

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
May 14, 1993

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission: (1) has any minister of the Crown read the security report investigating GTECH and VLC; (2) is it the position of the government that the principle of ministerial responsibility does not apply to the legal, proper, and appropriate conduct of gaming in Saskatchewan; (3) in context of the publicly stated position of the government relating to the responsibility for the Gaming Commission, what are the duties of the Minister of Gaming, and what is the purpose of having such a minister?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you, sir, and to the members of the Legislative Assembly two very distinguished guests who are visiting our Assembly today. They're in your gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce His Excellency Prem Budhwar, the High Commissioner of India to Canada — Mr. Ambassador, Excellency — and his wife Madame Kusum Budhwar who's here as well — Madame. I'd ask all members to give them a very, very warm welcome to the province of Saskatchewan as they visit us today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the ambassador is engaged in a very busy round of meetings with government officials and non-government people. I had the pleasure of a very delightful and informative conversation with him this morning on a number of matters ranging from international concerns to the question of economic prospects for Saskatchewan and for India.

He'll be meeting with the Minister of Economic Development at a luncheon today hosted by my colleague, has met with other ministers. This afternoon's agenda also involves meetings with SaskTel International — I'm glad to see that, Excellency, because as I was mentioning to you in our private conversation, we're very proud of SaskTel and communications, and maybe something can be developed there of mutual benefit; the editorial board of the Regina *Leader-Post* as well, and tomorrow with University of Regina officials.

Mr. Speaker, India is a very important country in the world, one which is of emerging strength and importance. It's a democratic nation, a strong nation. We have many Indian people in Canada, as Canadians of Indian background.

We welcome very much the High Commissioner and his wife and his delegation to Saskatchewan, and hope that the good relationships in the past continue and improve between our province and your country. Thank you very much, sir.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join the Premier on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, to welcome His Excellency and his lovely wife here today to our Assembly to watch our proceedings.

And I'm sure Your Excellency will enjoy his round of visits in Saskatchewan. We like to think that we view the world as our partners. And we certainly hope that you have a very fruitful stay in our province. So once again, on behalf of Her Majesty's opposition, we welcome you to the Assembly today, sir.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you, sir, and through you to the rest of the Assembly 13 grade 7 students in the east gallery. Mr. Speaker, they are grade 7, and they come from St. George School in Wilkie.

Now the reason I say it's a pleasure is because we're so far away from the capital, we don't get a lot of visits from our schools so it's a pleasure and a honour for me to introduce you to the Assembly.

Their teacher is accompanying them, Mr. Speaker, Bev Barth, and the chaperons is Bob Barth and Sarah Jensen and Rose Reiniger. I will be meeting with this group after question period, Mr. Speaker. We'll enjoy some refreshments and maybe some question and answers from the students and indeed from the adults there, too.

So I'm looking forward to this, and I'd ask the Assembly to help me welcome these students in a very warm manner, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeping: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce to you in the west gallery 29 students from the Carrot River High School. As the former member said, it's not very often that I get students coming down all the way from home, and it's a pleasure when they do come, an extreme pleasure.

They are accompanied today, these 29 students from Carrot River, by their teachers: Diane Higgins, Beth Ferguson, Trudy Skibinsky, Pat Rawlick, Mike

Weisgerber, and Chuck Low is the bus driver. I'll be meeting with them after question period for photos, and I ask you and members opposite to greet them here this morning.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege and pleasure to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly a group of, I believe, grade 6, 7, and 8's from McNab School who are with us and are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned, they are from McNab School and they are with us here today with their teachers Bill Parr, Darby Wild, and Gerrie Propp. And I want to welcome them here today and look forward to meeting with them in the Speaker's boardroom shortly after question period. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 26 grade 4 students from Montmartre Elementary School.

The students are accompanied by teacher Sandi Brown and visiting teacher Penny from Australia. Chaperons with the group include Carol Baumgartner, Delphine Lepage, Betty Ferraton, Patty Weichel, Gwen Ferraton, and Elanor Lepage.

I look forward to meeting with the group following question period and I ask members to join in welcoming this group here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly three people in your gallery, sir — Tim and Lynn Eremondi and their son Stephen.

They're constituents of mine and they're down to Regina visiting with relatives on holidays, their annual vacation. And I hope that you have a good rest and a good visit and a safe trip back.

I'd ask all members to join me, please.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Rural Hospital Closures

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, as you are well aware it's a month ago since you . . . or a month has passed since you brought down your death sentence on 52 hospitals throughout the province of Saskatchewan. At that time, Madam Minister, you gave all kinds of assurances that everything would be fine, that people's concerns

would be addressed, and people's questions would be answered.

Well, Madam Minister, one month has passed and still there aren't any answers. There's only concern, there's confusion, and there's fear in 52 communities across this province.

Madam Minister, will you give us some of those answers today? How many of those 52 facilities will be closed entirely and how much further will people in those areas have to travel to receive emergency care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite know full well if they are having any discussions — legitimate discussions rather than inflamed rhetoric — with people in their constituencies and who are working in the area of health care, they know full well that hospital boards in conjunction with planning groups are looking at options.

They're developing management plans, for example, that will determine where people . . . they are developing management plans that will determine where people will be relocated if they're long-term patients in acute care beds; that the hospital boards and the planning groups are working towards what is going to happen in the future, and the Department of Health officials will be meeting with them in the next short time in order to go over their management plans and see what is going to happen and how we can help in any way or another and make an assessment as to how that's coming along.

As to which facility . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Madam Minister, people's lives are at stake and you tell us that you're developing plans. In a whole month, we still are looking for some of the answers; hospital boards are looking for answers; they're trying to develop answers; and yet you have no answers for these boards, for the individual care-givers throughout the province.

Madam Minister, what you're telling us is not good enough for the people of Ponteix, Vanguard, Invermay, and the 49 other communities who fear for the future of their health care services.

Madam Minister, the doctor in Invermay said that she does not expect that any doctor will be willing to practice in that community after October 1. Madam Minister, will you tell us how many of the other 51 communities now expect to lose their physician after October 1?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I was just finishing answering the question, Mr. Speaker, and I'll finish the former question now.

With respect to conversion of these facilities, we are looking at the conversion of all of those facilities or most of them, depending on what the communities want in conjunction with their consultations with the district boards. Some communities are expressing to us that they may not want to convert the hospital because the facility is old and they may want to use another facility in their community. So that . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I think the members, if they ask a question should at least have the courtesy to listen to the answer; you can't have these constant interruptions.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — So that option is open and we want the communities to explore these options. And they are doing it. And I must say that many of them are doing it with a very positive attitude and looking to the opportunities within the change, unlike the members opposite who of course are engaged in inflamed rhetoric and attempting to . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, over the past number of years many communities and many individuals have put forward ideas and put forward suggestions. And what we're bringing forward today is the fact that in this past month and over the past year while communities have been looking for answers, the government really hasn't been coming forward with any.

Madam Minister, you promised that there will be enhanced ambulance services in those areas to make up for the closure of hospitals. The people I've talked to in these communities see no evidence of this taking place so far. When is this going to start happening, and why has there been no progress to date?

And what do you say to people who have serious concerns about a farming accident such as we heard about yesterday or a heart attack which may lead them too far away from emergency services they need when every minute may mean the difference between life and death?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I'll continue to finish answering the other question and the question with respect to doctors. A doctor's income on average with respect to in-patient acute care is about 6 per cent of the total income. I hardly think that doctors are going to leave their communities because of the 6 per cent aspect of their income. I hardly believe that.

Now with respect to emergency services, I have indicated that we are looking at enhanced emergency services. The government is now looking at

possibilities, for example, of a province-wide 911. We're looking at first-responder systems. There are other things being looked into. And in conjunction with district boards we will be looking at enhanced emergency services where it's necessary.

People with respect to cardiac problems will be in the same situation they were before. They will go in to their facility whether it's the hospital or if they choose to use another facility in the town, they will be stabilized, and they will be sent on in to the city which is what happens in most of these cases today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, and to the Minister. Madam Minister, one month has passed and now it is painfully obvious that you still do not have any answers . . . any more answers than you had a month ago when you brought down the death sentence on 52 hospitals or health facilities across this province.

You haven't informed us which ones may remain open or which ones will close. You don't know which communities will retain their doctors and which ones will leave, and you can talk to the doctor in Whitewood. You don't know what type of emergency services will be available, or how far people will have to travel to retain these services. You don't even know if ambulance services will be upgraded. You don't know how many jobs will be lost and when you will have a transition strategy in place for those who lose their jobs.

Frankly, Madam Minister, you don't have any answers to any of these questions yet you expect people in these communities to believe you have everything under control.

Madam Minister, why can't you simply admit that this isn't as well thought out as it should have been? Why can't you admit that you need more time? Will you set back the August 17 deadline? Will you set back the October deadline and allow proper consultation to take place before the implementation of all your strategies? Will you do that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is talking as though everything has been closed down in the last month. It's not true. There is funding for the . . . If the members opposite will listen — there is funding for hospital boards up . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. If members simply want to take up their time by interrupting, that's fine, I will interrupt then.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — . . . funding for hospital boards until October 1. We have indicated we wanted a management plan put together by May 31; however some communities have asked for an extension, and we have accommodated. We will be meeting with these communities and helping them to put together their management plan. It is not the Department of

Health moving in and saying, you're going to have this service, and you're going to do this with your facility. We are asking the district boards and the communities, in conjunction with the Department of Health, to work through those issues, and there is until October 1 to do it.

So there is lots of time in order for communities to develop some of the alternative services that will be available. The management plan is not due yet for a couple weeks, in some cases longer. So everything is going along according to plan, and communities will be working in conjunction with . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Does the member opposite want to hear my answer or not?

The Speaker: — Order, order. If the minister just kept on answering her question, maybe we could get through it. I'll give the minister a few seconds to finish her answer.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Communities and boards will be working together, Mr. Speaker. They'll be working with the Department of Health, and we will work very hard to get everything in place as quickly as possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, with the closure of hospitals comes decreased access to health care, the loss of jobs, the loss of economic security, and a loss of people in those communities. People are going to leave; there's no question about that. And when they do, they're going to take their children with them.

I'd like to quote from the *Star-Phoenix* of April 15: "If (the) hospital is shut, can the school be far behind?"

The article states that the town of Dodsland's biggest employer is the hospital. One town resident says, and I quote:

If they shut it down, it will take eight families. That's a big (problem) of Dodsland. We're going to lose our school next.

Madam Minister, you are shutting down over a dozen schools already. How many more are you expected to shut down as a result of your government's attack on rural Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to hospitals and economic development, I want to say this. This government was left with a legacy of a \$15 billion debt — a \$15 billion debt. If we are going to continue to preserve medicare for future generations we have to get a handle on the deficit. That means there will be reductions in expenditures in health. When we are faced with a limited health budget, dollars must be targeted to real health needs, to real needs, not to economic development in communities. The health dollars has to be targeted to health needs.

