

## EVENING SITTING

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

## SECOND READINGS

## Bill No. 38

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 38 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code** be now read a second time and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Toth.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister is . . . I told him I may be three hours tonight, and then he's signalling maybe half an hour, and I think maybe the last figure is maybe closer to it. I'll do the best I can, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, to cover the few points I want to cover and then we'll be moving on.

I just want to reiterate a little bit, Mr. Speaker, of what we're talking about before supper, is one of the most dangerous parts of the Bill — unless the minister can tell us something different in his closing speech or in Committee of the Whole — that I'm really worried about and what I'd say that the bulk of my conversations with people pertaining to Bill 38 seems to be, their children in the schools.

Like I said before the supper break, Mr. Speaker, that in the adult world as far as people having jobs and working in the workplace, if they rub shoulders with a homosexual or a lesbian they're a grown individual and they can take care of themselves. But children, we do not want them to grow up in this province being taught and looking at their teachers that may be a lesbian or a homosexual, believing in their heart as they grow up that that's a normal lifestyle. It is not a normal lifestyle. Every member in this Assembly knows that a homosexual or a lesbian is not normal. It's not a normal lifestyle. If you believe that well then I'd say you're not normal. Anybody believes that a gay lifestyle, the gay society, is a normal lifestyle then I would say the members that believe that are not normal themselves. It's as simple as that. It is very, very clear. The Scriptures make it clear. It couldn't be any more clear that they are not normal. If they were normal they would be a heterosexual and they would be living with opposite-sex partners.

And I just want to leave that with you, Mr. Minister, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, and I'm hoping that you have a good answer in second reading or in Committee of the Whole amendments to assure, assure the people of this province of Saskatchewan, that if you don't vote for our amendment tonight and let it go on for six months to think about this, that you'll have something there to protect our children so they do not have to be taught by an open, professed gay. It just cannot be.

It doesn't hurt them. I've rubbed shoulders with them all my life and didn't know it. I mean I probably have

you people have, I'm sure some of my colleagues have, that you could rub shoulders with a gay in your workplace or at school or whatever. But if you don't know it, it didn't hurt you. That means they didn't let anybody know what they were.

Now what you're doing now is you're going to open it up. You should be taking a lesson over this next six months where you're thinking about this, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister. You should be thinking about what's happening in United States. I was in Honolulu when President Clinton was sworn in as the President of the United States on inauguration day. And before the day was out his first piece of business was to have the Armed Forces protected for the gay community in the Armed Forces. If you were a gay you would be protected.

Well he's had trouble with that. He's had to listen to General Schwarzkopf and a few people like him that were saying this is wrong, and will be wrong, and then people . . . As soon as he stood up and was counted, people come forth. And it's not happening. They're not getting that to happen down there.

So I urge you, Mr. Government, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government, for goodness' sakes, think this out more carefully than you have. Think about the 90-some per cent of people that don't agree with you and quit discriminating upon them.

Mr. Minister, it seems to be a very funny thing that the provinces that aren't thinking this out are the socialist provinces like British Columbia, and Ontario, and now Saskatchewan. Why is it in the socialist provinces? Why is it the NDP (New Democratic Party) conventions that don't think this out? Maybe if they just thought about it for six months straight they'd think it out that they're the ones that always have adoptions and bring in to their conventions endorsing what we're doing here today.

We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the NDP Party endorsing it. They've endorsed it all your conventions, because when I spoke earlier on second reading, it was come right from your convention. So it's the NDP people of this province, the majority of them, that's brought this Bill to this here legislature.

And if you would just stop and think about it, there's no way you could proceed. You let cooler heads think this thing out. Listen to the people. Listen to the group of people that was in this Assembly today. There was a group here today and they had a press conference this morning. I watched them on the news tonight. They're concerned about, and they want you to think about it, and they know about our amendment of pulling this here Bill for six months.

