

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, the following petition has been reviewed and pursuant to rule 11(7) is hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to order SaskPower to facilitate the production of non-utility generated power in areas of increased demand.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to members of the Legislative Assembly some very distinguished guests to our province and to our Assembly today.

Sitting, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery is the High Commissioner of Britain to Canada, His Excellency Sir Nicholas Bayne and his spouse Lady Diana Bayne. Perhaps I could get them to stand up just very briefly to be acknowledged by the members of the House for their visit.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — And accompanying them is Mr. Patrick Holdich, the head of the political section of the British High Commission. Mr. Holdich, perhaps as well you'll be recognized.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, this is His Excellency's second visit to Saskatchewan, the last one being about a year ago in June of 1992. And as every ambassadorial visit to any jurisdiction concerns itself, this one also has been very busy for him, meeting with the Lieutenant Governor, various political figures, the journalists and editorial boards. I'm going to be meeting with His Excellency later this afternoon as is the Minister of Economic Development.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like all members of this Assembly to make very welcome the British High Commissioner to Canada, Sir Nicholas, and his spouse, Lady Diana. We wish you a very happy and — how shall I describe it — successful visit to our province. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to echo the Premier's words of welcome to our distinguished guests in the gallery today. On behalf of

Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, Your Excellency, it's good to see you here. Unfortunately I didn't know that you were in the province until just a few minutes ago and would have liked the opportunity, but I hope you enjoy the proceedings in the legislature today. I know that Saskatchewan is always a place of interest to people from Great Britain and we welcome you here again, sir.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would simply like to say I very much enjoyed the meeting this morning with Sir Nicholas Bayne as well as Mr. Holdich and it was my pleasure to meet with both of you. And it's my second occasion to meet with the High Commissioner and my first occasion with Mr. Holdich. I look forward to future opportunities to meet with you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to other members of the Legislative Assembly 49 grade 12 students from Robert Usher seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. They're accompanied by their teacher, Fred Steininger. It will be my pleasure to be meeting with this group on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Labour, the member for Churchill Downs. I will be meeting with this group at 3:15 this day, and very much look forward to that visit and the pictures and refreshment that will take place at that time.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming the group from Robert Usher.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce two school groups visiting from the Melville constituency in Regina today and in the Assembly and watching the proceedings from your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, there's 17 students from Grayson School, from grade 9 to 12, with teacher Ben Appell, and chaperons Ellen Bateman and Cheryl Exner, with their bus driver Clarence Rathgeber.

Also in the same gallery, Mr. Speaker, from St. Henry's senior elementary school in Melville, 32 grade 8 students who are accompanied with their teacher Garth Gleisinger, and their bus driver Al Schatz.

I'll be meeting with the two groups right after question period for photos and a bit of a visit, and I would just like all members of the Assembly to welcome both groups here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to introduce through you, to you, on behalf of the member for Shaunavon, a school group from Eastend,

Saskatchewan. They're in the west gallery. There's 17 grade 12 students, their teacher Brad Hauber, and bus driver Randy Morris.

I have also a special interest in this group, Mr. Speaker. And I have not met with them yet, but my second cousin is in the class, just a couple of years younger than I, in grade 12.

Mr. Upshall: — So I would like the Assembly to give that group a very special welcome. I hope you have a good tour of Regina and a very safe trip home. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with pleasure to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly a group of students sitting in the east gallery. There are 11 grade 8 students and they are accompanied by their teachers and chaperons, Beattie Ledingham, Lorri Ehman, and Evelyn Zehr. I'll be meeting with this group at 3 o'clock in room 255 for drinks and questions, and out on the steps I believe at about the same time for pictures. And it'll be a pleasure to visit with these students.

And I want to also say, Mr. Speaker, that in my 15 years of representing this here legislature, I think Holdfast has always attended here every year more than any other town in my constituency. I thank them, and I ask all members to welcome my school from Holdfast, Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the students of Schell School from Holdfast, Saskatchewan. Their teacher, Beattie Ledingham, I guess is a person that I know fairly well as my brother-in-law, who's married to my sister, Lynn, who was also a teacher at Holdfast. So I also want to extend a warm welcome to the grade 8 class. And I'm also looking forward to visiting Holdfast grad this May, to see the graduation of my nephew, Blair. So I extend a warm welcome to them, hope they have a good visit, and a safe trip home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ministerial Assistants Paid by SPMC

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation). Mr. Minister, once again your government has been caught saying one thing and doing another thing. A short while ago you thoroughly condemned the practice of paying ministerial assistants through Crown corporations. You made a great deal of political hay out of the Provincial Auditor's report, which recommended that political staff should be paid, not from Crown corporations, but from the Premier's office. Do you remember that?

So after you score your political points, when it comes time to act, what do you do? All six of your personal staff — all six are now being paid out of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. All six of his personal staff. Do you see the duplicity in that, Mr. Minister? Are you trying to shuffle the costs involved with having six staff members over to a Crown because you have no departmental responsibilities? Is that what you're trying to do?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the minister responsible for SPMC, I would like to thank the member for his question and outline for him that the issue has never been whether or not an employee in the minister's office was paid for by a Crown, but what was pointed out in the auditor's report was that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . but your administration was hiding them — \$1.2 million worth of ministerial assistants hidden in the Crowns.

We have disclosed . . . and this minister is responsible for SPMC, which is a Crown corporation and not a line department. Therefore it's appropriate that the staff in his office who respond to calls from the public and assistance for the public with respect to that Crown corporation should be paid for by that Crown corporation. And we made it open and accountable. That's why you know about it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, we all know that members of your government have an extensive record of not telling the complete truth; saying one thing and doing exactly the opposite — just as you're doing right now, Madam Minister. Your record of misleading the public is becoming particularly lengthy.

You promise an open government; then you refuse to release the security report on GTECH and VLC (Video Lottery Consultants), two companies you gave \$20 million to. You promised to end patronage; then you hired two NDP (New Democratic Party) hacks to high-paying jobs in the Gaming Commission.

You promised a fair and open accounting tendering process; then you institute a practice of opening bids behind closed doors. You criticized paying hacks out of Crowns; then you pay all six of the ministerial . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Does the member have question? I want the member to put his question.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister . . . Madam Minister, would you say that the things that you've done in the Gaming Commission are inconsistent, dishonest, or illegal? Which one are they?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I believe it was a

British statesman, Benjamin Disraeli, who said that justice is the truth in action. And so let me say that we have told the truth. We have made full disclosures. That's why you know; that's why you're asking the questions.

So the answer to the member's question is: it's none of the above. We're open and honest in our administration.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — The truth in action, Madam Minister, is just this: not only have you hired staff and hid them from the public's view, you are currently suing Judy Bellay because you alleged she was improperly paid by the Liquor Board while she was working for the Liquor Board minister.

Now six of the current minister's personal staff are being paid in a similar manner, exactly the same, Mr. Speaker, exactly the same as was done before, contrary to the recommendations of the auditor.

Madam Minister, do you intend to fire these people and then sue them exactly the same way you are suing Judy Bellay?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, these are competent staff. We have no intention of changing their status in any way. They assist the minister in his duties as the minister responsible for that Crown corporation. And I remind the members opposite again that the issue has never been how they were paid, but that it was disclosed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Well, Mr. Speaker, once again we see the government applying one set of rules to one group while exempting political appointees of their own from the rules on the other hand.

The Provincial Auditor reported that your government has made over \$700,000 in illegal payments to your appointees. Six of the staff of the minister responsible are paying . . . are being paid now by SPMC. Why aren't these things the same as the way the Judy Bellay situation was? Why are they any different, Madam Minister?

Judy Bellay was working for the minister and was being paid by the Liquor Commission. Now you say it's different. Can you explain to the Legislative Assembly why, Madam Minister, that there's any difference in this?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, it doesn't surprise me that the members opposite are unable to make these distinctions, but I clarify that these people are working in the minister's office in support of his ministry. The case to which they refer is a case where the employee was working in the minister's constituency office — not in the ministry.

An Hon. Member: — A political office.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — A political office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, if they're being . . . if they're working for the minister, why then are they not being paid by that office? Why are they not being paid by that minister rather than being paid by the SPMC? Can you answer that?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for SPMC, the Liquor Board, and the Gaming Commission is not responsible for any line department from which his assistants can be paid. So his staff is being paid to support him in his role as the minister responsible for that corporation.

This information has been disclosed to you. And again, in the Public Accounts Committee and the Crown Corporations Committee when the statements and affairs of that corporation are reviewed, again it becomes transparent for those who are able to see.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, we'll go through it one more time with you. On one hand, you're suing a former employee of the government, Judy Bellay, for working for the minister and being paid by SPMC . . . by the Liquor Commission, pardon me. Now you're doing exactly the same thing; but it's wrong for us to do it, but it's okay for you to do it.

In spite of the fact that you said you wouldn't do it — you made great political mileage in doing it — you go on a vindictive fling to try and condemn one individual, and yet on the other hand, Madam Minister, it's okay for you to do it.

Do you not see the inconsistency in that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I can see very clearly. Let me go over this slowly once more and see if the member opposite can hear. There is a difference between the staff in the minister's office here in this building working as his support staff as opposed to a staff member out in a constituency office acting in a political capacity. That's the difference.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, I had one question that I'd like to ask further; it's with respect to the Gaming Commission as well. Last week the minister responsible took notice on a question with respect to one appointee, Lisa Thomson. I wonder if you could provide information to the Assembly this afternoon on that situation.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, the member did take notice, and in due course, as always, the member opposite who posed the question will receive a reply.

