

April 28, 1993

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to present a petition. And I will read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have hundreds and hundreds of names attached from such towns as Hazenmore, Mankota, Ferland, Oxbow — indeed, Mr. Speaker, a composite of Saskatchewan indeed. And it gives me a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to put these on the Table at this time. Thank you.

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to table petitions with respect to health care today. And I will read the prayer. These petitioners are from . . . There are literally hundreds of petitioners' names here on these petitions from Bracken and from Val Marie, south-west part of the province, Orkney, Climax, more from Val Marie, more from Bracken, from Brock, Saskatchewan; and more from the south-west, a large number from Orkney.

I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I do so table.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to present petitions on behalf of petitioners from the people of Saskatchewan with regards to the health issue. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts

Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have the genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

From Grenfell, and looks like a lot of people from Oxbow and Assiniboia and in that whole area down south there. We've got several hundreds of names this morning, Mr. Speaker. And I take great pleasure in presenting them now.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a number of petitions to present. I will read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the Oxbow, Alameda, Glen Ewen, Carnduff area in the south-east; and from the south-west area, Frontier, Claydon, Climax, Val Marie, Bracken, and the south-west area. So it covers a good portion of the province, Mr. Speaker. I will table these now.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have several pages of petitions . . . names on petitions that I would like to table today, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to therefore read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners humbly pray.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out these petitions are signed by people from Frontier, Oxbow, all the way across to Cut Knife, and there are signatures from the reservations up there — Poundmaker, Sweetgrass — Aberdeen, Sask., Paynton, Cut Knife.

All of these people are asking the government the same thing — just to hold back on their . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member knows he

can't comment on the petition.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would present these.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to as well present some petitions to the Assembly, and I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions are signed by individuals from Regina, Watson, more from Watson, right across the southern and western part of the province, and I present it to the Assembly.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well have petitions with respect to health care in the province. Mr. Speaker, there are petitions here from Watson, Saskatchewan; let's see, page after page from Watson, Quill Lake, Macklin, Dodsland, St. Walburg, Morse, Herbert, Gull Lake, Eston, Dodsland, Shaunavon. Mr. Speaker, these petitions come from all over Saskatchewan. I present them now.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions and I'll read the prayer.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have them from Bracken, Shaunavon, Climax, Invermay, Rama, Margo, from Cupar, from Ferland, Mankota, from just about all over the province of Saskatchewan — Orkney, Climax, Bracken, Assiniboia, McCord. And I want to, Mr. Speaker, table these at this time.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Regarding per diems paid to members of the Legislative Assembly since November of 1991: (1) how many per diems claims were submitted

by members for "other reasons" than attendance in the legislature; (2) what was the value of those claims; and (3) what was the total value of such claims submitted by members representing constituencies in the city of Regina?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the House some very special guests who are here with us today. They are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to draw your attention to His Excellency, Tajeddine Baddou, Ambassador for Morocco, and his wife, Madame Marie-Ange Baddou.

We are very pleased to have them here with us. I understand that this is the first visit to Saskatchewan of an Ambassador from Morocco, so that makes it a very significant event. I know that Madame Baddou is very interested, I'm told, in health reform and indeed pioneered the blood transfusion system that exists in Morocco today.

His Excellency, the Ambassador, is here representing a country with whom Canada is a very important trading partner, and Morocco is one of the more important trading partners for Canada in Africa and the Middle East.

The schedule that they have is a very busy one. This morning the Ambassador met with the Lieutenant Governor and was a guest of honour at a luncheon hosted by the Associate Minister of Health. This afternoon he will meet with the Minister of Economic Development, the editorial board of the *Regina Leader-Post*, and I'm pleased that I'll have an opportunity to meet with them as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the members of the House to extend our welcome to the Ambassador and Mrs. Baddou.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me draw your attention to a number of people in your gallery as well, individuals from across the province representing the Saskatchewan Real Estate Association. And in particular I'd like to point out my brother, Dave, who works with Hallmark Realty in Saskatoon.

We'd just like to welcome them to the Assembly here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the Assembly, I would like to introduce a number of ladies in the west gallery that are here to observe the proceedings of the day. These ladies wear white ribbons, Mr. Speaker, to express their concern on Bill 38.

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member from Souris-Cannington knows well that he is out of order. I ruled on that the other day, and members are not to involve our guests from the gallery in either debates or Bills that are on floor of the Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I want, on behalf of the government, to also welcome the . . . add my words to the member from Moosomin welcoming the members of the Saskatchewan Real Estate Association to the Assembly. They've been in the building today meeting with various members on both sides of the House and I want to extend a welcome on behalf of the government as well.

But I also want to introduce to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, as I have done three times in the past, a group of public servants who are here on a tour of the building. There are 25 public servants on this particular tour from the departments of Finance, Education, Environment, Energy and Mines, Social Services, and my own Justice department, as well as the Public Service Commission.

The members of the tour will be in the building today finding out what we do and where we do it, and receiving some explanations as to the meaning of various parts of the Legislative Assembly.

So I'd like, Mr. Speaker, for members of the Assembly to welcome the civil servants to the House today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly a group of students and teachers seated in the west gallery — 74 grade 7 students from St. Alphonsus, St. Paul's, and St. Mary's schools in Yorkton, along with their teachers, Mr. Leroy Persick, Barb Zwirsky, and Steve Kozicki. One of the finest schools in Saskatchewan — I know that well, having two daughters who attend that school system.

I invite all members of the Assembly to help me cover the cost of the juice this afternoon and to join me for refreshments later in room 218.

So with that I welcome all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming the students and teachers and bus driver from Yorkton. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to members of the Assembly, Ms. Barb Byers — I'll ask her to stand — in the gallery; and Ms. Jacquie Griffiths. I'll ask her to stand as well.

I was unaware that this gentleman was going to be with us, but I'll ask Don Anderson as well to stand, if I could.

Ms. Byers is I think known to everybody to be president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. Jacquie Griffiths may not be quite as well known. She is a former member of the Workers' Compensation review committee and she was chair of the Saskatchewan federation's occupational health and safety committee.

It, I think, is timely to welcome these two people here today, Mr. Speaker. Today is the day of mourning for workers who've been killed on the job, and the Federation of Labour played a major role in having this day observed today, as it is. So I know members will join me in a particularly warm welcome to the representatives of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add my words of welcome to all the special guests already introduced today and introduce to you, and through you to other members of the legislature, a friend of mine from Hafford, Helga Fellehner. Helga is a committed mother, school board member, journalist, and soon-to-become student, and I welcome her to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to add my greetings very briefly to Jacquie Griffiths, and to thank her publicly for the work that she has done on the University of Saskatchewan campus on behalf of all the staff there in the field of occupational health and safety. I think the public of Saskatchewan owe you a real debt of gratitude, Jacquie, for your efforts there.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Rural Hospital Closures

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. I have a letter here from a very concerned individual from the town of Hazlet, and her name is Edith Mead. A recent announcement that acute care funding for the Cabri Prairie Health Care Centre will be cut after November 30 of this year will compromise the health and safety of the public in a rural district. There have been many instances where lives have been saved because of the efforts of doctors, nurses, and ambulance staff based out of our hospital. The loss of any of these professionals or program is not acceptable.

Madam Minister, Rolling Hills health care district comprises Herbert, Cabri, Gull Lake, Mankota, Ponteix, and Vanguard. It's 100 miles wide and 130 miles long. They have 12,000 people, and you left them with five and a half beds. Technically speaking, you should have given them at least 18, under a one and a half per thousand.

My question, my question to you, Madam Minister: based on the fact that you left them .39 beds per thousand, .39 beds per thousand, what kind of medical service is going to be available for these people in Vanguard, in Kincaid and Ponteix and Mankota, when the distance they have to drive will not be less than 55 and as high as 130 miles for acute care service? Can you tell us that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, for the umpteenth time in this legislature, I'll answer the question of the member.

First of all, the facilities that . . . from which in-patient acute care beds will be removed will still have emergency acute care. They will still have access to X-ray and diagnostic services in those facilities. There will still be other health care, broader health care programming that delivers other health care programs to the residents in that area. They will not have to do anything different with respect to emergency acute care, which is get stabilized and move on to a larger facility, which is what happens in virtually every case where there is a major emergency, Mr. Speaker.

Now with respect to this district, it is not yet a district. It has not determined its boundaries. It does not have a district board; it's not in place. When the district planning group comes forward with its plans . . .

An Hon. Member: — They have already done that, Madam Minister.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — And if the member opposite would listen, he wouldn't have to ask the same question more than once.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — When the planning group comes forward with its plans, we will know how many beds there will be in the district. We will know what the services will be in that area. So I think as a representative from that particular area, you may want to encourage these communities to get into a district and get the needs assessment done, so we can get on with the task of providing better health care to rural residents.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Madam Minister, they have already made application to you for that district, Madam Minister, and those hospitals have already done that.

I want to ask you another question, Madam Minister. In the very centre of that is the city of Swift Current. The city of Swift Current and three and a half municipalities comprise the Swift Current Union Hospital district. And that, Madam Minister, has about 20,000 people. They have today 78.5 or 78.6 beds which means that they have between 18 — according to your figures yesterday — 18 to 28 beds too many.

When are you going to tell the people in Swift Current that they have to reduce their hospital by 18 to 28 beds? When are you going to tell them that?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, there has not been a district board established in Swift Current and that area. This has not been done. There have been discussions going on. There have been proposals that come forward, but there is not a district board in place. The government has set out bed targets which — I've explained in this Assembly on numerous occasions — are only that. They are targets, and they are not carved in stone. They are not carved in stone. It will depend on needs. It will depend on the availability of community-based services. It will depend on what sort of district is formed.