They want you to think about it and they don't understand that, and they don't believe, and their lawyers don't believe . . . As I said before supper, our lawyers do not believe, Mr. Minister, that this Bill is as simple as it seems to be. It opens the door. It's going to open the door to the homosexual society. And they do

not have it coming. They do not have one thing more coming than I've got coming. If they can hold a job in the workplace and I can hold a job in the workplace, it should be our own talents that does that. It shouldn't have to be . . . You should think about that.

Think about that while this Bill's being closed. Think about it very, very carefully. The minister should be thinking about it very carefully that why should . . . just think it out. Why should a homosexual have preference in the workplace over anybody else? There's just no reason for it whatsoever. You are wrong, wrong, wrong, and the people of Saskatchewan say you are wrong.

Another concern of mine, Mr. Speaker, that I'd like them to think about is what's going to happen . . . and a very great concern has come to me from the Bible schools in this province of Saskatchewan. I'm talking about church schools and Bible schools. Like Caronport is a non-denominational Bible school, but we have a Catholic school at Muenster. You go talk to these people. They are wondering what's going to happen if gay people apply to teach at these schools.

Are they going to be forced . . . that's another one I want you, Mr. Minister, to think very carefully about over the next while if you're going to go ahead with the Bill and then not listen to our amendment. If you're going to go ahead, I want you, Mr. Minister, to think very clearly how you can protect the people in the Bible schools and the church schools that they do not have gay teachers forced upon them.

It would be absolutely wrong. You'd be discriminating upon the whole school and all the people that believe in that Bible school or that church school. It is absolutely wrong.

I've had many, many letters from schools such as this. I've had contact from the Lutheran college in Outlook. I've had many contacts from Caronport, Muenster, a Catholic school as I said before. They show concern.

So please, Mr. Speaker, I say to the government do not discriminate these people. Whatever you're going to do, make sure you protect the people that believe otherwise, that they do not have to have their teachers forced upon them that are not of the same thinking as far as Bill 38 is concerned. They must be protected.

You're the government. We're only the opposition. We can only bring you what the people are saying. And everything we're saying here, everything that my colleagues have said in the last month, debating this Bill . . . It hasn't been on the Table for pretty near four weeks, but we did debate it I think. Or not debate it, we spoke on it, and now we'll be debating it in Committee of the Whole if you don't listen to our amendment or vote for our amendment tonight.

But it's very, very important that you listen to us because every letter that we've got, almost every letter I've got, has been copied to the Minister of Justice, the Premier of this province. And so I'm sure if they're not just letting their staff read those letters and they're

reading themselves, it must mean something to them. It must surely. Think it out. Protect these people.

If you want to go out and protect the homosexual and lesbian people, the gay society, well then do as you may. But don't discriminate upon the rest of us while you're doing it. Do not let me have to hear from the alliance, Canadian Bible College in Regina that there'll be teachers move in there, apply there, that are gay. I want protection in this Bill if you're not going to pull it, protection for these people.

Now I suppose the Canadian Bible College is strictly Bible . . . and it may not be an open school, but the Muenster school and the Caronport Bible school, that's an open-unit school, so there's children from eight and under in the surrounding area go there. And it would be a terrible injustice to the Caronport Bible school if they have to have a gay teacher teaching their children and they believe otherwise. It's very, very important. And I urge the minister, and I'm sure that he will think of something, to protect these people if he already hasn't.

Mr. Speaker, I guess what's really very important here . . . Oh, I think now, Mr. Speaker, what I'll do is, I think it's only fair after the hundreds of letters that I have received — I went through them today when I found out I was going to be speaking again, Mr. Speaker — I just picked out six letters and they're very short, and they're kind of a cross-cut of them all. And it's something that I'd like the members to . . . I want it on the record. And it's something I'd like them to think about over this next six months if they're going to vote for our amendment. So I'm going to read just the highlights of these letters. And some of them are short. I'll read them all.