Ethanol Production

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister of Economic Development. Mr. Minister, there's been a great deal of discussion in rural Saskatchewan about creating jobs by producing value added products like ethanol, and given the number of people losing their jobs in hospitals, schools, and small business in rural Saskatchewan, quality job creation is more important than ever.

In light of this, Mr. Minister, I'd like to know what your government is doing to encourage job creation through ethanol production.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, the ethanol development or the projects basically fall under the Department of Agriculture so I think we can answer that.

There are two ethanol projects out now that are operating under a program of a subsidy whereby . . . We have one at Lanigan which is attached to a feed lot. We have another one at Kerrobert which is developing some technology. There are a whole raft of communities who are working on ethanol projects and possibilities of ethanol projects. We are assured that their technology is being developed that will make these economically viable. At the current time we do not feel that we want to subsidize any more of these plants at a large subsidy rate. We believe that they will become economically viable, where government will not have to play a large role in setting them up and operating them.

And we think that this is something that will be developed and is being developed as, I might add, across the piece is beginning to happen in this province. This is being developed from the community level up; people are talking about raising money, about how to get into it. They're not asking governments to fund them; they're just saying, what can you do to help us, and they are working forward on that. And I think ethanol is one of the possibilities for the future of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Just last week the Government of Alberta offered ethanol producers in that province a complete exemption from its 9 cent a litre fuel tax. In this province, you and your colleagues raised the tax on fuel from 10 cents to 13 cents last year, and from 13 cents to 15 cents a litre this year.

Saskatchewan, in other words, has a 15 cents a litre tax on ethanol while Alberta, our largest and strongest competitor of this kind of economic development, has zero. Mr. Minister, can you say that you are

encouraging this industry when you're stifling it with taxes before it even gets off the ground?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I assume the member opposite would like us to subsidize at the level of Alberta is. We do not have the resources to do that. I think if you look at the rate at which the Alberta deficit is growing, I think they will soon rethink some of their subsidy programs as well.

We have a large . . . Right now we are subsidizing the plants that are out there at 40 cents a litre, which comes to, at the Lanigan plant . . . 10 million litres means \$4 million subsidy from us, from government. With the large number of plants out there, we do not feel at this time that the government can subsidize 30 or 40 of these plants at that rate, and therefore we work with them to develop the technology that will produce products and by-products by which they will become economically viable on their own. And at that point we will certainly be helping to get them established.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Minister, for many rural communities — and I'm talking about communities like Weyburn and Lanigan, etc. — ethanol production offers one of the few good opportunities to diversify the economy and to create very badly needed jobs.

Can you show us the evaluation, the study, that measures the tax generated from ethanol versus the economic benefits which could be generated from increased production and job creation if this tax were re-evaluated?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, undoubtedly, as with any industry, there is spin-offs in economic development from producing industries. I guess my question to the member opposite would be: how much would she spend on this subsidy? Would she spend 100 million, or would she spend 150 million? Would she spend 200 million? Would she take it from education? Would she take it from health care, or where would she take it from? And that I guess is a question to you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Surely, Mr. Minister, you have done the research, and you can tell the people of this province that your government is making the proper decision. Today your Premier, as well as all of the members of your caucus, received a letter from the Saskatchewan business coalition saying that they are concerned with the pessimism, the frustration, and the anger that has grown throughout this province, that we need to visualize a positive, realistic, clear picture of the economic future in this province.

And they state that we not only need fiscal responsibility and jobs, especially job creation through what they cite as positive tax and regulatory environment. I would suggest you read the letter that came out today.

You and your colleagues fail to realize that if this province is going to diversify, if its economy is going to recover, it has to create an atmosphere which is competitive with other jurisdictions. It's been 18 months since you were elected, and everyone's been waiting to see evidence of your priorities in the economic development strategies of this province.

Is ethanol production a priority in your government's rural economic strategy? And if it is not, please tell us what is.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Agriculture for allowing me to answer this question.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Leader of the Liberal Party that the letter that she refers to probably has done more to harm the confidence, the emerging confidence and optimism in the province of Saskatchewan than anything that's been done in the last 18 months. This is a letter which does not face up to reality.

And if the Leader of the Liberal Party is saying, that in her words, following the tone of that letter, there should be a proper taxation and regulatory regime into place, namely, translated another way, for the mining association, when we're closing down hospitals or converting hospitals and going into the wellness model and making changes to the education system, if that's exactly what the Liberal leader is saying, I say that is not the direction the people of Saskatchewan want.

I'd also say, all that the Liberal leader has to do is take into account statements which are made by other people in this province. For example, Mr. Kehoe from Swift Current, with respect to the Spar industries. Quote: Our company sells all over North America, and we chose Saskatchewan for the cost advantages, the quality of life, and the quality of people. End quote.

There are many business people who have the highest degree of confidence and optimism. And it's about time the Liberals and the Conservatives joined us and the business community.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — You know, in the time that we've been waiting for you, Mr. Premier, to implement your economic development strategy for Saskatchewan, the province has been operating at a net job loss, which is outlined in this letter, signed by the head of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, Saskatchewan Construction Association, Saskatchewan Home Builders' Association, who are calling upon you, sir, to do what will provide a clear, positive vision and restore faith in the province so our future, and I quote, "can be bright."

If you have a reverse economic development strategy, it is working, sir. If not, I am asking you today: when is your government going to get into the job creation mode? Because right now we're at a 16,000 loss — net loss — compared to what you had outlined in your budget for what we need in this province.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party, picking up the words of the Saskatchewan Mining Association, as a typical Liberal Party in parroting it, adopts a prediction and a statement which I do not concur in at all.

And I want to tell you neither does the business community. If you travel around the province of Saskatchewan, individual business leaders are telling you that for the first time they have begun to feel that we have turned the corner. They feel a sense of optimism. We finally got the finances of this province finally under control.

We've got a game plan set out in the partnership paper, a partnership paper which has been reviewed twice. We've got an action committee of business leaders province wide who are directing the strategy of growth. And I say that everybody in the province who has assessed it, whether it's the Conference Board of Canada or the Royal Bank, predicts modest growth and even exceptional growth in the Canadian context for the year 1993 — everybody — except these people, some of these people, and you, the Leader of the Liberal Party.

An Hon. Member: — And these.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Yes, that's right. You point to those people. Those five. And I'm saying that you have to understand that those people do not speak for the business communities. The ordinary business people, the small-business people have hope and confidence for the first time in 10 years, and you should join on that bandwagon.

School Closures

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education. Madam Minister, your government has taken the absolute power to unilaterally cut health care in this province and now it appears that education is your next target.

Madam Minister, school boards throughout Saskatchewan are currently finalizing their budgets for the coming year. And because of your cut-backs, this news is very grim. Courses are being cut, whole grades in some schools are being dropped, and teachers are being laid off.

Madam Minister, your government started the wellness program by promising not to close any schools, and we know that's not true. In fact even the Premier admits to closing hospitals now. Perhaps you could start with a little more honesty than your colleague and tell this Assembly how many schools have closed under your administration and how many are scheduled for closure in the next two years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, that kind of decision is made at the local level by the local school boards. This year it is projected that approximately 13 schools will close. The year of highest school closings in the last decade was in the last year of your administration.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, the last decade was pretty well the entire time that this government was in power. How about before that in the 1950s when the previous CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) government was in power. There were a lot of school closures, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, according to the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) there will be . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. I would ask both sides to just tone it down a bit so we can . . .

An Hon. Member: — What do you mean, both sides?

The Speaker: — Both sides, and particularly the member from Rosthern.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, according to the SSTA, as many as a dozen or more schools will be closed, and that's just this year. How many will be closed next year, because next year's cuts are going to be even more severe?

Madam Minister, all of the areas of government spending, all the areas where government is spending money, Canadians identify education as being the most important and the most vital to this country's future. Yet here in Saskatchewan the government seems to have a different set of priorities. Your government is content to allow our education system to deteriorate and become second class compared to other provinces, and you are content to see those young people who do receive an education forced to leave because all the good jobs and the opportunities will be in other provinces.

What are you doing to address this problem, Madam Minister, and why should Saskatchewan parents be content with a second-rate education system and limited job opportunities for their children?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to reinforce for the member opposite that education is a very high priority for this government. I think in terms of the future funding, the education system for the future leaders of our province could have been given more consideration while the previous administration was spending money so freely and building up the debt that we would have to

deal with.

I want to say that it's been a continuing trend, as members opposite know, for the shift of the demographics and the rural population from rural to urban in Saskatchewan. But what we have done is this year, for example, we have changed the funding formula so that there are approximately 80,000 rural students, \$78 million additional money goes out to rural Saskatchewan because the per pupil grant is higher for . . . if they're not interested in the answer. The per pupil grant is 5 per cent larger for a rural student. We recognize transportation costs fully for bussing. We have the sparsity factor for sparsely populated areas and the small schools factor, and a formula that cushions the funding when there is an enrolment decline so that there is a strong support for the education system in rural Saskatchewan.

And when you look . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, the extra funding as you described that you were talking about were there in the previous decade. But you've cut education by 2 per cent this year and 4 per cent for next year.