But the members opposite blindly continue to oppose the Bill that will allow health corporations to come together and improve health care in their district. They're opposing the Bill that will be removing the union hospital levy, a \$5 million uploading to the provincial government . . . (inaudible) . . . the property tax base.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Madam Minister, the people in Mankota who are 130 miles away from Swift Current, the people who are 90 miles away from Assiniboia, or 80 from Gravelbourg are asking this question, Madam Minister. If this is budgetary driven and you're going to save all this money, they're asking this question, because they've heard it from members of your department: why did you close down Lafleche acute care beds and are planning to put \$10 million into a new hospital in Gravelbourg? That's the question they're asking me, and I want an answer from you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite know we're not putting \$10 million into a new hospital in Gravelbourg. They know that. They know that, but oh, they operate on rumours and they operate on innuendoes and they operate on misinformation and they continue to disseminate it throughout the province because that's their middle name — the Tory misinformation party.

The fact is that the members opposite are opposing legislation that not only gives property owners a break on their taxes because of the removal of the union hospital levy, but also opposes open and accountable funding practices for health boards, that requires open consultation and public health meetings. For the first time in the history of this province, this legislation is going to require health boards to have public meetings, to put forward their accounting, and to give the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question as well to the Minister of Health. And the question I have for you, Madam Minister, is based on the fact that time after time after time, you have heard the real concerns from the people of Saskatchewan, and yet, Madam Minister, you supply no answers. You have no reassurances for the people, Madam Minister. You have nothing to tell them except trust me; I know what I'm doing. That's what you're saying, Madam Minister.

But, Madam Minister, what if you're wrong? What if a child cannot get to the hospital in time? Isn't it worth, Madam Minister, taking a little bit more time, slowing down this process, listening to the people in Saskatchewan, and making sure that you have answers to the questions that these people have?

Madam Minister, there's no shame in admitting that you need more time. The people are willing to work with you; we are willing to work with you. Madam Minister, this is my question: will you postpone passage of the health legislation, postpone the closure of the 52 hospitals until the legitimate concerns of the people of Saskatchewan can be addressed? Will you do that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite . . . we are not saying, trust me. We are saying, work with us; put forward your plans; give us your ideas and suggestions in the context of the guidelines that we have set out; let's work together on that. And we're prepared to do that.

Now with respect to whether somebody can get to a hospital on time. I have said again earlier today, yesterday, the day before, for the last two weeks — yes, these are very slow learners — the emergency acute care will be available in those communities where there are facilities wherein patient beds are removed. They will not have to drive any further to get to a hospital in order to get emergency acute care. It will be there in their communities.

What happened in the past, Mr. Speaker, will happen tomorrow, which is that if there's a major farm accident, for example, they will go to the hospital; they'll be stabilized; they'll be sent on to a larger centre for surgery. That's what's happened in the past; that'll continue to happen before.

What they won't be able to do is stay in that hospital for four or five days. But in an emergency situation where major surgery is required, that doesn't happen anyway.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, there's one fundamental flaw in your reasoning. The people don't believe you. The people don't believe you — that's why we have a thousand people on the steps of the legislature and literally thousands of letters that are coming in and literally

tens of thousands of people on the petitions.

Madam Minister, they don't believe you because you told them that no hospitals would be closing. Then you closed hospitals. You told them that decisions would be made on a local basis. Then you make the decisions for them. You told the people one thing and then you did exactly the opposite.

Now I know, Madam Minister, that you are trying to emulate the Premier in the mode operandum that he follows. But the people of Saskatchewan expected more from you, Madam Minister. I have a letter here from a woman in Eston who writes simply this, a very short statement: for a minister who received an A rating back in September '92, I think you received a big red F from the people of Saskatchewan. End quote, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, will you postpone those hospital closures until some real consultation can be held? Consultations, Madam Minister, in which you will tell the people the truth?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I think the F-rating that's been received in this Assembly is visible right over there. There's the F-rating — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; that's it, 10.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the need for local boards to make . . . for boards to make local decisions, there is going to be lots of room and flexibility for local boards to come forward with plans to present, plans for programing, and to be involved in the decision-making process with respect to health reform.

The members opposite stood up in this House and said: there are tough decisions to make out there; you're passing the buck to boards; you make those decisions. That's what they were saying a few short weeks ago. Today they're saying: oh, you shouldn't be making those decisions. And a few months ago they were saying: health reform is not moving anywhere, it's too slow. And today they're saying: hold it, it's going too fast.

And what we get from the members opposite, they say: take the hospital revenue tax off, get rid of taxes on the property tax base. And then they vote against legislation to upload \$5 million from the property tax base. Totally inconsistent — that's what we get from the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, it's painfully obvious that you were not telling the truth, and what you are doing now is ramming this legislation through the legislature before the people can really appreciate what the truth is and the damage that is going to be done.

Mr. Speaker, members of your party, Madam Minister,

and members of our party were here till almost 5 o'clock in the morning last night debating this. So two parties were represented doing some work.

Now, Madam Minister, you have no idea how many facilities will be closed. You have no idea how many jobs will be lost. You have no idea what the impact is going to be on 52 communities. You have no idea which doctors will go and which will stay. And the people out there have some real, legitimate concerns about the health and safety of their families. And you have no answers, Madam Minister. But you keep charging ahead, oblivious to the concerns of the people, particularly in rural Saskatchewan.

Madam Minister, will you show some compassion to those people today? Will you postpone this legislation, and will you postpone the closure of those 52 hospitals?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, when the members opposite told their constituents and the people of Saskatchewan that hospital doors would be padlocked and we'd walk away from them, they didn't tell the truth because they knew otherwise because of questions they asked in here. When they told people there would be no emergency acute care in this hospital, they weren't telling the truth because there will be emergency acute care in those facilities. When they told the people of Saskatchewan, when they told them that they would have to drive hundreds of miles to see a doctor, half bleeding to death, they weren't telling the truth, Mr. Speaker. They were misleading the people because they knew from the answers in this House that those services were going to be provided.

And when they told the public in 1986 that they only had a deficit of some 400 million and after the election they said, whoops, it's 1.2 billion, Mr. Speaker, they did not tell the truth, and they were dishonest with the public. And that's my response to the member opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I recognize the next questioner, I want to make two points: members are getting very, very close to unparliamentary language and I ask them to please hold back a bit and get back to parliamentary language; and secondly, please let's stop the interruptions either when the question is asked or when the minister is trying to answer. Order. Every time you interrupt there'll be more time taken off.

SEDCO Appointments

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic Development, although recently, Mr. Speaker, the only thing the minister has been developing is a healthy list of employment opportunities for NDP (New Democratic Party) Party hacks at the public

expense.

Mr. Minister, in November of last year in an article headlined: From the Minister's Mouth — appeared in *Sask Report* — when the reporter asked you directly if there would be any political patronage in SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation), you said, and I quote:

What we have done with SEDCO since the election is indicate there will be no political influence on the board or management by any politician or board member. This is absolute and clear.

Mr. Minister, given this statement, how can you possibly justify hiring your personal friend, your associate, your former political employee, and long-time NDP supporter as vice-president of SEDCO? Because the only thing, Mr. Minister, that is absolute and clear, is that is political patronage, what you did.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. I want to thank the member from Kindersley for the courtesy of that question after having been informed that the minister was suffering from laryngitis. Thank you for your courtesy.

I want, Mr. Speaker, I want to make a comment before I speak to . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I know the member from Estevan would really like to get up and ask a question, but I think he's got to consult with his caucus.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, the approach of the opposition to the area of SEDCO is strange indeed. Firstly, they are very critical of SEDCO for losses which they themselves triggered with their own hare-brained schemes. Then they are even more vehemently critical of us as we try to clean up the mess.

Let me turn to Mr. Zach Douglas. Mr. Zach Douglas is a person who has worked for the provincial government in the '70s; he has worked for the federal government; he has been in private business. After all that was under his belt, he then went back to university and got a law degree.

I say to members opposite, if you had appointed people of this quality to SEDCO, we wouldn't have the mess to clean up that we do now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With answers like that, I'm not surprised you don't have laryngitis as well, sir.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Minister, yesterday you were caught firing capable people from SEDCO in order to make

room for political appointments, political friends.

I watched the minister's performance on the 6 o'clock news last night, and because of your . . . and trying to defend his actions. And it was just absolutely sorrowful, your performance, the type of performance you put on. Perhaps, perhaps, Mr. Minister, you should take some pointers from the Premier, who is far better at telling several different versions of the truth than you are.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Perhaps, Mr. Minister, you could rise in the Assembly and give your solemn pledge, as the Minister of Justice did last fall when he said he will be making . . . he said, we will be making appointments in the best interests of all people, not in the best interests of our political friends.

These comments, Mr. Minister, ring very hollow today after we've seen your recent actions. Perhaps, perhaps, Mr. Minister, you could renew your pledge with respect to political patronage to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Members opposite should have little difficulty recognizing a sorrowful experience. They've been engaging in that over the last six weeks.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the appointments, I would point out to the members opposite, as they well know but choose to ignore, these were appointments made by the very able chairman, Susan Strelieff, who is president of SEDCO.

They include Michael Fix. These appointments, as well, include Brent Krajewski . . .

An Hon. Member: — Krajewski.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Krajewski. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Next question. Next question.

Government Tendering Practices

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will be to the minister responsible for Gaming. But I would say to the members of the treasury benches over there, they should at least pronounce the name of their employees right.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Minister responsible for Gaming in the province, you had the courage last Thursday to get up and answer a question which you had taken notice of. It would have been far more impressive, Mr. Minister, had you provided the thoughts and the answers on the actual question that was asked, though.

The question asked was: why was the photocopying tender and so many other government tenders subject to closed bidding? Now why aren't those bids open publicly, Mr. Minister, as they have been in the past and as tenders should be? And how can you call this an open process when the bids are opened behind closed doors, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to the Leader of the Opposition's question, let me point out that the request for proposals came through within the neighbourhood of 2,800 different options. As I indicated in my note to him, that the Property Management Corporation wanted the time and the opportunity to assess the different proposals. There were proposals for leases. There were proposals for lease purchases, and there were proposals for straight-out purchases.

