mosaic and the people of Regina for reaching this 25th anniversary milestone, and to salute the thousands of volunteers who have made this celebration possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to a tragic situation which is unfolding in the town of Martensville, which is in my constituency — the revelation that numerous charges of

abuse against the most vulnerable in our society, our children, have been laid. And that has the entire community and, indeed, the nation reeling with horror and disbelief.

It would be an understatement, Mr. Speaker, to say that these are difficult times for the community and for our province, and a great deal of questions are going to have to be answered.

To the community of Martensville I say, you are not alone in your time of need. Unfortunately and sadly, the problems encountered here are pervasive throughout our society. And in my former position of minister of Social Services, I became acutely aware of the devastation wrought by these kinds of unspeakable acts.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure members of this Assembly, the people of Saskatchewan, and all Canadians join with me in expressing our heartfelt sympathy and support for the children, the families and friends, and for the citizens of Martensville. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whitmore: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, June 1 I was invited to the annual Girl Guides banquet in Biggar. The girls marked a successful year of achievement, and I want to thank them for the invitation.

One of the Guides had received a prestigious award. Ms. Cheryl Plysiuk, 17 years old, an 11-year veteran of the Guide program has been selected as the provincial representative to a Girl Guide conference in England in late July. There are only 14 participants selected across Canada. Ms. Plysiuk has gone through an extensive selection process. I met her, and she will make a fine representative of the province, her Girl Guide groups, and her parents.

I hope the legislature would show their appreciation to Ms. Plysiuk in embarking on her adventure.

Thank you again, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1345)

Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, 88 of the best young drivers in Saskatchewan were in Regina to compete in the finals of Rodeo '92. They were the top drivers from a group of more than 2,500 young people who competed in local and regional events.

Rodeo is a test of the driving skills and knowledge of drivers aged 16 to 19, sponsored by SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), Saskatchewan Safety Council, and Volkswagen Canada.

I attended the banquet following the competition and had the pleasure of meeting some of the participants and their families.

The message behind this competition is a very serious one. It is the need for young drivers to improve their safety

record. Although 10 per cent of Saskatchewan drivers are under 21, they account for almost 19 per cent of people killed, 23 per cent of people injured, and 30 per cent of people involved in alcohol-related traffic accidents. They are twice as likely to be involved in a traffic accident and four times as likely to be charged with a traffic offence.

Too often we only react to such grim statistics with fines and jail sentences after the tragedy. I commend SGI and its co-sponsors for being proactive in sponsoring such an excellent event to improve driving skills of our youth and reduce the number of deaths and injuries on our roads.

Congratulations to the winners and participants in Rodeo '92, as well as SGI, Saskatchewan Safety Council, Volkswagen Canada, and all the volunteers that made such an excellent event possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Effects of Health Care Changes on Diabetics

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question this afternoon is to the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, Ken McColm, a diabetic from Quebec, blinded by his affliction, has stopped in Regina to raise public awareness about diabetes and the many complications that can arise therefrom.

Madam Minister, I am wondering if you will endeavour to meet with this courageous gentleman such that you can learn firsthand the difficulties and hardships that must be endured by diabetics.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would be pleased to meet with Mr. McColm. He hasn't, as far as I'm aware, asked to meet with me. But if he wishes to meet with me, I would be pleased to meet with him.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, I don't know either whether he is going to be asking for that. I was wondering if you would take the initiative. That's what my question was.

I would hope that you would do that, Madam Minister, for each day that passes brings more and more examples of the hurt and betrayal that you have put on the people of Saskatchewan. Even more outrageous than your ill-advised decision to triple the deductible amount for prescription drugs and to increase the co-payment from 25 to 35 per cent, is your callous treatment of diabetics whose dependence is on insulin. There is not an option for these people.

Madam Minister, can you tell this Assembly your reasons for removing the 50,000 Saskatchewan diabetics from special coverage under the plan, and while you're at it, could you tell us with whom you consulted?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to diabetics, the facts of the situation are that in 1975 a program was instituted where diabetics would pay \$1 a vial for insulin. At that time it was 25 per cent of the cost. Today that dollar per vial of insulin is 4 per cent of the cost.

In the province of Saskatchewan we have a number of people such as asthmatics and hypertensives who have at least as high drug costs as diabetics, and they pay for their drugs under the drug plan. The intent behind the change of course, Mr. Speaker — and we regret having been forced to make very difficult choices like this — was to attempt to equalize these individuals.

The fact of the matter is, as there have been concerns that raised with us, it's my understanding that the Department of Health is looking into the matter and talking to people. And Mr. McColm, we're prepared to meet with Mr. McColm. If the opposition has his number, has his address, and have spoken to him about the potential of us meeting with him, we'd be prepared to do this.

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, Ramona Verity, president of the Outlook chapter of the Canadian Diabetes Association has said recently, and I'd like to quote a brief passage from her: without access to blood glucose monitors, strips and lancets, the diabetic's ability to practise preventive care is severely compromised. This increases the risk of complications, namely blindness, non-traumatic amputations, kidney and heart disease. This inevitably means a significantly higher health cost burden to taxpayers through increased hospital care.

Madam Minister, did you consider any of these factors in throwing diabetics out of the drug plan, or is this your idea of preventative health care and wellness model?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, there are programs in the government and in the Department of Health that will provide assistance for people on low income who have difficulty paying for their drugs. And I have explained at length in this legislature what some of those programs are. Anyone who cannot afford insulin can come to us and can be looked at from the point of view of income to determine whether or not they would qualify for special assistance.

And I want to say this with respect to the members opposite, that when they were mismanaging this province, and pushing that debt up to something like \$8.2 billion in the Consolidated Fund, when they did that, Mr. Speaker, they should have thought about the consequences of their action.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A new question to the same minister. Madam Minister, it took you three questions before you began to realize that you really didn't have any answers for me and you fell back on your

standard, true and tried political rhetoric.

Madam Minister, Jane Johnson, mother of a diabetic child, has said that last year she spent at least \$3,000 on accommodations, travel expenses, and baby-sitting during her son's bout with the flu, which was complicated by this disease. She said that, and I quote: the money we spend on drugs, testing supplies, and the special dietary needs add up to more than some people's mortgage.

Madam Minister, at one time you described \$125 deductible as forcing people to choose between groceries and drugs. Tell us what you will do for this family now that you have tripled the deductible and removed their son from the special status. Tell us, Madam Minister, what are you going to do?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — First of all, Mr. Speaker, there's a cap on the drug plan of \$750 a year which was not there before — not there before. And there would have been unlimited expenditures under the old plan. So this is an improvement.

Secondly, with respect to the allegation of politicizing the process, I think that the member opposite, in his very self-righteous manner, should not be taking that position because that man over there and his colleagues have virtually driven this province into bankruptcy so that we can no longer afford the sort of social programs that keep people in a comfortable fashion as we've had in the past. The minister opposite . . . or the member opposite and his colleagues, Mr. Speaker, are responsible for the fact that this province can no longer afford the kind of social programs it had before.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, you have inflicted additional hardships on diabetics given the complications and effects their disease has on their eyes. The Saskatchewan Association of Optometrists has indicated that diabetes is a major cause of blindness in those who are aged between 30 and 64. They recommended early detection by regular examinations such that these problems can be treated.

Now, Madam Minister, you have also removed eye examinations from medicare. Many diabetics will visit their optometrist twice a year, visits that will now cost them at least 60 . . . or up to \$60 per visit.

Madam Minister, you speak fondly of your wellness model and of preventative care. Would you not agree that this double hit on diabetics is in direct contradiction to that policy?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, what is de-insured under the optometric plan is routine eye examinations. If a person has a medical condition they are still entitled to go to an ophthalmologist with respect to that condition and be looked after.

It's routine eye exams that have been de-insured. And let me say, Mr. Speaker, that there are other provinces across this country that do not insure optometric routine eye exams, so this is not an exception with respect to Canada.

I want to point out once again that the very high debt burden that we face in this province makes it impossible for this government to continue many of our social programs . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Mr. Neudorf: — I appreciate you cutting off her rhetoric.

The Speaker: — Order. Does the member have a question? I would ask the member to get to his question.

Mr. Neudorf: — This is a new question, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, it is painfully evident from what we have heard here this afternoon from your answers that you have no idea, you had no idea, what you were doing as you went hacking and slashing through health care. No analysis, no consultation, no idea.

Madam Minister, will you now admit that you have made a mistake, that the hardship that you are afflicting upon diabetics is beyond reason? Will you, Madam Minister, now to commit to this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan that you will reverse your decision and reinstate diabetics under special status in the prescription drug plan?

Madam Minister, I ask you, will you reverse your decision?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, of course this government is concerned about people who are sick in Saskatchewan and we have provided programs for low income people. And we will do what we can to maintain quality health care services.

I want to know whether the member opposite will finally admit, after 10 years of mismanagement, that he has virtually bankrupted this province and made it impossible for the people of Saskatchewan to enjoy the programs that they had before. And it's right here, Mr. Speaker. It's right here in the news release from Standard and Poor's where they say that the New Democratic Party will increasingly have difficult choices to make. Difficult choices.

And the member opposite — that member who blew the money of the provincial treasury now with his GigaText, with his privatizations that have cost the taxpayer millions — I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is responsible for the plight of this province and he should admit it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Next question.

Attraction of CF-18 Squadrons to Saskatchewan

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Economic Diversification and Trade. The Canadian Armed Forces announced that it is closing two European bases in Lahr and Baden-Baden. By 1993 the federal government will remove all of this equipment from Europe and intend to place it at Canadian bases. And among the units moving are going to be two CF-18 fighter squadrons.

As Minister of Economic Diversification, have you asked the federal Minister of National Defence to have these squadrons located at the fully equipped airfield in Moose Jaw?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that the members of my staff are dealing with these kind of issues on a daily basis. I'm sure they'd be interested in the idea, your ideas and others. I'm sure they've probably already been thinking about it, if not approached the federal government department of . . . the federal department, probably will be doing so in the very near future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If Saskatchewan should get these squadrons, Mr. Minister, it would be a tremendous economic boost to the province. They collectively contain at least 54 aircraft, numerous well-trained ground crews that would require supplies, housing, fuel, would pay taxes in the province of Saskatchewan.

I'd like to know what exact steps your government has taken to bring this important development to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well what I will do here, I will bring for the member information as to the exact steps that have been taken. Clearly I want to say to you that the armed forces has played an important role in Saskatchewan, and I intend, we intend, to do what we can to make it happen that any increase in this area would come to Saskatchewan.

So I want to say to the member opposite that I will get for her a detailed report on what we're doing in that area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — I wish to thank the minister for that. I want him to know that I have checked with Moose Jaw and indeed they can more than accommodate this. We're talking about \$1.2 billion in expenditures, Mr. Minister, and unlike attracting Promavia or Piper, this endeavour will cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan nothing.

Now last week in this legislature your ministers, Mr. Premier, knew nothing about the opportunities that could be afforded through hydrogen research, and this week it appears as though your Minister of Economic Diversification and Trade does not know about this particular opportunity for Moose Jaw.

When will you form a Saskatchewan economic development authority as suggested in the Liberal Party

platform of 1991, where it would find and attract ventures such as this to our province?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I want to say to the member opposite that she may be opposed to Promavia and she may be opposed to the Piper arrangement as her question would indicate and she may want to do away with those economic developments and build CANDU 3 (Canadian deuterium uranium) reactors, but I'm sure there are many people in the province who disagree with her vehemently on her strategy for economic development. But in areas where you have ideas, we will look at them and I'll bring you back a detailed report.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Minister, you know full well what my stand on Promavia and Piper have been and it's on public record for it. I said, unlike attracting these, which cost taxpayers' monies in Saskatchewan, this would cost us nothing. There's a big difference.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I would remind the member she is not to get into a debate with the ministers, and she is to direct her questions through the Chair.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How can the people of this province be confident that your government has an economic development strategy, given your performance to date?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — If the member would look at the housing sales in Saskatoon, in her home city, where the number in April was up by 23 per cent over the previous year, she would know that there was a lot of excitement in Saskatoon in terms of housing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Many of the Saskatoon business people, including the mayor, were at a press conference on Monday, announcing some chemical warehouses in Saskatoon that will mean many jobs and job creation.

The member opposite, in her push to have AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) build a CANDU 3 reactor and waste disposal in Saskatchewan, she says it wouldn't cost the taxpayers anything to do these kinds of projects. Obviously it would cost over a billion dollars of taxpayers' money in Saskatchewan to build a CANDU 3 reactor.

If you believe that bringing military and military development doesn't cost taxpayers any money, I don't know how you do your numbers. Because obviously the military is totally paid for by the taxpayers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I am also on record about what I believe in terms of research dollars to Saskatchewan, not building nuclear reactors.

One of the things that I would like to ask the minister is

this. It appears as though you are not familiar with what it is I'm talking about today. This past week your Minister of Energy confessed he knew nothing about the potential for hydrogen research dollars coming to this province and trying to exercise our right in bringing those here.

I would like to know, when are you going to have a Saskatchewan economic development authority with people who are not politicians — people from the private sector, from labour, from agriculture, and others with expertise — who will help us to find ventures to bring them to Saskatchewan for our benefit?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I wonder where the member has been because we have had numerous meetings that have been reported in the press with business people. We've worked with the mayor of Saskatoon in discussions on the development of an economic development authority in Saskatoon that was announced this week. The Premier sponsored a meeting with many of our friends in the business community to talk about economic development. We'll be coming forward with a white paper as a result of that and other discussions.

I wonder . . . I'm not sure what you're referring to that we haven't met with, and consulted with, business people. We've done a great deal. In fact I would argue many things have happened in the last six months. And I advise the member to bring her ideas forward, and we'll include them in the white paper that we're planning on bringing forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Consultations with Energy Industry

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Energy and Mines in regard to Bill 10. Mr. Minister, as you know, that Bill has been the centre of great concern in the industry, so much that you had to pull the Bill from the daily business and go consult. Will you give the Assembly a progress report on your consultations in regard to Bill 10?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be very happy to debate Bill 10 with the members of the opposition as soon as they would give it second reading in the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Give us the results of your consultations so far that you've had with the industry, and then we'll debate it.