Now when we focus on real health needs, when we focus . . .

An Hon. Member: — How can health care givers be considered economic development? Get a grip.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I think the member from Thunder Creek should get a grip. When we focus on real health needs, on real health needs, we can deliver a high quality of health care services, preserve medicare for future generations, and get a handle on the deficit as well — much more than you were able to do in your nine years that you created this debt.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rural School Closures

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health doesn't seem prepared to answer our question so I'll direct the next one to the Minister of Education.

Madam Minister, even the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association recognizes how unfair your attack is on rural Saskatchewan. They have said you are creating two classes of education: one for the cities and one for the rural areas. And they're asking, why should taxpayers in small cities, towns, and villages receive an inferior quality of education for their children?

Madam Minister, it's your government's divide-and-destroy policies that are behind this. Isn't it your total disregard for the people of rural Saskatchewan the reason why groups like the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) must come out and publicly condemn your government's actions?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question, and for the opportunity to say that we work very closely with the SSTA and the other education partners in our province. They are not condemning us; they are working with us.

I'd like to also say that the highest year that the most number of schools that closed in any year since 1980 was in the last year of your administration when 20 schools closed. Last year the number was nine.

And with respect to opportunities for education for rural children and two classes of education, the cornerstones of our system are equality of opportunity for every student no matter where they live. And we have stood behind that in our budget of this year by dedicating \$10.7 million, a substantial increase, to distance education. We do care about the opportunities that rural students have to be on a level playing-field when they access post-secondary education, and we're doing something about it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Farm Income Problems

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. You were elected, Mr. Premier, on the basis of promises to protect rural Saskatchewan, provide better insurance programs through GRIP (gross revenue insurance program). You were elected for all of the reasons that we have isolated and suggested to the Minister of Health: more money for health, more money for education.

But since getting elected, every policy you've brought in has been designed to tear down rural communities, Mr. Premier. You destroyed GRIP, and then you took away the farmers' right to even challenge you in court. Net farm income in 1993 will be less than \$5,000 per farm — the lowest level since 1930, Mr. Premier — thanks to your destruction of rural Saskatchewan safety nets. Mr. Premier, why have you abandoned your commitment to farm families? And why are you so intent on destroying the rural part of the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, again the members opposite finally get around to the question of GRIP, and then they address it to the Premier rather than to the Minister of Agriculture. I think — yes, day 55 — again I think the farmers in this province know that this was a flawed program. The other provinces in this country now know that this was a flawed program. And I think, Mr. Speaker, the shortfall in income is because of a lack of third-line defence which again I remind the members opposite that they voted against; they did not support our farmers in going to Ottawa to get third-line defence which we have been unable to do up to this point. They do not support the farmers in their fight for keeping the Wheat Board or in keeping the Crow rate. And, Mr. Speaker, it's no wonder that they wait to day 55 to raise agriculture in the House after their record on this area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Minister, Mr. Premier, you took away the rural service centres. You took away the GRIP. You took away the farmers' rights to go to the court. You're taking away the hospitals. You're taking away the schools. In fact in Vanguard they are expecting that they are going to have to lay off three teachers next year in order to have the same school . . . teacher-pupil ratio. You did that, Mr. Premier.

Farm incomes are going to be less than 5,000, Mr. Premier, 5,000; that's lower than they were in the 1930s, Mr. Premier. Why the vicious attack on the farmers in this province? Why don't you do what you were elected to do and help rural people for a change instead of constantly planning on what you can take away from them next, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, again the

members opposite only get to agriculture questions when they run out of other questions, it seems. I remind the . . . Mr. Speaker, we do not subscribe to the rural/urban split that the members opposite perpetuated for 10 years in this province.

The rural people in this province are also a part of this province; they are also taxpayers; they are also suffering as everybody in this province is suffering, from the deficit that was left to us. They are putting their shoulder to the wheel with the urban people and with the other people in this province, with the workers and with the business people, as we try to get a handle on this deficit and get a better future for all of the province. And I think that we will get that if the members opposite will cooperate as well as the rural people have done in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rural Job Creation

Mr. Boyd: — My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. Mr. Minister, while your colleagues are driving people out of rural Saskatchewan, you sit and watch and don't lift a finger. Your colleagues have pulled the drain plug on rural Saskatchewan and you've shut the tap off as well, to rural Saskatchewan. The only job you have created for a rural resident was for your buddy, Jack Messer, the lord of the flies.

Mr. Minister, the only thing that you have developed for rural Saskatchewan is despair and resignation. Instead why don't you suggest something positive for job creation in Saskatchewan. Tell us you've done something other than printing glossy brochures full of rosy platitudes. Mr. Minister, will you do that for us?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the hon. member's question by pointing out to him that during the period from 1986 to 1991, the last term of that government opposite when they were in government, led to the out-migration of 60,000 people in that term of office — 60,000 people — at the same time as they were running up the deficit, \$15 billion, to the total of \$15 billion. This was their economic development strategy. That was their policy. Borrow \$15 billion, throw it at projects by the hundreds of millions of dollars, and during that period 60,000 people left the province looking for work.

Now for you to stand here and lecture us on how to do economic development flies in the face of reality and your record. Are there problems? Are there problems? I want to say that obviously there are problems with the economy right across Canada and North America.

But I'll tell you in meeting with the new president of the chamber of commerce yesterday in Swift Current, Mr. Mel Watson, we've agreed to continue to work together, obviously in a spirit of partnership and cooperation.

That's something different than what I see from the members opposite, that is, gloom and doom and more destruction — as they did during the 1980s.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Boundaries Legislation

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, what you've heard this morning from the members of the opposition is that you have taken away the hope of so many people in Saskatchewan. Less than two years ago, Mr. Premier, you promised so much — health, education, agriculture, jobs — and you were going to do it all on less, sir.

As the folks in Swift Current told your ministers yesterday, people are voting with their feet, says the chamber president. They're abandoning rural Saskatchewan because of the lack of hope, Mr. Premier, that your government gives them.

And today the final nail in the coffin of rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Premier, you're going to introduce a Bill that takes away the ability of rural people to have representation in this legislature. After you devastate everything else out there, Mr. Premier, you now bring in a Bill to take away their political representation.

Mr. Premier, are you telling rural people that they have no value in our society? Is that what this attack is all about, Mr. Premier, they have no value in society? Answer that for me, sir.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the short answer to the question is exactly no. In fact it's the exact opposite. What we're saying to the people of rural Saskatchewan, as we're saying to all the people of Saskatchewan, is that it is our lot in life to have been elected in a set of circumstances where we have inherited a fiscal and social and economic shambles as a result of nine and one-half years of the government opposite. You don't have to accept my word for this. In today's *Globe and Mail*, Jeffrey Simpson writes, amongst other things, quote:

In Saskatchewan, NDP Premier Roy Romanow has no good cheer . . . as the province wrestles with a staggering deficit bequeathed by one of the worst provincial governments in recent Canadian history, the Conservatives under former premier Grant Devine.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — That's the fact. It's not the Premier saying this; this is what outsiders are saying. And you have the audacity, sir, to get up and to say that in our attempt to try to redefine and to rebuild and to give hope and to turn the corner and to manage the deficit the way we do it, that that doesn't suit you?

Well I say to you, sir, with the greatest of respect, the

people of Saskatchewan have absolutely no confidence or respect in your judgement after nine and a half years of bringing us to the brink of destruction. I say to you, acknowledge that and join us, as everybody in this province is, as we start on this great mission of rebuilding and providing hope as we have begun doing so.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. It's interesting, Mr. Premier, that you always have to find someone like your buddy Eric Malling from Toronto or Mr. Simpson. Somebody from Toronto, Mr. Premier . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Will the members please come to order and let the Leader of the Opposition ask his question.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious that the government members don't like to hear, but I can't, for the life of me, Mr. Premier, find a person in this whole great province of ours that's been able to give you a pat on the back for months and months and months . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, really.

Well, Mr. Premier, the simple fact is that your process of rural cleansing has been going on for 18 months and there isn't a person in rural Saskatchewan, sir, that believes you any more.

Now the question is, why would you want to take away their rural representation, when the excuse you used that you're going to save the taxpayers money, when we all know that the cost of four or five MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) is the equivalent of one cabinet minister. You give your Deputy Premier an extra \$800,000 in the budget to run the federal election for the NDP.

Instead of saying to the people of this province who happen to live in an area that you don't like, I'll take away your political representation, why don't you just cut the cabinet by two or three and save the taxpayers that amount of money?

Mr. Premier, why don't you tell rural Saskatchewan the real reason that you want to take away their political representation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to answer specifically, as I always try to do, the specific question of the Leader of the Opposition. He prefaces his question by saying, why do we want to take away the representation of rural Saskatchewan? Of course that is a gross misrepresentation of the Bill.

This is not taking away. The proportion of representation, I'm sure after the independent commission sits down and does its job, will be very favourable and unchanged.

Remember that Manitoba has 58 MLAs — Manitoba,

an agricultural-based province too. Remember that Newfoundland has 54. Remember at a time when we're asking everybody in Saskatchewan to do with a little bit less and to do better with a little bit less, it's only understandable that the people of this province would expect us, as MLAs, to do as good with less.

That doesn't mean that the voice of rural Saskatchewan is going to be stifled. Far from it. I believe the voice of rural Saskatchewan is going to be made more effective and the voice of rural Saskatchewan is being heard as they're joining this government in dealing with "a staggering deficit bequeathed by one of the worst provincial governments in recent Canadian history". People know that.

And I'll say in conclusion to the Leader of the Opposition, he may not believe me, but I want to tell him this morning I actually got a pat on the back in a coffee shop. I had two youngsters from Swift Current who said: Mr. Premier, keep up the good work; you were left with a mess. You're on the right course; we know it's a tough job. We're with you as the young people, and they are. You join us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 79 — An Act to Provide for the Division of Saskatchewan into Constituencies for the Election of Members of the Legislative Assembly

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to Provide for the Division of Saskatchewan into Constituencies for the Election of Members of the Legislative Assembly 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. 80 — An Act to amend The Tobacco Tax Act and to make certain Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of this Act

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Tobacco Tax Act and to make certain Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of this 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. 81 — An Act to amend The Alcohol Control Act

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I move that The Alcohol Control Amendment Act be introduced and read a first time.

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

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

Mr. Toth: — With a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to bring to the attention of the Assembly the fact that I believe the Minister of Health and her responses today cast an aspersion towards the institution of this Assembly and the Chair. And on two occasions when the Minister of Health was brought to order, the Minister of Health indicated in her response that she was going to go back and answer the question that had been given previously.

It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that it was a challenge towards the Chair and it was not befitting of a minister of the Crown in light of the institutions of this Assembly. I would ask that you, Mr. Speaker, review the matter and indeed stand up for the institutions of this Assembly and ask that ministers show respect to the Chair.