And I indicate to you, sir, that there were 2,800 different options that they were going to assess. Now after the assessment process is complete, these results would be open to any of the people who put forth a proposal to have a look at the winners, and that is the process that was chosen. It was a fair and it was an advertised operation, and I think the member knows quite clearly that it is a fair process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, you know full well what the public are saying about that process. They don't like it. That's why they're calling the opposition and saying that this government is closed, after all the promises that you made. I mean, Mr. Minister, this is like having an election where everyone gets to vote but only you get to go behind the closed doors and count the votes and then come out and tell us who won. Mr. Minister, no one in this province would consider that to be an open and fair election. No one in this province thinks that that is an open and fair tendering process, Mr. Minister.

In today's paper we see how your government has been caught trying to hide information by its own freedom of information laws for the second straight year. That's the commissioner's words, Mr. Minister. Now you're trying to hide by instituting this highly unethical practice of opening bids behind closed doors. Would you change it, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that he knows full well that this proposal was advertised in all of the major papers across this province.

We invited the major suppliers of photocopiers to put forth proposals with respect to leases, with respect to lease purchases, and with respect to an option of outright purchases. He knows full well we were asking them to put their best foot forward, to put forth a proposal that could be reviewed by the Property Management Corporation so that we could assess which in fact was the best value for the dollars that the

people of Saskatchewan would spend for those products. He knows full well that the invitation was open.

He knows full well, as I've indicated to him, that there were about 2,800 different options that government was reviewing. And after the review process is complete, Mr. Speaker, I indicate to the member one more time, that all of the people who had put forth a proposal are more than willing to look at all of the different options and have a look at the ones that we accepted and have a look at the ones we rejected.

We do not operate like that former administration did, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that believes in fair and open tendering, and you will see that process continue throughout the term of this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, if you were truly open, you'd be out there trying to help people instead of doing things behind closed doors. You guys spent so much time covering up tracks, that's what people are upset about. Your minister of SEDCO appoints his hack and then has to go out and cover it up in front of the media.

The Premier makes speeches in New York about farm income and then has to come in here and cover up his tracks. The Deputy Premier breaks the freedom of information rules. Mr. Minister, it's the covering up of all these dubious things that have people upset.

We just had a spraying contract in this legislature brought up — \$150,000 shot because you went to the top bidder, Mr. Minister.

Now why do you continue to hide behind closed doors if, you as you say, there's nothing to hide. Why don't you end this questionable practice? Stand on your feet today and say there will not be another tender opened behind closed doors in this province. Do that, sir.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition, that from any other political party or any other political organization, a question in good faith may have some credibility, but not from that opposition, not from that member who was part and parcel of the most corrupt administration in the history of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I say to you, Mr. Speaker, this is not a government that will cut loan deals on a golf course for \$100,000 for friends of a government. This is not that kind of a government.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, this is not the kind of a government who will allow a chief executive officer, without the authorization of a board, to cut an over \$4

million deal, a contract, for a service that may not be even produced by the contractor. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that this government is committed to an open, and we're committed to an honest, tendering system, as was done with respect to the photocopy tender that was put out by Property Management Corporation. And I say shame on that member for even standing up in this legislature and talking about fairness.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Day of Commemoration

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on the day of mourning to ask the Assembly to join with me in recognizing workers in Saskatchewan who have been killed or injured on the job. I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that for this issue it seems we can set aside our partisan differences. I see members of all political parties in the Assembly recognizing this day by the badge they wear.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's rate of workplace accidents and deaths is higher than it should be. In the last year, 19 workers lost their lives to workplace accidents, and a total of 32,447 claims were filed with the Workers' Compensation Board; 12,000 of those claims were lost-time injuries.

While it's not possible to prevent every accident from occurring, I believe that the province's Occupational Health and Safety Act has not gone as far in the past as it should have to protect workers' health and their lives. Aside from the horrible human cost of death and serious accidents, there is also a financial cost to the workers' compensation fund.

I will later, Mr. Speaker, under the appropriate place in routine proceedings, be giving first reading to amendments to The Occupational Health and Safety Act to strengthen the protection given to employers and make the workplace more safe. I will also, Mr. Speaker, under the same item get into some amendments to the workers' compensation legislation which will make the whole scheme much more fair for workers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Before concluding, Mr. Speaker, I want to note one fact, and that is someone who more than anyone else was author of this particular day. The member from Moose Jaw Palliser was one of the first members in my memory to actually see a private members' Bill passed in the House. That was done. And Saskatchewan thereupon became the first province in Canada to recognize a day of mourning — something, Mr. Speaker, that I might add to the considerable credit of that member, has spread across Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I know all members will want to join with me in recognizing this day and in paying homage to the workers that it represents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed sad to see, Mr. Speaker, such an important issue being used as a partisan political tool by members of the government. Mr. Speaker, today we mark our respect and compassion for injured workers. And I want to say that I believe it is very important for us to do this at this time. Much work is very dangerous, Mr. Speaker, and as a society becomes more complex when we consider the dangers that are out in our society . . . And here I'm thinking of everything from nurses who are subject to physical assault to computer technicians being exposed to potential harmful emissions.

I think of people in the town of Coronach who will be working in the SaskPower facilities producing the electricity for the people of Saskatchewan, now facing accidents with no hospital, at a cost of life and limb.

But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that in our province the most dangerous occupation continues to be agriculture. Farming is not only a high-risk business economically, it is a high-risk work in terms of health and safety. And while we must continue to do all that we can to promote and enhance safety among the blue-collar workers, I am convinced that there is not near enough effort by government to enhance the health and safety of those who work in agriculture in our province.

And I must say that it is sad indeed that we may see the facilities from farm accidents increasing over the next several years as immediate emergency assistance becomes ever harder to obtain with the closure of many rural hospital facilities. These are real issues and they must not be swept aside in partisan bickering.

Mr. Speaker, while farmers go into spring seeding, I implore them to exercise every caution. And I say to them, please be careful in the next weeks as you become overtired and anxious to make your living.

I specifically wish to communicate to workers around the province in the coalmines and on the oil rigs, by the assembly line, or in front of the furnace: please make yourself aware of the risks of the workplace that you're in and take the necessary precautions.

I also want to make the observation, Mr. Speaker, that far too often government sets workers' safety issues up as an area of confrontation between the workers and the employers, and all of our people should understand that this is just not the case.

The average employer in the province of Saskatchewan is actually concerned for his workers' safety. Aside from the fact that our business community is a mirror reflection of our working community — good, decent people — aside from that, Mr. Speaker, the employer who is not concerned

for his worker is an employer that will not long be in business.

So let us not use this occasion to create division but to urge all people to work together to improve safety, prevent accidents, and to enhance the conditions of work for all. To those families that have suffered from work-related injuries, our heart goes out to them. God be with you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Does the member from Saskatoon Greystone have leave to respond?

Leave granted.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise and add my few remarks regarding injured workers day. We all long for the day when workplaces are without the perils of accidents and injuries, and we should strive to avoid situations where employees, men and women with families to support and loved ones who rely upon them, are placed in unnecessary danger.

To accomplish this it would seem appropriate that government would become its own example, and projects like the Shand power station and the NewGrade Energy upgrader were significant government projects, Mr. Speaker. Both of these unfortunately involved serious workplace accidents.

On this solemn day I am equally concerned, as voiced by my colleague, for the many farm families of our province — families who are approaching a season filled with endless hours of work. And statistics show that there are five times the number of accidents and injuries amongst farm families in our province compared to any other occupation that exists in Canada. A serious risk indeed.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, we grieve for those who have lost loved ones and for those whose quality of life has been diminished by having to cope with the effects of injuries. And to those people we say: courage, our prayers and concerns are with you as you struggle with your challenges and sorrows.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you. I'm going to ask for leave, Mr. Speaker, to revert to introduction of guests. So I'll do that first.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you. I introduced earlier, Mr. Speaker, because I was facing her, the president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour.

All of these matters ought to be partnerships between employers and employees.

I'm very pleased to notice just behind me, I just now see Del Robertson of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce and Jim Chase of the Saskatchewan Construction Association. And the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Right, the representatives of the UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers) who are sitting in . . . the RWDSU (Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union) rather, are sitting in front of them.

I would ask members to join me in welcoming these people.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — I'd like to echo the sentiments.

The Speaker: — Does the member have leave?

Leave granted.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly want to join with the Minister of Labour. As the critic for Labour in our caucus, I want to say that we are truly happy to see Jim Chase and Del Robertson and the other folks that were introduced up in the gallery today taking in the important issues that will come before the Assembly today.

And of course the folks that represent the labour movement, we would also like to welcome them here. We're sure that in a spirit of cooperation that we can all get together and make Saskatchewan truly a better place to work in and a better place to live. Thank you for coming.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Finally, Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as I guess Acting House Leader, it's been traditional at this time . . . After the ministerial statement, it's been a tradition of past years to observe a brief moment of silence, somewhat akin to what's done on Remembrance Day, for deceased workers. I would ask for leave therefore to observe that custom again, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

The Assembly observed a moment of silence.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Dinsmore

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Dinsmore.

The division bells rang from 2:58 p.m. until 3:03 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Neudorf
Martens
Boyd

Thompson
Simard
Shillington
Atkinson
Mitchell
Upshall
Hagel
Koenker
Calvert
Murray

Yeas — 5

Toth
D'Autremont

Nays — 20

Hamilton
Johnson
Whitmore
Sonntag
Roy
Keeping
Kluz
Renaud
Langford
Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Eatonia

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Eatonia.

The division bells rang from 3:05 p.m. until 3:06 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Toth
D'Autremont

Nays — 20

Hamilton
Johnson
Whitmore
Sonntag
Roy
Keeping
Kluz
Renaud
Langford
Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Elrose

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Elrose.