Mr. Minister, as you know, the Bill would give you the power to simply decide that a mining company has cheated on its taxes and, by your opinion alone, send the company a bill for the taxes you have deemed they have cheated on. Mr. Minister, did you have these provisions reviewed by the Minister of Justice before you included them in Bill 10?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I would be happy to debate this with these members of the

opposition any time they're ready to pass it through second reading.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, we would like to know what the minister has been doing in the meantime since the Bill was introduced to the House, to where it is now. Mr. Minister, in regard to Bill 10, as you know, there are substantial provisions for retroactivity throughout the Bill.

The Speaker: — Order. I think the member is fully aware of my decision yesterday not to get into details of any particular Bills that are before the Assembly. And I would . . . The member knows my decision of yesterday. If he has a more general question in regards to government policy, he can direct that to the government. But if we get into particulars of Bills, I will rule the member out of order.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to direct some questions to the Minister of Energy. Mr. Minister, I believe you met yesterday morning with some members of the industry, and being the opposition member responsible, I'm very interested in the outcome of those meetings. Mr. Minister, I had meetings with members concerned of the industry. They've been contacting me on a regular basis and I'd like to be able to answer some of their questions.

Would you today, or could you today, report to the House on the outcome of your meetings with those people yesterday?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I personally did not meet with the people in the industry and my department has not given me a report of the results. When they are available, I'd be happy to discuss those with the member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Minister, I'm a little bit surprised that you didn't find time to meet with those people yesterday. I was at a meeting in Saskatoon on Monday and I heard you say that you were prepared to be consultative, co-operative, and supportive. And you were applauded, you were applauded. I was one of them that applauded you for that. And now you tell me you never had time to meet with these people.

Mr. Minister, we all know, as you said in your keynote address, the oil and gas industry is vital to Saskatchewan's economy, and keeping it viable is important to our province's economy. You said that. We also know that the gas and oil industry under the NDP in the 1970s was practically non-existent.

Mr. Minister, is it your intention and the intention of your government to push the energy industry right out of the province again?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the fact that the member opposite was

listening when I spoke, because this is the first indication that I have from the members opposite they've ever listened to anybody on this side of the House or ever read any document. The answer to your question, however, Mr. Speaker, is no.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. And, Mr. Minister, in this Bill, you're talking about retroactive legislation back to 1974. Now that's 18 years — 18 years.

Mr. Minister, you claim that you want to encourage industry, to encourage growth in Saskatchewan. Yet your actions, Mr. Minister, on energy, prove just the opposite — just the opposite. Have you done any studies of what the effects of your energy decisions will be on the industry, such as how many jobs will be lost, how many companies will move elsewhere, and what effect retroactive legislation will have on the industry. Mr. Minister, would you please tell us what those studies are today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I commended the member opposite a few minutes ago for listening, and then he immediately turns around and shuts it off right there. So I don't have a lot of confidence in the people opposite when you tell them something or when you pass them a piece of paper.

We have consulted widely with the industry. And just for the record, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to read one letter that I received from a major company in Calgary. And it simply says:

LASMO would like to congratulate you on the deliberate and forthright manner of the Budget and we particularly want you to know how much we appreciate the frank and open communication afforded us and the industry by you, your staff, and the Department.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Kind of strange. It's kind of strange. I read in here from the mining industry concerned, it says, "we weren't consulted." I quote from a Mr. John MacDonald who says, "we weren't consulted."

Mr. Minister, you never had a meeting with those people till about two weeks ago because of our opposition in the House. You had another one yesterday. And I was at that meeting in Saskatoon and they said to me, we're having another meeting because of the pressure. And I commend you on having that meeting. Now don't stand there, Mr. Minister, and tell me that you have consulted with that industry because you have not.

Mr. Minister, previous to forming government you promised the people of Saskatchewan that you would be open and that you would be accessible and that you would be consultative. That was your motto — open and honest consultant. So far the only consultations that took

place happened because you were forced into it. Now you stand there in your . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Does the member have a question?

Mr. Britton: — I have a question.

The Speaker: — Well then ask your question.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Minister, is it a committee of the NDP (New Democratic Party) Party running the Energy department? And has there been any nuclear agreement, or is it that you are truly incompetent, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find this is a very interesting question. If I have to judge on my own incompetence or competence here, I'm not sure that I'm willing to do that.

I find however, Mr. Speaker, that I guess my level of self-righteousness just doesn't measure up to those on the opposite side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Penner: — I would just like to repeat again for the members opposite that we have consulted widely. And I will not read this letter, Mr. Speaker, but I have another letter which says similar to the one that I just read before. And there are many more of this kind if they would like to hear them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1415)

The Speaker: — Yes, what's your point of order? Order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Neudorf: — The point of order is that in response to the minister's last statement, yes we would want that letter tabled that he quoted from during question period.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I'm not aware that the minister read from any . . . He didn't read from any statement at the end. He said, I could read from this letter, and he did not read.

All right. The members are asking for the tabling of the letter that the minister read from and that is a tradition of the House. And the minister has said he will table it.

Order. Order. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, the point of order that I would like to speak on is, during question period my colleague from Souris-Cannington was sat down because of some reference . . . a vague reference made to a Bill. And, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I made my decision on it yesterday and that decision stands. I've made my decision.

An Hon. Member: — I've got another point of order, sir.

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

Mr. Neudorf: — On a point of clarification, does this mean now that the opposition has no opportunity to put forward its position?

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, during question period, the member from Wilkie, I believe, quoted from a document and I wondered if he would table that.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. We don't need any further clarification of that. Members know full well that private members do not have to table documents that they read from. If the member however wishes to do so, he may do so. But there's no, there's no compunction on the part of a member to table a document.

Order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, with thunderous applause, I would request the leave of the Assembly to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and to members of the House a delegation of Australian trade union and employer representatives who are sitting in the gallery opposite me. And they are in Canada visiting various provinces to study work-place reform initiatives and to share with us their experience on the same subject in Australia.

I'd like to introduce them at this point: Mr. James Armstrong, who is the secretary-treasurer for the Australia Postal and Telecommunications Union; Ms. Monica Gould, who is the president of the National Union of Food Workers; Mr. Patrick McCarthy, who is the manager of change integration and mail technology at the Australian Postal Corporation; and Mr. Max Ogden, who is an advisor for the Australian Council of Trade Unions; and finally Mr. Ron Robson, who is the chief executive of Anderson Rea Ltd.

I have a meeting with this distinguished group of friends from Australia in another room in this building immediately afterwards, at which time we're going to share some experience, and they have a full program in Saskatchewan over the next several days. So, Mr. Speaker, would members of the Assembly welcome our guests from Australia.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Swenson: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule 38(1), which states:

... oral questions may be asked seeking information from Ministers of the Crown relating to public affairs, and to other Members relating to any bill, motion or other public matter connected with the business of the Assembly ...

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the rules and procedures of this Legislative Assembly are the supreme rules of this House, overriding precedent, Beauchesne's, and any other reference.

Mr. Speaker, rule 38(1) explicitly provides the right to ask oral questions about Bills as was raised by the member from ...

The Speaker: — Order, order. I've made my decision yesterday and ... Next order of business.

An Hon. Member: — You've got no right to do that.

The Speaker: — The members know full well if they disagree with the Speaker's decision you can move a substantive motion in this House of lack of confidence in the Speaker. I've made my decision on ... My decision was made yesterday. I fully explained it to the members yesterday what my decision was.

Order. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Draper: — I'd like to introduce some guests to you.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Draper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, sir. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly, Mr. David Tindall, a restaurateur and STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) agent from the town of Gravelbourg, and his daughter in the west gallery. This family is a hard-working and enthusiastic members of our community, and I'd ask the members of the House to welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Saskatchewan Round Table on Environment and Economy

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning the Saskatchewan Round Table on Environment and Economy presented the Premier with the *Conservation Strategy for Sustainable Development in Saskatchewan*.

The conservation strategy culminates three years of work by the round table and the contribution of more than 800 Saskatchewan people through advisory groups and public meetings. The strategy, with its 64

recommendations and 203 action items, is a starting point which sets out a broad path to environmentally sustainable economic development.

The strategy includes recommendations on how to achieve sustainability in areas such as agriculture, transportation, energy, mining, and wildlife, to name a few. Some of the strategy's key recommendations are developing comprehensive strategies to managing our water resources, develop a sustainable energy path, manage our forests sustainably, minimize wastes, protect our soil resources, and maintain Saskatchewan biological diversity.

The Saskatchewan government strongly endorses a concept of sustainable development. We believe in protecting and using our resources wisely so that they are available for future generations to use.

Many people are focussed this week on the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. World leaders are discussing how to integrate the environment and the economy. It is important that we, in Saskatchewan, do our part.

I think this conservation strategy for sustainable development addresses many of these important issues. It is important that we find a balance between protecting the environment and creating economic opportunities.

The government has already begun initiatives compatible with the conservation strategies planned for sustainable development: in the area of waste management and minimization — an expanded beverage container recycling system, a white paper on waste minimization, a \$1.75 million five-year municipal solid waste management assistance program; and to protect Saskatchewan species and eco-systems — a \$225,000 contribution to the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre; to protect our air — a clean air strategy to be developed by a task force of Saskatchewan stakeholders, and advancing the deadline of 1995 for phasing out ozone depleting CFCs (chlorofluorocarbon).

To plan and conserve our energy, we have already established the Saskatchewan Energy Conservation and Development Institute to manage our energy needs into the next century, and to protect our environment from hazardous substances, tougher regulations on the storage; to promote business opportunities, a five-year \$1.5 million environmental technology development program; and to empower local communities and people, the community environmental management program; the Saskatchewan Green Works, incorporating cost-effective environmental improvements at Regina's public works fleet and the Victoria Square Mall; and to help better educate the public, an environmental resource network with its hundreds of information centres.

Work is under way to reform Saskatchewan's environmental assessment legislation and shortly we'll be introducing the charter of environmental rights and responsibilities.

The initiatives I have just mentioned fit right into the conservation strategy's plan for sustainable development.

The conservation strategy outlines what all of us in Saskatchewan should consider doing in support of the environment and the economy. The Saskatchewan government believes the environment must be considered in all economic decisions if we are to survive as a province. By developing our province in an environmentally sustainable manner, Saskatchewan's economy will benefit.

The Premier has asked me to head a cabinet committee in sustainable development. We will review the recommendations in the conservation strategy and advise cabinet on how we can achieve environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

Once again, I would like to thank the people of the Round Table and the people of Saskatchewan for their contribution to the conservation strategy for sustainable development.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table this document.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for presenting me with her speaking notes here a few minutes ago. The Saskatchewan Round Table on the Environment, Mr. Speaker, has presented their report to the Premier and as I look over the minister's statement, I find a number of very interesting things that we can agree with.

It talks of water management. Water management is very important, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, as we see from the Lake Diefenbaker project and from the Rafferty-Alameda projects. Sustainable energy path — sustainable energy, Mr. Speaker, is very applaudable. Co-generation is one of the means in the future by which we will all be provided with our electricity — biomass is another means, wind and solar. Mr. Speaker, we live in Saskatchewan, an area of the world that has a great amount of sunlight and — even though a lot of it may be generated in this Assembly — we have a lot of wind.

Mr. Speaker, soil conservation: our soil resource as an agricultural province is very important to us. And soil conservation in the sense of minimum till and chemical fallow is part of that conservation effort. One of the items, Mr. Speaker, that I think would aid in soil conservation would be a change to the quota system as instituted by the wheat board.

If we had a quota system based on 160 acres per quarter rather than on cultivated acres, there would be less need, less desire, to break up those areas of the province which are marginal lands.

Mr. Speaker, we will be discussing with the minister the Bill she has before the House, debating them, Bills 1, 2, and 3. The environment is very important to the Saskatchewan people and to the world, Mr. Speaker. We are willing to work with the minister to develop our environment and our economy in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would like to join everyone in this House in commending the group, the Saskatchewan Round Table on the Environment, the excellent work and recommendations that they've put forward to us, and given the information from the Earth Summit, it was embarrassing at least, and I think disgraceful at best, that we've discovered that as a nation Canada uses more energy per capita and creates more waste per capita than any other nation in the world. And I commend the hon. minister and the Government of Saskatchewan for doing everything in its power to attempt to make us better citizens of the world. I congratulate you and I hope to work alongside with you to make sure that this happens.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 45 — A Bill to amend The Business Corporations Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of The Business Corporations Amendment Act.

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

Bill No. 46 — A Bill to amend The Income Tax Act

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Income Tax Act.

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

Bill No. 47 — A Bill to repeal the Health Research Act

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to repeal the Health Research Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as it relates to questions put by members, no. 20 to 38 inclusive, I would ask these questions be converted to motions for return (debatable).

The Speaker: — Motions for return (debatable).

(1430)

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 28 — An Act to amend The Revenue and Financial Services Act

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I want to make some brief explanatory remarks on the Act to amend The Revenue and Financial Services Act before

I move second reading.

The Revenue and Financial Services Act regulates the administrative requirements of many of our provincial taxes. Mr. Speaker, most of these changes were publicly announced and have been in effect since January 1, 1991. What we are doing now is putting into legislation what should have been done in that time.

Businesses are now allowed to obtain a deduction for the tax portion of their bad debts. As well, the limitation period for obtaining refunds of tax overpayments has been extended from three to four years.

Another change included in this Bill is the repeal of a provision which permitted a vendor to avoid the obligation of collecting tax on a sale if the purchaser refused to pay the tax. This change is retroactive to April 1, 1991 at which time it was implemented and has been in operation since then, in excess of a year.