And these are six out of several hundred letters. But they're kind of a cross-cut that will pretty well tie in what people are saying. This, Mr. Speaker, these letters will pretty well say what the people of Saskatchewan are saying:

The NDP government of the (and I won't say his name; it would be the Premier) . . . plan to introduce amendment legislation next month that will grant special rights to those who choose to practice the homosexual lifestyle. This amendment will redefine family marriage, spouse, and the right to adopt children, as well as other family privileges, to a specific group. God detests homosexuality. It does not bless same-sex marriages.

Leviticus 18:22 — "You shall not lie with the male as with a woman. It is abomination." Chapter 18 of Leviticus deals with the laws of sexual morality.

Has the time come when Christianity and logic has become obsolete and the ten commandments are no longer guidelines to our morality laws?

What gay men or lesbians do in their bedrooms

is their business but they should not or do not need special legislation giving them special status.

I ask you to use your . . . debating skills and join the majority of Saskatchewan citizens that oppose the amendment.

This is not even from my constituency; it's from a Bob . . . sincerely, Bob Schmidt, Langenburg, Saskatchewan.

The next letter:

I am very concerned and opposed to any legislation that gives homosexual . . . (and lesbians) the same status as marriage of two persons of opposite sex.

If they get that right, what is next? I fear for the future generations. I trust you will do all you can to prevent this legislation.

Edith Obrigewitsch from Davidson.

Mr. Speaker, I had many, many letters from the Davidson area and I just picked out the ones to read because they seemed to be an average of what they were saying.

This letter — I'm not sure what town — enclosed his letter to the Premier asking him to stop any legislation that grants special rights to homosexuals.

Please! help protect our country & the future of our children & grandchildren.

(1915)

Frances Haugerud . . . oh yes, Craik, Saskatchewan. This is the only one I used from Craik.

And this is the letter to the Premier:

I am writing to ask you to stop any legislation granting rights to homosexuals.

They claim to need protection because they are so badly treated. They are really looking for special status not enjoyed by others. In Colorado recently voters passed an amendment which guaranteed that Homosexuals had the same rights as anyone else. Homosexuals were enraged and organized a nationwide boycott against Colorado. This proves to me that they are looking for special status not equal rights.

When it comes to rights I always remember the insight taught by Eric Blair better known as George Orwell in *Animal Farm* where he said everybody is equal but some are more equal than others. This proposed legislation will make homosexuals more equal than others in Saskatchewan, and I'm firmly opposed to it.

Homosexuals such as Evanna Simpson have expressed delight with the proposed NDP law, saying it will "open the door" for the rest of the homosexual agenda. I regret to say that she is probably right about this. I do not want this door open, and I ask you to reject this proposed legislation.

Frances Haugerud from Craik. It's right on the money here. She's saying that Evanna Simpson has expressed delight with this Bill, expressed delight that the proposed NDP law will open the door for the rest of the homosexual agenda. That's the fear in the province of Saskatchewan. It's going to open the door for the homosexual agenda.

And for goodness' sakes, you people that have got a good thinking head on you, think this out. Think it out. This is the last thing that we can do. Many things have happened in North America in the last few years that we've . . . our morality is slipping down the drain. And here we have this happening in Saskatchewan.

Once this is adopted, there goes Saskatchewan along with many other parts of the world. In fact in some of the European countries, they're better than we are. They're coming back out of some of this immoral Bills that they've put through and things that they've allowed in the last years, and they're stopping it because it was the ruination of their country.

Please note. We are opposed to any legislation that gives homosexuals . . . the same status as the marriage of two persons of the opposite sex.

This is a devious pressure tactic, producing a crack that will "open the door" to the abandonment of all moral standards.

It is a grave mistake to "open the door" to all these destructive . . .

We ask that you please "burn" proposed homosexual rights legislation. Harvey and Bernice Anderson.