The division bells rang from 3:07 p.m. until 3:08 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 7

Toth
D'Autremont
Goohsen

Swenson
Neudorf
Martens
Boyd

Nays — 19

Thompson
Simard
Shillington
Atkinson
Mitchell
Upshall
Koenker
Calvert
Murray
Hamilton

Johnson
Whitmore
Sonntag
Crofford
Keeping
Kluz
Renaud
Langford
Jess

Shillington
Atkinson
Mitchell
MacKinnon
Upshall
Calvert
Murray
Hamilton

Sonntag
Crofford
Keeping
Kluz
Renaud
Langford
Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Goodsoil

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Goodsoil.

The division bells rang from 3:09 p.m. until 3:10 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 7

Swenson
Neudorf
Martens
Boyd

Toth
D'Autremont
Goohsen

Nays — 18

Thompson
Simard
Shillington
Atkinson
Mitchell
Upshall
Calvert
Murray
Hamilton

Johnson
Whitmore
Sonntag
Crofford
Keeping
Kluz
Renaud
Langford
Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Kyle

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Kyle.

The division bells rang from 3:11 p.m. until 3:12 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 7

Swenson
Neudorf
Martens
Boyd

Toth
D'Autremont
Goohsen

Nays — 19

Thompson
Simard

Johnson
Whitmore

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Milden

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Milden.

The division bells rang from 3:13 p.m. until 3:14 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Swenson
Neudorf
Martens

Toth
D'Autremont

Nays — 19

Thompson
Simard
Shillington
Atkinson
Mitchell
MacKinnon
Upshall
Calvert
Murray
Hamilton

Johnson
Whitmore
Sonntag
Crofford
Keeping
Kluz
Renaud
Langford
Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Neilburg

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a great deal of pleasure to move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Neilburg.

The division bells rang from 3:15 p.m. until 3:16 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Swenson
Neudorf
Martens

Toth
D'Autremont
Goohsen

Nays — 18

Thompson
Simard
Shillington
Atkinson
Mitchell
MacKinnon
Upshall

Hamilton
Johnson
Sonntag
Crofford
Keeping
Kluz
Renaud

Calvert
Murray

Langford
Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Norquay

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Norquay.

The division bells rang from 3:17 p.m. until 3:18 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Swenson
Neudorf
Martens

Toth
D'Autremont
Goohsen

Nays — 18

Thompson
Simard
Shillington
Atkinson
Mitchell
MacKinnon
Upshall
Calvert
Murray

Hamilton
Johnson
Sonntag
Crofford
Keeping
Kluz
Renaud
Langford
Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Pangman

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Pangman.

The division bells rang from 3:19 p.m. until 3:20 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Swenson
Neudorf
Martens

Toth
D'Autremont
Goohsen

Nays — 19

Thompson
Simard
Shillington
Atkinson
Mitchell
MacKinnon
Upshall
Calvert
Murray
Hamilton

Johnson
Sonntag
Flavel
Crofford
Keeping
Kluz
Renaud
Langford
Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Ponteix

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Ponteix.

The division bells rang from 3:21 p.m. until 3:22 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 7

Swenson
Neudorf
Martens
Toth

Britton
D'Autremont
Goohsen

Nays — 19

Thompson
Simard
Shillington
Atkinson
Mitchell
MacKinnon
Upshall
Calvert
Murray
Hamilton

Johnson
Sonntag
Flavel
Crofford
Keeping
Kluz
Renaud
Langford
Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Smeaton

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Smeaton.

The division bells rang from 3:23 p.m. until 3:24 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Swenson
Martens
Britton

D'Autremont
Goohsen

Nays — 18

Thompson
Simard
Shillington
Atkinson
Mitchell
MacKinnon
Upshall
Calvert
Murray

Hamilton
Johnson
Sonntag
Crofford
Keeping
Kluz
Renaud
Langford
Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Spalding

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Spalding.

The division bells rang from 3:24 p.m. until 3:25 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

	Yeas — 5
Swenson	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen
Britton	

	Nays — 21
Thompson	Johnson
Simard	Whitmore
Shillington	Sonntag
Atkinson	Crofford
Mitchell	Harper
MacKinnon	Keeping
Upshall	Kluz
Lorje	Renaud
Calvert	Langford
Murray	Jess
Hamilton	

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Gull Lake

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud today to move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Gull Lake.

The division bells rang from 3:26 p.m. until 3:27 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

	Yeas — 4
Swenson	Britton
Martens	Goohsen

	Nays — 22
Thompson	Johnson
Simard	Whitmore
Shillington	Sonntag
Atkinson	Scott
Mitchell	Crofford
MacKinnon	Harper
Upshall	Keeping
Lorje	Kluz
Calvert	Renaud
Murray	Langford
Hamilton	Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Ituna

Mr. Goohsen: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Ituna.

The division bells rang from 3:28 p.m. until 3:29 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

	Yeas — 5
Swenson	Britton
Devine	Goohsen

Martens

	Nays — 18
Thompson	Hamilton
Simard	Whitmore
Shillington	Sonntag
Atkinson	Scott
Mitchell	Crofford
MacKinnon	Keeping
Upshall	Kluz
Calvert	Langford
Murray	Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Invermay

Mr. Goohsen: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Invermay.

The division bells rang from 3:30 p.m. until 3:31 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

	Yeas — 5
Swenson	Britton
Devine	Goohsen
Martens	

	Nays — 18
Thompson	Hamilton
Simard	Serby
Shillington	Whitmore
Atkinson	Sonntag
Mitchell	Scott
MacKinnon	Crofford
Upshall	Keeping
Calvert	Kluz
Murray	Langford

Bill No. 55 — An Act to amend The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to move first reading of a Bill to amend The Workers' Compensation Act.

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

Bill No. 56 — An Act respecting Occupational Health and Safety

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting The Occupational Health and Safety Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 3 — An Act respecting Health Districts

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a motion that the Bill be read a third time and passed under its title.

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am receiving a great deal of public support to speak against this Bill. And unfortunately we only have 20 minutes because we are limited in our time to debate on behalf of people because, for whatever reason, the NDP administration is afraid to listen to the people and is hiding behind closure. They won't let the people debate it or provide alternative suggestions.

And particularly in this Legislative Assembly they've decided now this Assembly isn't even for debate on real issues. And this is a fairly real issue. It has the lives at stake and the families at stake and the communities at stake. And the NDP says, no it's not really important. It's only health care and it's only your community and it's only your life, but we won't debate it. We'll cut you off.

I raise that despite the fact that I only have 19 minutes left to speak because I just find it deplorable that we're going to address this Bill, under these conditions, that has such wide and sweeping possible changes, and there's absolutely no guarantee that they know what they're doing.

The government plan just might not work. People might experience increased risk of life and limb, and clearly their communities could be in severe danger. And what if this doesn't work? What will happen to these communities? What will happen to their livelihoods?

I've put together, Mr. Speaker, a combination of some of the items that the NDP administration has done to communities and how they are beginning to feel. Because it's more than just the wellness plan that is in this Bill. It is an entire strategy of centralization and control and an attack on communities where people have lived since they've homesteaded at the turn of the century. And most interestingly, it's the smaller, more vulnerable communities.

A lady put it to me this way. She said, how would you feel if these people who wanted centralization and control did the following. How would you feel if you were living in a rural community and you thought you had universal health care and you thought that you had a good, supportive, compassionate government, and you voted for that party that said that it was going to stick up for health care and stick up for rural people and stick up for public employees, and this is what's happened to you?

And she read it to me and she said, how would you feel if first they took away the children's dental plan, then they took away our dental plan, then they took

away our optometric and our chiropractic coverage, then they took away our prescription drug plan, then they took away the insulin and oxygen coverage, then they decided to close my hospital, then they took away the local jobs, because then they took away my doctor. And because there was no doctor, they took away employees that are working in labs. And then they took away the pharmacist. And then they took away the roads that were paved. And then as we've seen, well we'll take away the bus service. And then they will take away the schools.

And the NDP member from Humboldt says, this is a fairy tale. Every single, solitary one of these items that this lady has mentioned to me has been enacted by the NDP — every one of them.

Then they took away from my seniors. They not only took away the comfort of health care and acute care and seniors' care, but they took away the seniors' heritage program for low income people. And then they took away the seniors' home because people would not retire in the community. Then they took away my farm support programs. And obviously they've taken away GRIP (gross revenue insurance program). They've taken away any sort of harmonized tax benefits for agriculture and small business.

And then she says, Mr. Speaker, and finally they just took away the town. And then she added, what is left for you to take? What's left after you've done all those things? What more could you do to them? And then she remembered, oh yes, now you could take away my riding and take away my vote.

Now what a tragedy. Because every one of these items that this lady has given to me has taken place by the NDP, the NDP who say they are from the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and who have compassion, want universal health care, help farmers, help public employees, and they've attacked every single, solitary thing that this woman has said. And that's her very life since her parents homesteaded there.

And she said, at the very end, after you've taken away all these services and closed my hospital, closed the school, ripped up the roads, taken away the bus service, taken away my farm support programs, and I've lost my senior citizens' home because there's no confidence at all for seniors to retire there without help and without doctors, then you finally take away my town.

And she said, and what's left? What's left? Well I guess they could take away the riding because there won't be the people, and then we won't have the vote. They've taken away our franchise; that's what's left.

Here is an NDP administration who says this is the wellness model and they've taken away everything. And finally when there's nobody left, they can say, well for centralization and control purposes, we'll take away your vote. There's only a handful of people there. They don't count. Obviously they moved to Alberta or moved some other place or moved to the

city.

And then she went on. So if this is the plan for rural Saskatchewan, because all these things have taken place and costs have certainly increased, then she says, how are we doing? Well I'll tell you, I provided her with the information that is in the newspapers and I said, well in the farm community, their income this year is supposed to be net \$5,000. In fact they almost get twice as much income off the farm as they do on the farm now in the province of Saskatchewan under the NDP administration, and no support.