The Speaker: — I will take the member's advice and review the matter.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Rulings on Points of Order

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I have four statements that I wish to make this morning in regards to points of order that have been raised during this session. So I ask the members to bear with me this morning.

The first one is the Opposition House Leader on Wednesday raised a point of order relating to the accuracy of the *Votes and Proceedings* in its record of the Speaker's ruling on an amendment made to resolution no. 7 on May 11. I concur that in my ruling I did not actually use the words used in the *Votes and Proceedings*, but for reasons I stated in response to the point of order when it was raised, I do not find the point of order well taken.

While addressing this subject, I do want to point out to all members that the only purpose of recording points of order in the *Votes and Proceedings* is to summarize a point of order or a Speaker's ruling which might have a bearing on proceedings. It is for this reason that not every point of order is recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*. All points of orders are of course published in their entirety in *Hansard* report. *Hansard* being a verbatim, there is no interpretation or summary of events.

In reviewing this matter, I have found that in certain jurisdictions, points of orders are not noted in the *Journals*. In some cases, neither are Speaker's rulings unless the Speaker makes a statement from a prepared text. A ruling is just as much a precedent when

recorded in *Hansard* as it is when recorded in the *Votes*.

To avoid the prospect of misinterpretation in the future, I have instructed the Clerks at the Table not to record in the *Votes and Proceedings* points of order and to record Speaker's rulings only when the Speaker makes a statement from a prepared text. I hope this will in future avoid the necessity of raising a point of order like that raised by the Opposition House Leader.

The second statement. My second ruling deals with another point of order raised on Wednesday by the Opposition House Leader concerning resolution no. 7 and the amendment to it on which I ruled on May 11. Given that the amendment to resolution no. 7 was ruled out of order because it contained words in the nature of a preamble, the member asked that the main motion be modified by Mr. Speaker for the same reason. I have again reviewed the wording of the resolution and find it to be within our practice.

However, the member again raises an issue which is of some concern to the Speaker. On occasion during this and the last session I have ruled on the inadmissible form of amendments proposed from both sides of the House. The difficulty of this issue is the loose practice that has developed over many years regarding the technical acceptability of certain private members' motions and especially the amendments made thereto.

While the Speaker has attempted to be diligent, this is again another issue where the Speaker must make a judgement where to draw the line. It is apparent that when the Speaker has acted, it has been to the dissatisfaction of certain members from both sides of the House. On the other hand I have found that other members feel the Speaker has not been strict enough. Given the problematic nature of this matter, this is perhaps an issue which should be addressed by the Rules and Procedures Committee so that the general will of the Assembly can be determined.

(1045)

Statement number three. The Opposition House Leader raised a point of order yesterday relating to the proceedings of Wednesday regarding how points of order should be recognized by the Chair. On reflection after the heat of the moment has passed, I agreed that points of order should be heard when they arrive and therefore the point of order is well taken. The member's suggestion that the disorder should have been dealt with by other means is also well taken. I thank the member for his advice and it is my intention to use those means when appropriate.

The last statement. At this time I also want to deal with a point of order raised some time ago by the Government House Leader.

On April 15, 1993 a point of order was raised regarding the repeated use of adjournment motions which, in the view of the Government House Leader, amounted to obstruction of the Assembly. The use of

motions to adjourn the House to delay the Assembly from proceeding to controversial business is not a new occurrence. The aspect that is new is the 10-minute limit on the division bells on the vote on such a motion, and hence the move to repeated adjournment motions.

This is also not the first time that the Speaker has been asked to intervene to stop this form of obstruction from succeeding. I refer members to the *Journals of the Legislative Assembly* for June 12, 1991 where Speaker Tusa responded to a similar point of order respecting the use of adjournment motions to obstruct the House. At that time the Chair pointed out that there were serious inconsistencies in our practice between the use of adjournment motions and other superseding motions during routine proceedings.

Speaker Tusa recommended that the House seek a solution to the problem of obstructive use of adjournment motions through the usual channels of a Rules Committee review. Indeed the most common way for changes in rules and practices to be made in this Assembly is through review and report by the Committee on Rules and Procedure. There options can be studied, the pros and cons weighed, the effects of one change on the broader picture of all the rules as a whole can be debated, and most importantly, essential compromise can be made and a balance found. And this process respects the important principle that the rules are made by the members themselves and the House as a whole.

If it is the view of the Government House Leader that the use of adjournment motions is still a problem and should be addressed, then I submit that the Rules Committee is the most appropriate place to do so.

MOTIONS

Referral of *Estimates* and *Supplementary Estimates* to the Standing Committee on Estimates

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I intend to move a routine motion by leave of the Assembly. The motion being moved by myself and seconded by the member for Churchill Downs that by leave of the Assembly:

That the *Estimates* and *Supplementary Estimates* for the Legislative Assembly, being subvotes LG01 to LG06 of vote 21, and for the Provincial Auditor, being vote 28, be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates.

I so move.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 70 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move second reading of Bill No. 70, An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984.

This Bill responds to requests from the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association as well as individual municipalities for amendments to the legislation. These amendments will assist in keeping the legislation on the powers and duties of urban municipalities up to date and provide for more effective functioning of our urban centres. They provide urban municipalities with the authority to act independently but also foster intermunicipal cooperation.

Key amendments in this Bill deal with petitions for binding by-law votes, provide orders to enforce fire prevention by-laws, integration provision of the fire and emergency response services, and intermunicipal agreements. There are also several other amendments that are administrative in nature.

The amendments respecting petitions will change the number of signatures required to force a binding vote on an issue in an urban municipality. The amendment will parallel the number of signatures required in The Referendum and Plebiscite Act that was passed prior to the 1991 provincial election.

SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) requested that this issue be examined as it can be very costly if votes are required on issues on a regular basis. Frequent votes may undermine the decision-making responsibility of municipal councils. Concerns have been expressed that under the current Act it is too easy to collect the required signatures in a few days by canvassing people in malls. Petitions for binding by-law votes will continue to be allowed on a matter within the jurisdiction of any council.

Other amendments are necessary to complete the passage of the new Fire Prevention Act, 1992. They are designed to work in conjunction with this new Act. These amendments will provide authority for municipalities to issue orders to enforce municipal fire prevention by-laws. They also broaden the authority of municipalities to enter into intermunicipal fire service agreements.

These provisions will ensure that fire departments have authority to provide services at any kind of emergency. Fire departments are increasingly involved in emergency response services at the site of an emergency, using special equipment. For example, fire departments are involved in hazardous material incidents and may assist in the rescue of people trapped in vehicles. These amendments ensure legal authority for fire departments to conduct these activities.

A further amendment broadens authority for municipalities to enter into agreements with other parties for jointly or cooperatively providing services. Agreements could be made with any person, organization, or agency.

This amendment complements efforts of the minister's intermunicipal cooperation advisory committee that was set up last year with representatives of local governments to foster cooperation and agreement amongst communities. To make the provisions even more flexible for agreements between communities, it is also proposed to allow more flexibility in the selection of auditors for intermunicipal boards.

As I have indicated, there are several other administrative and modest policy amendments that are largely to respond to concerns raised by municipalities and SUMA. These include fine-tuning dangerous-dog provisions, updating the conflict-of-interest provisions, revising the provisions on the urban municipalities board of reference, adjusting capital works plan provisions, facilitating enforcement of orders, clarifying the role of the Saskatchewan Municipal Board in approving water rate by-laws.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to join with me in supporting this Bill that takes a number of steps to foster intercommunity cooperation and to strengthen local government. I move second reading of An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I've been listening to the second reading presented by the minister and as it appears to me that a number of the areas that this Bill is addressing are ongoing areas of bringing points and amendments up to date.

The one area that may cause some concern, I would think, would be the fact that the government is giving local governments added ability to demand increased signatures on petitions regarding votes that would be called for by the public. We trust that the government has taken the time and certainly that local governments have actually taken the time to converse with their constituents regarding some of the amendments or a number of the amendments that are being brought forward in this Bill.

However to just allow for further perusal of the Bill, I move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 71 — An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act (No. 2)

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 71, An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act. Most of these amendments can be best described as housekeeping or technical changes to local election legislation.

In sequence, the Bill permits reference to councillors as well as the term "alderman" as in the urban Act;

adjusts the timing of the notice for a mobile poll to occur at the same time as a notice of the poll; permits a mixing of advanced poll votes with regular poll votes to ensure voting secrecy; gives persons leasing land and resort villages the right to run for office as well as to vote in order to broaden the base of potential candidates; clarifies that it is the municipality which decides on the preparation of a voters' list where the municipality is expected to conduct the school division election; requires 25 electors rather than the existing five electors to sign nomination papers for election candidates in cities of over 2,000 in population; requires \$100 deposit which would be refundable under certain circumstances from candidates to run for election in cities over 20,000 population; moves nomination day ahead by a week to give more lead time to preparation for election day; permits use of cardboard or recyclable ballot boxes to reduce cost, provided security is assured; and finally, it permits combination of voters' registration forms as a poll book to reduce election paperwork.

Many of these adjustments are being made in response to a request from the city clerks' association with SUMA's support.

Mr. Speaker, I call on all members of this House to support these changes, and I move second reading of this Bill.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, this Bill is basically a housekeeping Bill, and I don't believe there are a number of areas that we're really opposed to or really would be bringing in a lot of opposition to. However I also think it would be appropriate to just take a closer look at the Bill, and therefore I move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 63

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. MacKinnon that **Bill No. 63 — An Act to amend The Fuel Tax Act, 1987** be now read a second time.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a long series of Bills brought in by this government to add to the taxation load of Saskatchewan citizens. Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party promised Saskatchewan people such a short time ago that they weren't going to add to the tax load of the average individual in our province. What we have seen consistently, Mr. Speaker, from this government, is to increase that tax load at every opportunity. This Bill is only another in a long line of tax increases which Saskatchewan people are having to deal with on an everyday basis.

This Bill affects the person that drives down Albert Street every morning, Mr. Speaker, on their way to

work. It affects every farmer that goes to the field in the province of Saskatchewan at this busy time of the year as they try and seed another crop in the absence of any consideration or help from this NDP (New Democratic Party) government. Even though they promised — the Premier promised Saskatchewan rural people and farmers in particular — that their tax burden or tax load would decrease, if elected.

What we see with this tax Bill, Mr. Speaker, is the trucking industry, the tourism industry, the railway business, all of them impacted over and over again by a government that promised them so much less, so much less would be on the backs of the average person trying to make a living in this province.

Increasing fuel taxes, Mr. Speaker, when we have jurisdictions all around us that have a lower level of taxation in this area, means that Saskatchewan people are at a disadvantage, a disadvantage of making a living, a disadvantage of providing employment, and a disadvantage in marketing their products around the world.