Because these changes have been in place for over a year and they are changes which make tax administration more fair to Saskatchewan taxpayers, we are proceeding with this Bill in basically the same form in which it was introduced by the former government last year.

The Bill also makes several changes to certain procedures in the Provincial Comptroller's office. The major change will allow the Provincial Comptroller to examine payments either before or after payment is made, thereby creating significant payment processing efficiencies. The Provincial Auditor supports this change, Mr. Speaker, and indeed supports it and says it is the correct move to make.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Bill ensures that the same persons who are full-time members of the Saskatchewan Municipal Board are also members of the Board of Revenue Commissioners. This puts into law what has been the practice for many years. Most of the amendments concerning the Board of Revenue Commissioners and the Provincial Comptroller's office were also included in the Bill which died on the order paper last year, Mr. Speaker.

With these words, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that it is desirable to provide a proper, legal basis for these changes as it should be for any tax measures or administrative measures of the government. And therefore I am pleased to move second reading of this Bill, An Act to amend The Revenue and Financial Services Act.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to Bill 28, the Minister of Finance is right that some of these provisions were introduced previous to this legislature, and the opposition, the official opposition, doesn't have a problem with some of them.

I might say to the minister that there are a few areas such as some of the debt provisions that are in the Bill that we are going to want to explore a little bit further with the affected parties. And I think that once that is done that we probably won't have any problem with seeing this Bill proceed into committee, but I would ask for leave to adjourn today.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 29 — An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to briefly comment and explain the provisions in this Bill. As members of the House will know, that this and several of the other amendments which I'm going to be introducing here today are dealing with tax measures, are implementations of budget provisions that were announced during the budget address on May 7 earlier this year.

This is an amendment to The Education and Health Tax Act. What this amendment does, as announced in the budget, Mr. Speaker, is increases the sales tax rate to 8 per cent on that narrow sales tax base which is applied in Saskatchewan — far narrower than it is in most other provinces except of course in Alberta where there is no sales tax.

I would much rather of course, Mr. Speaker, be speaking to tax reductions and boasting about our financial wealth as was once possible to be done in this province of Saskatchewan in 1970s when there was last a New Democratic government in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. But I would be quite misleading to myself and to the public and to this House if I was to do that.

Mr. Speaker, during the past 10 years there were decisions made on expenditures without balancing those expenditures with appropriate revenue measures, and therefore we face today in Saskatchewan a huge debt. We face in Saskatchewan today a reduction by two of the rating agencies to BBB. Standard and Poor's recently reduced our credit rating to a BBB plus.

It was, Mr. Speaker, decisions that this government has made in this budget, which although the credit rating agency reduced our credit rating to a BBB plus, they applauded and recognized that the government was taking the appropriate steps to bring this province back to financial responsibility and fiscal responsibility and preparing for a positive and sound future.

Mr. Speaker, the problem that we face today was a problem that was created by the refusal of the former government to face reality and to react responsibly to what was then the situation in Saskatchewan. You cannot have growths of expenditures on the average of 6 per cent a year when your revenues are only going up by about 3 per cent a year. And that was the case, on the average, during the last 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, I detailed the severity of our fiscal situation in the budget address, and I have made a few comments on it. And I will not state much more on that in my remarks here this afternoon.

As stated by our Premier, this government has decided to confront our financial problems. Indeed our first priority is to get the deficit under control. Unless we do that, Mr. Speaker, there is no future; there is no financial freedom for the people in Saskatchewan and for the government.

We believe that this government was elected, Mr. Speaker, not to plunge the people of Saskatchewan further into debt, but rather to take the measures required to get us back onto our financial feet. We must take these measures to ensure that our children will enjoy the quality of life which we have enjoyed and will continue to enjoy. If we are to provide the same level of government programs and services to our future generations, then we must take action to reduce the deficit and we must do it now.

The people of Saskatchewan resisted the previous government's expansion of the education and health tax base. While in opposition we also opposed the expanded PST (provincial sales tax). The expanded PST was an unfair and an unbalanced way of increasing taxes. It unfairly prejudiced certain sectors of the economy. Booksellers, restaurant owners, and others saw the tax rate applied to their sales soar from zero to 7 per cent, especially right after the federal government had imposed the GST just a few short months earlier.

The expanded PST created an unlevel playing-field for these sectors and we believe that is why the people of Saskatchewan rejected that tax. However, by increasing the general education and health tax rate by one percentage point, Mr. Speaker, we are asking everyone to participate in our attack on the deficit.

Essentially family items such as food and children's clothing and adult clothing under \$300, prescription and non-prescription drugs, electricity used in homes, natural gas and other fuel used in home heating, and reading materials will continue to be exempt from the tax.

Mr. Speaker, we considered several options in deciding how to generate needed revenue and we feel that this is one of the fair options. Even at 8 per cent, Saskatchewan still has the third lowest rate of the provinces that impose a sales tax.

In addition, in raising the tax rate by one percentage point, this Bill also makes tobacco subject to education and health tax. Six other provinces currently include tobacco in their sales tax bases. Only British Columbia and Prince Edward Island continue to exclude tobacco from their retail sales tax bases.

These measures, Mr. Speaker, finally I might add, are expected to raise an additional \$87.7 million in 1992-1993. With these explanatory comments, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this Bill, An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make a few points and then adjourn debate. I'm going to bring to the attention of the Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan that this government has had an opportunity to make choices. We heard about it in question period.

Choices to choose between dealing with sick people and people who are in constant need of specialized care. They had choices with those people and they said, we'll increase their costs. We'll increase their costs in relation

to what they can afford to pay. And those people who are on the kinds of things that relate to diabetics are the kinds of places and the things that I think that this government made wrong choices.

Mr. Speaker, I also think that these people made wrong choices as it relates to this kind of a tax. We had, in the province of Saskatchewan, an opportunity to: one, make an investment in the business community through tax harmonization, and I think that that should have been done. We had in this province an opportunity to make concessions to farmers and business men and people all across this province, that would relate to fairness.

Mr. Speaker, they had choices to make. They had individual choices to make about where they were going to tax and, Mr. Speaker, I think they were wrong. They were wrong as it relates to a number of things. And I want to point it out because I live on the west side of this province, and if you go the west side of this province you will know that the people in Lloydminster, Kindersley, Maple Creek, Swift Current, Shaunavon, all have choices to make. And, Mr. Speaker, they do it on a very, very regular basis.

And I want to point out to the minister that his minister responsible for diversification and tourism had his department go down to Minot to buy stamps to send to the United States. And you have choices to make, Mr. Premier, and Mr. Finance Minister, and you're making choices. The same choices are going to be made by individuals on the west side of the province, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Premier — exactly those same choices.

When they go to buy an appliance for their home, where are they going to buy it? Are they going to buy it in Swift Current, Kindersley, Unity, Wilkie, North Battleford? No, sir, Mr. Speaker, they will go to Alberta. And then what are you going to do? Set up police along the edge of the border? That, Mr. Minister, is what you're doing to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, last Friday two businesses closed their doors in Swift Current. And what are they doing, Mr. Minister? They're taking those opportunities and delivering them to the people in Medicine Hat. That's what they're doing. You're making choices, Mr. Minister.

There is a time and a place when you risk the observation that I'm going to make today. That is that the people will choose where they're going to spend their money. They're going to go outside of the province. And that, Mr. Minister, is exactly what they're doing. If you would have taken one opportunity to take a look at the oil patch and one very important feature in this province to give a level playing-field . . . Mr. Minister, you just raised it another point higher and people are going to move out with another point on the E&H (education and health) tax because every truck they buy in Swift Current or every truck they buy in Kindersley or Lloydminster or wherever, is not going to be bought on the Saskatchewan side.

That opportunity is going to be . . . the investment is going to be made by the people who purchase their vehicles, their equipment, in Alberta. They're going to move to Alberta, and they're going to deliver the service to

Saskatchewan out of those provinces.

And, Mr. Minister, you'd reach a point of no return in this pretty soon. And that's what's going to happen, and that's what is happening.

You gave the people of Saskatchewan a choice, Mr. Premier, and Mr. Minister. You gave them a choice as it relates to their business practice, the things that they're going to do. You did it for the home owners, you did it for business, you did it for farmers. And they're going to choose not to buy in Saskatchewan if they can at all possibly help it.

And, Mr. Minister, if you would have done the very honourable thing and allowed harmonization to become a part of the process, you would have had an opportunity to balance your books over and over again. And that, Mr. Minister, would have given . . . Mr. Premier, that would have given an opportunity for the businesses in the province of Saskatchewan to succeed.

(1445)

And what's happening to these people today? They're slowly leaving. And I don't have to count the numbers of people who have already left Swift Current because of this kind of intention. And there are going to be more. The oil patch is slowly going west and they will continue to go — threatened, Mr. Premier, and Mr. Minister, by taxes and an overwhelming desire on your part to absolutely regulate and control them out of business. And that, I think, in the long run is exactly what you want to do.

Mr. Speaker, not only that, but what he has provided to this Assembly, even in spite of the high tax increases, is still a budget that has a deficit that is the second largest in the history of Saskatchewan. That, Mr. Minister, is what people are complaining about.

They said . . . or you said, over time you could operate this government on four a half billion dollars. You said it over and over again. And I heard it from people standing on this side of the House when you were in opposition — four and a half billion dollars is enough.

And, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Premier, you have said that, and you know what your budget did? You spent 4 . . . or no, \$5.1 billion is what you're spending. You said four and a half was enough.

That, Mr. Minister, is exactly why the people in the province of Saskatchewan are saying, I'm tired of it; I'm not fighting any more; I'm leaving. And they're leaving, Mr. Minister, from the west side of the province over and over and over again.

And I want to ask the members of this Assembly who are perhaps on the other side, and they will say, ask the members from the west side what exactly is happening. When it comes to buying tires for their implements, buying equipment for their oil patch — all of those things — what are they doing? They're not buying them in Swift Current, Lloydminster, or Kindersley. They're buying them in Alberta. In Meadow Lake they're buying them in Alberta, right on. And why? Because they don't have to

pay 8 per cent sales tax. That's zero in Alberta, Mr. Minister, and that's why they're doing it. And over and over again they're doing it. I know, Mr. Minister, that this tax is wrong and therefore I am going to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 30 — An Act to amend The Corporation Capital Tax Act

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move second reading of this Bill, An Act to amend The Corporation Capital Tax Act. In speaking to it I just want to address a number of things. First of all, I want to address the continuous comments by the members opposite when they rise in this House and they talk about choices. I think, Mr. Speaker, it's not unfair to ask the members opposite, what are the choices? What choices would they make in the circumstances that this province faces today? And maybe even more important, because it sets the stage for where we are today, is what kind of choices did those members opposite make when they were on this side of the House and when they were of the government of the day from 1982 until 1991.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it was obvious that they spent without any due regard for the capacity of this province to pay those bills which they incurred on the credit card. Those are the kind of choices that the member from Morse made. He would sit at the cabinet table and he would sit in his caucus and then he'd come along with his colleagues into this House and simply spend money, borrowed money. He didn't think it was any skin off his back because he thought it wasn't his money. What the heck, the people and the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, that's going to be their problem. He was kind of independent. He could probably sell whatever he owns and go somewhere else. No regard for the future of the new generations who would have to live in Saskatchewan and pay the price, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, of the folly, the economic and financial folly, of the former Conservative government, Mr. Speaker.

A result of that has created a situation which requires these motions and these second reading Bills that I'm introducing here today. Mr. Speaker, one result — a \$15 billion debt. Now you can put your head in the sand, one can as an elected member of this House or as a cabinet minister, and ignore that. The point, Mr. Speaker, is that the people who lend us the money will not ignore that and at some point in time will stop lending us the money. And if the member thinks that under those circumstances that some of the measures we have taken in the budget this year are severe, he should just stop and contemplate on how severe it would be if the province was unable to borrow all the money that is needed to pay the daily bills. We would actually lose whole programs.

If we don't take the actions we're taking here, Mr. Speaker, we would lose a good portion of medicare down the road. This government is not prepared to let that happen. We're going to make the hard decisions that are necessary to get it under control. We're not prepared to continue spending \$760 million a year and growing of interest charges because we believe that money would be better spent on health care and education and industrial

and economic development.

Those are the choices we're making, and it's unfortunate that the members of former Conservative government refuse to make those kinds of choices. Mr. Speaker, if the right choices had been taken in the last 10 years, we wouldn't be having to introduce some of this legislation that's before us today.

Mr. Speaker, harmonization could have been introduced. Harmonization would have cost \$440 million out of the taxpayers' pocket, and therefore we have to introduce Bills like this Corporation Capital Tax Act, Mr. Speaker, because The Corporation Capital Tax Act is an example of spreading this share of paying for the bills in Saskatchewan among everybody rather than singling out one sector of the Saskatchewan population, as the former Conservative government had done. They were going to single out the consumer, totally and exclusively, with the PST. And the consumer, Mr. Speaker, would have had to pay, in fully implemented harmonized PST, \$440 million a year in the first fully harmonized year.

And you know what? Only 180 millions of that would have gone to the provincial treasury. Now that's an interesting and perverted way of taking the burden off the Saskatchewan taxpayer. That's not the way that this government, Mr. Speaker, chooses to do it.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill increases the corporation capital tax rate levied on financial institutions from 3 per cent to three and a quarter per cent of taxable, paid-up capital of a corporation. In addition the rate of the corporation capital tax resource surcharge is increased from 2 per cent to 3 per cent of the resource corporations' value of resource sales. Both of these changes are effective on April 1, 1992.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill also makes a minor change to the calculation of paid up capital so that effective April 1, 1992, paid-up capital includes the long-term debt of a corporation where the amount is owing to a pension trust or other trust. This change will help to protect capital tax revenue and eliminate the potential for inconsistent tax treatment among competing firms.