And if you go into the cities, Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* had it published very clearly, what have you got? — 450 per cent increase in those going to food banks. Retail sales are down. Number of people on welfare is up 18 per cent. The business community is saying it's worse than we thought — much, much worse. The NDP non-plan, or now it's being revealed as centralization control, is devastating.

And when we want to talk about it and tell them about their mistakes and go through what they've done, they say no, we'll just hush you up in the legislature because maybe we'll cut off your franchise out in the country, maybe you won't be able to get your vote.

But even if you did make it in here, let me tell you folks what they do. They limit your time to speak on something as important as your community or health care or GRIP or farm support or taxation. In the last session we even had a minister of Finance who stood in his place and would not even answer questions when he wanted interim supply. First time it's ever happened in Saskatchewan legislature.

Last time we were in here they voted even without the opposition. They said, we don't need opposition, we'll just do it our way. Never ever happened before. But under this bunch it happens.

(1545)

So even if you happen to get elected, they just cut you off in here too. Arrogant, deceiving, and now betrayal. The NDP administration has betrayed people, rural and urban, so that unions are upset; pensioners are upset; farmers are angry; taxpayers are angry; Indian and native people, frustrated and angry; the business community, no confidence; the bond rating institution says you got a BBB.

So who are you pleasing? What's happening here that we have to be in such a hurry for your grand plan? Isn't it ironic that they have to cut off debate because they're so proud of their plan. They're not proud of it. They just want to get it done. And as the Associate Minister of Health said, well we don't have all the answers, but after we do this a while it'll kind of work out. We'll know a little bit better how it's going to work.

That's what they got for the people. I can remember asking them, do you have a plan? Mr. Member from Riversdale, do you have a plan? What will you do if

you get elected? You promised big tax cuts and lots of money for health and education. How will you do it, sir? Oh I don't have to tell you; I'll just, he said, I'll just manage a little bit better, and I'll open the books and everything will be fine.

He opened the books, and he found the same deficit that we had. And then he went on to say, well I'll do it my way. And if we had a farm protection program, he'd take it away. If we opened a hospital, he'd close it. If we initiated a development program, he'd cut it off. If we say harmonize, he'd do the opposite.

And what have we got? We've got people writing in saying, how would you feel if they took away your child's dental plan and took away your prescription drug plan, took away your support, took away your doctor, took away your hospital, took away your nursing home, then took away your pension plan, and took my school and your senior citizens' home, your farm support programs, they took away your children because they moved, and finally they took away your town. How would you feel?

What's left to take? Just your vote. Just your franchise. Just your hope. Because as sure as I'm standing here, Mr. Speaker, there will be an excuse come from the Premier's office — well for efficiency reasons and because the population has gone down in rural Saskatchewan due to the wellness program, we will have to take away rural ridings. And we'll have to cut them probably by 10. So people won't get a chance to vote against the NDP administration because that's the excuse they used to take away the GRIP program, the excuse they used to close 52 hospitals.

And believe me, they're closing. The hospital is gone. The doctor is gone. Don't let the Minister of Health or the Premier give you the New York line that, oh the door is still open and there'll still be something going on there. Well it ain't a hospital. And it ain't a doctor. And they'll drive hundreds of miles.

Well it's pathetic that we have to be here under a time constraint to look at this massive social engineering for centralization and control done by a socialist government. Bring everything to the middle. Control all the boards. Control all the people. Tell them, tell them that they're doing it for themselves.

And I'll tell you, they're fooling nobody. Look what the *Star-Phoenix* says, Mr. Speaker. It's a farce. That's what it says. They'd get much higher marks if he just told the truth. The local people have nothing to do with this, absolutely nothing.

And the paper, in the editorial, which generally are pretty supportive of the NDP, says your tactics are a farce. In other words, it says you're not telling the truth. You're not fooling anybody. This is the New York story. The New York story is, oh yes, we're doing this, and we have great popular support. And oh yes, by the way, says the Premier, quoted in CP (Canadian Press), farm income is way up. People are happy with the hospitals closing. Oh, it's very nice.

Well that isn't what the editorial says. The editorial says that you're not telling the truth, and it's a farce. That's what the NDP whole wellness model is.

And the second farce is that you have to rush through this House to get on with it when you know that it's full of all this risk and all these mistakes. Because what if somebody doesn't make it through your health care program? What if people suffer life and liberty, risk, as a result of your program? What if towns do go through what this lady has said? It will be on your conscience and your political head.

And you don't even have the courtesy and the decency to listen to the people speak out. They drove for hundreds and hundreds of miles to the steps of the legislature here, got up at 5 in the morning. And the minister goes out to meet them, says a little speech, and comes back in here, hides in the House, and then up to her office.

And they said, well for heaven's sake, doesn't she think that we took a long time to speak to her? She said, well I've got to go for question period. Well heaven's sake. They said, if the Premier and the Finance minister can be in New York and miss question period for five days, you'd think when the people of Saskatchewan who are having their communities shut down come to this Legislative Assembly — because it is theirs, not the NDP's — that the NDP cabinet ministers responsible for this could at least stay out there and listen to their suggestions and talk to them and listen and give them suggestions on what they could do.

But no. They say one thing in New York and another thing here. They say one thing prior to an election campaign, something else different. They say something else in the country and something else in the city. They've got so many versions of the truth.

They've even got several copies that their press secretaries hand out now — a copy for the New York people, a little different copy for the Toronto people, and a little different copy for the legislature, and a little different story and a little different paper for the country.

And what is the media saying? It's a farce. It's pathetic. As if we're supposed to believe that you . . . well I just had this little trial paper in New York that didn't quite go for it. You've got a BBB and you've added 1.6 billion to the deficit and to the debt. That's more in your 16 months than we added in our last two years of our government or the first two.

So you've got more taxes, bigger taxes, broadened PST (provincial sales tax). And you've added to the debt 1.6 billion, and you've cut all these rural communities and you haven't saved enough to amount to more than 1.3 per cent of your health budget. And you have no confidence that the people believe that you know what you're doing. Because when you're asked in here to talk about it in second reading, well I kind of think if we just kind of get a crack at this we'll know a little bit better after six

months on how it's all going to work.

Imagine! Taking away your doctor and your hospital, your bus service, your roads, your farm support programs, your seniors' heritage program, your prescription drug, and you say, well I don't really know the impact on your community but give us a few months and it will probably all become clear. And then we can't talk about it.

I didn't think you'd do this. I didn't think you'd even believe anybody who would say you had to do this. You're not even saving that much money. Do you know what you're going to be into now? As I'm standing here, sure as we're shooting, you're going to be into, well, the new harmonization of the tax system. You'll broaden it even more. And oh, we'll have to harmonize; we'll have to go back on it; maybe we'll have a little wrinkle here. Probably an inheritance tax and probably just some really Draconian things that you're going to do in legislation that's going to cost the business and small business and farmers just all kinds of money.

And you're going to think this encourages the economy? Saskatchewan will have a good reputation? You'll have all these happy communities?

Listen to what the media says again: the NDP is losing credibility on health care. Well you certainly don't have it in agriculture. You don't have it in the business community. You're not known as the free enterprisers, the market people. You don't do public share offerings.

So if you don't have it in agriculture and you don't have it in the business community, and you don't have it among seniors because you took away their pension plan and took away their prescription drug plan, you don't have it among the taxpayers because you're ripping them off, and you don't have it among Indian and native people because you've been at war with them politically, and now you're losing your credibility on health care, no wonder they say that whoever designed this whole plan must have had, you know, mud up here.

That's what the paper is saying. A supportive NDP paper says the NDP is losing credibility on health care. And a little bit later it says your wellness model is a farce. And it says — this is again from the *Star-Phoenix* — if the hospital is shut down, can the school be far behind?

Well you know the rippling effect. You close your elevator. You close your school. You close your hospital. The town's gone. The church closes. Seniors won't retire there if there's no support mechanisms.

So here you are. And you say, oh that won't be the case; it'll magically survive. Agriculture is going to be really strong, and then you come to find out agriculture income is cut by 56 to 60 per cent. Well then that isn't working. So you asked yourself, what in the world have you got going for you? Why did you get elected? Why did you run? What was the reason to

run? For what, for who? For your community? Because you're going to reduce the debt? You've added to the debt \$1.6 billion. You're going to help taxes. You've raised taxes. I can't figure it out, and the people can't figure it out. What in the world are you doing? There's no rhyme or reason to this.

Your credit rating is going down. The debt's going up. Taxes are going up. Communities are going down. Population is falling. Retail sales are going down, food banks up by 450 per cent, and you've got a plan. You couldn't go for dog catcher with this unless you had just die-hards who said, well I guess I'll just go with you because oh they're . . . after months and months it will probably kind of work out.

Well do you know what it looks like? It looks like you just wanted to get elected because, well, you're on one side, and we're on the other. Just go for it, and you'll get elected, and then you get to sit on that side and play government and go to a cabinet meeting, and then you can have centralization and control because that's what you really believe in. Deep, deep down in your heart, you want centralization and control.

Then it's interesting to note, while my remarks are focused on smaller communities, the threatened changes to urban hospitals have nurses and doctors and support staff and patients and others with much anxiety. They don't think that you really know what you're doing in Prince Albert. They don't think that you really know what you're doing in the consolidation of services here where you're going to spend something like \$100 million dollars on new health care facilities here, and supposedly close one over here that the NDP built.

Wasn't it the NDP that built the Plains Health Centre? The NDP built the new Plains Health Centre for largely rural people on the edge of . . . Mr. Speaker, were you the minister? No, you weren't the minister. You would even deny it ever happened, right . . . (inaudible) . . . The Plains Health Centre, built by the NDP, now the NDP are going to close that and spend \$100 million on new facilities . . .

An Hon. Member: — They'll blame it on Walter.