Eldon and I are very perturbed regarding the recent letter in the Davidson *Leader* regarding the preferential treatment proposed by forthcoming legislation. We know from reading your articles that you are strongly against such legislation.

We have learned from reliable sources that as Christians our views don't really count in these matters but as Canadians we can put a stop to this if enough like-minded people form groups or coalitions and block this by getting an injunction against it because it is not legal to give preference to one group over another.

We send our support to anything you can do in your capacity as our member.

We ask God's blessing on your efforts. Eldon and Mary McClaren.

Mr. Speaker, these are very, very important letters I'm reading here because . . . and I'm reading six out of several hundred letters, and this covers what people are thinking in this province of Saskatchewan. And as I said before, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice and the Premier and many members over there have had these same letters, and if they were digesting it and really thinking it out, we wouldn't be in this position we are today.

Another letter, and this is not from my constituency either. It's from Langbank, Saskatchewan.

Dear Sir: I'm writing in regard to the granting of special rights to those who choose to practise homosexuality.

As I understand the present law, a homosexual has the same rights everyone in this province has.

I don't believe that less than 1 or 2 per cent of the population should have special rights.

We believe in the current definition of the family — man and woman publicly married under God and the State and if they desire, have children, which creates a bond of love which we build our society on.

Please give this matter your careful attention and vote against this legislation of sexual orientation. Yours truly,  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Toth from Langbank, Saskatchewan.

And that is a real good, average letter. Now the last one, Mr. Speaker, it's just a letter that came to me and an article out of the paper. This was sent to all MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly), Mr. Speaker. And this is another good point why should we be thinking about this and thinking what we're doing.

And I'm just going to read a few highlights of the article. Because on here . . . this person . . . is from Frank and Barbara Leier, and I'm not even sure where they're from. It just says, MLA, Gerald Muirhead. I'm not sure where they're from.

Frank and Barbara Leier to all MLAs. And the article is "Gay isn't okay".

Forcing people to accept homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle smacks of propaganda. I have several gay relatives and other gay friends. I have read a lot about gay people from many sources, religious and secular. My believe is that most cases result from an unhappy family life, lack of role model, physical or mental abuse, or exposure to pornography, to name the most extreme causes. Very few cases are genetically determined.

The February 4 *Journalism Post* editorial tends to agree. So what about these cases that aren't genetically determined? Do these people have

emotional problems or are they gay by choice? Certainly the more our society suffers from emotional problems and the more natural the choice of being gay is perceived, the more homosexuality will increase.

Is this what is being advocated? Full acceptance of homosexuality no matter what the reason?

I won't read on any more; that's just the main part that she underlined and wanted all MLAs in the province of Saskatchewan to read that.

Mr. Speaker, it's very important that we . . .

I'd like to enlarge on a little bit about what the member from Nipawin was talking about tonight about . . . and more reasons why we should be thinking this out very carefully and why we should be putting a hold on this Bill for six months. For ever would be better for me, Mr. Speaker, and that is my own personal belief along with thousands of people in the province of Saskatchewan, like thousands and thousands, as God's word in the Scriptures is very, very clear.

Either this province, either this government, either all the members of the Assembly believe in the Scriptures, believe in God, or we don't. If we don't, Mr. Speaker, why don't we stop calling ourselves a Christian nation and let us be a heathen nation. Why do we say the nice prayer that you say each day, Mr. Speaker, when we open this Assembly? Why do we make a mockery of ourselves and then turn around and go against the Scriptures? Because that's exactly what we're doing.

And if you would read all the passages that I gave in second reading, Mr. Speaker, if they were all digested, you would understand that it is wrong what you're doing and that it is wrong, wrong, wrong, the belief that so many people believe. If you just stop and think it out and read God's word in the Scriptures and look around you at statistics that homosexuals and lesbian people are not born that way. They are made that way from sin after birth.