(1100)

Mr. Speaker, we have an economy that is based on trade. Even the Minister of Economic Development has said that Saskatchewan's future lays in trading with its partners both in North America and around the world. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan, because of our large size, the many miles that we have to travel as individuals, means that we are a society based on transportation. Mr. Speaker, the very qualities of life that we appreciate in this province are tied to the fact that we all move large distances in this province. What the fuel tax does, Mr. Speaker, is that it attacks the very fabric of what we in this province consider to be our way of life. Yet this government has consistently raised the fuel tax.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to put yourself in the shoes of someone who lives anywhere near the Alberta border, for instance, who is having to compete and do business with folks in that province, along the U.S. (United States) border and indeed next door in Manitoba.

A good example, Mr. Speaker, recently was the community of Moose Jaw who have always been a major transportation centre in the province of Saskatchewan, who are the main CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) servicing and rail network in western Canada.

In other words, between the Rocky Mountains, Mr. Speaker, and the lakehead, Moose Jaw has always played a very important role. The opportunity for over 200 well-paying jobs in the province of Saskatchewan came along, a payroll in excess of \$7 million; 200 jobs based on that industry. It was tied in a large part, Mr. Speaker, I'm told, by the civic officials, by the business people in Moose Jaw, to the fact that this government refused to even look at the question of tax on diesel fuel.

Mr. Speaker, we in this province rely upon our railway system to move our potash, to move our grain, and if we have the opportunity to strengthen things that we've had here since we became a province and build our economy by using those natural strengths, I would think that we would at least make an effort to look at the ramifications of how we fit into this bigger picture in western Canada, and indeed, western North America.

People tell me, Mr. Speaker, in my community that there wasn't even a serious consideration given. We've asked the Minister of Highways and Transportation in this legislature and his estimates, what role that he played in those discussions. And he said, well we didn't really do much at all. We simply handed the ball over to the Minister of Economic Development — the same Minister of Economic Development who tells us that he is meeting widely and doing everything in his power to bring jobs and new opportunities to the province.

I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is a hollow, hollow argument and promise by that minister and this government. When every jurisdiction around you, Mr. Speaker, has got a lower fuel tax, then you have to have some recognition of the fact that it is impairing the ability of people to hire other people and provide employment.

If this government were serious, Mr. Speaker, they would take the advice of the people in Swift Current yesterday who said to the Associate Minister of Finance, who said to the Minister of Economic Development, who said to the Minister of Labour, that you've got to start addressing this issue.

So far, Mr. Speaker, we have seen no indication that this government is prepared to address that issue at all. They are saying to the average Saskatchewan citizen that we are going to tax you on fuel at a higher rate than anyone else. We hear this government talk grandly about tourism, about the initiatives that they're doing in the tourism sector. And yet, Mr. Speaker, when we face the difference in the American and Canadian dollars, when we look at Alberta, we look at Manitoba, we wonder why anyone would want to come to the province of Saskatchewan and keep paying higher and higher fuel taxes on a consistent basis.

It makes all the other arguments presented by this government ring hollow, Mr. Speaker. It means that people in every walk of life in the province of Saskatchewan are in a disadvantage — a disadvantage that they cannot overcome by simply working a little harder, by putting in a few extra hours in the day, by trying to streamline their businesses. Because I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, they've already cut to the bone in order to try and stay competitive. That the average working person in this province has done lots of things like car pooling, like public transportation.

Our civic administrations have tried to cut back on their busing routes. School boards have tried to make

their bus routes larger. Our hospital system, now faced with closures all over the province, is going to have to rely upon transportation to an even greater degree. That the ambulance boards that the Minister of Health tells us is going to pick up the slack on acute care funding in the province of Saskatchewan is going to have to put in many thousands of extra miles in the province in order to pick that slack up. And yet each and every one of those instances, Mr. Speaker, faces an ever-growing fuel tax burden.

So on one hand we have the government take it away, say they're giving it back, but knowing full well that those costs are increasing on a daily basis for those school boards, for those ambulance boards, for those trucking firms, and for our railway system.

Mr. Speaker, there are things about this Bill that we're going to want the Minister of Finance to tell us the straight goods about in Committee of the Whole. We are going to expect that Minister of Finance to come in here with the relevant details and data to show exactly what this regressive tax increase is doing to a lot of sectors of Saskatchewan's economy. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move that this Bill proceed into committee and we'll then deal with it at that time.

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

Bill No. 64

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. MacKinnon that **Bill No. 64 — An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a second Bill in a list of Bills that this morning increases the tax load on Saskatchewan people. I think it would be interesting, Mr. Speaker, if every member of the government today took the opportunity to read the Friday, the May 14 edition of the market-place section of the *Leader-Post*, on the comments that chamber of commerce made to three ministers in Swift Current. And the headline is, Mr. Speaker, "Group slams high sales tax".

Mr. Speaker, anyone in the province of Saskatchewan, since this last budget, knows that their particular situation has been worsened by this government imposing a further increase on sales tax.

The business community of this province, Mr. Speaker, have been saying to the Premier and to his economic ministers, it's time that we sat down and redefined your own document. Because the promises, the considerations, the commitment to work cooperatively with us to provide better employment opportunities and to build our economy are simply not coming true because of the actions of your budget and the way it impacts upon the average business person in this province.

Mr. Speaker, they're saying, if we're going to suffer

this economic pain, then we want to know at the end of the day there's a light at the end of the tunnel. The message that was delivered absolutely resoundingly to this government in Swift Current yesterday and the day before was that there is no light at the end of the tunnel; there's simply a freight train coming through that tunnel that is going to squash and run over the people in this province that have to provide the employment, that have to provide the economic wherewithal to pay the taxes so that we as a society will keep moving ahead.

They have said to the Premier in an open letter: your sales tax increases are regressive. They are causing a sense of revolt amongst the people in this province that work hard and try and get ahead. They're saying, and I quote: people are voting with their feet when they go to Alberta in droves to buy their goods and services, to do their shopping, that when they go and they survey the parking lots in Medicine Hat, they find enough vehicles there to talk about a \$10 million loss in the retail sector in the city of Swift Current alone.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when you go up and down the entire west side of this province, when you go across the entire southern boundary of this province, when you go to the east side of this province, you know, Mr. Speaker, why they're talking about a revolt. That these tax increases . . . do you remember the election campaign in the fall of '91 when the member from Riversdale, the now Premier, said there will be no PST (provincial sales tax), no new taxes? That 5 cents on a cup of coffee and 10 cents on a hamburger is more than the public can bear.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what the public are now saying is that they cannot bear the solutions as provided by the member from Riversdale and his government. They are saying we simply cannot bear the load that you have imposed upon us and still maintain some degree of optimism and economic wherewithal.

I would suggest that more ministers of the Crown, more of these back-benchers who stand in here day after day and vote for this stuff, Mr. Speaker, should go out and visit with the real folks. You know, Mr. Speaker, I think it's the reason why the Health minister and the Associate Minister of Health and others of these ministers prefer to stay in this Legislative Assembly and hide from the public. Because if they were like the Associate Minister of Finance who yesterday actually took the time to go to his home constituency and face the music, they would have found a tune being played that they don't like very much. They would have found that music was a drum roll, Mr. Speaker, of economic devastation — a drum roll of economic devastation which this party promised Saskatchewan voters and taxpayers wouldn't happen.

I don't know how any of these New Democratic Party members can go to their home communities and walk down Main Street and hold their head up so soon after they campaigned against raising taxes, raising sales taxes. And I would suspect, Mr. Speaker, that they don't bother to go through the exercise of walking

down Main Street, Saskatchewan, because they can't take the heat. They don't have the moral courage to walk down Main Street, Saskatchewan, and take the heat. Because I say to you, sir, the very integrity that they campaigned upon no longer exists. It no longer exists.

If this government had been true to its word we would have seen not an expanded PST, which is what we've gotten from them. It isn't even the same level of goods that were taxed in '91. It has been an expanded E&H (education and health) tax at not 7 per cent, but 9 per cent.

I remember well, Mr. Speaker, in 1991 we heard the members of the New Democratic Party who sat on this side stand on their feet and they used every tool available under the legislative rules to block the passage of the harmonization Bill. They obstructed this legislature for weeks on end because they said Saskatchewan people cannot bear 7 per cent; 7 per cent is unrealistic in the economy that we have.

(1115)

And yet the economy that we have today, Mr. Speaker, is in far worse shape than what we had then. Every economic indicator and agency in this country that measures economic wherewithal, says that this province is in worse shape today than they were then. Sixteen thousand jobs less, unemployment up, welfare benefits up, food banks up — every indicator that is around the piece, Mr. Speaker, says that this province is in worse shape than it was in 1991.

And yet we don't have a 7 per cent sales tax, we have a 9 per cent sales tax and it covers nearly every item that they fought so hard under harmonization, except restaurant meals and children's clothing. It is an increase, Mr. Speaker, that the average family, the average family in Saskatchewan now faces anywhere from 1,500 to \$3,000 more.

And where is the relief? Mr. Speaker, there is none. The document, the partnership document that this government trotted out so handily last fall, is in tatters. It means nothing any more.

The job projections that were made there haven't come to pass and nor will they. Yesterday the Toronto Dominion Bank said the Conference Board was wrong, it's even worse. It's not 1.8 per cent growth, it's 1.5 at the best, and it may go down from there because this budget of this government is the only cause of inflation in the province of Saskatchewan today.

The only cause of inflation today in this province is the government's sales taxes, fuel taxes, increases on utilities — the only cause of inflation that an average Saskatchewan family has to bear today is the cause of this government. Other than that, we would be in a deflationary period, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when we have interest rates at a 20-year low,

interest rates that the federal government has brought down to a 20-year low, we've had legislation brought down to allow Saskatchewan people to purchase their own homes, because we have lower interest rates; because the Canadian dollar is in a good position, vis-a-vis the American dollar, to do our exporting business, to do our manufacturing businesses, to actually have the opportunity to employ more people. We have this provincial government step in and negate every last one of those opportunities, negate every last one of those opportunities with their increases in sales tax and all of the other taxes and the hidden half a billion dollars in property taxes that are going to come down on the heads of property owners in this province in the next four years.

The member from Riversdale said that increased taxes are the destroyer of jobs, the silent killer of jobs in the province of Saskatchewan. Well the silent killer has been stalking Main Street, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, as he has never stalked it before.

People, as the president of the chamber of commerce said yesterday, are voting with their feet. They hit No. 1 Highway, Mr. Speaker, and they turn right and they head for Alberta. They hit the Yellowhead and they turn right and they head for Alberta.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to believe that the Premier, today in question period, would have the audacity to stand in this legislature and say that there was a couple of people from Swift Current that patted him on the back for his economic plans.