The corporation capital tax is essentially an annual tax on the wealth of a corporation. It is an important source of revenue for the province. In 1992-93 fiscal year, the tax will raise over \$150 million in total. The increase in the tax rate for banks, and loan and trust corporations, will generate additional revenue of approximately \$1.3 million in this fiscal year. This is first corporation capital tax rate increase for financial institutions since January 1, 1987, Mr. Speaker — not exactly onerous.

Since July 1, 1988, resource corporations have been liable for the corporation capital tax resource charge. The resource surcharge was introduced to ensure that large resource corporations operating in Saskatchewan paid their fair share of taxes. Prior to April 1, 1992, a corporation's resource surcharge liability was the difference between 2 per cent of the corporation's value of resource sales and its existing corporation capital tax liability. Effective April 1, 1992, the tax rate is increased to 3 per cent of the corporation's value of resource sales in

the province. The changes in the rate of the corporation capital tax resource surcharge, Mr. Speaker, will increase revenues in 1992-93 by approximately \$25.1 million.

Mr. Speaker, the changes to the corporation capital tax being introduced in this Bill will help ensure that the corporate sector contributes to the deficit reduction and the restoration of Saskatchewan's financial wealth. Mr. Speaker, this is one way of making sure that the burden of taxation — and it is a burden, taxes always are — is spread equitably across all sectors of the economy. And that's why I'm pleased to move second reading of the Bill to amend The Corporation Capital Tax Act at this time.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In speaking in response to the minister's comments on Bill 30, Mr. Speaker, certainly everyone in the province of Saskatchewan expects our corporate sector to pay their fair share. It's something, I think, that all governments have looked at over time. As the minister said, the last amendments to these particular areas were done in 1987 and 1988.

And I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that when we talk about the larger corporate sector, which this Bill mostly refers to — although it does get down to the level of a number of Saskatchewan companies . . . I can think of a couple of Saskatchewan-based oil companies that are affected by the provisions in this Bill.

As the member from Morse mentioned in debate on the previous Bill, it isn't so much the changes that the minister has made in this one that make determining decisions amongst our business community — the fact that we're going to raise a little over \$1 million, as the minister said, is not terribly onerous when you spread it across the entire corporate sector — but the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister's other initiatives, whether they be in the sales tax area, in gasoline tax, in personal income tax, and a whole lot of areas add up to a lot of money.

I've been told by a number of resource companies that their costs on budget day went up by \$500,000 to operate in the province of Saskatchewan; \$500,000, Mr. Speaker, often will make people make decisions as to where they stay, what kind of investments they're going to make, what type of profile that they are going to have in a long-term business relationship with the province of Saskatchewan.

The problem that we foresee, Mr. Speaker, the problem that we foresee, not in Bills such as this one, but in the other things that the minister is doing, is that when you don't have a company here at all it's very difficult to get any tax out of it.

And I hope the minister very clearly remembers the 1970s and how the New Democratic Party drove business after business out of this province. They were gone. There was nobody left to tax. They had simply loaded up their trucks and headed outside this province because of people like the Finance minister. And it took another government to bring them back again.

Starting in 1982, companies came back in this province. The population started to grow. And I remind the Minister

of Finance when they left office in 1982 that the population was somewhat less than it is today, that the province of Saskatchewan did get over a million people in the 1980s because people were welcomed back to this province to be taxpayers. And if we're going to put such onerous regimes on them, they simply will leave again.

The Minister of Finance said to my colleague from Morse, you may be one of those people that can pack up leave. Well I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Morse, most of the members of our caucus here, simply can't hook their tractor onto their piece of land and haul it off to Alberta.

The investment that four generations of my family have made in this province pretty well guarantees that I'm going to be stuck here no matter what the Minister of Finance imposes on me. And there's a whole lot of other people around this province, Mr. Speaker, with the same kind of roots and feeling. And I would suggest if anyone probably packs up and moves a little later on in life it might be the Minister of Finance because he doesn't have those same roots down here.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's always a very careful balancing act. This one alone, this Bill alone, I don't believe is onerous as long as there's somebody left in the province of Saskatchewan to tax at the end of the day. And there are very clear choices, as the minister said, very clear choices.

I don't believe for a minute that the taxpayer of Saskatchewan should be investing in natural gas pipelines. We've got \$200 million worth to lay in the next few years. I don't believe the taxpayer should have to do that. I don't believe the taxpayer should take a Saskatchewan-based insurance company into other provinces at the taxpayers' cost. I don't believe that.

And I don't believe for a minute when the minister talks about choices that the \$1.13 billion that the taxpayer of this province sunk into potash mines in the 1970s were a good choice. That money in the bank for a rainy day might have made a whole lot of sense in the 1990s.

So I say to the minister, I say to the minister before adjourning debate on this Bill, just make sure at the end of the day under your stewardship that there's somebody left in the province of Saskatchewan to tax, that there are corporations here that will pay their fair share. With that, Mr. Speaker, I adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1500)

Bill No. 31 — An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make some brief comments of explanation of this Bill to amend The Tobacco Tax Act. This Bill increases the tax on a package of cigarettes from \$1.67 to \$2.00 effective on May 8, 1992. The tax on one gram of fine cut or pipe tobacco goes from 4.4 cents to 5.3 cents.

These changes, Mr. Speaker, are expected to yield an

additional \$17 million in this fiscal year of 1992-93. Prior to these changes, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan had one of the lowest tobacco tax rates in the country. In the submission prepared by the Canadian Cancer Society this spring, they stated that these low tobacco tax rates represented a subsidization of the tobacco industry by the taxpayers of this province. They also mention that over 38,000 lives are lost in this country each year because of tobacco use, including an estimated 1,200 people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the consumption of tobacco has been declining in recent years; much of this has been through people adopting healthier life-styles. However, higher taxes have also contributed to a reduction in the use of tobacco products. The reduction in smoking, Mr. Speaker, is in keeping with, I think, any responsible approach or in keeping with any goal to promote a healthier life-style for Saskatchewan as well as anywhere else.

Mr. Speaker, as well as achieving that, this is obviously an important revenue measure with an additional \$17 million which has been necessary to bring the deficit to the level which it is today under this budget, rather than the \$960 million which it was in the last fiscal year. We cannot possibly sustain that kind of deficit level.

Let us assume that we ran deficits of \$800 million a year, which was kind of the average of the former government. That means that in that year we would incur an additional charge of interest on the public debt of \$80 million. If we did that for three years in a row, Mr. Speaker, we would have interest charges paid by the Saskatchewan taxpayer in a population of less than a million people, with about 360,000 of whom are taxpayers, we'd have annual interest charges that they would have to pay, of a billion dollars a year.

That's not sustainable. I'm sure you will agree, Mr. Speaker, that's not sustainable. What that would mean, that for every \$80 million of interest charges we incurred in the next fiscal year, we'd have to find either additional tax revenues or we'd have to find further cuts in expenditures.

The only way to solve the problem that we face financially in Saskatchewan is to make the hard choices which this government has made, such as this tax measure — although this is not as hard as some of the ones that have had to be made — so that we begin to manage our debt, manage our financial affairs, and restore financial freedom for the people of Saskatchewan in to the future, Mr. Speaker.

I move second reading of this Act to amend The Tobacco Tax Act.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few brief comments on Bill No. 31, The Tobacco Tax Act.

Mr. Speaker, no one takes issue with the comments of the Minister of Finance as far as the detrimental effects of tobacco and their concerns that people in the health community have with people who use tobacco. It's a well-known fact.

I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that that was the reason for the minister increasing the tax. I think the minister was looking for ways to raise significant amounts of revenue, as have past governments in this area. Certainly we've seen the price of tobacco almost quadruple in the last 10 years.

I guess what we really find irritating, Mr. Speaker, about this particular Bill, is the fact that everyone in Saskatchewan knew about it prior to the budget being released. And as everyone knows, the trade in illicit tobacco products today is one of the major concerns of our law enforcement agencies.

We have all sorts of stories about tobacco being brought in from the United States illicitly. We know there's a lot of cross-border shopping going on with our neighbouring provinces. And as we said to the minister in debate on the interim supply motion, when everybody in the province knows that a pack of cigarettes is going up almost 80 cents, I think people probably took advantage of it.

And I think in Committee of the Whole, the minister had better be prepared to answer questions on that fact, that we want to make sure that his officials have checked into the fact that his budget was widely known ahead of time. And we are going to be asking the minister, when we get into committee, some very specific questions about The Tobacco Tax Act and its ramifications.

And I stand by what I said then, Mr. Speaker. With that kind of a budget leak, with that kind of sloppiness in the Department of Finance, I think it would have been incumbent upon the minister to tender his resignation at the appropriate time. And if his department is running as sloppily today as it was when they prepared the budget, people of Saskatchewan are going to be in for a rough time.

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

The Speaker: — Why is the Premier on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the House Leader on this side, the Government House Leader, has spoken to the opposition members for me to ask of you, sir, and the Assembly, leave to make a statement on the constitution which will be of interest, I hope, to members and to provide an opportunity for response from the opposition.

Leave granted.

STATEMENT

Negotiations on the Constitution of Canada

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the members for providing this opportunity. I must alert you — perhaps I should use the word warn you — Mr. Speaker and members that this will be a rather lengthy statement, but of necessity. And I will try to be as succinct as I can, but it's a very complex subject matter. And I thought that a full report would be

more desirable than one which is a little more truncated.

Mr. Speaker, as members of the House will know, the constitutional negotiations have now been recessed for about a week, at least another week approximately left to go, for a period of reflection and consultation. And I've received a full report from the minister — and his officials — who is representing the province of Saskatchewan, the Minister of Justice. I might add very ably representing the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — And I believe as well that there have been full briefings provided to the official opposition and to the Leader of the Liberal Party by the Minister of Justice. And we'll continue to do this as events dictate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to you and to the members of the Assembly at large, and to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, a brief status report as we the province of Saskatchewan see it, with respect to the negotiations.

Let me begin first of all, Mr. Speaker, by reminding the House what brought us to this juncture. In part, as most will know, everybody will know, Canada is a history of ongoing tension, some might describe, a tension which has been deeply embedded within our Canadian society.

This country is a diverse one. It's a country of diversity, diversity which frequently is the potential source of discord, but which diversity also, I believe, has been the source of one of our greatest strengths as a nation. It's been the healthy tension which has resulted in a form of federalism and a society which makes this country one of the best places on earth in which to live. Respect for diversity, therefore, is fundamental to our national identity.

We are a country of two large language blocks, both regionally centred. We draw much of our national identity within the world community from this fact. When people elsewhere think of Canada, they think not only of a very vast land, and sometimes I guess a very cold land with a lot of snow and ice, but they also think of a nation and a land with linguistic and ethnic identities in two of the world's largest language communities.

Most of the respect that our country enjoys, or perhaps I should say much of the respect that our country enjoys in the world, comes from a recognition that our two major ethnic communities have co-existed peacefully in one state for such a length of time — 125 years celebration this summer. And as we look about the world, especially today, I think all of us should give thanks daily for this peaceful and fruitful co-existence.

Canada has maintained this relationship, as I've said, for 125 years because of the willingness of our citizens to constantly adjust and update the relationships between the two major language groups and to do so in a spirit of co-operation and compromise.

There has been a great deal of adjustment. In the years following Confederation, the French-speaking

community in Quebec was a dominated one ruled in part by an Anglo economic élite. After World War II such a situation was no longer acceptable, and particularly after 1960, the Quiet Revolution in Quebec, there was resistance and rejection of this domination. It became necessary for Canada to enter into a series of discussions and compromises and changes to accommodate the new Canadian reality. Those accommodations are not yet complete.

Quebecers are different and they want to know that their difference does not make them second-rate Canadians. This then is one of the historical routes of the present negotiations — a profound need on the part of the people of Quebec to be reassured through constitutional arrangements that they are a valued and equal part of Canada.

But, Mr. Speaker, the need for constitutional change has other historical roots as well. While Quebec has changed profoundly since 1867, so has the rest of the nation. This is no longer simply a country of the English and the French. Outside of Quebec the complexion of Canada has changed dramatically. Our communities are now home to dozens of languages and ethnic groups. We are rich now with the diversity of the whole world — a truly cosmopolitan society.

Here in Saskatchewan, as all members know, times have changed too. Permit me a personal example. Last November I had the great honour of being sworn in as Saskatchewan's first Premier of Ukrainian descent. And the cabinet ministers sworn in with me that day represent a diversity of ethnic backgrounds which would have been unthinkable in this legislature even 30, maybe even 20 years ago.

And this is the case with the Assembly at large. When the elected representatives of this House converse in Cree or Ukrainian or French or English or any other language, it is accepted. Not only accepted, but it's rejoiced in as a sign of our ethnic and linguistic diversity.

Here too then, Mr. Speaker, is one of the roots of the present discussions — the need to accommodate the new reality of regional, economic, and ethnic differences outside of Quebec. We must ensure that the new arrangements adequately reflect that changed circumstance too.

Equally important, Mr. Speaker, new arrangements must adequately reflect the rightful place of first people in the Canadian mosaic. Tentatively at first in the 1960s, in the 1970s, and now more assertively, first peoples have come to demand their proper place within Canada, the rightful recognition that they were the first stewards of this great land.

(1515)

Mr. Speaker, many worry about their demands, about these demands. They fret about the accommodations which are necessary to be made, about the ability of our society to adequately accommodate the place of the first peoples.

I want to state clearly that our government does not fear this change. We believe that it will be difficult to achieve, that many tough negotiations are yet ahead and will be needed. But we enter this new phase and stage determined to succeed with good will and tolerance, secure in our belief that this is a change which is profoundly important and long overdue and needed.

The roots then of these current negotiations are not to be found in the failure of any particular deal or arrangement. We are not in this current round of constitutional negotiations only because the Meech Lake accord collapsed. We are in these negotiations because it is necessary to continually revise our fundamental constitutional arrangements to take into account the changing realities which is Canada.