Now there is such in instances . . . There is some instances where it is kind of hard to believe that. Some people perhaps could be born with a tendency to be that way. But don't forget God's word in the Scriptures says very clearly that man can suffer for your forefather's sins. So you're not always born free of sin. Everybody is born in sin. They must become into a new life when they grow up, and each person has to think for themselves, and they must either live through God's rule in the Scriptures, what he teaches us . . . You either believe that way or you don't. So if you let yourself go and live in sin, you will sometimes, if you have a tendency, you become an acting homosexual or a lesbian person.

And the proof of this to me is the Scriptures, but let's go outside the Scriptures, Mr. Speaker. Let's go outside the Scriptures.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why you're shaking your head at me tonight. I don't think the Speaker should shake their head at anybody.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order! I've been listening a long time to the member, and the member is referring to a second-reading debate. He knows that he is on the amendment moved by his colleague. And that amendment says that this Bill should not be read now, but six months hence.

And the member therefore cannot have a wide-ranging debate. I've been very generous with him this evening, and I'm asking him to get back to the amendment and not on second-reading debate. He had his opportunity for second reading, and he's now on a very narrow, restricted debate on the amendment. So I ask the member to get back to his amendment.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, that's fine. I have no problem with that at all because I can just take longer and connect everything I say with six-month's thinking. We're only play games. If you don't like, Mr. Speaker, what I'm doing, please just get up and stop me. Don't shake your head at me while I'm speaking.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I will ask the member to withdraw those words implicating that the Speaker is being negative to him. I simply indicated to him that he is out of order by making it very wide, his discussion. The member can take all evening if he wants to debate, but the member is going to abide by the rules of this House just like anybody else. And I ask him to get back to the amendment as moved by his colleague the member from Moosomin. If the member doesn't want to, I'll call upon another member.

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now as I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that we're talking about the most serious thing that's ever happened, as far as I'm concerned, in the province of Saskatchewan — the most serious Bill that ever has come before this House, ever.

And I don't think it's wrong that our colleague from Moosomin put an amendment in that we think about this for six more months. And certainly I can connect everything I say with the six months, and I will do that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should think very, very clearly about the facts. There's so many people that laugh at the Scriptures and say that they're not correct. And let's just call ourselves a Christian nation, as we do. We consider ourselves a Christian nation. God made us. God made the earth; God made the sea. He made the land and the waters. There's nothing he didn't do right. He put fish in the sea; he put the animals on the earth. And then he made man. And no one, no one on earth — and I want you to think about this very, very carefully — no one on earth has ever seen the fish in the sea or the animals mate with same sex. It's only sin and man and woman that does that.

So God didn't make us imperfect like he made the

animals and the fish perfect. There is no mistake on what God does perform. It's only man that promotes sin and lives in sin.

So I want you to think very carefully upon this, that you people that are feeling so sorry for somebody that is born a homosexual or a gay. They are not born that way. They become that way.

And Mr. Speaker and all the members can shake their fists at me as much as they want, but all they're doing is lowering their own . . . they're lowering themselves by doing that. Because read . . . instead of shaking their hands at me, Mr. Speaker, they'd be far better if they opened the Scriptures and read God's word.

Or else come right out and say it, come right out and say it that we're not a Christian nation any more. Well that we are not. Say that you, the NDP government, are not a Christian nation. Say that we're a heathen bunch of people and we are going to do these things.

Because that's what I'm going to leave when I close here to the Minister of Justice, that when we move to the Committee of the Whole, that I have faith in him. That he is a decent enough man to think these things out and have strong, strong amendments that will stand up to any court in Canada pertaining to marriages, and adoptions, and protecting our children from lesbian, homosexual teachers.

(1930)

This is what we must have. We have to have men like you, Mr. Justice Minister; this is all on your hands. It's up to you to set where we're going into Saskatchewan right now, whether we're going to call ourselves a heathen province and throw it wide open and promote homosexuality and the lesbian and gay society. We're going to promote it or we're not.