I would suspect that they probably patted him on the back and said, so long, Mr. Premier, because I'm going to Alberta. It's been nice knowing you, but I simply can't live in this province any more when you devastate my home community. You don't have any opportunity for me to get a job. I've simply got to leave.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know when this government is going to wake up and start living up to their campaign promises, but at least they could take the opportunity when a large segment of our population asks for a meeting, they could take the time out of their busy schedule, their busy schedule of hiding in this Legislative Assembly, and go out and meet with them. If nothing else, Mr. Speaker, they could have that economic summit while this legislature was in session so that Saskatchewan people would know what was being said at that summit.

But day after day the member from Riversdale says no, I can't do that. I've got to duck on this opportunity to actually work with the people that produce the employment to produce the tax dollars that will produce the money that we need in the future to maintain our social network. I don't have time to meet with those people. I'll simply hide in this legislature and bring down legislation that takes away the rights of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, on this particular piece of legislation I say the same thing to the Minister of Finance — that when this Bill comes into committee you had better be

prepared to come into this Assembly and give Saskatchewan taxpayers the straight goods. You'd better be prepared to come in here and give us the information that Saskatchewan people want to know — what this sales tax is doing to our economy in the various sectors.

It's only right and proper after this much time, Mr. Speaker . . . And I must say normally with tax Bills like this, that they aren't brought in at the end of a session; they're brought in at the beginning of a session so that Saskatchewan taxpayers know that they're being taxed fairly.

But here at the closing time of this Legislative Assembly we now have the government finally bringing through these tax Bills. And if the minister tries to come in here and tell us that she doesn't have the economic information, the impact that it's having on so much of our society, then Saskatchewan taxpayers will know the truth — that it's simply a money grab; it's I don't care from a government that told us such a short time ago that we do care.

Mr. Speaker, we await the Minister of Finance coming in in committee to give us the answers and Saskatchewan taxpayers the answers that they all want to hear.

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

Bill No. 65

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. MacKinnon that **Bill No. 65 — An Act to amend The Corporation Capital Tax Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this particular piece of legislation there are some questions I think that have to be answered by the minister because this once again impacts on Saskatchewan's ability to improve its economy: 3,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector, gone; 2,000 jobs in the construction industry, gone; 2,000 jobs in finance, insurance, and real estate, gone.

Mr. Speaker, those aren't the stats put together by the opposition; those are stats that are put together by StatsCanada, all sorts of agencies that monitor economic development, economic activity in Canada. It only reinforces what we have said, Mr. Speaker, on the previous two Bills: that the reason that the business community and others want to have a sit-down with this government and review their own plans, their own four-year document for survival, is because it simply is not measuring up to the mark.

This Bill is just another in a long list, Mr. Speaker, that means that these job loss numbers simply won't improve; that this government has to be on a wing and prayer hoping that every commodity price in the world goes up at the same time if we're going to have any economic activity in this province at all.

This government has no control, Mr. Speaker, over the price of oil, potash, uranium, grain. And if all we're doing is hoping and praying, Mr. Speaker, that those things somehow will turn around magically for this government, then that is why the government's own document is being questioned by so many people in the province of Saskatchewan.

We will have questions in committee, Mr. Speaker, about those 2,000 jobs in the construction industry and what this Bill will do to that particular industry. We will have questions about the 3,000 jobs lost in manufacturing and what this Bill will do to that; about the 2,000 jobs lost in finance, insurance, and real estate and what this Bill will do to turn around those job losses if in fact it doesn't make the situation even worse.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier can stand in this legislature and say that he's turned the corner. If in any way this Bill keeps people from taking that right-hand turn and heading for Alberta, we want to give the Minister of Finance the opportunity in committee to explain that to us.

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

Bill No. 66

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. MacKinnon that **Bill No. 66 — An Act to amend The Income Tax Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if you remember back to the first interim supply motion that this government brought in, we had a lot of questions in this area about the changes that were made, the 8 per cent non-refundable manufacturing and processing tax credit that the minister has put so much hope in as far as being a driving force in the economy of Saskatchewan.

And we would welcome the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to see how that compares with, for instance, the — and the word harmonization is beyond the Minister of Finance — but perhaps the integration or the combining or whatever word in the English language she is more comfortable with in talking about as far as some degree of cooperation between the federal and provincial tax systems.

We would love the opportunity, and I think committee's the right place, Mr. Speaker, for the minister to explain to us how this particular three year — or in the case of this one I believe it only goes to the end of 1993 — but that in conjunction with some of the other three-year initiatives that the Minister of Finance has undertaken, how they will be more progressive and provide more employment opportunities and more economic activity in the province of Saskatchewan, and that simple process of integration which she has so much trouble with.

So, Mr. Speaker, we'll look forward to her explanations in committee on this particular Bill of how that's going to work.

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

Bill No. 67

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carson that **Bill No. 67 — An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again we see this government bringing forward Bills, and this is just another example of the kind of things that they're doing. This is an example of offloading — rather than increasing taxes directly — this is an example of offloading taxation onto the municipal level of government, Mr. Speaker.

And then they say, this government says that they've cut spending. Well indeed they've cut spending as far as the provincial government is concerned, but they've also cut programs and cut spending to rural municipalities and urban municipalities. And as a result of those cuts, Mr. Speaker, there will be significant tax increases that will come in the form of tax increases at the municipal levels.

And all property owners are waiting, I think nervously, Mr. Speaker, for their tax notices which will be coming out later this year in rural municipalities and urban municipalities. They will see exactly the impact of this type of initiative that the government is bringing forward.

(1130)

Mr. Speaker, but something that the government opposite seems to miss in all of these measures that they're bringing forward is, is there's only one taxpayer. There's only one taxpayer that's going to be footing the bill for all of these increases — whether it's increases in the E&H tax, increases in a number of other taxes that this government's brought forward, increases in utility rates, or anything else for that matter.

But this will mean direct impact, direct tax increases at the municipal level. There's no question about that, Mr. Speaker. Either that, or there's going to be a slashing of services at the rural municipality and the urban municipality level.

This government has continued to say that they are going to be continuing to cut spending. And as a result of that, they'll be continuing to cut it and there'll be job cuts as well in rural Saskatchewan.

Sixty-eight thousand people now are receiving social assistance in Saskatchewan. And those numbers, I predict, Mr. Speaker, will just continue to increase as

time goes on. A loss of 16,000 jobs in this province since the members opposite took over — another record, dubious record, Mr. Speaker, that they hold.

Something the Leader of the Opposition was touching on earlier about the number of people moving to Alberta or shopping in Alberta. Mr. Speaker, it would be interesting, in light of today's events of the constituency boundaries Act being brought into this legislature, it would be an interesting experience if we set up a polling booth in Medicine Hat so the people from Saskatchewan could vote there and then move home after they threw this government out . . . with all of the things that they're doing.

Mr. Speaker, the offloading and lack of leadership that this government has shown is phenomenal. They are moving in a direction that rural Saskatchewan doesn't believe, and urban Saskatchewan I think doesn't believe is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, following . . . I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we can make our remaining remarks known in Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 68

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carson that **Bill No. 68 — An Act respecting Financial Arrangements for Urban Parks** be now read a second time.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill carries on a tradition that has been going on for a number of years.

Mr. Speaker, it's an unpleasant task to reduce funding to urban parks. I think we would recommend to the minister that she be extremely careful that we don't reduce the level of funding to the point where these parks simply cannot operate and their existence is threatened. We'll be asking further questions of the minister in committee about that very concern.

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

Bill No. 69

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carson that **Bill No. 69 — An Act to amend The Assessment Management Agency Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan assessment branch is slowly losing funding. This year the number is dropping to \$7.5 million and, Mr. Speaker, I guess the question that we have is who's going to be picking up the tab when SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) doesn't get provincial funding any longer.

Will that responsibility fall to local governments, property taxpayers, local property taxpayer once again?

SAMA in a couple of years when the funding completely disappears, which we think will happen under this administration, how many jobs will be lost? How much money will cities like Regina have to pay for assessing and research services?

Mr. Speaker, those are the kinds of concerns that are being raised with us, and I think it's another example of the government's lack of foresight. They keep forgetting that the people who are paying higher provincial sales tax, higher fuel tax, higher income taxes, higher everything under this government are the same people who'll be paying higher local property taxes when the NDP are done with their offloading.

Mr. Speaker, the rest of our concerns can be addressed in committee.

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

Bill No. 74

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No 74 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The other day we had the opportunity to address this Bill which will have a serious impact on agriculture in Saskatchewan. We went through a number of points as to how it will impact on agriculture, Mr. Speaker, and we pointed those out to the minister.

At this time we feel that we can perhaps best address this particular Bill in Committee of the Whole, and we're prepared to allow it to go there, Mr. Speaker.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Saskatchewan Municipal Board Vote 22

The Chair: — At this point I would ask the minister to please introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right, I have Graham McNamee who is the chairman of the Municipal Board. To my left, I have Marilyn Turanich who is the secretary of the Saskatchewan Municipal Board.

Item 1

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, first of all I would like to welcome the officials here this morning.

Madam Minister, last night when we were dealing with this issue, the Minister of Economic Development was kind of handling it. I'm pleased to see that you're here this morning. He wasn't, quite frankly wasn't doing a very good job, I don't think. So I'm pleased to see that the minister responsible is going to take over the responsibility this morning.

We were discussing a situation with a board member that had been dismissed by your government. And I just wonder if you would care to comment on the situation with Wanda Eifler, please.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes I will. In the preparation of the 1992-93 budget we realized we had to make certain reductions. And under the circumstances, we talked with the chairman of the board to find out how to best manage the reductions to their budget, and it was decided that what would happen, we would reduce the number of the members on the board by three. We did so, and Ms. Eifler was one of the people whose position on the board was terminated.

Mr. Boyd: — What were the reasons for her dismissal?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — As I've said just now, it was budgetary reasons. We were under budget restraints. As you know, we have a deficit that we have to control. It requires every facet of government to reduce expenditures, and the Municipal Board was obliged to reduce its expenditures like everyone else.

Mr. Boyd: — So there was no other reasons for the dismissal of Wanda Eifler other than the fact that it was a budgetary concern.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That's correct.

Mr. Boyd: — And did you have an opportunity to meet with Ms. Eifler to discuss the situation?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, Ms. Eifler was upset about the reduction in staff at the board and she made numerous calls to my office and I finally did agree to meet with her late . . . I don't have the date with me, but it was about a little over a year ago.

Mr. Boyd: — Yes, your memory is fairly accurate; apparently it was May 3 of '92 was the date of the meeting. And at that time, maybe you could enlighten us as to what the discussion was.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, Ms. Eifler was concerned about her termination on the board. She wanted to know about the prospects for future employment. At that point in time there was a position within the department; we had encouraged her numerous times to look at the position, of transferring back into the department to accept that position.