There's an old saying, Mr. Speaker: you either grow and change, or you die — and so too with societies. We must grow and change or new pressures and strains will divide us and eventually rip us apart. Peaceful, democratic change — constitutional change — is needed in Canada now, and we must respond in a charitable and compromising way to that need.

In that spirit then, Mr. Speaker, we have begun this latest round of constitutional discussion and negotiation. As I have reported before, we came to the table with certain goals and principles. Let me outline them briefly in the context of the negotiations.

The first principle or goal is that our determination is that these negotiations must succeed. They should succeed, that Canada will not be forced to flounder over the inability of negotiators to meet or to compromise. But, Mr. Speaker, even a willingness to compromise can falter in the face of intractable or unreasonable demands.

And so our second guiding principle is that we do not accept the view that these negotiations must be made at any cost, that they cannot be made at any cost just to succeed. There are limits beyond which we should not go. We should not, for example, be prepared to negotiate away the fundamental characteristics which have shaped our national identity, which have been the glue holding Canadians together. Canada must maintain sufficient capacity for independence and autonomy to remain a truly different nation state.

We cannot compromise the long-term future of our country through short-term political fixes. Our national government must remain truly national, and it must retain the capacity to meet national goals and objectives of all Canadians living everywhere. It must have the ability and the capacity to maintain the national programs which have kept us together and which bind us together.

I believe that these programs — like equalization, regional development, medicare, social assistance, and others — which are currently funded in large measure by all Canadians through the federal government, are important national symbols. In addition to being important policy programs, they are rallying points of Canadian identity. These must be maintained and expanded where appropriate.

To acquiesce to demands that would so decentralize Canada that they would seriously damage the ability of the national government to function in the way that I've just described is, for my way of thinking, Mr. Speaker, simply an impossibility.

In our opinion, with respect to the current round of negotiations, none of the changes proposed to date would do that although we're keeping a watchful eye on the evolution of the discussions.

The proposed revisions, for example, to the restrictions of the federal spending power on national programs and the affirmations of provincial jurisdiction in several areas like tourism, recreation, urban affairs, and others, are crafted in such a way to allow for a reasonably strong national role. In particular, Mr. Speaker, for those provinces who lack the financial resources to launch or maintain certain social programs, there are safeguards to ensure continued vital spending by the federal government and equity of access for all provinces for different arrangements.

Now I did say to date, Mr. Speaker, because we may not yet have had the complete universe of changes unfold before us. There may yet be more proposals put on the table, especially by the province of Quebec, which as you know is not at the bargaining table. And if this is done, these will require careful further evaluation.

Now the Saskatchewan government is also determined not to accept constitutional changes which will upset the delicate balance of the federal system of government, the delicate balance of federation, in ways which weaken the long-term stability of the country.

What do we mean by this? Well whatever arrangements are concluded, there must be an ability for all governments to participate. Mr. Speaker, we believe in the fundamental equality of the provinces, recognizing that we are different as provinces, profoundly different in some respects, and that different but equal arrangements might be necessary in some instances.

In short, while there is asymmetry in our federation — the term that is used fashionably the last little while — such asymmetrical arrangements cannot be of the type which allow access to power by one province and not to another or to result in a fundamentally disjointed or fractured country.

To date, Mr. Speaker, I say that the negotiators from Saskatchewan see prospects that these principles of equality and the proposals which are tabled before us are hopeful and consistent with the principle which I have articulated.

Further, we take the view that no arrangement should be agreed to which would seriously further weaken a province's power to influence its own economic, social, and political future.

Now here, Mr. Speaker, I regret to say that we are very concerned about this particular item and in particular one matter. The specific matter of which I speak, Mr. Speaker, relates to the federal government's proposals on what is called the common market clause. It's a specific set of

amendments to the current section 121 of the constitution.

These proposals, as they stand now, in our judgement, would profoundly upset the balance of the federation.

Let me further elaborate. We currently have a clause in our constitution which prohibits the imposition of duties or charges on goods travelling from one province to another. In 1980 the then Trudeau government proposed changes to the constitution which would have substantially expanded the ambit of this particular section. It was called something euphemistically by the press as powers over the economy. It would have strengthened the role of the federal government under this descriptive term of powers on the economy in a very expansive way.

Eventually the federal government of the day did not proceed. There was a lot of opposition, primarily from the western provinces but others as well, arguing that the balance, the delicate balance with respect to the economic arrangements and the various jurisdictions of Ottawa and the provinces, would be upset by this proposal.

Well although it did not succeed in 1980, this debate was revived last fall in the latest proposals by the current federal government. In short, these changes as proposed would, as we see it, severely restrict the ability of provincial legislatures to effect economic decision making in the best interests of the local region or the local province. It would do so by, one, adding new words to section 121 which would expand the list of prohibited actions. To give you an example, the words that would be added would in effect say that a provincial legislature could not interfere with the free movement of persons, goods, services, or capital — note those words: persons, goods, services, or capital.

Secondly, the proposal by the federal government would establish a trade tribunal which would act like a court with respect to the new, expanded meaning of section 121 and which would adjudicate with respect to those matters of free movement pertaining to persons, goods, services, or capital, and the decisions would be binding.

Now let me make it abundantly clear that our province is in favour of reducing unnecessary barriers to internal trade in Canada. We are a trading province. We trade internally and we trade externally, and we depend and know the value of freer trade. But, Mr. Speaker, what we are not in favour is of a simplistic, ideological proposition which would effectively transfer all of the important power over trade and economic matters to yet another and brand-new federal agency — the monitoring agency.

We know that as a small province we must have fair trade rules, fair economic arrangements and a fair playing-field. This can only be accomplished, in our case as a relatively small province, if we retain the ability to have our resources, all of the resources, private sector, co-operative sector, and governmental, as necessary, martialled in a common cause to accomplish our economic and social goals. That's how we have built up the, if I may say so, rather distinct society called

Saskatchewan.

I repeat again. We are in favour of reducing internal trade barriers, but we believe that this can be done and should be done by negotiation and agreement. And we believe that the federal government should have sufficient economic levers in order to manage the nation's economy. However, we believe that they have those authorities now, constitutionally, and that expanded constitutional authority is not required for them to do this. What is maybe required is political will to exercise the current constitutional power that they have in order to exercise and implement the appropriate economic and fiscal programs. That's the subject of a debate on another occasion.

So we do not agree with the current federal proposals, because as we see them, Mr. Speaker, they would fundamentally, and not acceptably, alter this balance in a federal system in a way which would be not acceptable.

I want to remind the House that this proposal on section 121 is not a proposal which has been put forward by the province of Quebec. So it's not on the table because it's part of a request by the province of Quebec with respect to that issue. This is really an add-on by the federal government which, in my opinion, could and should be withdrawn.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, on another matter and another example, we will look very negatively, and are expressing our concerns, about proposals that do not ultimately respect individual and collective rights in Canada. There must be a proper respect for individual and collective rights. And in addition to that, there must be a proper balance between the roles of the elected legislatures and parliaments on the one hand and the judiciary in the enforcement of those rights.

I'm pleased to report that the minister tells me that so far there are no serious proposals put forward to date which violate this principle in these areas.

Now our third broad goal or principle in these negotiations is to move forward some specific changes of ours — some of our agenda matters. We believe that several changes to the constitution are needed to protect the constitutional union, and we have something to offer to this debate and some items which we add to the agenda.

Primary amongst them is Saskatchewan's concern with regard to the whole matter of transfer payments. I've described this on the occasion of another debate as the constitutional version of the CFL (Canadian Football League) gate equalization formulas.

Canada is the greatest nation on earth in which to live and to raise a family. We all know that. Our quality of life surpasses most others if not all others. In large part, as I've said a moment ago or so, this is because of our unique national social programs like medicare and others. These programs have come to define what it is to be a Canadian, and Canadians feel strongly about them and rightly so.

Mr. Speaker, if the rivers of commerce are increasingly

flowing north and south, the highways of social programs flow east and west of necessity in order to keep the country together, and one balances off the other. Our social programs are vital not only for the well-being of individual Canadians, but as you can see by my argument, they are vital to the existence of Canada itself.

If we are to continue to be a secure nation in the global economic village, an identifiably distinct nation, we must have a strong cultural and social identity. These intricate webs of social programs — equalization, regional development, medicare, and others — are fundamental to Canadian identity and unity, and the weakening of them is a weakening of Canada.

(1530)

It's not enough to simply put these programs into a social charter into the constitution. We must ensure instead that the practical means to deliver these programs to all Canadians of varying capacities to receive these services in all provinces is guaranteed in the constitution.

Adequate transfer payments are vital to Canada and its identity. They are also valuable to our commitment of equality in this province and in this nation. Transfer payments like equalization, EPF (established programs financing), CAP (Canada Assistance Plan), and others ensure that the less prosperous provinces are able to provide services of comparable levels to other parts of Canada, and any lessening of commitment to these programs would be a fundamental shift in the sense of sharing and equality — characteristics which distinguish Canada from other nations.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the off-loading of the last several years — and here I don't single out the current federal government alone because it began before 1984 — is a very, very serious matter indeed. In order to deal with this matter we have put forward, supported by the other western provinces as well as Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, proposals to entrench two principles in the constitution. One, good faith negotiations; and two, a fixed period of five years for programs.

We fully understand and accept, Mr. Speaker, that in the final analysis the federal government must be able to determine its own spending priorities, but the process must include the concepts of dialogue and continuity, and in our judgement it should be constitutionalized.

To date I must report that we have only met with partial success on this subject matter.

On equalization and regional development the federal offer is for consultation and a two-year notice of change. On EPF the federal government has rejected constitutionalizing such a commitment. Naturally we're disappointed with this reaction and we strongly urge the federal government to reconsider its position as it heads into the meetings on June 9 and 10.

Mr. Speaker, another matter of great importance I referred to at the beginning and I want to come back to it, and that is the place of the aboriginal rights, the place of the first nations, the first peoples in Canada.

We hold the position that this matter has been put off for too long. And I'm pleased to report that considerable progress has been made during the course of the current negotiations. Negotiators have recommended the entrenchment of the inherent right to self-government for aboriginal people. They've agreed to a recommendation on a context for the exercise of that right. They have agreed to recommend on a three-year period of negotiations to elaborate on what self-government might look like. And there is a recommendation of a political accord with respect to the Metis.

Mr. Speaker, there is also agreement to constitutionalize treaties and treaty obligations for first nations. Now this is a very complex and important area and obviously there is much yet to do. But I do believe that we are on the verge of a very important and historic breakthrough.

Now we put forward several other matters as well, Mr. Speaker. I won't go into them all today. The Minister of Justice can supplement these remarks on some other occasion at a later date. But I do want to identify a few of them very briefly before taking my place.

Another matter which we've advanced is the issue of international economic treaties and the role of provinces with respect to those treaties. Mr. Speaker, when the free trade agreement was negotiated with the United States, the current federal government in Ottawa went to great lengths to consult with the provinces and to involve them in that process. It was in many ways an unprecedented effort on their part.

Everyone understood that these types of treaties, or more particularly that treaty, will profoundly influence a nation. We understand that all too well in this province. As I say, we're a trading nation dependent upon the world and dependent upon our domestic economy. We accept the fact that we're going to be traders to survive and succeed in the future.

We also understand that the nation must speak with one voice when it speaks to the rest of the world. We cannot be put in a position of having several discordant voices at the international table all claiming to express the views of Canada. That's the role of the federal government.

But, Mr. Speaker, we also understand that the ability of the federal government to make treaties — and I want to underline this — is the ability to reshape federalism, to reshape the Canadian federal system, especially if provincial areas of jurisdiction are not adequately protected by those international treaties or, worse yet, ignored. The economic and social priorities of the provinces or even the regions can be severely skewed by the lack of control that can result from obligations imposed on the provinces by an international treaty entered into by the federal government and another nation without consultation involving the provinces.

At present, provincial jurisdiction on this issue is preserved by a 1936 decision called the Labour Conventions decision. But this decision has pointed some judges to indicate that it might be amended or overturned down the road. As a consequence, Mr. Speaker,

especially for a trading province like Saskatchewan or, if you will, the trading region like the West in this era of global trading — global economics — more constitutional security for provinces on international treaty-making as it affects provincial activity, is essential.

An unfettered federal treaty power, together with the current proposals one to one that I talked about — the powers over the economy provision — could spell the end of a meaningful role of provincial governments in Canada as we know it, and spell the end of the role of that delicate balance which is what federalism is all about.

Now, as I say, we believe in a proper balance, an appropriate balance, one that has to be adjusted from time to time to suit the times. And I believe that unless the legal situation as we know it — the doctrine in the Labour Conventions case — is entrenched, that balance could be in trouble, especially in the face of the Mexico round and, as we know, the current ongoing negotiations with respect to GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), all three of which have profound implications, not only for the nation, but for our province and for our region.

Now let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. No one is asking for any power to negotiate treaties as provinces at the table internationally, or in any way to supplant or to hamper the federal government. We want only to ensure that when a treaty is made, that it respects the division of powers as we know it in Canada and that there be proper input and consultation involving the provinces in this area.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, we supported Alberta when they put forward the proposals in this area. We believe that they are quite reasonable and attainable. Unfortunately, I have to report to the House that they have been rejected. Again I urge the federal government to rethink its attitude on this question for the forthcoming meetings and to come back with what I would categorize as a more reasonable response.

One other item, Mr. Speaker. When we reviewed the matters before us, it was also in the light of a recent decision by the Supreme Court of Canada with respect to telecommunications and the carriers of telecommunications commonly known as the AGT cases, the Alberta Government Telephones case. In effect, Mr. Speaker, this decision brought the prairie telephone companies — and this has serious implications for SaskTel — under the control of the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission), a federal regulatory body, the composition of which is determined by the federal government exclusively and the powers determined by the federal government exclusively.