Mr. Devine: — Oh they'll blame it on the media. Media must have got it wrong. And the same in Saskatoon. They don't believe you know what you're doing. Dr. Baltzan says it threatens St. Paul's very existence. These people don't know what they're doing.

Well we have, Mr. Speaker, accumulated thousands and literally tens of thousands of petitions from rural and urban people who said: please give us the time — we've read the petitions, Mr. Speaker — please give us the time to talk to you about this approach. We don't believe that you have figured it out. We don't believe that you know what you're doing necessarily. And no disrespect, these people are vote everything. They said: I want to be convinced that you know what you're doing, that you're actually saving some money, that it will actually work.

And today we're going to see third reading; we can't talk about it any more. Well believe me, Mr. Speaker, we'll be talking about it. We'll be talking about the things that I mention here today. You can shut us up in here, as I think the member from Moose Jaw something-or-other said the last time that he spoke on closure. He said: you can stop us in here but you can't stop people speaking in their homes and in restaurants and in churches and in the ball diamonds and in the hockey rinks — we'll speak.

And the people will speak as they spoke out here in the legislature and they went home more angry than they arrived, because there is no justification for what you're doing, absolutely none. You're not saving any money. You're spending \$100 million just in this city alone, in Regina, over the next five years and you might save 5 million this year and then maybe 20 thereafter if you close all 52 rural hospitals. Show us the savings.

And then you've got the Taj Mahal out here that the NDP built, the Plains Centre — you're going to close it. I don't figure out how you're going to do that if all these people are going to come to Regina because they won't have rural facilities. What are they going to do? They're going to be lined up? Where are they going to get served?

And the seniors aren't going to retire in these rural communities; they're going to have to come in here.

An Hon. Member: — No, they're going to Alberta and B.C. (British Columbia).

Mr. Devine: — Well a lot of them are going out of the province and they're going to retire in British Columbia; they're going to retire in Alberta. They're not going to retire here. And young people are saying: I never, ever would have thought the NDP were like this.

And on top of it — it's ironic — they're adding to the deficit, they're adding to the debt. They've added over a billion dollars to the debt and they won't even admit that. Not one of them will stand up and say, well yes, that's true, we added to the debt. We've added almost a billion and a half to the debt in all of our magic.

And by the time you get around to balancing the budget you'll have added several billion to the debt. And you're complaining about interest on the debt now. Well the interest on the debt will be that much bigger because of you guys and your wellness model and your agriculture model and your business model.

(1600)

In fact what the rating institutions are telling you, because they've told our people, is that they think the Saskatchewan economy is in tough shape. They think that just maybe there isn't the confidence in the business sector for reinvestment, just maybe people won't come here to spend their money, just maybe young people and businesses will leave, as they've

been doing. Maybe the farm economy won't turn around, maybe the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) stuff is not going to be resolved. And if you looked at Congress in the United States, you'd have to be pessimistic on the price of wheat.

But what if all that comes true under your model and your credit rating stays low and you add to the debt all because you wouldn't admit, you wouldn't admit that you've misled the public, that you had no idea what you were doing, and you walked into office and said, well gee, now we better figure out something; we got elected.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a sad day in this Legislative Assembly when we have to see this undemocratic process by the New Democratic Party to stop debate and to limit debate on a Bill and on a procedure that is absolutely historic in this province.

And the Premier stands up and he says, but this is historic, this is historic. Boy, he says, I'll be just like Tommy Douglas. They took it on in '44 and now me, as man from Riversdale, will take it on in '93, and I'll look just like Tommy. Isn't that . . . You listen to him. And he gets you all clapping. You say, oh yes, he'll look just like Tommy because he'll have taken on this big challenge. And what if it doesn't work? What if Tommy actually had a plan?

And the man from Riversdale, what if he didn't have one? What if he has no idea what's going to happen? And he wants to go down in history as the man who could dazzle them with all his footwork and tell them one thing in New York and another thing out here in Saskatchewan. But what if his plan to be in the history books like Tommy Douglas isn't right? What if there's no substance in the plan? What if it's just a dream of his, a personal, pie-in-the-sky dream of this man who wanted to be Premier since he was six years old?

What if that's all it's about and you are just following him anyway, and your town goes down and your community goes down, and the budget isn't balanced and the deficit goes up and the debt goes up and the confidence is lost and the population disappeared? Well those are the questions that people are asking because they are realizing that there's several versions from the truth come out of the man from Riversdale and several other people.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to close my remarks by saying we obviously join with the people of Saskatchewan in opposing this Draconian Bill, this unfair attack on people — taxpayers, seniors, farmers, and good Saskatchewan people all across the province.

And I for one, Mr. Speaker, will be making sure that after I vote against this, that people will continue to know the truth about the NDP and their betrayal of the socialist trust, the CCF trust, and just the non-partisan trust that people put in them. Mr. Speaker, this Bill deserves to fail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to rise one last time and debate on this Bill. And it's not really a debate, Mr. Speaker, that we've been going through on Bill 3; this is simply a large NDP government forcing upon the people of Saskatchewan their idea of health reform. There's been no debate anywhere in this province, Mr. Speaker, that amounts to anything of substance.

And I would quote from the *Star-Phoenix* of April 21, 1993. And it says:

In the wake of this announcement, Simard is still claiming local control means something. By taking away acute care money, the government is merely "asking" the hospitals and district boards to "consider a role change."

Sure. And having someone walk the plank is merely inviting that person to take a stroll in the fresh, tangy air of the open sea.

Mr. Speaker, that quote from April 21 in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* sums up what people all over this province are feeling about Bill 3.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, I took the opportunity to take a drive around the province. I went up to the north-west part of the province last Thursday and then across to Prince Albert and over to Nipawin on Friday and down the east side.

Mr. Speaker, what the Minister of Health should do, what the Minister of Health and her sidekick from Moose Jaw Wakamow should do, is that they should maybe get in a car and take a drive around the province as I did last week. And they should get out on the main streets of our towns and our cities and talk to people about Bill 3; not fly over them in an airplane and drop in to selected settings for an hour or two but actually get out and walk up and down as I did last Friday morning in Prince Albert — just walking down main street stopping into stores where the people didn't know me and I didn't know them. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? Every person in this province is willing to talk about this Bill. They're willing to be very open about it. They have opinions about it.

People in Prince Albert say the lid is going to come off in our community because this thing has been mismanaged so badly. People on Main Street, Saskatchewan are saying the lid is coming off because it has been mismanaged so badly. We are being asked to take a stroll in the fresh, tangy air of the open sea. Our communities, our infrastructure, our reason for being is asked to walk the plank. That's what they're saying, Mr. Speaker. That is where the debate is taking place.

And logically, Mr. Speaker, as the elected representatives of those people, logically these members over here, those that fill the back rows over there should be taking part in this debate because they are representing or should be representing tens of thousands of Saskatchewan people who are being asked to take a stroll in the fresh, tangy air of the open

sea.

And what we see from them is compliance — compliance that their front benches would allow closure to be brought in, compliance that their front benches would ram a Bill through this legislature, Mr. Speaker, that fundamentally affects tens of thousands of people in communities all over our province.

And it would be one thing, Mr. Speaker, if we were closing down a business, if we were bringing a Bill in this legislature to shut down 52 hockey rinks. What we are talking about here, Mr. Speaker, is 52 health care institutions and dozens of other ones as yet not pointed at by the Minister of Health. What we are talking about here is the inability of local control to have its day, to have its say, and to be responsible taxpayers. What I heard in my little swing around Saskatchewan last week, Mr. Speaker, is people saying, time and time again, that this government, this Minister of Health and this Premier, don't give us any credit for being strong, intelligent people.

Mr. Speaker, in most of these rural communities what you are dealing with are the third and fourth generation of people that came to this country from somewhere else and carved a life out of the land for themselves. These are the direct descendants of people who came here with no services, without a roof over their head. Many of them dug a hole in the ground, Mr. Speaker, and covered it with sod and they lived in it because they knew that this was a land where you would build something.

So these people in these communities, these communities that we stood and defended in this legislature today, these are not craven people, Mr. Speaker. They come from good stock. These are good, honest taxpayers.

The hospital auxiliary in almost every rural community in this province has raised money, has put in innumerable hours, has volunteered, provided their services because they are responsible taxpayers. And they're saying this government doesn't give us the credit that we deserve. That if they simply would have allowed local people the time and the budget, we will do the rationalization and the modernization of our health care system that we all know responsible taxpayers must do. Work with us, give us direction, but do not impose your solutions.

Mr. Speaker, this from a government who promised them so different a story such a short time ago, who always pandered to the health care issue. It didn't matter what was said. No, they were always against it. They'd always do more.

Mr. Speaker, the feeling of betrayal to those people is stronger than I have ever felt it before. And the solutions are so simple. The solutions are simply a matter of listening and of working with people.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I attended the signing ceremony which had the community of Central Butte — Central Butte Union Hospital, Central Butte manor,

and Central Butte ambulance board — join the Moose Jaw-Thunder Creek Health Care District.

And, Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I think, was a positive experience. Not that any one stood up and said that there won't be problems; that they probably would have preferred to have more money. But it was positive, Mr. Speaker, because there isn't one person on that board who has been imposed by the Minister of Health. There isn't going to be one person on that board who that Minister of Health or her government will impose on that board. And that is different, Mr. Speaker, from my understanding what's going on anywhere else in the province. These people at least feel that their own destiny is in the hands of responsible, elected, local people.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? The reason that there is a positive feeling amongst those folks, that they can overcome some of the apprehension, is that they have been at this process since 1987. Six long years of redefining acute care service. Six long years of redefining what home care should look like. Six long years of looking at ambulance services. Six long years of understanding how union hospitals and privately funded institutions can cooperate.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, there is some ability to cope with change. Every community in this province would only ask as much, Mr. Speaker — that it be entirely local people with enough financial wherewithal to define their own region and their own capabilities. Not the imposition from on high, as we have seen from this minister and this government.