I asked her if she would seriously consider it because I thought it was the best alternative, and I believe also

she said that she would prefer to have a position on the Municipal Board. And I said that it was up to her; if there was an opening at some time in the future, then she was free to reapply. But I still encouraged her, for the sake of continuing her career, to look at transferring to the job that was open within our department.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Did you indicate to her . . . As you said, I guess you did indicate to her that should a job open in the management position of the board member, that she should reapply. I just want to confirm that.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I said that it was up to her if she wanted to reapply. I don't discourage anybody from applying for a position. It's up to them to make that decision.

Mr. Boyd: — Would you say that she was qualified in her previous position as a board member? Qualified in . . . Obviously being there nine years, I guess you'd have to say she was experienced. But would you say she was qualified?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Last year, as you know, we introduced certain specifications to the Municipal Board and there were certain qualifications. We felt that the duties and the requirements and the responsibilities of the board are becoming very technical in nature and we were looking for future board members who would be qualified in specific areas, had specific background qualifications, either in municipal government or in assessment or in law. So we had a concern that there were . . . and in the past appointments made to board, this board in particular, who perhaps didn't meet the requirements in order to fulfil their duties properly.

So Ms. Wanda Eifler has obviously experience working on the board. That doesn't mean that she is the only qualified person to work on the board though.

Mr. Boyd: — No of course not, I don't think anyone's making that assertion that she's the only one qualified. I just wanted to know, in your opinion, whether she is qualified.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I think under the amendment to the Act, her qualifications would meet those specifications.

(1145)

Mr. Boyd: — Did she receive a severance package on her dismissal?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — She was offered one. She declined it. She chose to go through a court of law.

Mr. Boyd: — Has that court of law hearing, has that been resolved?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes it has and she received 18 months' severance.

Mr. Boyd: — Was there a further opening at the Municipal Board, Madam Minister, and at what time was that? And was it publicly tendered out?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, the end of June last year, Don Abel resigned from the board and we advertised on October 1.

Mr. Boyd: — What were the reasons why so shortly after the budgetary problem that you experienced in February of '82 — I understand that was when Wanda Eifler was let go — so less than one year later approximately, nine months later, all of a sudden the budgetary problems of the province have evaporated and now you're able to offer an opportunity for Municipal Board members. Is that what you did?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I'm not sure I understand your question but I'll put the answer as best I can for you.

The quorum requirements under the Act requires two. We were down to two and there are instances where we need three board members. We felt that it was important to maintain the membership on the board at three. And so the resignation of Mr. Abel came after the downsizing of the board by three members previous to that, in the previous budgetary cycle.

Mr. Boyd: — Oh I see, Madam Minister. So subsequent to Ms. Eifler's dismissal then, the board only had three members and at that point when Mr. Abel resigned, then it became two; and of course you need three, so that was the reason for moving to have another board member?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, that's right.

Mr. Boyd: — Okay. Well, Madam Minister, it seems . . . it passes strange to me that . . . I can understand the government's desire to downsize, if that's what they want to do, and it appears that that's what you have done. I can also understand that the reasons, as you've outlined, why the Municipal Board needs another board member. And it was tendered — I have a copy of the . . . or not tendered, but there was an opportunity for people to apply to the board for that job opportunity.

But it passes strange to me that you have a person who has a great deal of experience, nine years; you have a person who in your own admission is qualified for the job, perfectly qualified, no problems in that respect. I have her résumé and all of the things that you have suggested are met on her résumé.

She has had experience as a municipal adviser in Saskatchewan Urban Affairs. She was the administrator of a rural community — Whitewood — for seven years. She has urban class A certificate. She has a number of qualifications that makes her eminently qualified for this job.

And yet when she applied for this job, on your own recommendation that she should give it some consideration, that she should apply for it, she

receives a letter back from the department saying that she doesn't have the experience or qualifications necessary for this job.

And yet, Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, you've said yourself that she's qualified, she has experience, she meets the requirements set out as far as your department feels are necessary for the job, and you turn her down.

Madam Minister, I wonder, is there any other reason, any other reason that you could suggest to us as to why you decided that and your department decided that she wasn't a capable candidate for this job?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — There are a couple minor corrections I would like to put on the record. When I met with her, there was not an opening on the board. I didn't encourage her to apply for a job on the board at that point in time because there wasn't an opening. So I'll make sure you understand that. I said I wouldn't discourage her for applying if she chose to sometime in the future, and that was her choice. I offered her another job within our department which she turned down.

In regard to her qualifications, yes, she meets a minimum qualifications, but there are other people who are very expert at other areas that are also qualified, and when a letter was sent out to Ms. Eifler, the letter didn't say that she didn't have the qualifications. The letter said that there were other candidates who were more qualified in the areas that we felt the board needed further experience on. So it wasn't a matter of her not meeting the qualifications; it was a matter of other candidates having better qualifications in the area of expertise that we felt were vitally needed in order for the job to be done by the Municipal Board members.

Mr. Boyd: — Madam Minister, how many other people applied for the job, and has the job position been filled?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Sixty-two people applied for that job, and right now the job has not been filled. We're still looking at the budget and managing the budget. I believe we're going to have to fill it in the near future because there are going to be appeals coming forward that are simply going to be too demanding on two board members to fulfil, and we're going to have to look seriously. But we're going to look at our budget and to make sure that we can manage that within the parameters of the budget.

Mr. Boyd: — Well, Madam Minister, I'm having difficulty accepting what you're telling me. And the reason I'm having difficulty accepting what you tell me . . . because there's a lot of inconsistencies in what you're telling me. On May 3, '92, you did have a meeting with Wanda Eifler, and your discussion centred on the dismissal and the reasons for the dismissal. During the discussion, you also indicated should circumstances change to permit the board to increase its membership, she would be given the opportunity to be re-employed as a member of the

board and you encouraged that. And I have the letter from her supporting that, that she has written to your department. This was sent in with her application for that job opportunity. She sent that attached letter in with her application.

And so it seems strange that she was let go. There was a position opened up. You encouraged her to accept that position, or to apply for that position. And then when the opportunity for that position becomes open, she does go through all of the information that you've asked her to, submits an application, is turned down, told she doesn't have the proper qualifications.

Madam Minister, I think the conclusion can only be drawn that maybe she doesn't meet the blood test requirements — political blood test requirements — for your department. And I just wonder if you'd care to comment on that?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Well once more, for the record, you have incorrectly summarized what the events were. First of all, I had a meeting with her and maybe her interpretation of my remarks are different than what they should have been, but I never encouraged her to run for a possible opening in the future. I encouraged her, in fact, to accept a position within the department that was open. That's what I encouraged her to do. She chose not to. She chose instead to initiate legal action and further to that there was an opening because of a resignation, and those events were out of my control.

So I'm not sure what it is the member opposite is trying to get at at this point in time. I can tell you for sure that what I encouraged Ms. Eifler to do was to take the position within the department that we were offering to her. And that is a fact.

Mr. Boyd: — Is that opportunity still open to Ms. Eifler?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — No, the position within the department . . . As you know we've downsized and I don't believe that we have any further positions at this point in time that have vacancies.

Mr. Boyd: — Has there been a short-listing process for the position as advertised?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We have short-listed but we haven't selected the final candidate yet.

Mr. Boyd: — When do you anticipate making that final selection?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Well I anticipate meeting with the chairman and talking about the workload that the board has now and making a determination of whether it can be managed effectively in the near future and whether we will have to look at increasing the board's size in order to respond to the number of appeals that are before the board.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Well, Madam Minister, I won't take up too much more time

on this. I think it's been reasonably clearly demonstrated that this lady has been unfairly dealt with, and it's little wonder that the courts gave her 18 months severance in light of the kinds of events that have taken place and the way that she was treated. Incidentally, she was offered eight months severance to begin with.

And it's, I feel, a little bit of relief in knowing that the courts support her view and my view that she was unfairly dealt with in this situation. And so it . . . although it is not a job opportunity for her, I think it is certainly some satisfaction in knowing that she was right and you were wrong in what you did, Madam Minister.

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 22 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1992-93
Consolidated Fund
Budgetary Expenditure
Saskatchewan Municipal Board
Vote 22**

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 22 agreed to.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank my officials for being with me this morning, and I'd like to thank the members of the opposition for their questions.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Chairman, I too would like to join with the minister in thanking the officials for taking the time to come this morning.

(1200)

**General Revenue Fund
Municipal Government
Vote 24**

The Chair: — I would ask the minister at this time to introduce the officials who've joined us.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right I have Bill Reader, who is a deputy minister. Behind me and to my right is Ron Styles, associate deputy minister, housing division. To my left is Ron Davis, assistant deputy minister of municipal services division. Keith Rogers, to my far right, is the executive director of the culture, recreation division. Don Harazny, to my left, is director of human resources. Larry Chaykowski is behind me; he's finance and administration. Doug Morcom is manager of rural revenue sharing. Ernie Anderson is director of rural transportation services. John Edwards is director of municipal policy and legislative services. And Nick Surtees is executive director of protective services.

Item 1

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister. Welcome to your officials as well.

Madam Minister, I wonder if you would outline for us if your department decided . . . or did any studies on the impact of the sales tax increases in the province of Saskatchewan and what impact it would have on municipal government.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chairman, to the question of the member opposite, we in our department don't do those studies. If there were studies conducted, they would have been conducted by the Department of Finance.

Mr. Boyd: — Madam Minister, we haven't received the answers to the standard questions that we asked your department. I wonder if you would mind sending them over if you have them.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I do have a package of information for you; I will send it over. In this package there's also data on the Municipal Board.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, when were these all prepared for us anyway?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — They were just completed within the last two or three days.

Mr. Boyd: — Madam Minister, something that bothers me a little bit when we go through this process, like we're doing right now, we come in and we sit down here and we ask you questions about your department and we receive the package of information, and you know, it's plunked in front of you just a few minutes before we have to make our thoughts known on your department. And it would have been helpful had we received the answers to all of these questions — even yesterday would have been helpful.

We discussed the fact that municipal government and all of that was going to be coming up shortly, so it . . . I wonder if in the future you would consider giving us the package of information in advance of the actual estimate.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — You do make a good point, to the member opposite, and we do apologize. Our officials have been very busy with the amalgamation of the various parts of the department. They have been working very, very hard to get the budget in line and to get the department functioning, and I guess that was part of the reason that we did have a delay. But I do apologize.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, we appreciate the fact that you'll try and do better in the future with respect to sending those questions over. All of us, including yourself, are very busy and we appreciate the fact that your department has a significant workload.

Madam Minister, I just wanted to ask a few questions about your ministerial staff. Are the names of all of the employees, job descriptions, qualifications, salaries of your staff included in the information provided?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes they are.

Mr. Boyd: — Is the names of all of the staff working for you in Regina . . . Do you have any political staff located in Saskatoon?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — By political staff, you mean from my office and not from the department's office? All my staff works out of my office here in the legislature.