Now I won't go into detail on this particular matter. But members of the House, I think, will remember that they were all unanimous in resisting this attempt by the federal government through this legislation to regulate our Crown corporation, SaskTel. At the moment there is a Bill, as I've said, before parliament which would do precisely that.

We have placed the whole matter, therefore, of telecommunications and its constitutional place on the table for debate and discussion. We have made it clear that we would not pursue this debate if satisfactory arrangements could be made to exempt SaskTel from the ambit of the proposed federal legislation. Unfortunately to date no satisfactory arrangement has been offered.

Another matter, Mr. Speaker. We also proposed changes to section 92(a) which was one of the results of the 1981-82 round of negotiations. The changes to 92(a) which would better aid this province in resource regulation and other changes. I'm not happy to report that no satisfactory result has yet been obtained here. Again I would commend the federal government to consider both of these matters, telecommunications and 92(a), with respect to the next set of negotiations which we are about to embark on.

These then are some of the matters which have been put forward by the province of Saskatchewan. As you can see, we have had only limited success. I deliberately contrast this — meaning our requests for matters to be considered — with the progress on other issues and other agenda items. And on those items there seems to have been substantial progress made.

When I contrast the progress there with respect to the ones which we advance, I can only conclude that greater efforts must be made, with respect that some of these Saskatchewan and western Canadian items, if we are to be a part of any final deal. Because after all, Mr. Speaker, what must be emphasized is that this is the Canada round. And as the Canada round, this requires the commitment of all regions and provinces and interest groups that are involved to feel a part of the ultimate solution.

Let me turn briefly to a couple of other important items put forward by other jurisdictions and which have received a lot of attention in the press. On the matter of Senate reform there has been limited progress, I'm advised, on what I would describe as relatively non-essential elements of that problem.

On the major question, representation in the Senate, it looks like we are at a deadlock. Saskatchewan and four other provinces together with the Northwest Territories support a Senate in which all provinces are represented equally. British Columbia proposes a regional model. Ontario, New Brunswick, and P.E.I. (Prince Edward Island) support unequal representation according to population differences. There is also no agreement thus far on the power of such a new body.

Let me make two points on this issue, Mr. Speaker. First, we have supported a Senate with equal representation because we think that it is based in and on a defensible principle. Why should we be interested in a second Chamber, for example, which represents only population or which has little power? If there is to be no equal, effective Senate, then perhaps we should support and start considering supporting an amendment to abolish the Senate.

It is my belief, Mr. Speaker, that this is one of the thorniest questions in this process, but I believe that it is also

solvable on an equal basis. Mr. Clark in the House of Commons has already stated that if there is a consensus on any model, the federal government will support it. I believe that we can reach that consensus, or putting it more bluntly, we need to return to the negotiating table more determined to reach that consensus on the equal model.

I want to turn to the amending formula since this also is a contentious matter, and Saskatchewan has put forward a proposal for consideration which we think is a compromise proposal. The question of the veto with respect to a future amending formula has arisen as part of this debate, and it has become one of the priorities for Quebec.

I should explain to all members of the House that Quebec is not asking for a veto over everything on the constitution, but only a veto on institutional matters and institutional change, the so-called section 42 matters set out in the current constitution.

Now the matter of an amending formula is also contentious. It was part of the Meech Lake accord. That is, section 42 matters were to become the subject of unanimous consent by all provinces as set out in section 41. Some believe that unanimity is too restrictive for any formula but particularly too restrictive for institutional change. Accordingly, Saskatchewan has put forward a proposal which would require two-thirds of the provinces, seven, representing 85 per cent of our nation's population instead of 50 per cent, the current formula, as an alternative. This would raise the level of consensus but not impose a unanimity provision.

I'm pleased to report that my minister tells me that a number of the provinces like this idea and agree with this proposal as an alternative to the one currently set out. We hope that it might be the basis for compromise. At least we're going to keep it there until it is rejected by the negotiators, if that should be the end result.

(1545)

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are many other items that should be mentioned, but time does not permit me to do so, and I thank the members for giving me this leeway for the extended statement that I make here.

The key here is that some of the important items I've identified and the larger key for constitutional negotiations from our point of view is that the entire package needs to be looked at at some point fairly soon. The ministers and the negotiators will do the best that they can, and at that point we will give a further report to the legislature and then decide in consultation with the legislature and the public as to whether or not there is a deal there.

We hold strongly to the views which I have articulated in the statement to the House on these specific issues, but we also do so in the spirit that there needs to be room for some flexibility and compromise. I repeat again our concern that progress has been made on a lot of the non western Canadian issues, if I may put it that way, or at least I'll describe them as Saskatchewan issues, and we

need to direct the attention of the negotiators in the days ahead to come to some compromises and solutions on the other matters.

Let me close with the last goal or principle which we have set ourselves in this process, namely public involvement. As many of you know, the process which resulted in the Meech Lake settlement was found to be totally unacceptable to a large number of people in Canada. This was primarily because the matter of change was the result of secret discussions in the period between '87 and 1990, and even before that time.

The majority of people after 1990 want a much more open process in the future. As a result, the federal government undertook a number of public initiatives such as the Spicer Commission, the federal proposals last fall, and the Dobbie/Beaudoin joint committee of parliament. As well, they sponsored a series of open conferences on the constitution. Here in Saskatchewan the previous government commissioned a committee to sample public opinion and to receive response to the federal government initiatives, and that committee reported just last winter.

And as you know, we have proposed and the members of the House have accepted unanimously a standing committee on the legislature on the constitution, which committee will have two functions; first, to receive the proposed amendments generated either here or from parliament or from other legislative assemblies and other matters such as the amending formula. And the second function will be to undertake public consultation if necessary.

We believe that this will go a long way toward involving the public of Saskatchewan in this debate. And of course the minister who is at the table, the Minister of Justice and I will be speaking to the media and to the legislature giving reports as required.

We're also going to hold an open mind to the views of the standing committee and others on the question of whether or not any proposed constitutional amendments should be put to the people of our province in the form of a plebiscite or a referendum. That decision, I think, can be more appropriately made once we have a clearer, firmer picture of how the state of negotiations have progressed or concluded.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to close in the same way that I began. I want to emphasize how important these negotiations are to the future of Canada. In particular, I want to urge again that the Government of Quebec return to the table so that we can complete these negotiations in an orderly and timely manner. I also would urge the Prime Minister to consider the call of an early first ministers' meeting in order that some of the tougher issues can at least be discussed if not resolved. Without Quebec at the table and without a first ministers' conference, it is going to make things more difficult in order to successfully conclude this very complex dossier.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the people of Saskatchewan and the people of Canada want us to get on with the other urgent business which faces this nation. We have in our

own province, as everybody knows, an economic and fiscal — how shall I describe it? — challenge, if not crisis. And Canadians want their governments, federal and provincial, to address this matter of the economy and of finances. And while we're doing as best as we can and devoting as much time as we can, clearly overall we cannot do so while the constitution overhangs the agenda of all provincial governments and of the nation as a whole.

And so therefore I pledge to you today that we will return to the table making every effort to ensure a successful conclusion to these negotiations, to work diligently in the spirit of goodwill and in the spirit of compromise and accommodation in order to try to put this matter satisfactorily to a proper conclusion and a resolve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the members of the House for giving me the opportunity of providing this report to you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I too will try to be as brief as the Premier in putting forth some of our concerns perhaps and understandings of the constitutional process and such. I would like to say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that many of the points brought out by the Premier are certainly points and issues that this official opposition agrees with and certainly would encourage the Premier and the Minister of Justice as the chief negotiator for the government to continue on and bring this to a successful conclusion.

However at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I would be defaulting my responsibility as the opposition to voice some of the concerns that we have, specifically about some of the statements made by the Premier as well.

Now I want to lay little bit of a groundwork before I continue on with my remarks. If you check *Hansard* you may find that I've said something similar to this from times past on the constitution. But, Mr. Speaker, I believe that Canada's history is a history of two great streams of human activity, and I don't, when I say this, refer to the dualism of French and English, but the two defining human endeavours that have marked our evolution as a nation which are namely economics, Mr. Deputy Speaker, economics and culture. And I want to spend a few moments talking about them.

I would remind members opposite what the Leader of the Opposition said to the parliamentary committee when it visited Regina, when he said that Canada was born of fish, fur, wood, and wheat. And I can certainly empathize with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As a history major and so on, I'm interested in the past but not interested in the past alone, but rather how does the past affect our present and how can we use those to build into the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've always maintained that as a nation and indeed as a province, we have been hewers of wood and drawers of

water, and the challenge that is facing this province and indeed this nation is how do we get out of that mould? How do we break out of that mould as being perceived as hewers of wood and drawers of water and take a rightful place in the destiny of the world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Europeans came first to our shores for the bounty of the fish that once teemed in our waters, a bounty that, I'm sad to say, is increasingly being threatened by the abuses of modern Europeans. The fish trade, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was followed by the fur trade. And that industry not only opened up the entire continent of Canada but of the entire continent including the United States. This brought Europeans into both co-operation but unfortunately into confrontation with our aboriginal peoples.

So while the fur trade grew and prospered, so did wood from our forests give birth to a thriving shipbuilding industry in the Maritimes, as well as contribute to a growing export trade. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of most importance for our province was the occasion of wheat into the young Canadian economy, for it was wheat that won this land to an international economy and a national partnership.

So there is great truth in the concept that we were born of economic activity, and even more basically, that it was the natural gifts of nature or, for those that are more spiritual among us, by the blessings of God that Canada was created, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But Canada was also of necessity a great cultural enterprise. And because of the nature of our parliamentary system and the nature of the people who settled and the nations that were here from the beginning, because of human characteristics a great cross-pollination began with relatively little armed conflict. While we should not forget that blood was shed within these borders, we should also not exaggerate those events, for by any standards the armed conflict in the development of Canada was certainly modest. Rather all were changed by the contact they had with one another. And it shows to this day in our attitudes, our customs, our political institutions, and indeed our values.

It is historically true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the greatest dynamic was that between the French and the English cultures sharing this country. But it is equally true for Canada and especially true, I would suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, especially true for Saskatchewan that we were shared by the dynamic of many cultures — of many cultures.

I am a Canadian of German-Dutch descent speaking in a freely elected legislature in a country where only 50 years ago Canadian Germans were interned and persecuted. And the rapid change, even as recently as after the last war, the rapid change from hatred to acceptance is a great mark of the character of our people.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that we must continue to change. We must continue to grow. And the Premier touched on some of those things during his remarks. We cannot be static, but we must remain dynamic and evolutionary. I think that we ignore the dual characteristic of our history at our own great peril.

Our views on Quebec's distinct needs as a party, as an official opposition, are indeed well-known, Mr. Speaker,

and I don't know if I have to go into detail with those and restate them once more. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am compelled to speak to some of the more disturbing aspects of the Premier's remarks, and I do so without any animosity but with a great deal of respect.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the one hand the Premier has stated on many occasions that the national government must truly be national and have the powers necessary to perform as a national government. On the other hand he states that any dilution of provincial powers will be the signal for him that the cost is too high to save the country.

And it's with great respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I remind you that on a daily basis in this Assembly, some members of the provincial government are condemning the national government for not accepting its responsibility in agriculture, not accepting its responsibility for health, not accepting its responsibility for education, its responsibility for everything on the provincial government's agenda. It's a constant and steady diet of how Ottawa is shrugging its responsibilities for the entire list of matters that the constitution gives provinces control and responsibility for.

Now in other words, Mr. Speaker, the government's position appears to me to be that the national government should essentially be a bank account where Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia make deposits and the rest of us make withdrawals.

(1600)

Now lest my remarks be misinterpreted, Mr. Speaker, it should be obvious to all — and I want to make this very clear — that I do support equalization, and I do believe that this province has an excellent track record of obtaining special financial assistance for our province from Ottawa. At the same time I personally, as minister of Social Services, had many occasions to chastise the federal government for off-loading. It happened in a number of areas, as the Minister of Social Services will be aware, in that particular portfolio that I'm most familiar with.

And I would say to the Premier, I would say to the Premier, this province needs to continue to defend our budgetary position in the federation. And if you continue on that, you will find that the opposition will give you its full support in that procedure.

So we do believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the national government has a fundamental and vital role in transfer payments. We do not, however, believe that this country can have any measure of stability if we return to the kind of destructive Ottawa-bashing that was so prevalent back in the '60s and indeed the '70s. We most certainly, we most certainly cannot afford to constitutionalize that kind of political culture.

Let me say for the record, my perception — and I stress this is my perception of the Premier's view of the role of the national government — it should provide defence and it should pay the bills. Again with all respect, I must say that I have seen very little that the Premier or one of his ministers have not made into a matter of provincial power

but federal payment.

On trade, the Premier not only rejects an overriding national role, but states that a national economic union is too high a price to pay to save Canada, which sounds very close to almost a threat. Now I hope that as I say that I'm not putting words into the Premier's mouth, but that is the impression that I got from your remarks, sir.

On external affairs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier has said the provinces must be full partners with the national government in international negotiations. In agriculture, health, education, Ottawa should pay the bills but basically keep their nose out of provincial jurisdiction and provincial policy making . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The Premier says that he has said exactly the words . . . the opposite, I mean, the reverse. And if that is what you have meant, my interpretation of your comments were different. And I certainly suggest, sir, that if that is your position, that you restate it perhaps in a manner in which I can understand it to be such.

But I say sincerely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say sincerely that on the face of it, the sum of the positions of the government, Saskatchewan, resemble nothing as closely as sovereignty-association, sovereignty-association. And those politicians who fail to engage in constant and wholesale political attacks on the national government are portrayed as betrayers of Saskatchewan. And that is something that I do not accept and I don't think that that is something that is acceptable to the people. It was great politics in the '70s but I don't think that it's great politics today. There are signs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan have matured beyond the emotional appeal to select an outside enemy and be content in that hatred. I think the people of Saskatchewan and indeed the people of the country have matured beyond that point.