According to the SSTA, what this amounts to for this year is 300 less teaching positions and 150 support staff that will be eliminated. And next year it will be even worse because the cuts will be doubled.

According to Craig Melvin of the SSTA, you are creating two classes of citizens in this province, just like your government did with health care. And he says, and I quote: we have to offer the full service program for children no matter where they are in Saskatchewan.

And, Madam Minister, your cuts are making that impossible. Why are you telling people in smaller communities that the education of their children is less important than the children of Saskatoon or Regina? Why is your government so intent on creating two classes of citizens when it comes to health care and education?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, we do not subscribe to the theory of divide and conquer like the previous administration did, pitting rural against urban people in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — I have outlined some of the additional supports that we are providing for rural schools. The cornerstones of our education policy in this province are equal opportunity to all students no matter where they live and equality in taxation.

If you will look in the budget for the upcoming year, you will see that there has been an emphasis put on distance education initiatives so that full courses will be available even to small instructional groupings in rural areas, to make sure that when they enter the post-secondary system, that rural students are on a level playing-field with urban students.

We recognize the value of investing in the future citizens of this province through our education system. We wish that you had had the same respect when you spent all the money.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 63 — An Act to amend The Fuel Tax Act, 1987

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Fuel Tax Act be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 64 — An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Education and Health Tax Act be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 65 — An Act to amend The Corporation Capital Tax Act

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Corporation Capital Tax Act be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 66 — An Act to amend The Income Tax Act

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Income Tax Act be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 67 — An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 68 — An Act respecting Financial Arrangements for Urban Parks

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that The Urban Parks Financial Arrangements Act, 1993 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 69 — An Act to amend The Assessment Management Agency Act

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 1993 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

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

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I rise to ask leave to make a statement of interest to all members of the House with respect to teachers.

Leave granted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Teacher Appreciation Day

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, during National Teacher Appreciation Day we take time to thank those dedicated men and women who play such an important role in shaping our children's lives.

Today's society presents teachers with many new and challenging situations. At one time a teacher's focus was almost exclusively on academic instruction; now teachers are often called upon to deal with issues related to health and nutrition, family violence, neglect, substance abuse, illiteracy, and many others. We have come to rely on teachers to address the broader needs associated with learning and try to ensure that those needs are met.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Assembly to join me in thanking the over 12,000 Saskatchewan teachers who play an integral role in the development of today's youth and tomorrow's leaders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the minister in thanking teachers on Teacher Appreciation Day. We realize how important it is that teachers provide the future for our children in educating them so that we can develop and build this province into the place that we wish to have it.

And teachers are very important in this because they instil in our youth their knowledge and their values, along with their ministers and their parents at home.

And as a group, this is how we build society, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the teachers for their contribution to our society.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join with the hon. member.

A lot of people I think in this Assembly had a profession of teaching before coming here. And although a lot of people recognize me as a psychologist, I did have a fairly lengthy career as a teacher, set up all the self-contained learning disability classrooms in the city of Saskatoon as well as the learning assistance centre, which is a rural-urban service delivery system for children with learning problems and behaviour problems, and then a program for chronically truant high school students.

All of the people that I worked with as colleagues were astonishingly hard-working and committed people, probably not dissimilar to yourself, Mr. Speaker, when you were a teacher. And I think, too, that we forget what assistance there has been from teacher assistants as well as clerical staff in schools that really make the place what it is.

So I too would like to congratulate those people who work on behalf of not just children in this province, but all of us while they're caring for our children. I think we should applaud them. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 58 — An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move second reading of Bill No. 58 — An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act. The Northern Municipalities Act is a key Act that provides for independent local governments in the North. This Act sets forth the powers and the duties of northern towns, villages, hamlets, and settlements. The Act is in some ways similar to The Urban Municipality Act, 1984, but with changes where necessary to reflect the needs of northern communities.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a number of years since the last major package of amendments to The Northern Municipalities Act. In this time there have been a number of changes to The Urban Municipality Act, 1984. Therefore, the Bill before you contains provisions which for the most part are required to restore similarities between the two Acts where applicable.

(1445)

Northerners have asked through resolution passed at SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) that corresponding changes be made to The Northern Municipalities Act, where appropriate, to keep it up to date. Several of the key amendments included in this Bill deal with northern settlements petitioning for binding by-law votes and fire protection.

Today there are 27 incorporated municipalities in the North. To further the establishment of incorporated municipalities, it is proposed that new communities initially be formed as hamlets rather than northern settlements that have only advisory status. This will insure that communities being set up have an adequate population and assessment base. Up until now, legislation has allowed for the granting of northern settlement status to some areas having quite small populations and having very limited existing or potential tax base.

For new communities to form as northern hamlets, they will have to meet the population and assessment criteria included in this Act. This amendment will in no way affect the status of current northern settlements. They continue with the same function as before. And when the criteria is met, on request they may be raised to northern hamlet status.

An amendment respecting petitions will change the number of signatures required to force a binding vote on an issue in a northern municipality. A similar amendment is being made to The Urban Municipality Act, 1984 and the requirement for signatures will parallel that required to force a provincial vote under The Referendum and Plebiscite Act.

After consultation with northern municipalities we are putting in an amendment to clarify that municipal funds are to be used for municipal purposes. A few northern municipalities have encountered difficulties as a result of making loans for non-municipal purpose. With economic times being difficult, it is imperative that protection be put in to protect the taxpayer in the community from misdirection of revenue needed to provide local services.

Amendments are also included that complement the passage of The Fire Prevention Act, 1992. They include allowing for the issuing of orders to enforce local fire protection by-laws and allowing for a wider range of emergency services to be provided in conjunction with the fire services.

Other amendments included in this Bill are as follows: allowing the use of the term "councillor" interchangeably with the term "alderman" for northern municipality council members; updating the conflict of interest provisions; fine-tuning the dangerous dog provisions; strengthening authority to enforce orders; ensuring adequate authority for grants to northern municipalities; allowing custom work to be done by municipalities; and broadening authority for intermunicipal agreements.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in

supporting second reading of this Bill which updates and enhances the legislation respecting northern municipalities.

I move second reading of An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I followed with interest the comments made by the minister regarding the Bill before us, Bill No. 58. And as the minister was indicating . . . and certainly we will take a moment just to follow up and make certain that indeed the comments and the suggestions that have been made by the minister, the fact that they have been — I'm not sure if I should use the term lobbied — but have been encouraged by northern municipalities to initiate some of the changes in The Northern Municipalities Act to bring it more into focus with today's age.

What I was thinking as the minister was talking here, the minister had indicated that an amendment is going to be brought forward that is going to provide some limitations, or if I understand it correctly, basically indicating any funds that are raised under municipal levies are to be used for municipal purposes.

And I can appreciate what the minister and the government are looking at there, as certainly many communities over the years as they've had funding have possibly indicated or assessed or placed funding in other places other than direct municipal responsibility, and at times have found themselves on the short end looking for more municipal funds. And in a day and age when the taxpayers have basically said we've had enough and it's time to hold the limit, it's probably appropriate.

And I trust that in bringing forward this amendment, it's an amendment that has also been agreed to by groups in the northern municipalities or that will be affected by this legislation.

I'm sure that no one will argue the point that there shouldn't be some guidelines set out. And it almost goes along with the same guidelines that have been suggested by taxpayers across this province about provincial governments bringing deficit financing or budgets . . . or I mean a Bill in that restricts governments to operate within their means.

So maybe this is the start of a purpose or a goal in mind down the road where governments will all be living within their means. So in order to allow my colleague to take a little closer look at the Bill, I will move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend the Education Act (No. 2)

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, The Education Act is the single most important statute governing Saskatchewan's kindergarten to grade 12 school system. It deals with

the structure, powers, and duties of boards of education. It specifies the powers and duties of the minister. It also addresses a wide range of matters related to school staff, programs, and facilities.

The Act needs to be updated on a regular basis. The current version was enacted in 1978. Since then we have seen many changes in our school system.

A regular update of the Act serves three purposes. It deletes sections which have become obsolete. It allows us to revise provisions which are no longer appropriate or accurate. And finally, it allows us to include provisions which address emerging issues. Mr. Speaker, the Bill before us serves all three of these purposes. I'd like to highlight the major items which I think would be of interest to the members of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, home-based education or home schooling, as it is often called, has existed in Saskatchewan for many years. However there has been no clear legislative basis for this practice. In addition, there has been no effective mechanism through which public education authorities could approve and monitor home-based education programs.

In recent years the absence of an appropriate legal and administrative framework has become something of a problem for all concerned. These problems have been highlighted by a number of court cases. These establish very clearly that in Canada parents have a legal right to educate their children at home, in accordance with their conscientious beliefs.

In the spring of 1991, Saskatchewan Education established an advisory committee on home-based education. This committee included representatives from the major public education organizations and from home-based educators. The committee submitted its report last fall. The report included recommendations for a better organized set of laws and procedures on home schooling. Despite the widely varying perspectives of the committee members, every one of the recommendations had unanimous support.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, this report is consistent with the way in which we've developed education policy in this province since day one. We've done so in the Saskatchewan tradition by talking to and listening to those affected, and working with them to define common ground that we can all comfortably stand on.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill includes several new provisions which are needed to implement the advisory committee's recommendations. A definition is provided of a home-based education program, something the Act did not previously contain. It is defined as a program initiated and directed by parents in the pupil's home.