All the more reason, Mr. Speaker, that you should not have closure in this legislature. All the more reason, Mr. Speaker, that you shouldn't have hundreds of Saskatchewan citizens getting up in the middle of the night to come to the steps of their legislature to protest and ask for the ear of the people who are defining their future. All the more reason that those people should not be shoved out in the cold — given the cold shoulder, and not listened to, like we have seen this government not listen to them.

And, Mr. Speaker, you will find . . . And I would challenge anyone in this legislature: get in your car and drive around to the communities of this province and just simply listen to what they're saying. What they are saying, Mr. Speaker, is what the *Star-Phoenix* of April 21, '93, has on its editorial page. It says:

What a farce! The issue: . . . Our position: Stop blather about local control.

(1615)

Mr. Speaker, in a half hour's time you are going to have to call a vote on Bill 3. A half hour is all the democracy that is left to the people in the communities of this province who are having the Minister of Health define their future for them. That's all the democracy that's left for those people.

This from the government opposite, the members

opposite, and from that political party who are on record in verbatim in this House for tens of hours against such an imposition of authoritarian control.

There is nothing, Mr. Speaker, left for these people but shame. If any one of them who mouthed those words in this legislature such a short few years ago can have anything but shame today as the clock ticks down to the imposition of Bill 3, then they should have taken the opportunity sometime in the debate to stand up and deny their own words and deny the shame that must hang over the head of everyone who sits for the NDP Party in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat because other of my caucus wish to comment on this pall of shame that hangs over this legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to say a few things about what I believe is a very, very serious erosion on the people of Saskatchewan's ability to have health care delivered in a reasonable fashion.

Mr. Speaker, today we had a day of mourning, April 28, to honour workers killed and injured on the job. Mr. Speaker, today is a sad day in the health care field for the people in my part of the province.

I want to point out to this Assembly some of the things that I have learned from the people that are here that are supposed to provide to us the answers. And these are some of the observations that I've made.

One, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that has been placed before us is first of all that the health care district that I am in and has been working hard to have a reasonable approach to the health care policy of this government, a wellness model, is the area of the Swift Current Union Hospital district. And that, Mr. Speaker, is facing a very, very serious concern.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the members of the steering committee resigned because of some very serious concerns as it relates to what this Health minister is doing to them.

Mr. Speaker, in the Swift Current Union Hospital district, there are roughly 20,000 people; 20,000 people, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of a regional hospital have between two and a half to three beds per thousand. Which means, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the people in that area who now have 78.6 beds per day on an average daily census, they will have in acute care a reduction of at least 18 beds or 28 beds, depending on which the minister will choose to take, whether it's two and a half in a thousand or three a thousand.

But they will have to contend with, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a reduction of between eighteen and a half beds or twenty-eight and a half beds. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a concern to the people in Swift Current.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, the community that I represent and the constituency that I represent and the constituency that is comprised of a health care district that's called the Rolling Hills, which is surrounding the city of Swift Current, that health care district, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has 12,000 people in it stretching from the American border on the south to the South Saskatchewan River on the north — 130 miles long and at least 110 or 20 miles wide.

That health care district, Mr. Speaker, that health care district has 12,000 people and should have 18 beds, acute care, spread through the various hospitals that are there — Mankota, Kincaid, Ponteix, Vanguard, Cabri, and Gull Lake. Every one of those hospitals should have an opportunity to provide acute care to the people in those communities. But do they, Mr. Speaker? No, the Minister of Health yesterday said that acute care beds will not be provided in those hospitals that I mentioned. There is only one hospital in that whole Rolling Hills district that has acute care facilities and will maintain acute care facilities and that is Herbert, at five and a half beds. Five and a half beds, Mr. Deputy Speaker, mean that in that district, mean that in that district it will be at a .39 beds per thousand.

That is despicable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is what these people are arguing about from one end of my constituency to the other. That is why the people of Vanguard shut down the town. The mayor declared a civic holiday so that the people could come to Regina here to talk to the Minister of Health, because that community will be devastated by the fact that the hospital is gone. And I asked her yesterday — the Minister of Health — yesterday I asked her would these people have an opportunity to maintain acute care beds and she said no.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are 55 miles away from the nearest health facility — 55. That's an hour. You get an ambulance out, an ambulance in; it's two hours, Mr. Speaker, and that is very, very critical. And, Mr. Speaker, we have had two stories spoken about. One they say it in Regina; the other story they say it in Mankota; or the other story they tell the people in Vanguard. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a fact.

As a matter of fact they tell people in the rural parts of the province . . . in fact I had one of the people in the steering committee tell me this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, told me that they were closing down Lafleche, which is a fact, and that they were going to build Gravelbourg which is 13 miles away. For \$10 million they were going to build a new hospital there.

And the people think that's grossly unfair. It's disgusting. And people will say to you in spades it is wrong — absolutely, totally wrong. And, Mr. Speaker, the people in the communities have worked hard.

I want to just point out to the people of this Assembly a letter that the Minister of Health got, and I got a carbon copy of it myself, from the director of care at Cabri. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the director of care at Cabri is a very efficient, a very fine nurse. And I'll put it to

you this way: she is of the old stock, she is British, and she comes from England and was trained in England, and understands efficiencies and health care to the last straw, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And this is what she had to say:

In order to cut costs, staff in Cabri do multiple jobs (Mr. Deputy Speaker). My nurse aides also do the laundry. This has been cost-effective. They do the laundry, they do the floors.

Why, Mr. Deputy Speaker? So that the people in the province of Saskatchewan don't have to put money into that and the people themselves will maintain that infrastructure within that community. They are proud of that facility. They are proud of it in Herbert; they are proud of it in Gull Lake; they are proud of it in Vanguard.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the hospital in Vanguard last year received a brand-new X-ray machine. Where was wellness when they were putting money into that? And now they're going to sell them? What are they going to do with all the X-ray machines that they're going to take out of the six hospitals in my district? What are they going to do with them? What are they going to do with the six doctors that now won't have any jobs? Are they going to give them privileges in health care units that don't have an acute care bed in them?

And, Mr. Speaker, they are very, very seriously concerned. And I agree with them, Mr. Speaker. And I agree with the article that appeared in the *Star-Phoenix*. What a farce. Absolutely, totally, a blather. That's what they talk about. They say global funding here. And what do they say when they get out of here? No, it's not going to be global funding. Do you have a local autonomy here? Yes, you do. Out in the country — no, you don't.

All of these things are talked about in this Assembly but when you get out in the country and ask the people what their health boards have said and what they have told the health boards, they have absolutely no control of the agenda.

And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the reason why in the community of Swift Current the board resigned. I'll tell you another thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is this: the Minister of Health should understand that those people that were on that planning committee, that steering committee, were people who were in the Health Region No. 1 to begin with. They understood it.

And if you ask Mr. Eugene Waker, who was 30 years as a reeve in the municipality of Swift Current, if you turned to him and said to him: sir, what do you think of this, he would say, I quit because it won't work because we don't have governance. We don't have the opportunity to develop a health care system in this community like we have done for years and years.

Mr. Speaker, He was on that Health Region No. 1 board and he understood it. And now we have a

whole new program, Mr. Speaker, and it is wrong.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker — I'm going to give up my place so that other members of our caucus can talk about this — but I, Mr. Speaker, have adamantly opposed from the perspective, not of saving money, but I oppose it on the basis that it I don't believe anywhere will save the dollars that these people have projected.

In fact if the minister was prepared to put her utilization commission report on the Table, we would all find out that this is strictly her own agenda about something to rip the rural communities in the province of Saskatchewan. And I will defend those rural communities till the last time that I ever have a chance to vote in this Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise yet again and to address this Bill No. 3, An Act respecting Health Districts.

Mr. Speaker, over the last several weeks Saskatchewan, and especially rural Saskatchewan, became victims of the indifference of the members opposite. The government imposed drastic budgetary measures on people in rural areas, and is only now creating the health districts which we all thought were going to be empowered to make important decisions.

Mr. Speaker, our health system needs to change. It needs to be changed to remove the tragedy as outlined by Ross Thatcher, and he stated that we do not get value for our health care dollar. The health system needs to be more reflective of the people's needs and wants. And we do need this system to be part of the 1990s and taking us into the 21st century.

Questions remain however, Mr. Speaker, and some questions more than others. Is this government, a government asking for passage of this Bill today, being fair to the people of rural Saskatchewan? Is it being fair to health care consumers? Is it being fair to the many men and women who labour long days in our hospitals and our care homes to maintain our health? Above all, Mr. Speaker, the question remains on whether this government has a sound vision for health care in Saskatchewan.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, while I realize that health care reform is necessary, I believe, as do many people of this province, that this government is not being fair to the health care-givers of this province, it is not being fair to those who require care, and it is not being fair to the already hard-pressed people of rural Saskatchewan.

As well, Mr. Speaker, this government, just like the members of the official opposition when they were in power, does not appear to have a vision for health care. Although the government has rhetoric and is taking actions, its actions are helter-skelter. The government's plans are reckless, as reckless as the spending spree of the members of the previous

government.

And why? Why could this government be accused of being that reckless? Because we're talking about a \$1.5 billion expenditure item, Mr. Speaker. And it is being changed based on the concept of a model that has never been tried. It is just a concept — no kind of working out through a pilot project to determine whether or not this is going to save monies; no way of determining whether or not this is going to be more cost efficient; no tried-and-true way of determining whether or not this is going to harm people in the province or better serve the people of this province.

(1630)

Now I do know that today, Mr. Speaker, there was an announcement that in the North they were going to have one year in which to put together their health board. And I'm wondering what it is that is so distinctive about the North that makes it different from people who are in the south-west of our province where they too have vast differences to cover. I mean these are two very unique parts of Saskatchewan. And the people of our province have a right to be able to have pilot projects to determine whether or not this is going to work.