We are playing with fire, I would suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we believe that the old way of tearing down the national government while pretending to be nation builders will do anything but cause harm for this great nation of ours. Now I don't want to go on at great length, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I am not convinced, I am not convinced that as I stand here that these particular speeches today were necessary or that indeed they were particularly productive.

I do believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Premier has still not told us the details of the position he's putting forward on behalf of our people. If he has, from what I have heard then we are to understand that Saskatchewan's position boils down to essentially two points: number one, we will refuse to sign anything that contains provisions for an economic union of the provinces; and number two, we insist that the constitution contain explicit provisions for more money for the federal taxpayers to provincial taxpayers and more power for the provinces.

If that is truly the total of our province's position, Mr. Speaker, I say with all respect, that we do not have a very admirable position. This country is more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this country is more than a joint bank account, and it is more than 10 independent provinces. This country is more than the sum of its total parts.

And then, while I am confident that I will be subject to criticism, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say with all sincerity that someone has to speak for Canada. Yes, even in the legislatures of the provinces, the voice of a nation must be heard. Two world wars, a history of pain among our aboriginal peoples, the lives of settlers cutting the bush around Rosthern, the women who pulled ploughs on their backs to make this nation — all these demand that we see more than our own political interests and more than our own provincial boundaries.

All these demand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we speak not only for Saskatchewan, but that we also must speak for Canada.

I opened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by mentioning the plight of families who depend on fish off of Newfoundland. And there is a link between our children and their forefathers. That's how deep this link goes. Because, fellow members, as each of us knows, we did not earn this country. None of us here earned Canada. It was given to us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in trust by those who came before.

We now have the sacred duty of taking that inheritance and ensuring that it is passed on in good order to those who will come behind us and after us. To reduce our husbandry of the nation to, almost, two contradictory positions would be a breach of trust for our forefathers and an act of broken faith for our children.

Now before I close, Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words on a topic that the Premier ended with, on the issue of the referendum. It is reasonable for the government, it is reasonable for the Premier, to get up and to say that if the federal government holds a national referendum then one will not be held separately in Saskatchewan. It is reasonable and that, sir, is acceptable.

We believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is reasonable. And we believe in fact that it would meet the demands of the people for a direct say in their own future. And that is what the people of this province want. However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the national government does not hold a national referendum then it is our firm and our intransigent position that the provincial government must then hold a referendum here. People must be asked, what do you want? They have a right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be heard on this all-important issue.

It is not possible in the calculus of democracy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to say that a committee of 10 MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) shall have a voice that is stronger than 400,000 Saskatchewan voters; that 10 shall not overrule the democracy of the many. And that is where we shall draw our line in the proverbial sand.

I believe that it is a fair advice, and perhaps warning to the Premier, that if he proceeds with no referendum vehicle, whether national or provincial, if there is no vote, then there will be a long and difficult battle. And please understand that the battle will not be over the substance at that stage, but over the process — over the people's right to take back their own country.

And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish the Minister of Justice as our chief negotiator, Godspeed in his important work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan at the negotiating table.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Keeping: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Keeping: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to me to introduce to you 43 students from Wagner School at Nipawin. They're the grade 4 students. They're here visiting us today from my constituency. And they're with their teachers, Bev Gunnaugson and Jack Rowswell and nine other chaperons that I won't bother to read their names, Mr. Speaker. But I ask that you and all the members here would make them feel welcome. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENT

Negotiations on the Constitution of Canada (continued)

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've heard it said of politicians that we have a tendency to talk things to death.

And if I may paraphrase something that Yves Fortier is reported to have said at the constitutional conference in Halifax: no country has ever died from too much dialogue on its future.

So I now welcome the opportunity to speak on behalf of not only my party, but in particular bring forward three areas of concern that are most often raised with me by the citizens of Saskatchewan on this topic.

I also wish to publicly acknowledge in this House and to those watching today that the hon. member from Fairview, the Minister of Justice, took time out of his busy schedule to speak with me earlier this afternoon and give me a briefing, and I appreciated that very much.

The people of Canada face a constitutional crisis which threatens the existence of the Canadian state. And the irony of this is, that measured against any objective standard, Canadians have a constitutional history and have achieved a community standard of living that is the envy of virtually every peoples on earth.

That is not to say that we've not experienced trouble and that all have benefitted equally from the Canadian experience. It is, at least in part, because of this latter fact that the future of our nation is now at stake.

Great work, immense sacrifice, and vision, have created a transcontinental dominion which boasts democratic traditions, peace, and considerable wealth. While these attributes are admirable, as a people we must add to them an extensive measure of ingenuity at this time, a sincere compassion for our fellow Canadians, and I think a desire to resolve our differences. Like the fathers and mothers of Confederation, we must be prepared to adopt what others fear to contemplate.

Now is not the time for anyone to become entrenched in his or her position. Rather we must use our creative strengths to imagine ways of not only solving the present crisis, but of giving ourselves and our children a better future with greater harmony, justice, and prosperity. And only when we've improved upon what we've been given can we be satisfied that our lives were indeed lived to the fullest.

Now I wish to comment on several aspects of the constitutional proposals. The initial agenda that was advanced by the federal government is very, very lengthy, and some would say too much so. And I don't really want to comment on that. I leave it to others to advance this criticism, as I perceive that there is a reef. And if there is a reef upon which the Canadian country, our nation, may flounder, it is that too many of the real and self-proclaimed players are beginning to harden their positions at a time when I believe flexibility and imagination must be the touchstones.

(1615)

It's either my way or the highway, is something that may work in the locker room, but seldom will hold a family together. And I know from professional experience that too often when a family member is confronted with an ultimatum of that nature, his or her reaction is to slam the door shut, to the ultimate loss of all.

There are problems in our Canadian family. I don't see them as so bad that with some living arrangements that will be considered new living arrangements, all cannot both be prosperous and self-fulfilled within this Canadian family.

There are many aspects of the federal proposals that one could criticize. And since we are engaged in what I consider to be a process of nation rebuilding, I propose to focus on three aspects of the proposals around which I suggest that consensus can built. And these are the three proposals, topics, that the people come to me most often when they're discussing the constitutional crisis and raise.

The first — and everyone would like to think that this one is settled, but it's not — the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society; second, Senate reform; and thirdly, the recognition of an inherent right of self-government by the first nations.

Now before looking at the detail of any of these, I would like to suggest that what motivates the call for each of these reforms is the same. While the interests of groups clamouring for each are superficially different, the same

concern underlies each, and that is a need to make our government both be and appear to be more responsive to the current Canadian reality. The 20th century may not have belonged to Canadians — as Sir Wilfrid Laurier predicted it would — but without reform the country will not live to see, let alone possess, the 21st.

The most significant shortcoming in Canada's constitution is by far its meagre ability to address the diverse differences that the Premier so eloquently addressed. The Constitution Act in 1867 addressed and resolved short-term differences between what was then called Canada West, Ontario; Canada East, Quebec; and the Maritime provinces. It, however, is now 125 years old and is no longer responsive to Canada's current and future divisions. Canadians face three major divisions which if not addressed will continue to seriously threaten the survival of the Canadian state, the public well-being, and — I fear most — even public peace.

Canada is overtaken with linguistic, racial, and regional divisions. There remains a perception that there's an inordinate amount of attention to linguistic division of Canada and a failure to realize that the other divisions are, to many Canadians, of equal importance.

One family member has expressed concerns about the familial arrangement that we call Canada. His grievances and dissatisfactions have exposed the grievances and dissatisfactions of other members of the family in Canada. While the pathos of the first must be addressed, the wounds of the others, once exposed, demand equal attention. The family cannot be treated by simply responding to the needs of one. The solution to our divisions is not to attempt to eliminate them, but to create institutions of government that will encourage divided peoples to agreement through compromise.

I'll begin by talking about the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society. Although it is a popular perception that an inordinate amount of time has been devoted to responding to the needs and the wants of Quebec, it remains appropriate that Quebec's concerns be addressed during this present round of constitutional deliberations and should be addressed first. Given what was agreed upon in the British North America Act, it seems somewhat absurd that we're dealing with this in 1992 and, as Eric Kierans has talked about so very wisely, he has indicated that if all we had done was to attend to what was agreed upon many, many years ago, we wouldn't be going through this today.

This is not to say that the concerns need necessarily be considered paramount to those of other Canadians — the wants and desires of Quebec — and I really don't understand that to be the demand of Quebecers. Although the desire to be expressly recognized as a distinct society is but one aspect of the agenda put forward by the Quebec government, it has come to symbolize to much of the rest of the country the entire menu of that province's demands. Frankly expressed, there is a desire on the part of most Canadians, and myself included, not to dilute the individual rights and freedoms now expressed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

There's a real concern that constitutional entrenchment or statement of a unique status for Quebec poses a threat to individual rights and freedoms and undermines its commitment to them. There is further sentiment that a constitutional recognition of Quebec's distinctiveness undermines the unique characteristics of other parts of Canada and thereby creates inequality amongst regions and provinces.

Now I see ways to respond to these concerns and would like to be on the record. The majority of Canadians do not wish to subordinate their own individual liberties to collective rights, and frankly would like to talk Quebecers out of doing so for themselves. Still, if the majority of Quebecers are inclined to accept some diminishment of their individual rights and freedoms for the protection of their collective position, there may be a legitimate concession to accommodate Quebec within Canada.

This is particularly so if the only other option is a more drastic expression of Quebec's uniqueness in the form of an autonomous or semi-autonomous state. We in the rest of Canada recognize that Quebec is distinct; we feel distinct; Newfoundlanders feel distinct as well.

The constitution should be made clear that that does not detract from the uniqueness and the special attributes of the rest of the nation. Uniqueness is not superiority; uniqueness is not inequality. I do not hear Quebec saying that it is. But to the extent that other Canadians have legitimate fears — and this has been raised on so many occasions with me throughout Saskatchewan — these anxieties must be addressed in the constitutional process.

As the Supreme Court of Canada has indicated in a number of cases under section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, equal treatment need not and in fact cannot always mean identical treatment. Similarly, if recognition of Quebec as a distinct society is part of the price of Confederation, Canadians outside of Quebec need to be reassured that the clause, if incorporated into the constitution, will not affect the position of those outside of Quebec.

I do not see any intent within the federal proposals to extend the application of the provision outside of Quebec, but nor is it made clear. Doing so may provide comfort to Canadians in accommodating the aspirations of those Canadians within Quebec that are not affecting their own position.

Now on Senate reform. And I do hope people will bear with me here because I'm trying to prove a point in this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And so I come up with a proposal that I would like simply for people to understand that I did believe there was a way of addressing the concern of equal.

Most Canadians see recognition of Quebec's uniqueness and the transference of legislative authority to give further content to that uniqueness as watchwords in the current constitutional debate. Most, I believe, are prepared to accept this in some form to preserve the unity of Canada. If however the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society and the exercise of additional powers are part of that province's self-fulfilment, the desire of other parts of

Canada to participate more fully in the exercise of federal powers which now inordinately rest in the hands of two provinces is equally legitimate.

I return to the analogy of the family with which I started this presentation. A family cannot survive if the smaller or weaker of its members are not equitably treated. Equality is the foundation upon which familial relationships are maintained.

To many Canadians, and not exclusively western Canadians, a Triple E Senate has come to represent the mechanism whereby the inordinate power exercised by central Canada over matters of national importance may be influenced by the less populated regions of the country. Just as it is a legitimate concern for Quebecers to say that in matters of particular concern to them, Quebec should exercise power disproportionate to its numbers, so too is it legitimate that in many matters in respect to which the federal parliament has jurisdiction, less populated provinces of Canada have interests which are not reflected in simple proportion to their population.

Now the first E in Senate reform is elected. If reformed, the Senate must be elected. The details and timings of elections can be debated at another time. While the federal proposals purport to speak to the two other aspects of the Triple E Senate, both the equality of the representation and the effectiveness of the power to be exercised by the House are seriously diluted by those in those proposals.

Now the Government of Canada and the province of Ontario oppose the idea for a Senate that distributes amongst the provinces an equal number of seats. And the federal government has given a reason for this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The federal government suggests that a more equitable representation must be achieved that will take into account what they call Canada's linguistic reality or duality.

The nearly eighty-fold difference in provincial populations was their second concern — the smaller number of provinces, the need for aboriginal representation, and the method of election of the House of Commons. The government, in other words, argues that a Triple E style Senate will not meet any of those aforementioned aims.

Now it is correct that a Senate that allots seats equally among the provinces will not account for the great differences in population. Representation by population, however, is the basis for the distribution of seats in the House of Commons. If there were to be an equal distribution of seats in the Senate, this principle could be purified. Certain provinces would lose seats and the more populated ones would gain.

For making this compromise — it was the reverse, actually — the less populated provinces could receive the benefit of an equal distribution of Senate seats among the provinces. And strangely enough, the federal proposals do not suggest that the need for equality among provinces should be taken into account in any distribution of Senate seats.

This factor must be addressed, for the lack of it is precisely what continues to drive regionalism. It is generally and I would say mistakenly accepted that an equal distribution of Senate seats cannot account for the linguistic duality of Canada. And I'm far from convinced that this be the case. The following is but one illustration of how I think that this can be accomplished.

If all provinces were granted 10 seats in the Senate, a portion of the seats from certain provinces could be allocated to francophones. The province of Quebec, with 10 seats, would allocate eight to its francophone majority, or conversely, two to its non-francophone minority. In addition, three seats from New Brunswick, one seat from Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta could be reserved for francophones. These 16 francophone members could then be given a veto power over matters concerning the French language and culture and redistribution that might reduce their number.

The equal division of seats between the francophones of Quebec and those from outside Quebec would recognize the true dual nature of the French community in Canada. It would give francophones outside of Quebec a role in promoting their own community and their own language. Instead of leaving their survival in the hands of others, they would be empowered to protect themselves. To this formula for the Senate might be added one seat for each territory and representation of native peoples could be accommodated. Ten aboriginal members would bring the total number of senators to 112.