Provision is made for home-based education programs to be registered. This means students

receiving instruction at home can now be given clear legal status.

Under the Act, boards of education will now be required to establish local policies for the registration and administration of home-based education.

The Act has always contained a section listing reasons for which students can be exempted from attending school. This is being amended to include pupils who are receiving instruction in a registered home-based instruction program.

Another section of this Bill will give immunity from liability to public education officials who are required to deal with home-based education programs. This immunity reflects the belief that parents who choose to educate their children at home must be responsible for the operation and outcomes of the education programs for their children.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Bill will give the minister and Lieutenant Governor in Council the necessary authority to deal with home-based education through policy and regulation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that these new measures are not intended to promote home-based education. I should also emphasize that they do not formally recognize home-based education as an equal alternative to school attendance. Rather, the new provisions simply recognize that home-based education is a fact of life in this province and across Canada. Moreover, the existence of home-based education is supported by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The amendments reflect the balance of interests between the state, parents, and pupils. They mean that each of the main parties recognizes the other's right to exist. They give us a legislative base for regulating home-based education in an organized, constructive way.

I have met, Mr. Speaker, representatives of the organization for home-based . . . parents that are teaching their children at home. And this is a very difficult job to do. They are very dedicated people and their organization is doing an exceptional job in representing their interests to us. And I think it's reflected in this Bill.

The Education Act was originally drafted — to turn to another significant aspect of the Bill — at a time when the federal government through the Department of Indian Affairs was responsible for virtually all matters relating to education for native students.

The current legislation reflects that. It makes no provision for direct interaction between Indian bands themselves and Saskatchewan school divisions. Clearly this is no longer appropriate. More and more Indian bands in the province are assuming direct responsibility for the education of Indian students.

This Bill includes several amendments which will

allow Indian bands and boards of education to enter into agreements with one another. These agreements could address matters such as tuition arrangements, capital agreements, and agreements for the joint management of school facilities and programs.

In short, these amendments will make it easier for Indian bands and local boards to cooperate in delivering programs to Indian students. This will benefit everyone — the students, band officials, and local board officials.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to mention several other features of this Bill that help to bring it more up to date.

A number of sections have been amended to keep their terminology consistent with the language associated with the core curriculum. This was not previously the case because core is a relatively new undertaking.

In addition, several sections have been amended to delete references to superintendents. Within the meaning of the Act, superintendents were individuals employed by the department to oversee school divisions. Every school division now has its own locally employed director of education. There is no longer a need for the department to employ superintendents or for The Education Act to make any mention of them.

A new provision is being added to provide an explicit penalty for the illegal operation of an independent school. This is needed to complete the legislative and policy framework for independent schools which has been put in place over the past several years.

A provision has also been added to clarify the status of the local board of trustees for a school once the school has closed and the local board no longer has a role to play.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated at the outset, this Bill serves three purposes: it eliminates obsolete provisions; revises those that need it; and adds new measure to address the issues of our day. The amendments in this Bill will help to ensure that The Education Act remains an accurate and up-to-date reflection of our provincial school system.

I am therefore pleased to move that Bill No. 59, An Act to amend The Education Act, be now read a second time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in listening to the minister I'm glad to hear that the government has certainly taken the time to look at the recommendations. I guess the one major area that most of the people in my area that are involved in home-based school programs and other individuals I've talked with have strongly indicated is that they would like to have some guidelines and some regulations in place that they can look at, that they can be involved with, that they can be administered

under. So that at the end of the day as they've educated their children, they can feel quite confident that the school program they've offered will be acceptable in other jurisdictions, and that their children have reached a certain degree of education that is not only acceptable but gives them the opportunity to move out into the world.

(1500)

As the minister has indicated, I believe the government appears to have and the minister has taken the time to take a very close look at the recommendations, and we as well would like to take a bit of time to review the Bill.

I guess the one other concern that comes up and will continue to be raised by individuals who choose to look at private schooling for their children or home school-based program is the fact of taxation, and most of the individuals in my area would certainly be happy to at least have local governments and the provincial government take into consideration even just the property tax, education component of the property tax and whether that can be used as . . .

The fact of even through home-based schooling, it costs some money. And securing books and curriculum material, it costs them as well, and they have to do it out of their pocket. And I think that's an area that has been addressed, will continue to rise, and maybe it's an area that we should be taking a closer look at.

But at the present time, I would like to give my colleague an opportunity to take a closer look at the Bill; therefore I move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 61 — An Act to amend The Vital Statistics Act

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 1993.

By way of background, Mr. Speaker, the Uniform Law Conference of Canada has provided each province in Canada a draft of a model vital statistics Act. Provinces in turn were then invited to review their own legislation in light of this non-binding model Act. With respect to Saskatchewan's vital statistics legislation, as a result of the model, two areas were recommended for change.

The first amendment, Mr. Speaker, in this Bill removes therefore distinctions based upon the marital status of parents with respect to the naming of children and the recording of the father's particulars on the birth record. Under current legislation, if the parents are married to each other, the child is given the father's surname or the mother's surname or a hyphenated surname comprised of the surnames of both mother and the father. Also both parents' particulars are put on the birth record automatically.

However, Mr. Speaker, currently if the parents are not married to each other, the child is registered in the name of the mother, and the father's particulars are not placed on the birth record. The father's particulars will only be placed on the birth record if the mother and a person acknowledging himself to be the father jointly request this in writing.

Upon receipt of such a request, the child can also then be registered either under the name of the mother, surname of the father, or a hyphenated surname comprised of the surnames of both. And in the circumstance upon the marriage of a child's parents subsequent to the birth, the birth record of that child then is re-registered to show the parents as being married.

Mr. Speaker, rather than having the marital status of parents as the criteria by which a child is registered, the amendment before us would remove this distinction. It places primary responsibility on the parents to have both of their particulars placed on the birth record and then to determine the name under which the child will be registered.

The second amendment, Mr. Speaker, deals with the choice of names under which a newborn may be registered. At present the child can only be registered either under the surname of the mother, the surname of the father, or a hyphenated surname comprised of the surnames of both mother and the father. This amendment would allow the parents to choose virtually any appropriate surname for the child, written in the Roman alphabet, which could reflect their personal, cultural, or religious beliefs.

Mr. Speaker, one further amendment will also revise the definition of stillbirth to make it consistent with the definition that is being used by physicians throughout the province. This was a change requested by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I believe these amendments are positive because they represent decreased intrusiveness into matters that are essentially personal. They will also decrease the probability of human rights and/or Ombudsman complaints regarding discrimination on the basis of marital status.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, these amendments will bring Saskatchewan legislation into line with that of other provinces, particularly British Columbia and Nova Scotia, where it has been demonstrated to work satisfactorily.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I hereby move second reading of The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 1993.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to give my colleague, the member responsible for the health issues, to just peruse the Bill and become a little more informed, I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 62 — An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased now to stand to move second reading of The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 1993.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment Act proposes a series of small changes to the Act, and these changes will better reflect the current practices of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the first change is that the college wants to increase its council members' terms from two to three years and to clarify how council vacancies are filled. The college feels that it will manage its responsibilities better with more experienced council members.

Two changes are intended to clarify the Act's linkage to the by-laws, specifically those by-laws concerned with the definition of professional misconduct and how physicians change from inactive to active status. For example, while the Act has a general definition of professional misconduct, the by-laws are more specific. The college wants to make sure that someone reading the Act will be aware that there are also by-laws on the topic. No changes, Mr. Speaker, are envisioned to the current by-laws.

Mr. Speaker, three related amendments will allow the executive committee to act on behalf of the council when the council cannot meet to handle the referral of discipline matters. For example, when an investigation report is completed on a physician, the council, or the executive committee in council's absence, can refer it on to the discipline committee. This will help prevent delays in conducting hearings into misconduct or incompetence.

Another change related to improving the efficiency of the disciplinary process is to allow the college to operate a number of discipline hearing committees at one time. This reflects the current practice of the college, as it was not realistic to expect one committee to handle all hearings into complaints. It would be simply too demanding a workload for one committee which would of course result in considerable delay for the complainant and the physician.

Mr. Speaker, the college's disciplinary hearings are currently open to the public and the media. However, some cases are sensitive in that they might deal with allegations of sexual misconduct. In such cases the college wants to be able to protect the identity of the person or witnesses who might have been mistreated or witnessed the misconduct. In these cases the college would be able to apply to the court to prevent the media from reporting the name of the person or relevant witnesses. It will then be up to the court to decide whether the person's name or witnesses' names should or should not be reported.

While the situation does not arise very often, it is a positive move to protect someone who comes

forward from being publicly identified and possibly ostracized.

Mr. Speaker, when a decision has been made by a discipline hearing committee, the council of the college may assess a variety of penalties including the costs related to the investigation and hearing. An amendment will be made to clarify the costs that can be assessed, consistent with recent court decisions on such matters.

A similar change is being made to clarify how notices of hearings and such are served. When it is impractical to serve documents, the college may apply to the court to rule that the documents are served. This might arise when the physician attempts to avoid service by leaving the province for a period of time.

The final amendment related to the discipline process is to require a physician who appeals a discipline matter to pay for the transcript of evidence. At the present time the college absorbs this cost on behalf of the appealing physician.