Mr. Boyd: — Have any of your staff received salary increases since initially hired?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I believe two of the people who are working in my office received staff increases within the last couple weeks. I could get that information for you. It was because of reclassification. Their duties were reassigned and they were classified into different category.

Mr. Boyd: — Yes, Madam Minister, we'd appreciate the details of any increases in salary that your staff may have been given, regardless of whether it's for reclassification or anything else. We just want the full details of those increases.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I will certainly provide you with that. I also took the opportunity to do some research into my ministerial expenses and my staff for the year 1992-93, and I compared that with the 1990-91 minister's expenses in the minister's office.

And just for the record, it might be useful for comparison. For the 1992-93 year, the total expenditures for my office including my ministerial staff and my secretarial staff totalled an amount of \$155,570. And for the year 1990-91, the former administration, the total amount was \$266,654. Where I have six people working in my office . . . I have five; one left. The former minister had 14 working under his staff. I can give you further breakdown of those costs if you would like. But they are here; you might be interested in them.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Do any of your assistants . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Sure you can table that if you like. Do you have any assistants that travel in conducting their work?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I have two ministerial assistants. They do 99 per cent of their work here. I think they travel to the SUMA convention in January-February, but that is the only time that my two staff have left my office. There may have been one interprovincial-federal ministers' meeting where we had one of my ministerial assistants at last year. But to the greatest extent possible, they remain in my office working there, and they do not travel.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I wonder if you would provide details of the departmental travel of those assistants. As well as any ministerial assistant travel expenses, I'd like the full details of the travel including the assistant's name, total cost per trip, the purpose of the travel, mode of travel, who they accompanied — if it was the minister or department

officials — and the destination, please.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, I will do that. In fact it's in the package. Once again, just for the record, I will say that comparing 1990-91 with 1992-93 once again, in-province travel plus out-of-province travel for me and people on my staff was \$31,391. And for a year previous to that for the former administration, the total amount was \$42,607.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister, so you feel you're making significant progress. I take it that . . . and as an opposition member, I see not a whole lot wrong with that. If your department is saving money relative to the previous administration for the administration of your department, good for you. Congratulations. We appreciate the . . . I'm sure the taxpayer of the province appreciates that.

Something that I just also would like to know, have you been engaging in framing of any pictures lately?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — No, in fact we have a very good protocol for making sure that all gifts that are given to us are recorded with the price of that gift, and they're all on record, and they all belong to the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister, as you recall last year we had a little bit of a difficulty in that area, and I suspect the regulations have been significantly strengthened since that time, and I appreciate you taking the time and attention to deal with that matter. It was a problem that people had on their minds at the time, and as I recall you and I discussed that at length last year, and we won't go into that any further.

Madam Minister, I wonder if you could outline for us, your ministerial travel during the last period and provide all of the details on it including purpose of the trip, who accompanied you, mode of travel and destination, and most importantly, most importantly, Madam Minister, I wonder if you could outline for us what you felt you accomplished on the trips that you took.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Those aren't detailed in the numbers we gave you, and we can certainly undertake to provide you with that. There were two or three provincial-federal ministers' meetings that I attended. I know there was one in Manitoba. I attended a housing ministers' meeting in Toronto. I believe as I recall . . . and I attended one sports ministers' meeting with a federal minister in Edmonton, but I believe those were the only three out-of-province meetings I attended: one in Manitoba for the municipal ministers, one in Toronto for ministers of housing, and one meeting the federal minister of sports in Edmonton last year.

Just so we get it on the record, your remarks around the pictures . . . I don't recall we had extensive discussion between you and I. Those were not my pictures. They were owned by the

Government of Saskatchewan and they are still owned by the Government of Saskatchewan. And I didn't ask for them to be framed and I gave no instructions for anyone to frame them.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. My recollection of the events is a little bit different, and I think the public of Saskatchewan's . . . taxpayers of Saskatchewan's recollection is probably a little bit different, too, as indicated by the number of news stories that there were of the event.

Madam Minister, just to touch on that last question. You made two or three trips, you mentioned. Did you feel that anything was accomplished on those trips? You hadn't touched on that.

(1215)

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Well I guess you could make news out of almost anything some days when the news is dull.

But as far as what I accomplished, when we had a federal-provincial meeting with the minister of housing, I think we accomplished a great deal. We are very, very concerned with the federal minister, Elmer MacKay, and his decision to pull out of social housing. And last year all the provincial and territorial ministers requested that the federal government continue to hold a position in the social housing policy of Canada.

If this country is going to be able to provide a decent standard of living for all residents across this country, no matter where they live, we feel it is extremely important that there is leadership and dedication of funds from the federal government. That was the main area of concern last year at the federal-provincial-territorial meeting of housing ministers.

And we tried as best we could to send a message to the federal minister that it was imperative that in these very difficult times the federal government should not withdraw funding from social housing. However, as you will note from the budget that was brought down by Mr. Mazankowski recently, the decision was made that the federal government will withdraw all funds from social housing. We feel that is not only a great disservice to all people across this country, but it puts in jeopardy our programs in Saskatchewan in trying to meet the requirements of people both in the northern communities but also the seniors and the people living within urban communities across the southern part of Saskatchewan.

So that was one very important aspect of our travel to Toronto and we'll be continuing with that with further meetings. But it's a great concern with us.

On the meeting that we had with the federal-provincial-territorial ministers in Manitoba, we discussed issues that were of common concern regarding governance, regarding pressure on property taxation and services supplied by municipal governments. And we'll be continuing with those

discussions because we at the provincial level value the relationship and we value the services that are provided by municipal governments and we all have those common concerns.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, has there been any cost analysis or consultations conducted on how . . . or what impact the workmen's compensation changes will have on municipalities?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — No, we have not done that analysis.

Mr. Boyd: — I've been informed that these costs will amount to something in the order of \$25 million per year. I wonder if you or your department officials would care to comment on that.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The urban municipalities have not expressed any concern to us regarding the changes in the workmen compensation. If you have information regarding that, we would appreciate seeing it. The \$25 million figure appears extremely high to us, but if you can verify it and perhaps show us your documentation, we would appreciate it.

Mr. Boyd: — What figure would you and your department officials like to put on it?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chairman, we don't want to hazard a guess on that. It would be pure speculation. We will speak with the municipalities about this issue, and the information that we receive back, we'll provide the member with a copy.

Mr. Boyd: — Have rural municipalities expressed any concern about the changes?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — No, they have not.

Mr. Boyd: — Have you taken the opportunity to contact the urban and rural municipalities to see if they have any concerns about the changes?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We talk to the urban municipal associations and the administrators and the mayors regularly. This is not a subject that they have brought to our attention. In our further discussions we will speak to them and see what they feel about it. We will also speak to the Workers' Compensation Board to see if they have any information regarding this.

Mr. Boyd: — And have you met since the budget was released to discuss anything with them for that matter?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Our officials in our department meet regularly with the officials in both SUMA and SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities). I have had conversations with the presidents of the organizations. I am invited to attend their regional meetings coming up in June, and I have made a commitment to do that. They haven't had a board meeting since the budget was brought down, but I . . . yes, they did. I met with SARM after the meeting, after the budget. I did meet with the SARM

board of directors. I haven't met with the SUMA board of directors after the budget though.

Mr. Boyd: — Has your department studied the impact on rural and urban municipalities of the fuel tax increases?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Once again the Department of Finance has done the analysis on this. We know that there are concerns expressed by the municipalities. There is no doubt there is an impact and we are talking with them about these issues, and it's just a matter of trying to manage a very difficult situation when you have many demands on your money and not enough money to go around. And I guess if we didn't have \$847 million to pay in interest, it would be great to be able to provide all sorts of services to municipalities.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Has there been any analysis done on municipal infrastructure?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Municipal infrastructure can mean many things. Are you talking about roads and streets? Are you talking about water mains and sewer mains? Are you talking about water treatment plants and sewage plants? Would you be more specific about that question?

Mr. Boyd: — No, Madam Minister. I'm sorry for the confusion on that question. What I was really interested in is how you and your department feels the combining of the two departments has gone?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We haven't received any complaints whatsoever. In fact we have received very positive remarks about the amalgamation of the urban and the rural services. We think that it is very effective and will only serve to coordinate services better in the future.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I wonder if you would provide us with a breakdown of the list of all of the provincial transfers to urban and rural municipalities please?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Once again we have to clarify exactly what the information that you require is. If you want a breakdown of all the allocation as far as revenue sharing to both urban and rural municipalities, we'll provide you with that, those amounts, by Monday. We don't have it here with us.

There are other funds that we distribute also to municipalities, like disabled transit funds and so on and so forth. Do you want that included in the package or are you just talking about revenue sharing?

Mr. Boyd: — No, I was talking about the complete package, the total provincial transfers to each and every municipality, rural and urban.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We will provide that information for you on Monday.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. We accept that.

I want to go through in the *Estimates*, maybe we could just go by each heading as we come to them. On the municipal affairs, item 3, I see there's a transfer to Cumberland House. And I wonder if you could outline for me — I'm not familiar with that — if you could outline for me what that amount of money is allocated for.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Are you referring to the \$1 million? Yes, that's just a flow-through from SaskPower. When SaskPower made an agreement with the community of Cumberland House there was a block of funds set aside and those funds distributed in the allocation of \$1 million a year, and it flows through our department from SaskPower to Cumberland House.

Mr. Boyd: — Is it a contractual obligation, or how exactly does that work? And why isn't it directly paid from SaskPower to Cumberland House rather than being routed through your department?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That was in a negotiated settlement. I'm not sure if it was through the courts, but I seem to recall it happened a number of years ago under your administration, I believe. It was in compensation for the power projects up in the North that affected the Cumberland House delta and the people living in that area.

Mr. Boyd: — I wonder if you could provide me with details of that agreement. As you said, it's a contractual obligation, and we'd like to know what the details of that agreement are, how long they exist for. And also you didn't answer the question about why is it not paid directly from SaskPower to Cumberland House rather than being routed through your department.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The arrangement was such that SaskPower agreed to make compensation, but the compensation was paid to the province of Saskatchewan, and as Department of Municipal Government we are responsible for the development of the northern municipalities. And it was decided at that time that the funds would flow from SaskPower to the province of Saskatchewan and through our department back to Cumberland House. We will provide you with background information on that, but that was a decision made a number of years ago.

(1230)

Mr. Boyd: — Yes, Madam Minister, that's fine. It's a \$1 million transfer of funds to Cumberland House. I'm interested in when the contract is up, or is it into the future for some time, or . . .

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Just to make sure you understand. It goes to the Cumberland House economic development corporation. It doesn't go to the municipality of Cumberland House. And it's for economic development in that area, and it's a million dollars a year for 10 years. I think it helps run the Cumberland House farms and some other areas that they are working on within their economic

development strategy.