Now admittedly the foregoing does not account for all possible divisions within Canadian society. While there are many divisions in our Canadian society, the regional, aboriginal, and linguistic divisions pose the most serious threat to the continued survival of the dominion. Unlike these divisions, the remainder can likely be accommodated by political means through our political parties.

Now I don't pretend that the formula outlined is necessarily perfect. It does however illustrate that the divisions that have given rise to the current impasse, I believe can be accommodated within reformed federal institutions. If the principal central institutions are strengthened by ensuring that concerns beyond central Canada are better represented, there may be more willingness in the rest of the country to see the powers of the federal government strengthened, which rests at the heart of other aspects of the federal proposals which I will not comment on this afternoon.

(1630)

Of course one other thing that I would like to spend some time speaking on but shall not this afternoon, is the paramount E that deals with effective. The other two E's about which I have spoken really become moot if we cannot define what roles the Senate will have. And I will hope that we can have further discussions on this at a future date.

Aboriginal self-government. Now at the beginning I indicated that it would be a travesty if we were to let the

next generation down by in effect squandering 125 years of nation building. To do so is as inexcusable as the squandering of most precious natural resources. This said, if there were one member of the Canadian family which has been systematically excluded from sharing in the political and economic prosperity which Canada has by and large enjoyed, it is the country's first nations. In fact the treatment of aboriginal peoples is such that often they do not even consider themselves part of the Canadian family.

I accept that behind the federal proposals lies a genuine intent to alleviate this historic irony. I believe that most Canadians agree with the goal of the inherent right to self-government. Many Canadians are, however, apprehensive. They're apprehensive about recognizing what is presently an undefined concept and which will be and is termed a judiciable right in 10 years. This is a legitimate concern, particularly given the recent history of impasse which has characterized all of the constitutional negotiations.

While the concern for the unknown is legitimate and palls in the face of the present known, the *status quo* is unacceptable, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe that recognition of the right of self-government will focus efforts on giving that concept a defined and exercisable content.

In the event full agreement is not reached, perhaps first recourse should not be made to the courts but to a special tribunal. It should be possible to negotiate the process for future negotiations which will flush out the concept fully of self-government during the present round of these constitutional deliberations.

The details about the content of the right to self-government and the process of future negotiations to give content to it may be subject to negotiation in the present round of the negotiations. Aboriginal leaders, for example, have railed against a lengthy wait and the outcome of uncertain negotiations. Recognition and entrenchment of the right is as legitimate as the demand by other Canadians that their dreams and aspirations be realized within this Confederation.

I have attempted to be quite limited in my comments, and I hope that I've been positive as well. Canadians don't just want their leaders to be successful in these deliberations; they're counting on them to succeed. And we cannot be allowed to fail in our endeavour. Now I'm not prepared to tell our children and our children's children that our generation was so preoccupied with self that we sacrificed our family of Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in family therapy the process of facilitating healthy change in a dysfunctional or an unhappy family begins with all family members being heard, and each position must be fully understood. And that's whether we're talking about the concerns of the youngest or the oldest, the quietest or the loudest, the weakest or the strongest.

And when improvement begins to take place in a family, it is common for family members to become frightened by the changes that are occurring, and in fact each person

tries to cling to the old ways. It's interesting that regardless of how miserable they feel, the *status quo* feels safer because it's familiar.

For those families who persist in getting to the bottom of their problems, the rewards can be very great. Individuals move from their entrenched positions in order to empower others in their family, and the result is stronger, healthier individuals and a stronger, healthier family unit. Each brother and sister is still unique. All have grown and hopefully will continue to do so because they've learned a new way to relate to one another. All have grown and hopefully will continue to do so because they have a genuine new understanding and concern for one another. And this does not preclude the possibility of needing further therapeutic intervention in the future.

Well I believe that Canada is a family in crisis. I do not view Quebec as one spouse who is no longer interested in staying married to the other spouse, namely the rest of Canada. Rather I see each province as a sister or brother of varying strength and age and individual concerns and that the task at hand is to provide a framework whereby each sibling has an opportunity to express itself openly. Most importantly, each sister and brother must be carefully listened to and truly heard. I do not consider the constitutional exercises, like some, to be a waste of time. Instead I see this as an amazing opportunity for our Canadian family to learn about itself, for it to become more enlightened and adjusted, more fair and conciliatory. And the result of this amazing process is that by rising to the challenge, we may become a model for future nations who will face similar struggles.

I would like to conclude by saying that I have appreciated the opportunity afforded me to speak today. And I wish to lend my support to the Premier — first, in his move to deal with section 121; secondly, in protecting transfer payments; thirdly, in his desire for provincial input, particularly into federal decisions of international treaties; fourthly, I very much agree that the amending formula, section 42, is far too restrictive, and highly endorse the seven provinces' 85 per cent suggestion.

I would also like to add to the words of the opposition that I wish to state my fervent belief in a referendum for Saskatchewan people. We need to encourage people that they live in a participatory democracy. And by allowing them to take part in a referendum, they would understand that they truly do.

I think that I might be able to find further words to express why we should keep Canada together. Perhaps I could find a lot of ideas about perhaps how we could even achieve that success. But I know that I would never be able to find the words to explain and to justify how one enviable nation stopped caring about one another. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 32 — An Act to amend The Public Trustee Act

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am

pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Public Trustee Amendment Act, 1992.

This Act is being amended in three ways. First, the amount that the public trustee may pay or authorize to be paid to a responsible adult on behalf of a child is increased from \$2,000 to \$10,000. Responsible adults will be required to use this money only in the best interests of the child. As more funds are administered by responsible adults, the public trustee can reduce the number of trust accounts it administers and this will reduce the demand on limited resources in the public trustee's office.

Under the current legislation, 30 days notice must be given to the public trustee before legal proceedings can be commenced or continued against a person who is named in a certificate of incompetence under the The Mentally Disordered Persons Act if a property guardian or personnel guardian has not been appointed. The second amendment clarifies that the notice to the public trustee is not required once a certificate of incompetence lapses pursuant to The Mentally Disordered Persons Act.

The third amendment will continue the public trustee's consent for homestead transactions if the public trustee acts for an infant or has been appointed property guardian. This amendment reflects proposed amendments which will delete the requirement for the land title system to enforce compliance with The Homesteads Act, 1989.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments permit parents and other responsible adults increased access to funds held by the public trustee, subject to an increased legal onus to use the money only in the best interests of the child.

They also clarify that the public trustee's consent is required for homestead transactions, subject to proposed amendments to The Homesteads Act and notice to the public trustee is not required once a certificate of incompetence lapses.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend The Public Trustee Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1645)

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've listened to the minister's comments with interest. We have a few questions with regard to this Bill and would like to take some more time to review it, so we would now move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 33 — An Act to amend The Land Titles Act

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Land Titles Amendment Act, 1992. This amendment will permit land titles registrars to process estate land transactions if a certificate of no infants is presented from either the local registrar of the Surrogate Court or the

Public Trustee.

A certificate stating that no infant has an interest in the estates is required before a state land can be administered by personal representatives. Presently the registrar can only accept the certificate from the Public Trustee. This amendment will assist executors and administrators of estates by permitting them to obtain a certificate from the Surrogate Court immediately after their appointment, rather than from the Public Trustee.

The Public Trustee will issue certificates if infants cease to have an interest in an estate, for example, when an infant becomes an adult with full capacity to consent to transactions affecting estate lands.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Land Titles Act.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The opposition has reviewed this, and we would have no problem with letting this move into committee.

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

Bill No. 34 — An Act to amend The Mentally Disordered Persons Act

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Mentally Disordered Persons Amendment Act, 1992, which I referred to in remarks respecting the previous Bill.

These amendments provide that a certificate of incompetence lapses one year from its date of issue unless proceedings are underway to appoint a property guardian, a guardian has been appointed, or the Public Trustee is acting as property guardian.

Certificates of incompetence held by the Public Trustee's office will lapse on Royal Assent being given to the Act, provided that a property guardian is not appointed. Certificates of competence will not be required once a certificate of incompetence lapses.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend The Mentally Disordered Persons Act.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Once again the opposition has reviewed the Bill and would have no problem letting it move into committee.

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

Bill No. 37 — An Act to amend The Automobile Accident Insurance Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — On completion of these remarks I intend to move second reading of The Automobile Accident Insurance Act. But before I do that, I want to say that The Automobile Accident Insurance Act which is contained in the Bill are necessary to provide for payment of vehicle registration fees and basic insurance premiums by instalments. The members opposite will

know that this is not a new concept or a new phenomena, but only puts in legislation which had been done for some time and is very much of a housekeeping nature. So I would expect that the opposition members would have little problem in supporting the Bill.

I'm going to take a few minutes to provide for the members some of the background as to why this legislation is needed now. SGI has been offering a two-payment plan for private vehicles and farm truck registration fees and basis insurance since July 1, 1991. The program has proved to be popular, with over 20 per cent of the fees and premiums for eligible vehicles now being paid, Mr. Speaker, by two instalments.

Unfortunately the previous administration told SGI to go ahead and offer the two-payment plan without bothering to make the required amendments to The Automobile Accident Insurance Act. We now have a situation where the two-payment plan has been operating for nearly a year and is well received by vehicle owners but has operated without the proper legislative authority. This Bill will correct that problem by giving SGI the authority it needs to offer instalment payment options to Saskatchewan vehicle owners.

The two-payment plan for licensing private and farm vehicles is an option that has been chosen by many of Saskatchewan's vehicle owners. About 15,000 vehicles' licence are being paid for in this way every month. It is important service provided by SGI which is part of an ongoing effort by our Crown corporations and in fact this insurance company to make the process of licensing vehicles as convenient as possible. It must be legitimized now by legislation, and I would ask all members to support the Bill.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move second reading of The Automobile Accident Insurance Act.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the opposition will not be preventing this Bill from moving forward in the House but we do have some concerns with it. The concept of a split premium payment is a good idea, Mr. Speaker, as some people do not have the funds available at one particular moment in time to pay for their total vehicle licence.

One of the things that I would like to ask the minister to take into consideration when he brings the Bill into committee is, is there a grace period after the premium ceases, after the premium has run out? If the premium runs out on a Sunday could he consider a grace period allowing that person to renew their licence on the following first work day without suffering a penalty?

I also have a question, Mr. Speaker, on some of the reasons why section 81(q) . . . 81(s) is in place. I was wondering, and hopefully we'll get into this, Mr. Speaker, when we go into committee, as to what the categories of persons are who may apply for such an instalment plan.

In 81(v), Mr. Speaker, we come across the word — it seems to be quite prevalent in many of the Bills being presented to this House — and that is the word deemed. And one of the questions I will be asking the minister in

committee is why it's necessary or why he would have in the Bill that a person could have deemed to have earned a portion or all of his premium on his vehicle licence. It seems a little strange to me, Mr. Speaker, that either a person has earned the return on his premium or he has not. And so why would it be necessary to deem that he has?

I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, whether or not the minister in many of these Bills is simply setting a trail for the use of the word "deemed" so that the member from Rosetown-Elrose may use it when he presents his GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) legislation to say that there is a precedent set, it having used this word so many times already in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I will use my comments and my questions in the Committee of the Whole when this Bill is presented there. Thank you.

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 1

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carson that **Bill No. 1 — An Act to amend The Clean Air Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few words I would like to say on this Bill. Mr. Speaker, this Act is to amend The Clean Air Act — as a whole, make slight improvements in some of the regulations. Most of the questions that I will have on this Bill will be asked in the Committee of the Whole, and I'm sure that there they will be taken into consideration.

However, Mr. Speaker, under clause 24(2)(i), the addition of a sliding scale of fees is not clearly defined. The purpose of implementing sliding scales for permits or renewals of permits is a little vague. I assume that the minister means by a sliding scale that it has to do with the size of an operation and the amount of pollution created by it, meaning more pollution a company emits into the air, the higher the fee it will pay in its permit.

If this is the reason for a sliding scale, it makes perfect sense. If however, the sliding scale is for any other purpose I have to question why it is needed.

Mr. Speaker, as I previously stated, I see no reason why I should ask any additional questions at this time. My questions will be asked in Committee of the Whole. I believe the Bill should be allowed to proceed at this time.

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

Bill No. 2

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the

proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carson that **Bill No. 2 — An Act to amend the Ozone-depleting Substances Control Act** be now read a second time.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I only have a few comments that I wish to make on this Bill.

We're dealing with the important matter today of the ozone-depletion substance control. This side of the House is planning to co-operate in the passage of this Bill; however we do have a couple of questions. Dealing with control orders, item (3), under section 10.2 states:

The Minister may, by a further order, replace, revoke, amend or vary a previous control order.

What appears to be the case, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister will have a *carte blanche* over control orders in question. And I know that the NDP government in the '70s enjoyed similar control, yet I don't believe this should be the case today.

The control orders and provisions have to be more clearly defined and a minister should not have the power to do whatever he or she pleases in one case and change his or her position in another — whatever suits their purpose.

In order to be fair, Mr. Speaker, these control orders should be the same for everyone involved.

Another concern, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the government setting limitations on prosecutions. Take an extreme example. Say an unscrupulous person has been . . . or continues to allow ozone-depleting substances into the environment. The person sends these substances into the atmosphere knowing full well he is breaking the rules. Should knowledge of this matter not come to light until two years after the person in question has broken the control rules, he will not be able to be prosecuted.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe anyone would doubt the person breaking the rules should pay for what he is doing. Therefore I ask that further consideration be given to the statute of limitations. I feel the time limit should be extended to cover a longer period of time, perhaps five years.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, this Bill has some fine tuning that should be taking place before it goes into effect. The Bill, we will allow now to proceed, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Bill No. 3

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carson that **Bill No. 3 — An Act to amend The Environmental Management and Protection Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to adjourn debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.