Mr. Speaker, a further amendment proposed by this Bill is one which will eliminate the automatic recognition of U.S. (United States) medical examinations for licensing purposes. This amendment recognizes that the U.S. exams referred to in the current Act, the federation of medical licensing exams, and the National Board medical exams will be phased out later this summer and replaced by one new examination, the United States Medical Licensure Exam. The change will also prevent claims being made against the college that it is favouring foreign graduates who happen to have taken the U.S. exams.

So this amendment, Mr. Speaker, will treat all physicians — Canadian and foreign — the same. They will all need to pass the Medical Council of Canada qualifying examination and receive the licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada to receive permanent licensure in Saskatchewan. This is consistent with the licensure requirements in other provinces.

The licensure change will make it somewhat more difficult for U.S. physicians to be licensed in Saskatchewan; however the college only receives three or four applications per year from these physicians.

Mr. Speaker, provision is contained in the current Act to grandfather or to grandmother, in some cases, physicians who may have been registered and licensed pursuant to previous requirements related to the U.S. exams. The exceptions would be physicians who have not paid their fees or who were expelled from the college for reasons of misconduct or incompetence.

Mr. Speaker, the college has been consulted extensively on these changes and is supportive of them. Some physicians may express reservations about having to pay for transcripts of evidence and not

having physicians' names included in the non-publication order amendment; however physicians' names are already able to be published and therefore this amendment maintains the current situation for physicians.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 1993.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I listen to the minister bringing forward the reasoning for The Medical Profession Amendment Act, Bill No. 62, I believe I observed, or heard the minister talking about a number of changes that will be brought in place, put in place, especially to address misconduct by medical professionals. And the minister I think indicated that the college was extensively talked to or discussed . . . and some of the changes were brought forward.

I'm certain that if the college was talked to and they brought forward recommendations on this, that at least the minister and the department would have taken time to hear and follow up on these recommendations. And certainly a number of the issues that were raised by the minister have been concerns that have been part of the medical profession over a period of time.

I trust that as the Act moves forward, we're able to alleviate some of the concerns out there, as well as providing protection for the general public.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I believe I will just move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1515)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 21 — An Act to amend The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act

The Chair: — I would ask the minister to please introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Yes, I would be pleased to introduce my staff. First of all, Denise Gustavson to my right and Peter Phillips to my left.

Clause 1

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, first of all, welcome to your staff as well. I guess any time the government brings forward a piece of legislation that helps people or encourages people to invest in the province of Saskatchewan, the official opposition feels that this is the right direction and a positive step.

Equity investments in Saskatchewan companies is a step in the right direction by the government, any government. Now if we could just get you, Mr.

Minister, to look at all areas for equity investments, like Crown corporations. Share offerings really aren't that bad. I think the people of the province of Saskatchewan support them.

And I just wondered if you might care to comment on that before we allow this to move forward. We don't feel that we have any sharp objections to this unless you raise something at this time.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — No, I think not, Mr. Chairman. I think this Bill, as the member from Kindersley expresses, is very straightforward. Basically it does, as my staff have indicated to me, three main things. One, it harmonizes with federal regulations, which is necessary in order for the program to work properly; it makes the type A investments more feasible; and also adds some compliance features that make the program work easier.

The member raises the issue of the role of Crown corporations and other investment tools that we may think of. And I want to be clear to him that there are advantages obviously within the private sector of having tools and instruments for private-sector investment, and we've got no qualms with that; in fact we try to strengthen at every turn those programs that we believe to be in place by the previous government, but at the same time try to eliminate the problems that existed in other areas.

And this is not a dogmatic statement; in fact very pragmatic, that we believe strongly in the private sector. We believe there is a strong role for Crown corporations as we saw the other day with SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) expanding into Manitoba, and also the cooperative movement where we are doing a lot of work with the Wheat Pool and the credit union system in order to make the co-op system in the province work and generate jobs and generate wealth.

So it's an approach that talks about three main engines of economic development and obviously the private sector or private investment being an important component of that.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 9 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 54 — An Act respecting the Department of Economic Development

The Chair: — Order. The minister has been joined by another official and I wonder if the minister would introduce his official to the committee.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairperson, I would like to introduce the deputy minister of Economic Development, Mr. Frank Hart.

Clauses 1 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 9

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we'd like to propose an amendment to this clause, clause 9 of the printed Bill. And I'll just read the amendment:

Amend clause 9 of the printed Bill be adding immediately after the words "in support of economic development" where they appear in clause (f) thereof the following:

" , provided that no such fee or charge shall be of any effect unless and until approved by the Legislative Assembly or any committee thereof established for the purpose of reviewing such fees or charges".

Mr. Minister, simply what we're asking for here is that the fees, any fees that may be attached to this in the future, would be approved by the legislature or a legislative committee. I guess it goes to the issue of accountability, which I think we all feel that a government department should be looked at and involved in.

So, Mr. Minister, we feel that this is a very reasonable amendment, and we would move it now.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I just want to point out to the member that the fees and charges referred to here would very normally, according to the Department of Justice, appear in the regulations that would be attached to the Bill, and that it would be in fact very unusual to include them in the actual legislation.

And therefore I would just make the argument that we look at and consult with those affected ahead of time if any regulation changes are going to be made that would affect the fees. But to include them in the actual legislation is thought to be just too cumbersome and not correct to put them there.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, that would allow the fees to be changed or increased without any accountability to anyone; no one would know about that — whether they have changed or not. And we feel it should be the process of the legislative committee or the legislature itself to review all fees, or increases of fees, so that the general public is made aware of the changes.

So we think that that wouldn't be too cumbersome. There's very good reason. People want to know what the fees they're going to be charged are and therefore we think that this is reasonable.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I understand what the member is trying to achieve here, but I think in many ways we have already taken care of that with the announcement as of April 1 of the regulatory code of conduct for government departments.

And that is that in order for regulations to be changed, that there is a grouping of things that have to happen

before a department can change regulations. And one of them is to consult extensively with the stakeholders who will be affected. Then after that, of course any regulatory change is publicly gazetted and everyone knows it has occurred.

But I think you're right in the sense of letting people know ahead of time. And that's why we introduced the code of regulatory conduct that makes it necessary for departments, before they bring forward regulation changes to cabinet and before it's acted on, that a very large degree of consultation has to go on in advance.

The other thing that the code of regulatory conduct insists the departments do is look at every other option that would avoid the changes to the regulation or the increase in fee before they come forward to cabinet and have to explain that in advance as to what process they went through there.

So I think in many ways we have taken care of the problem that you are concerned about, that is that there's consultation and the process being made public.

Mr. Boyd: — Well, Mr. Minister, while you may feel that, I don't share your feelings in that area. I think that the reason we're asking for that is so that there is some accountability in the legislature or in a legislative committee prior to the fees being implemented.

You can consult all you like with whomever you like, but the fact remains that if you decide for one reason or another that the fees are going to change, increase, there's no accountability as far as the legislature is concerned or a legislative committee. You will simply go into whomever is affected by this Bill and say to them that we are proposing to increase the fees. They may say to you, we're not happy about that. And you say, we're going to go ahead with it anyway.

So we think that it should be debated on the floor or at the very least in a committee.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I just want to reiterate that we believe that the consultation process that we have set in place is much better than what has existed in the past. And it would be very unusual for this process to take place in the legislature. It hasn't happened in the past, in this Act or in other Acts that the previous government brought in.

And what we have done is strengthen the process by introducing the regulatory code of conduct. And we will, I'm sure, see some very positive results from that, and we've seen positive results already.

So I just reiterate that there is a consultative process before regulation changes and fees are changed. And following that, of course, there's a publication of any of these changes that are of necessity gazetted and made public to the population.

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 9 agreed to.

Clause 10

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have an amendment to clause 10 that I would like to move now. We would like to:

Amend clause 10 of the printed Bill by adding immediately after the words “other than an agreement pursuant to section 6 or 7” where they appear in subsection (2) thereof the following:

“provided that such expenditure has been specifically approved by vote in estimates”.

I move that now, Mr. Chairman. It again is a call for accountability that the spending, any spending that is going to be taking place, has to be approved in estimates of spending of anything over \$10,000.

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I want to say again that the restrictions that the member is trying to inject into this Bill would make it very difficult for the government to do business or do deals on a regular basis. I mean if you had to approve each and every one in the estimates, it would preclude the government from doing business for the rest of the year on issues that might come up that weren't known about at the time the estimates were introduced.

I use the issue of potentially the AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) deal between the province and the federal government. If it were the case that it had to be debated in estimates before it could be approved, obviously that deal then would have had to have been put on hold until the next year when the estimates could discuss it.

And for that reason there are certain sums of money that obviously are included in Economic Development that would allow for agreements to be made. And this then is made public in the *Public Accounts* that follow, and so at that point members of the legislature have the opportunity to have their input.

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 10 agreed to.

Clause 11 agreed to.

Clause 12

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would move that clause 12 be amended:

Amend clause 12 of the printed Bill by adding immediately after the words “within or outside Saskatchewan” where they appear therein the following:

“provided that no such grant, loan, guarantee

or other similar means shall be provided without authority of vote in estimates where the grant, loan, guarantee or other similar means would have a value greater than \$100,000”.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, without getting into and repeating words, basically this would do the same thing, that is tie the hands of the department or the government in making deals that would have a value of greater than \$100,000 in any given year if they had not been discussed in the estimates. And obviously there are many such arrangements that are made within or outside the province of Saskatchewan that would severely restrict economic development in the province.