And it looks like that's what most of your people think, but I think that if they give it six months to think about it and talk about it, and wait until the vote comes in — this plebiscite, they'll get over their hundred thousand names. They have approximately 12, 15,000 names in Regina alone on petitions. They have approximately another 35 to 40,000 that's been gathered up by another group, and there's about another 15 to 20,000 that are sitting throughout the province now, partly filled and now that seeding is over there's going to be a great move out there, Mr. Speaker, to get these here plebiscites filled and we'll get over a hundred thousand names. I'm sure the people involved will come up with their hundred thousand names. I'm absolutely sure of it.

Then we'll have to have a vote. So why wouldn't this government do the opposite what the Minister of Justice said one time, that we wouldn't honour it anyway, and I'm sure he didn't mean that. I'm sure when his head cooled that the Minister of Justice will say when the people of Saskatchewan speak we will listen. This is too important. This is not debt, like I said before, this is talking about things that are of a serious nature.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to leave again . . . If we're not going to vote . . . we're hoping, Mr. Speaker, that they vote for the amendment and give it six months so all people can think this over and give this of course again a chance for this here petition to get in and let the people speak.

But if not I leave this message with the Minister of Justice. I talked to the Premier in the hallway after I spoke at supertime, and the Premier said very clearly to me when he put his hand on my shoulder that your concerns will be met when the Minister of Justice speaks on second reading and with amendments. So I say, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier is concerned. He's concerned with my views and the views of my colleagues. He is concerned.

And I ask you, Mr. Minister of Justice, not to come in with some weak amendments that doesn't get by, stand up in court. So all I'm saying is, Mr. Minister, if you're going to proceed, and we have to proceed into committee, then we're asking you to think it out very carefully to make sure that the statement you said in the fall of '92 and then several times this winter, that this government will never allow marriages or never allow the adoptions . . .

And you'll be protecting these different provisions that we've been talking about in the Bill that we want protected. That's not the homosexuals we're talking about being protected. We don't believe in that at all. We would like to see you pull the Bill. We want them to be equal. What we want you to do, Mr. Minister, if you're going to proceed, protect, be sure you protect the other 90-some per cent, the people that oppose the Bill. Be sure that all their protections are there.

So I leave that with you, Mr. Minister, and I ask you to . . . and there's a lot of people out there tonight. I get phone calls every day that people, Christian people said they are praying for the Minister of Justice, that God will prevail in your mind and your heart to do the right thing for the province of Saskatchewan.

I ask to adjourn the debate.

The division bells rang from 7:34 p.m. until 7:44 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

#### Yeas — 5

Muirhead	Toth
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	

#### Nays — 20

Romanow	Murray
Tchorzewski	Hamilton
Shillington	Johnson
Kowalsky	Draper
Mitchell	Sonntag
Upshall	Roy
Hagel	Wormsbecker
Bradley	Crofford

Lorje  
Pringle

Kluz  
Langford t

The division bells rang from 7:47 p.m. until 7:57 p.m.

Amendment negated on the following recorded division.

#### Yeas — 5

Muirhead	Toth
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	

#### Nays — 21

Romanow	Murray
Tchorzewski	Hamilton
Lingenfelter	Johnson
Shillington	Draper
Kowalsky	Sonntag
Mitchell	Roy
Upshall	Wormsbecker
Hagel	Crofford
Bradley	Kluz
Lorje	Langford
Pringle	

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

**The Speaker:** — I want to warn members at this time that the minister is about to close the debate on second reading. If any member wishes to speak he or she should do so now.

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to close debate with respect to Bill No. 38 which amends the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code. Mr. Speaker, surrounding this piece of legislation is a great deal of misunderstanding. In my speech leading off this debate, I attempted to clarify the scope and effect of the Bill. The debate which has occurred in this House makes it clear that some further explanation is needed.