Mr. Boyd: — Does the contractual obligation call for any kind of monitoring or anything at all of what the money is spent for? Or is it simply left up to the economic development committee in Cumberland House to make the decision on that?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — This was a settlement. It was a settlement dedicated to the people in that area. And it is dedicated to help people there improve their standard of living through economic development initiatives. So it flows into the Cumberland House economic development corporation. We have one person who sits on that board but there is no legislative authority for accountability because this is money that they have due them. It's their money, and they are best in a position to determine how they want to spend it.

Mr. Boyd: — What year is the final amount to be paid out in?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — It was a 10-year agreement. We believe there is about three years left in that agreement for the payments.

Mr. Boyd: — Is the money paid directly to your department from the General Revenue Fund, or is it transferred directly from SaskPower?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — SaskPower pays it into the General Revenue Fund, and from there it's allocated into our budget through the Department of Finance.

Mr. Boyd: — So it's simply a bookkeeping exercise of the transfer comes to you and you transfer it them. That's as simple as it is.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That's what it is.

Mr. Boyd: — Under municipal affairs, item 3, I notice that there are grants to local authorities and other third parties. I wonder if you would detail for me what those expenditures are for.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chair, would the member opposite give us again the . . . where are you talking?

Mr. Boyd: — On page 92 of the Saskatchewan *Estimates*, item 3, municipal affairs. Go down to the bottom of the page, grants to local authorities and other third parties: \$79.183 million.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That amount of \$79.183 million, that is the total amount allocated to urban and rural governments under all the programs that we have which include revenue sharing and transit grants and so on.

Mr. Boyd: — Okay, Madam Minister. Does that same thing hold true for grants to local authorities and third parties? I notice it's in every single one of them, starting at the next page, urban parks. It's the same sort of thing. Is that the allocation as it's broken down, and that's the total?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, it is.

Mr. Boyd: — Madam Minister, in your former department of Community Services, I understand you provide low-cost housing for people of low income. I wonder if there were any housing starts allocated in this budget anywhere.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We're still waiting for the final numbers from the federal government. And as I said, we're very concerned with the federal government, who are our major partners in this, pulling out.

The relationship between Sask Housing and CMHC (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) is a 75/25 per cent relationship. We anticipate about 190 units being delivered this year. We haven't been able to verify that yet with the federal department, but that at this point in time is our allocation for social housing.

Mr. Boyd: — Madam Minister, 190 units is what your anticipation is. And I wonder if you could detail for me . . . you must have some idea of what would be considered native and non-native.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chairman, we haven't got the final numbers down but we can give you an approximate number. When you're talking about natives I assume you mean Indians and Metis living off reserves because we don't deliver on-reserve housing. We anticipate that between 60 and 70 units will be delivered to aboriginal groups in Saskatchewan this year. About 46 of those will be designated to northern municipalities.

Mr. Boyd: — Could you provide us with details of the locations for those 190 units?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, we'd be happy to provide you with the information. The trouble is right now we have to wait and work it out with CMHC to find out the final allocation with the communities, because to a great extent the communities will decide what their needs are. So we do have a list of communities where we anticipate we're going to be able to provide some social housing. By the end of May or within the next couple weeks we'll have it pretty well finalized. We can give you, next week, an estimate but it won't be the final picture until a couple weeks when we've been able to work through all the details.

Mr. Boyd: — Well that will be fine, Madam Minister. We just wanted to have some indication of the locations where these units were being proposed for, and if you'd provide us with that we'd appreciate it.

Now, Madam Minister, moving to page 95, arts and multiculturalism, subvote MG09, I notice that there's been a significant increase in two areas, the Saskatchewan Arts Board and SaskFILM.

Dealing with Saskatchewan Arts Board first, I wonder if you could outline for us today what the increase will be. What the . . . well not only increase, it never existed apparently before — funding — at least not in

'92-93. I wonder if you could provide us with details of what that \$4 million will be used for.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I thank you very much for that question because it is obvious that members of the opposition are confused about that. That is not an increase; it is a change in the way the \$4 million is allocated. Under the arrangement made by the former minister of community affairs before we took office, the Saskatchewan Arts Board was funded directly out of Sask Lotteries, so there was no designated funding within the blue book for the Arts Board. It was a \$4 million allocation, but it went from Sask Lotteries directly to the Arts Board.

When we looked and reviewed that situation, it became obvious — and also too some comments made by the Provincial Auditor — that the Arts Board is a legislated authority operating under the jurisdiction of the provincial government, and as such we have a requirement to provide funding for it.

So that \$4 million, although it came out of the lottery proceeds, it flowed from the lotteries, transferred into the Consolidated Fund, and was transferred to our department and back to the Arts Board. There is no increase in the Arts Board whatsoever. The \$4 million that is there this year was the same as \$4 million last year and the year previous but it is accounted for in the blue book this year in a different way. There is no increase whatsoever.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. We appreciate your answer on that. I wasn't aware of that and I appreciate that. It could have been provided in an explanatory note perhaps in the details of that, but that's fine. We accept your answer in that.

Does the same apply for SaskFILM?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Once again that is much the same.

I want to make sure you understand. These are lottery funds designated for sports, recreation, and culture. In previous years SaskFILM was funded directly through the lotteries. We have a contract with SaskFILM and as such it is appropriate that the funding allocated to SaskFILM be in the blue book. It is an increase over what it was in previous years, and the reason that we have provided an increase is because we believe that SaskFILM provides a fairly significant economic spin-off in this province and they do hire a lot of people and there is justification we believe to provide an adequate amount of funding for them.

So once again to make sure you understand, this is not revenue from a Consolidated Fund as tax revenue; it is through the Sask lottery funds and it is designated to SaskFILM per our agreement.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Is there any kind of auditing done of Sask Arts Board or SaskFILM, both of them, with respect not only to their expenditures but what their expenditures are used for.

Do you do some kind of an assessment on those two areas to make any kind of a determination as to whether you and your department officials feel the money is well spent?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — All right, in regard to SaskFILM, we have a contract with SaskFILM that requires them to do certain specific requirements. And we do monitor them, we do keep in consultation with them, and they do provide us with an audited report.

In regards to the Arts Board, once again the Arts Board operates as an arm's length agency from the provincial government. They have their records audited. The yearly report is submitted to the legislature.

And as I said, they operate to some extent independent of the provincial government, and their mandate is to provide grants to people working in the various artistic fields in order to further their careers.

(1245)

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Would you consider though, at some point in the future, an assessment of those departments, of Sask Arts Board and SaskFILM, to in your mind determine whether the money is being well spent?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We do that all the time. We are aware of where the grants are being allocated. We feel that it is in the best interest of the province of Saskatchewan however, that we allow the people who have the expertise and the interest in that area to continue to adjudicate the applicants for funds under the Arts Board, and we believe the process that is in place is working very well.

But nevertheless we always keep in touch with them. We are provided with information on the directives of the board and we believe that it is a responsibility of the provincial government and our department to make sure that the funds that are allocated are properly allocated.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Do you know whether SaskFILM tendered on the SaskTel "Don't Worry, Be Happy" promotion that they're about to enter into?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That is not the function of SaskFILM. They don't tender on contracts. What they do is provide loans for people who are in the film production or the video production or in those areas of film and the film industry. They provide loans to those people to allow them to further their careers and further their own industry. But it is not SaskFILM's responsibility to go out and tender on any contracts.

Mr. Boyd: — You mentioned that SaskFILM operates under certain requirements from your department. I wonder if you could outline what those requirements are.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes. But I think the easiest way to

handle this would be to provide you with a copy of the contract.

Mr. Boyd: — Yes, that would be acceptable, Madam Minister.

I understand the Saskatchewan Arts Board suspended an employee on December 10, '92. I wonder if you would provide details of that for us please.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That's true. The Saskatchewan Arts Board . . . it came to their attention through their internal audit and through the Provincial Auditor that there were certain procedures that the certain employee was using that were inappropriate in regards to allocating his own salary and his own expenses. And when that was brought to their attention they removed that individual from their employment.

They also subsequent to that turned over all the information to the police and they have, I think, done the appropriate thing. I think it's important also to note that the individual who had been using these funds had paid back to the Arts Board all the funds that were inappropriately taken. So he has made compensation to the Arts Board. He no longer works for the Arts Board, and the issue has been turned over to the police.

Mr. Boyd: — Madam Minister, thank you. You mentioned that he had taken money? Did I hear you correctly?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — What he was doing was writing out his cheques in advance and there was no checks and balances within their system to prevent him from doing this, so in effect he was writing his cheques for two or three months in advance and cashing them. When this was brought to the board's attention, they put in the proper checks and balances within the board and that is no longer continuing.

Mr. Boyd: — That's an interesting little twist on how one should be paid, isn't it, Madam Minister? I'm wondering if there have been any controls now implemented to rectify that situation into the future and what they are.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, the Arts Board has undertaken to make sure that their procedures in regard to salaries are now very stringent, and they have met all the conditions laid down by the Provincial Auditor in this regard.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Does your department consider what the gentleman — I'm not sure whether it was a gentleman — the person in question was doing was fraudulent?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — As I have said, we have turned all the records over to the police and it is up to the police to make that determination.

Mr. Boyd: — Has there been any charges laid or do you anticipate charges being laid?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — At this point there have been no charges laid, and I would not want to make comment further on that.

Mr. Boyd: — How long had this practice been going on, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The records have been turned over to the police and they're investigating it. If you want further information, I believe it's probably in the auditor's provincial report.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I guess any time that something like that is happening it's disturbing, and disturbing I'm sure to yourself and to everyone — the taxpayers particularly. Is there any indication that there was anything other than the amount that this person was to be paid? There was nothing extra, you know, above and beyond the salary the person was expecting?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I believe on some of his credit cards there were some charges. But as I said, all that money that had been missing has been paid back. The Arts Board is satisfied that they have been compensated for all the funds that were inappropriately taken and the issue has been turned over to the police.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. So as far as your department is concerned, the situation is closed, done with, and it will be up to the department to make any . . . or pardon me, up to the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) to make any further investigation of it?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I think that's Regina police, but I will say once again that the person has compensated the Arts Board for all the funds that were taken. Second, all the records have been turned over to the Regina police force. And third, the checks and balances that were required to be put in by the Arts Board in order to control such circumstances have been initiated, and we believe the situation has been appropriately dealt with.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Has your department put forward any thoughts or recommendations to the city police? Or have they asked your department for any input into whether the person should or should not be charged?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — No, not at all. You will recall that the Arts Board is an agency that operates at arm's length from the government. We have not been asked for information, nor we have given any.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, previously your department was made up of Community Services and Rural Development. I wonder if you could provide us with details of all costs associated with the amalgamation of those two departments.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We can provide you with the

organizational changes and the final amount saved, which was \$2.7 million, by the amalgamation of the two departments. I will ask a page to take that across.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:58 p.m.