It's fair to say that when these deals are made and consummated, they are made public. They would then follow in *Public Accounts*, that the expenditure has to be accounted for and made public at that point. So I would make the same argument that we will be voting against this amendment.

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 12 agreed to.

Clauses 13 and 14 agreed to.

Clause 15

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am concerned about public accountability and disclosure. And while I see that under this Act the normal annual report is required, it seems that that is all. Mr. Chairman, many people in this province have expressed concern with this sort of approach to things where the minister can spend millions and only have to give a report that tells people very little about how their money is spent.

And, Mr. Chairman, people in this province as well, in fact groups like the Saskatchewan taxpayers' association, want better disclosure. They want to know what each agreement, each grant, and each example of financial assistance involves because it's their money.

Why was there no effort to offer this sort of disclosure in this Act so that we can end the speculation and concerns of so many people regarding potential waste of government monies? And while I realize that there may be some commercial reasons for not disclosing everything, there should be better disclosure. And I just want to know why there wasn't a better effort made.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to indicate to the hon. member that in fact this does greatly enhance the position of disclosing what the department is doing. Under the previous Act, The Industry and Commerce Act, in fact deals could be made with no disclosure. And under the new Act in fact, in terms of compliance with the sections of this Bill, in fact through order in council or through regulations, complete disclosure has to take place.

So in fact what you're referring to here is actually happening. And the old Act which would have allowed for a continuation of non-disclosure, is being changed here by its replacement with this Act, The Department of Economic Development Act. And I think what you will see is a much better system of disclosure than has been in the Act in previous years.

Clause 15 agreed to.

Clause 16

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to amend clause 16 the following way:

Amend clause 16 of the printed Bill by adding immediately after the words "in support of economic development" where they appear in the clause (a) thereof the following:

“, provided that no such fee or charge shall be of any effect unless and until approved by the Legislative Assembly or a committee thereof established for the purpose of reviewing such fees or charges”.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I want to once again tell the hon. member from Kindersley that this goes back to our earlier conversation. I think in clause 9 or clause 10 that related to fees and the advance notice to people affected by fee increases, that under the new regulatory code of conduct that applies to all departments including this one, that the consultation that you talk about has to take place in advance to those changes taking place and coming to cabinet, and then upon acceptance by cabinet, then the proper procedure and disclosure that takes place.

So this is already happening and it's not needed to put it into the Bill. It would make the Bill much more cumbersome.

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 16 agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 22 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, before we move on to The Heritage Property Amendment Act, I would like to thank my officials and members of the opposition for working with us quickly and efficiently on these two Bills.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We as well would like to thank the officials for coming in and their help this afternoon. Thank you.

Bill 31 — An Act to amend The Heritage Property Act

The Chair: — I would ask the Minister of Municipal Government to please introduce the officials who are

with us here today.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chair, thank you. To my right I have Keith Rogers, who is the executive director of the recreation, culture division of Municipal Government. Behind me I have Frank Korbemaker, and to my left is Dean Clark from the heritage branch of the Department of Municipal Government.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we wanted to amend clause 3 of the printed Bill:

by adding immediately after the words "Section 2 is amended:" where they appear therein the following sub-clause (a):

“(a) by adding the following clause after clause (d):

“(d.1) “committee” means such committee of the Legislative Assembly as may be established pursuant to the rules and procedures of the Legislative Assembly for the purposes of scrutinizing and approving proposed non-tax revenues of the executive government, or, in the event that no such committee is established, means the Standing Committee on Public Accounts;”

and

(b) by re-lettering existing clauses (a) through (e) as clauses (b) through (f).

So moved.

(1545)

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chair, the amendment is simply not compatible with the intent of the Bill. It's hard for us to approve this. It simply is out of context completely with the purpose and the direction of The Heritage Property Act. We would not agree to that amendment.

The Chair: — Order. The amendment as it stands would not be accepted by the Chair because it seeks to add things to the Bill as opposed to amend things in the Bill. However I am told by the opposition that they have further amendments which if adopted would then mean that this amendment would be consequential and would then conceivably be in order.

So I'm suggesting to the committee — but I'm at the graces of the committee — if they will agree to stand consideration of this amendment and this clause at this time to move to other sections of the Bill and then depending what happens there, we may see a need to

come back to this particular clause. Is that agreed? That's agreed. So by agreement then, we'll proceed to Clause 4 of the Bill.

Clause 4

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We apologize for the confusion on that, Madam Minister. The proposed amendment — the first one we proposed — relates to other amendments that we are going to be proposing in later clauses. And I'd move the first one of those now — clause 4 of the printed Bill:

Amend clause 4 of the printed Bill by striking out the words “for any disposition or class of dispositions that may be made pursuant to clause (b), (b.1) or (b.2)” where they appear in subclause 3(1)(b.3) as being enacted at clause (a) therein and substituting the following:

“to be proposed for approval by the Legislative Assembly or any committee thereof established for the purpose of reviewing such fees, royalties or prices, for any disposition or class of dispositions that may be made pursuant to clause (b), (b.1) or (b.2), and no such fee, royalty or price shall be of any effect unless and until so approved”.

I move that.

(1600)

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chair, this amendment I think changes administrative practice across I think the executive arm of government considerably. Fees and charges have always been set by any department. And these are very minor, minuscule fees; they are not of a substantial nature at all.

To come back to the Legislative Assembly every time we wanted to know whether we should charge a fee for some palaeontological artefact or some minor gemstone, I think would result in just a tremendous task on the Legislative Assembly. And it would make no sense administratively at all.

We simply feel that that amendment would not enhance at all the ability of the branch to perform its duties and we would not agree to it.

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we would move to:

Amend clause 5 of the printed Bill by striking out Section 3.1 as being enacted therein and substituting the following:

“3.1(1) Where, in the opinion of the minister,

release of information would endanger heritage property or interfere with its proper conservation, the minister may, pursuant to the provisions of The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, make a submission to the Information and Privacy Commissioner seeking exemption from any requirement the minister may otherwise have to release such information.

(2) The Information and Privacy Commissioner shall, in considering a submission of the minister made pursuant to this section, have due regard for the conservation, loss-prevention and protection of heritage property.”

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chairman, on that amendment the purpose of that clause is to preserve and protect some of the historical sites in Saskatchewan from pillage, I guess, is one word that you can use for it. And we want to make sure that those sites are maintained for historical purposes.

Anyone wanting to know more information on those sites can always go through the freedom of information and access those records under due process. But I think it still is a prerogative of the minister. If a department in the government perceives that it's in the best interest of the people of Saskatchewan to preserve those sites, they can say that they will deny public the information on the sites.

But it is still the prerogative of those people to go through the FOI (freedom of information) to access this information. So we would prefer to leave the process that we have in place and allow due process to take place under normal affairs and let it go through FOI subsequent to the minister's denial.

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 16 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 17 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I would like at this time to thank the officials from the department for assisting us this afternoon, and I would like to thank the opposition for their cooperation.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We too in the opposition would like to thank the officials for coming out this afternoon and helping to answer the questions.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 52 — An Act respecting Culture and Recreation

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chair, I would like to introduce Keith Rogers, our executive director of the culture and recreation division of Municipal Government.

Clause 1

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, I wonder if you could take the time to tell us what problem this Bill is trying to address or correct, and are there any costs associated with it to the taxpayer of the province?

The Chair: — I wonder if we might have the cooperation of the members. If they want to carry on conversations, they do so quietly.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the member opposite, the Act had to be changed because The Renewable Resources, Recreation and Culture Act under which the authority rests now has been repealed. And in that process we've reorganized government, and culture and recreation now rests within the Department of Municipal Government.

So in that process we had to develop a new Act that would give the department and the ministry the authority for programing and policy development in the field of recreation and culture. There's no cost associated.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

(1615)

Bill No. 27 — An Act to amend The Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan Act

Clause 1

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, we realize that the officials that you're dealing with here in this Bill want to make these changes. I'm just wondering what kind of cost is associated with making this name change.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, there wouldn't be any cost at all to the taxpayer or the government. I assume the only inconsequential costs there would be, would be for their association to have new stationery and that type of thing.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, does this association receive any government funding whatsoever?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the answer is no.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 9 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

The committee reported progress.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No 21 — An Act to amend The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act

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

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

Bill No. 54 — An Act respecting the Department of Economic Development

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 54 now be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 31 — An Act to amend The Heritage Property Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 31 be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 52 — An Act respecting Culture and Recreation

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 52 now be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 27 — An Act to amend The Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 27, The Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan Act, now be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**General Revenue Fund
Highways and Transportation
Vote 16**

The Chair: — I will ask the minister to introduce the officials who are with him here today.

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. The members that are here today is my deputy, Clare Kirkland, sitting to my left; Myron Herasymiuk, sitting to his immediate left; Mr. Anderson, sitting to my immediate right; Don Metz, assistant deputy minister; and Colleen Laing, the head of finance.

Just a couple things that arose last day that I just want to correct . . . not correct, but add. And in going through that 398 hours of work in compiling the information, I say to the hon. member of Maple Creek, the department has indicated that in checking it there were three pages in respect to computer purchases that should have been included. And so I want to send that over to you.