Another thing announced today, Mr. Speaker, was about the Prince Albert area and that now, after the fact, there is some indication that perhaps we will have some form of pilot project. I don't know whether that's something we should simply accept after all of these different kinds of decisions have been made and the door is closed. Perhaps what we should have done was to empower people in the first place so that they could have been participants in the process, checking out over a period of time whether this was going to be in the best interests of health care in Saskatchewan.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, full well from the members of the opposition and myself, we've received endless letters and many, many calls on this particular issue — numerous letters and calls from people who are very, very much concerned about what is happening not just to themselves personally, but to their communities, their health care system overall, and their loved ones who rely upon it.

Most of these people don't believe that they're being treated fairly, that they're being honoured, that they're being respected, that they are seen as people who can participate in the process fully. They don't believe that their communities and that their families are being given the respect that they deserve. And they believe that they are not getting the treatment which they, as residents of the province of Saskatchewan, as taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan, deserve because they are not getting the details they need of what the health plan involves. And they are not being included fully in the process to be able to try things out in their own areas.

They don't mind the system being changed. They don't object to the system being changed. But they want some assurances that rural Saskatchewan will

not turn into an outback where the only health services are helicopters taking people to distant health services.

One of the many caring people in our province wrote to me and said, I quote, Mr. Minister:

For these 52 communities who are losing their hospitals and acute care facilities there is no hope. They are losing more than just a hospital, but their livelihoods. They have worked hard to make their communities grow and prosper, and now your government has come in and taken (all of) that away.

This woman continued to say that rural people:

... feel that the "rug has been pulled out from under their feet" ...

And then appeals to the minister:

PLEASE listen to the district planning groups and hear what they have to say. They live and work in these communities ... and know how things are done ... PLEASE don't rush into this new health care program. These are lives we are talking about and I think a person's life is a lot more important than cutting \$22 million from the provincial health care budget.

Another resident from the rural area expressed similar concerns, Mr. Speaker, similar concerns that they are not getting respected, that they are not being listened to, that there is too much of a hurry, a concern that the government is not providing people with the details of the wellness model — if it can indeed call it a model.

The woman attended the Eston meeting where some 1,600 people, more than the entire community of Eston — as has been pointed out by the member from Kindersley — attended to show their concern to the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, this woman writes that she saw the Minister of Health at the meeting, and she quotes:

... I watched you. I listened to your speech. I watched you (Madam Minister) as the panel gave their presentations. I saw the indifference (that) you and your staff had to the plight of the people of Eston.

And she continues, Mr. Speaker to say that she, and I quote:

I realized that (the minister) had (her) mind made up. The concerns and emotions shown (to) you by the people of Eston seemed to have no effect on you (Minister), although, at one point, (she) felt we were being impatiently chastized ...

Mr. Speaker, those are but two of the many, many people in this province who do not feel that they are being fairly treated by this government. They don't feel that the health plans embodied in these new

health districts are the right ones. If they are, they just want time to chart their own way as an entire community.

Over the last several weeks, this government hasn't been fair to the people of this province. It announced the introduction of this Bill, as it promised, but while they answered some questions, they created many others. Added to this were the announced budgetary decisions that funding for some 52 acute care hospitals would be ended as of October 1. After that, funding will be based on the ability of a district to reach selected bed targets.

Now I'll give the minister credit, Mr. Speaker. If she wanted to come out with a flurry of decisions and announcements over a period of weeks, they were almost as successful as the official opposition were in giving away plums before the election — plums which I might add only contributed to the financial crisis which is forcing us, as a province, to deal with the financial crisis and cuts to things like health care and agriculture programs.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a flurry of decisions and with it have come waves of worries. In the communities across this province, people want to know what will replace their acute care hospitals. People want to know what will the services be that these centres offer. They want to know what will happen to their seniors, their loved ones, who are in crisis.

Just the other day in this House they couldn't explain to the people of Saskatchewan what will happen to people in long-term care that are now in hospitals that are to close. I know the minister is only cutting acute care funding, Mr. Speaker, but people are worried that under the new districts there will no longer be long-term facilities — no place for the elderly to go, no place for moms and dads and grandparents and so on, but to leave and go to another community without the kind of support from family. These people are worried. They are worried that they will be without care because the budgetary decisions that will amount to restrictions will affect the amount of care that they have already had. They're already made long before the local input, the community-based aspect of this system, like district boards, before they ever get a chance to make any decisions.

The funding for these beds is gone before district boards can make a decision to allocate services based on their own needs assessments. It's gone before these very individuals could even decide whether keeping acute care beds might be the very best decision. All the important decisions, Mr. Speaker, were made before the real people even got to have their input.

This begs a question. It begs a question of whether this is fair. Is it fair for the government to stifle debate in this House and then not provide answers outside of it to any of the people who really matter — the people who will pay for these decisions; the people who will be most affected by these decisions.

And it is ironic, Mr. Speaker, that the government wants to create district boards under this Bill and is now asking that they, or the planning committees, to do the needs assessments. They asked them to do these assessments, but they go out and make the decisions of which hospitals will stay, which will go, before any of the local people, the local boards, that they are proposing here today, are even put in place. It's so ridiculous.

It's completely out of order, Mr. Speaker. That is not fair. That is a sign of a minister that could have saved herself and the taxpayers gas money, because she went out to hear people like the woman I spoke of in Eston, but she didn't want to hear or feel what they were saying and feeling.

Mr. Speaker, there are other aspects of this government's lack of fairness when it comes to health care. They close hospitals and set up districts without offering any plans about how inevitable job lay-offs will occur. When health care districts spend 70 to 80 per cent of all of their revenues on employment, there will be job losses. The government didn't provide people with a viable job creation and economic development plan for rural areas; didn't go in and talk about the people for how they could be participants in making this happen. She simply brought in her decision.

The government has no plan in place to retrain health care workers, like many of the psych nurses who will lose their jobs and want a reason to stay in Weyburn. All of these things happening because of improper process by this government, Mr. Speaker. That is not fair to health care givers. It is not fair when there is no coherent strategy. It is definitely not fair when 25 people out of 630, the total population of Ponteix, is told they will no longer have jobs, Mr. Speaker. That's like 7,200 people being told in Saskatoon they will no longer have jobs. Surely there could have been an approach put in place to allow this community to make some of its own decisions within a district to be able to accommodate those people who are losing their jobs.

What they are doing, Mr. Speaker, is putting part C of their plan, if they actually have one, before part A.

Another example of the inconsistency of their plan is found when it comes to the drug plan. The government says that the districts they want in this Bill will save money, will guarantee services in their plan. At the same time however, as Dr. Sinclair of Regina noted, they're making the pharmaceutical aspect of health less accessible. They expect everyone to have a better health care system and get the care they need, thanks to these districts, but they go out and gut the drug plan. As Dr. Sinclair argues, the government has failed to realize that drugs are as much an important aspect of our health care today as they were 30 years ago.

This government deinsures much of that sector and yet still expects us to believe that they somehow have a coherent plan for health reform just because they are

creating districts. They somehow have a coherent plan because they're creating districts, and they're in such a hurry to do so and are willing to do anything in order to get their way. That, Mr. Speaker, is not fair to the people of our province. It is not fair to health care recipients and to the taxpayers who must pay for this plan.

So I ask again, Mr. Speaker, of the government, why are they in such a rush? There is no real reason to hurry this legislation through. People want more time to discuss how this will have an impact on their communities, their jobs, their loved ones, and themselves. They want more time, and the people of this province deserve it. If the government can have endless time to answer key questions, endless time to lay concerns to rest, then the people surely deserve the same.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to reconsider these Draconian ways, to reconsider its heavy-handedness, its cart before the horse planning. People need to know that they can be part of the process. They need to know because this is their health care system, and they need to know that they are the ones to have the most influence upon it. People need to know that they have representatives that are committed to their well-being and to the principles of consultation, community, and cooperation — the principles that helped to build the province of Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I realize that it won't be all that long before you are forced to call the vote in this Assembly. But I want to bring a few points to the floor, points that were raised at last night's meeting in Whitewood; I'm sure the points that have been raised all across the province regarding the health Bill before this Assembly and regarding the closure motion that has been presented by the government and by the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that came through very loud and clear last night was the fact that the people of Whitewood and the surrounding region indeed wanted some more time. They wanted the ability to have the opportunity to voice their concerns, to raise their concerns, to discuss their ideas. And they had a lot of sound and positive proposals that they could have put forward that they wanted to put forward.

In fact they raised them with the Minister of the Environment. And I trust the Minister of the Environment, as he represented the Minister of Health last night, was indeed listening very carefully, and that over the next period of time, even as this Bill is voted in and brought into . . . passed in this Assembly, that the government will indeed listen to the concerns that have been raised, will take heed to the suggestions that have been raised, and will offer the public a time, a period in which they can put forward their proposals and indeed bring health care services and maintain health care services in their communities and in the province of Saskatchewan.

(1645)

The Speaker: — Order. Pursuant to a special order of the Assembly, the motion of time allocation, the Speaker must at this time put the question on third reading of Bill No. 3, An Act respecting Health Districts.

The division bells rang from 4:46 p.m. until 5:08 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 41

Van Mulligen	Lautermilch
Thompson	Calvert
Wiens	Murray
Simard	Hamilton
Tchorzewski	Johnson
Teichrob	Trew
Shillington	Serby
Anguish	Whitmore
Solomon	Sonntag
Atkinson	Flavel
Kowalsky	Roy
Mitchell	Kujawa
MacKinnon	Crofford
Penner	Stanger
Cunningham	Harper
Upshall	Keeping
Hagel	Kluz
Bradley	Renaud
Koenker	Langford
Lorje	Jess
Pringle	

Nays — 10

Swenson	Toth
Devine	Britton
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen
Boyd	Haverstock

The Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:11 p.m.