And one other piece of information that the member from Rosthern asked for, and that is in respect to the highway count in Martensville and beyond. I'll send this over to the hon. member from Thunder Creek . . . Morse. I think those are the two things that I wanted to add to the information from yesterday.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, two things I should do to begin with is to pass along a pair of compliments. I first of all want to compliment our staff who did numerous hours of work preparing the questions and the forms that were necessary in order to get the answers that we required. And so I want to compliment them on a very thorough job in having done all of the work that they did to prepare the necessary things that had to be done.

And I also want of course to pass along a compliment to your staff for so ably answering the questions and presenting them to us. I'm sure that the taxpayers, if they could be aware of what all goes into what we're doing here, would be happy to know that we have this kind of cooperation and that their interests as taxpayers are being looked after in a most judicial way.

The questions and the answers that you've provided to us, I've gone through them very quickly. There's an awful lot of them but I did go through them, and we have picked up a few things that we would like to clarify.

The first thing I'd like to ask, Minister, we refer in the questionnaire to quite a few manuals that are apparently connected. And obviously it appears that there's way too many for me to ask you to send them over for me to be able to go through them because there just seems like too many volumes and too big of an expense. But we wondered if these manuals and copies of them are in fact available perhaps in the library where everyone who is interested could go in and check, myself or anybody else. If not, would it be possible to have them put into the library?

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — Yes, that's very true. There are a lot of manuals, as you indicated. There is no precise filing in libraries or indeed coordinated into a library in Highways as such. Some of them are in individuals' departments of it. But I have assurance here that if indeed there's a particular manual or manual that is

required, that the department could in fact make it available. But we haven't really got a centralized system set up as such, and many of the manuals are related to the specific department within the department.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Minister. I take it then that what you're saying is that you would authorize us to maybe go to a department and look through their manual, or perhaps have it sent over for a couple of days and then return it so we wouldn't have to double the cost of re-manufacturing something that we probably wouldn't have to really have for ever or anything like that?

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — I think that if you contact my office with a request in respect to a specific manual, then I would immediately contact the department. I would appreciate if you would come through my office, not for clearance, but just in order that I'm apprised of the request. Because then we may want to see whether or not we should be making more copies available and perhaps making available in libraries.

(1630)

Mr. Goohsen: — Well thank you, Minister. That seems like fair ball to me. So we'll go along with that commitment and check out to see what in fact we may need, as I get a chance to peruse these answer sheets a little more closely.

I came upon a list of committees that are listed in the answers. And I guess there's four of them that are named. And what I wondered was, from my experience, it seems like there would be an awful lot more committees that would be than four within the department itself.

Now I would like to know why you didn't list the committees that work within the department. And could you brief us on how many committees would work within the department and what the nature of their committee work would be, the approximate kinds of time that the employees would be spending in these committee meetings, and what types of things would they be discussing while they're into that?

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — Just for clarification there, are you asking for a list of all of the internal committees? Our expectation, when you asked the question, is those that are established by the department outside of . . . essentially outside of the department. And that's the information that we were giving you.

Yes, there will be a number of internal committees, but I wasn't aware that that's information that you wanted. Can you clearly indicate what in fact you want?

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Minister. I guess we did have one little slip-up in our questions then, because we did want to get the internal committees as well as the external. So perhaps you could work on delivering them later. If you could commit to that, that would serve our needs.

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — Yes, that's agreeable.

Mr. Goohsen: — Okay. Thanks, Minister. In the estimates of the costs of things, we have a fair bit of money that we see that goes for advertising. We're presuming that most of that advertising would be for things like tenders and road weight restrictions in the springtime and that kind of thing.

But rather than just having us guess at it, could you clear up, you know, where this money is expended? And have you reduced those costs at all this year as compared to, say, last year?

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — Yes, I can provide you with that particular information. Actually the amount that we are spending on communications is relatively the same over the years, as I understand. There's some variation. When I take a look at the respective years, '85-86 for instance, there's 850,970; and then it varied to '86-87, there's 788,990. I can read all of these right up to the present. But for '92-93 there was 642,200; '93-94 the estimate for communications branch is 596,590, according to my information here.

That is made up of several programs and I'll just itemize a few of those for you to indicate the essential costs. The various programs in the communication is, for instance, the O Zone, and that is the area where there's construction, and getting the signing and so on in respect to that, \$125,000.

There's another zone, the Snow Zone, \$125,000 — this was a program that was initiated by the workers under occupational safety. The hotline is 2,500; road restrictions, as you indicated, 6,500. There's a program for salvage of hay of \$22,000; ATV (all-terrain vehicles), 2,000; other advertising, snowmobile safety, 1,000.

And then we have a few others. Official highway map which we make out, and I may say that what the department did there — there is no expenditure for '93-94 — what they did is really produce two years supply and saved a very substantial amount of money in doing that.

Annual report is \$7,000, and the traffic accident information statistics, printing is 20,000. And *In Motion*, which is sort of an internal paper for the department and staff is \$12,000. Those are the essential make-up of it.

So there's no real large advertising from the standpoint of what one ordinary looks at advertising. It's primarily promoting those particular specifics that I gave you there. Is that the information you wanted?

Mr. Goohsen: — Yes, Minister, I understand what you're saying. But I do recall that during the election period, members of your party went around campaigning on the theory that they could reduce advertising in the Department of Highways and places like this by up to 80 per cent. And we thought maybe you might actually try to prove that you could do that

somehow by going ahead and bringing out programs where in fact you could show some savings.

We never did believe that anybody could accomplish that figure. However a target of maybe 30 per cent might have been in order. And I think later I will probably move a motion that we try to reduce this by 30 per cent, or that in fact we do do that. I don't want to do that just now, but I'm going to do it later because I think I should put you and your government to the test of whether you really mean what you say in the election campaign and whether you're willing to go along with trying to fulfil your promises to the people of the province.

I want to ask you, Minister, about your own personal travel involved with the Department of Highways and the travel of your staff members. Where were these monies paid from? Did they come out of SPMC, did they come out of somewhere else, and could you give us a briefing on where your travels took you and what it included.

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — Just in respect to your comments in respect to cutting highway advertising costs, certainly we have, as I indicated, made a substantial savings in respect to the production of maps which was costing something like close to 100,000. For a two-year supply we got it for \$134,000 — very substantial.

But when you're thinking of making your motion, I think you ought to think as to the various items that I indicated to you in the advertising budget. All of them are, I think, fairly essential items. And we have, as I indicated, made savings by purchasing maps for a two-year period rather than one.

In respect to the question on travel, the minister's expenses, I can give you the totals in respect to the in-province travel. And it's broken down into accommodation and sustenance, 580.58; SPMC air fare is 7,630.35 — that's combined air fare and CVA (central vehicle agency). There's a charge in relation to the minister's car. Taxi, \$7.60; other, 29.29; total, 8,247.82 is the total. That is in-province travel.

In respect to out of province: November 16, 17, destination Toronto, Ontario — accommodation and sustenance, 169.31; travel, 984; total, 1,153.31. That was, by the way, to attend the agricultural ministers' meeting with the federal Minister of Agriculture in Toronto in November 16, 17. The major discussion was the dismantling of the Crow benefit.

February 3 and 4, Victoria, British Columbia: accommodation, 356.70; travel, 387.71; total, 744.41. That was attending a WESTAC (Western Transportation Advisory Council) board of directors meeting.

And on March 15, Winnipeg, Manitoba: accommodation and sustenance, \$40; travel, 496; total, 536. And the Winnipeg meeting in Manitoba, I was accompanied by my deputy minister, and similarly, I had one member in the Toronto trip. I was

also accompanied by a member of the staff, the assistant deputy minister.

The total there then is — for out-of-province — is \$2,433.72. The Winnipeg meeting was again another meeting of the agricultural ministers, western provinces — Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan — along with the federal Minister of Agriculture. That was a one-day meeting and again it related to the discussion of changing the Crow benefit.

Those are the total . . . for the in-province and out-of-province, the total then is 11,319.89

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Minister. I have a question now about student hiring and the policy of the Department of Highways. I get quite a lot of inquiries from anxious parents and anxious students this time of year who are hoping that they can find some kind of summer employment that will supplement their ability to finance their education again next fall.

Do you have a policy in this regard? And if you could briefly outline that, and what kind of numbers do you think might be available in terms of jobs that people could apply for and who would they apply to, those kinds of things. We see a lot of students as flag people and that sort of things in the past, and I just wonder if you could update people on that.

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — The policy that has been adopted is that students are to apply with a Public Service Commission application form. And these are available, I take it, at universities and technical schools. Those applications, all of those applications are then forwarded to the Public Service Commission. And what is done there is those names are put onto computer and on a random basis they are selected.

If there are positions in the Department of Highways, then those are sent over, two or three, three or four names for a position . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes. There's usually two or three names comes out of the Public Service Commission, sent over to the Department of Highways, and then a selection is made. They make a selection of the three or four that have been randomly sent over to the department. So it's completely through the Public Service, over to the department, the department then makes the selection of the three or four.

I want to say that this gives everybody in the province, every student a fair opportunity to get an opportunity to work for the Department of Highways or any other departments of government.

I think it's commendable that we have put together . . . because otherwise there could be political favouritism, and what we have tried to do is to remove that and to put it on the basis that is fair and equitable to all students.

And I want to say that it has been working fairly well. There are several positions each year that the Department of Highways make available during the

construction year for employment for students, and those are in the process I guess of being filled at the time now . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, and apparently there's slightly more than a hundred positions would be made available. I think somewhere in the neighbourhood of 110, when I read it.

But that's the process. The applications go into the Public Service and the Public Service then on a random selection — they're all put on the computers — in random selection they come out, and three or four names are sent over to the department and they take a look at them and choose the applicant.

(1645)

Mr. Goohsen: — Yes, if a student perhaps couldn't find an application form, could they phone the Department of Highways or something like that? Or is there an easier access? Perhaps an out-of-province student might want to apply, or something like that. Or do we have them available through our MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) office perhaps or something?

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — That would be a good idea — to get a few application forms into your individual offices. An individual can phone to the department. Not to get a job, because all you could do is get an application, because it would have to go back to the Public Service Commission. Because we want this to be fair and give everybody an opportunity to . . . not like it has been too often the practice in the past. So that's how it would have to work.

But certainly you can contact the Public Service Commission and they'll have the application forms.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well thank you, Minister. I'll congratulate you on the program that you've put together, if it in fact works as you have explained it. It certainly is commendable that you would do it that way. And I know that our students want to be treated fairly.

And I think we all know that a man's character and a woman's character will never change, but their philosophy often changes as life goes by. So those that aren't supporting you today might support you some other day. And of course I may not necessarily support the same philosophy that my father did. So not knowing how people might think in the future, I think that's a very commendable way to approach the situation of student hiring.

And I will probably just take from *Hansard* a copy of what you've said and send that to some of the folks as an explanation of how to go about getting their applications and getting them in. That'll be easier than me trying to paraphrase it.

So I thank you for that approach, Minister. And we do appreciate it on behalf of the students of the province of Saskatchewan.

I have several other questions, but I do want to let some of my colleagues in on the questioning. And so I'm going to defer to one of my colleagues just for a moment.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I thank my colleague, the member from Maple Creek.

Mr. Minister, just recently I sent a letter up to your office. Your office staff will be aware of it; possibly the department is aware of it as well. It related to hauling or stockpiling gravel for a highway project on No. 8, south of Rocanville. That's a paving project along that area and a very major concern from the area: the fact that the contractor was moving on a grid road — I believe it's 601, west of Rocanville — and there were a lot of complaints in the area regarding windshield damage.

And I'm not sure, this may not be just an isolated case . . . related just to my area, it may happen across the province as well. And I appreciate the fact that you took a moment to look into it.

But I'm wondering if you could explain what has been done or what actions have followed up and what the process is that the department takes, or what format the department takes, in conferring with contractors when they indeed are forced to travel down grid roads. Realizing that these large trucks, with the type of rubber they have on, have a tendency to throw stones, and certainly vehicles moving by can create a fair bit of damage, and that damage also then falls . . . the cost of that falls on the taxpayer by SGI. And I'd just like your response on that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — Your specific problem that you brought to our attention has been sent to the department. And what the department has done is to have a discussion with the contractor in respect to that specific concern.

As a further follow-up, because this is a problem that I've had in my constituency too, of complaints with respect to that, we are now setting up a discussion with the industry to see whether we can get a better resolution of problems that develop when they're hauling gravel and gravel falls off, flies off, and so on.

So we're working at it. If there's a problem with a specific one, let us know; the department will get a hold and contact them, see whether or not . . . or what can be done in order to resolve if there was damage which was occasioned.

Mr. Toth: — I just wanted to also thank you, Mr. Minister, but just remind you and bring to your attention as well the fact that as these vehicles are being loaded there's a potential for gravel just to sit on the edge of the box and be maybe bounced off and what have you. And certainly I think it would be appropriate to discuss the movement and the hauling of gravel, and what have you, with the industry because they've got tight guidelines.

And I'm sure as they're bidding on some of these

contracts, probably in a lot of cases because the work has significantly decreased over the last few years, contractors out there trying to make a living, they're cutting their budgets fairly fine, and I'm sure that they want to do everything in their power as well to not only honour their contract, but to have the general public in mind.

So I think it's only fair and appropriate that we take the time to discuss the issue with them and possibly looking at ways . . . Tarping will eliminate anything blowing off. It won't quite catch what's, say, on the side of a box, but also I guess the speed limits is going to have to be something that's discussed, especially driving down grid roads.

One other question, Mr. Minister. You did send around a copy of projected construction for this year. I took a note of the construction projects; unfortunately I didn't see anything on Highway 48, Kipling and east.

And I'm wondering where the department is with some of the . . . On Highway 48 when you look at it, Mr. Minister, is strategically located that it could be a natural means of traffic flow from Manitoba, specifically Virden, into the Regina market and west, that could alleviate some of the traffic flow on Highway No. 1. And I'm wondering if the department has taken a long-term view and approach as to how they will be looking at further construction on Highway 48.

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — I think the hon. member will recognize that we're working under pretty tough financial restraint. And if I say so myself, I think you did fairly well in respect to your riding. As I look at it: Highway No. 1 resurfacing, Fleming to Moosomin; Highway No. 8 resurfacing, Moosomin to Rocanville; and Highway No. 9, resurfacing, junction 48 to Pipestone Creek, and Highway No 1 seal coat, Moosomin west. So we are certainly trying to spread the few dollars around that we have. And obviously we are looking constantly at all of the highways, and we can't service as much as what we would like.

But what I would encourage you to do . . . and I got into this job in September and didn't have the opportunity, but I welcome . . . if you send in, in the future, prior to getting into the next schedule sort of the essential priority that you have in a given riding . . . I know you'll have more than what we can facilitate, but sometimes there's an irritant for instance which we can correct. I think the member from Wilkie had an irritant or one of the farmers, and he contacted me, and we were able to resolve it. Sometimes a safety aspect can be corrected.

But all I can say with you is that we constantly are reviewing it. It will depend of course on the traffic count and the usage of it, and we'd have to take a look at that. So all highways I guess are under consideration for the future; we're pretty well set for this year. For the future I would ask you to feel free to indicate to me early enough so that perhaps we can take a look at the priorities in your ridings.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, you have set out a list of different proposals for repairing highways or upgrades in bridges, etc., that are all part of a federal agreement that you have made.

The people in my area have asked me to talk to you about upgrading Highway 13, the Red Coat Trail, which runs through this province from the Manitoba border to the Alberta border along the very southern edge of this province — actually it runs from about Brandon down to Fort Macleod in Alberta — and they asked me to approach you to see if there was any possibilities of getting some government funding to upgrade this road.

They have talked to the MP (Member of Parliament) for the area, who has talked to his federal counterparts. The federal counterparts said that if the province was prepared to put in their 50 per cent of the money, that they would be prepared to consider putting in their 50 per cent to do further upgrades on this highway at some point.

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — Yes, I know there is a considerable amount of determination to improve the Red Coat Trail, No. 13 Highway. I had the occasion very recently of meeting with the association, I believe it was at Eastend, and had a good discussion with them. They're a very innovative group in attracting tourism. I have to commend them for the effort that they're putting into it.

We're very knowledgeable as to where this road goes. They also asked me whether or not I could put a little bit of . . . not pressure, but at least contact Alberta so that they would at least complete that portion of the road so it would take it completely to Fort Macleod, I believe it is. So there's a portion that has to be upgraded in Alberta.

So that's where that's at. As funds are made available, if we can get our finances going, we're trying to do the best as possible. We're trying to meet the priorities where the traffic is heaviest. Secondly, the federal agreement did really force us to access more of our capital funding into the main arteries which they consider interprovincial and federal funding, and so to that extent. But I can assure the member that we'll take a look at that and see what we can do.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. When we talk to tourists from across Canada or the U.S. that visit this country and they're travelling from east to west through Saskatchewan, a large number of them take No. 1 Highway. And yet then they turn around and complain that Saskatchewan is boring because they've driven No. 1 through here. And it is fairly flat unless you take special attention to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . My colleague here is disputing the flat part, but when you get west further there is a few hills.

When you take 13 Highway, the Red Coat Trail, though, as an alternative, you're travelling through a total different geography and topography right across the province. You're dealing with the Moose

Mountains in the south-east, Cypress Hills in the west, the Big Muddy in the centre, and you go through quite a variety.

And I think that to upgrade this highway would be beneficial to our tourist industry to give an alternative to tourists passing through this province to take another route that they might find a little more scenic than No. 1. The Yellowhead Highway is also a good example of a variety of topography. I think we need one a little further south, and the Red Coat Trail would fill that bill, Mr. Minister. So I would ask that you contact the federal people and do enter into negotiations with them on this.

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — I take that under advisement. I will be having a meeting in Toronto on May 13 and 14 with the Hon. Minister of Transportation. The purpose of it is to further look at a real national highway proposal at least, and at that time will indicate whether or not they would consider other than what they have already in their funding contribution. But so far they have only allowed in any of the negotiations or contracts is No. 1 Highway, No. 16 Highway, No. 7, and No. 11 from Saskatoon to Regina, so that's . . . and a little piece of No. 6 and over on 39 to Estevan. That's the extent of what they consider the national highway system.

But we can discuss this and to see whether or not there would be any assistance that they might give us in that regard.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:02 p.m.