One of the members has remarked that there is no need for this Bill. And another has questioned the government's motives in introducing legislation to include protection on the basis of sexual orientation. It may not be apparent to most of us that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation occurs. It doesn't affect most of us. However for homosexuals it is, unfortunately, a fact of life. Without these amendments a homosexual person who is denied an apartment or who loses a job because of his or her sexual orientation doesn't have any means of redress and that's not fair.

(2000)

I believe that the members opposite would agree and have agreed that it is not fair. This legislation is needed to address this unfairness. The government's motive in passing this legislation is precisely that: to provide a means of redress when unfair distinctions are made on

the basis of a person's sexual orientation.

I would also like to point out that it is not only New Democratic Party governments in this country that have recognized that individuals face discrimination because of their sexual orientation and that legislation is needed to protect these individuals. Legislation was passed in Ontario in 1986 by a Liberal government steering the amendments through their legislature. In New Brunswick it was a Liberal government which included this protection. And in Nova Scotia it was a Conservative government. On the federal level, it is a Conservative government which has introduced amendments to their human rights legislation to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination.

Despite the fact that this development has already occurred in most of the jurisdictions in Canada it is clear that many people still don't understand the concept of anti-discrimination legislation. As I emphasized in my second-reading speech respecting this Bill, human rights legislation is not about extending anyone extra or special rights.

Perhaps some examples, Mr. Speaker, will help to clarify what we're talking about. We're talking about equal rights rather than extra rights. For instance, the protection of the code on the basis of religion doesn't give special rights to Christians or Muslims or Jews, but provides that persons can't be discriminated against regardless of their religious belief and practice.

Similarly the inclusion of race as a ground of discrimination doesn't give special rights to any particular race but serves to protect all of us regardless of our race. Because race and sex are two grounds included in the code, persons of all races — and both men and women — are protected from discrimination in the situations covered by the code.

In fact white persons rarely file complaints on the basis of race, and men rarely file complaints indicating that they have suffered discrimination on the basis of their sex. Because non-whites and women are more likely to experience discrimination and thus file complaints on the basis of race or gender, this doesn't mean that they have received extra rights, or special rights, under the code.

This leads me to another misapprehension which underlines opposition to the Bill. The words "sexual orientation" do not simply mean homosexuality. Protection from discrimination against heterosexuals, if it occurs, is also included in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to directly address some of the members' concerns — not all because we can get into specific concerns during committee — but some of the concerns that I think are the main ones.

First, several members have questioned the effect of this Bill upon the matter of adoption. As I stated in my earlier speech, this legislation will in no way change

the present law respecting adoptions. Perhaps I can expand on that briefly tonight.

The present Adoption Act, which was passed by the previous government in 1989, provides that married adults or an unmarried adult or any person that the court may allow may apply to adopt a child. There's nothing in the Adoption Act that says only a heterosexual may apply. This doesn't mean that the court has no control over where a child is placed.

On the contrary, the deciding factor in every case is whether the adoption would be in the best interests of that child. All relevant factors must be considered by the judge in determining what those interests are. The simple fact, Mr. Speaker, is that Bill 38 will not change who may apply for an adoption nor will it change the way that each adoption is dealt with by the courts.

Second. Specific concerns have been expressed relating to the marriage of homosexual persons. Again this Bill doesn't affect that issue. Under the Canadian constitution, it is the federal government that has jurisdiction over matters relating to marriage. The only matter that the province has within its control is the solemnization of marriages.

Federal jurisdiction clearly includes the issue of capacity to marry. It is therefore for the federal government to determine the rules regarding age, soundness of mind, and indeed the gender of the marriage partners. Provincial legislation cannot affect those rules.

Third. Some are concerned about whether these amendments will entitle homosexuals to spousal benefits. Generally, whether a homosexual partner will be entitled to employment benefits will depend upon the terms of the particular pension plan or dental plan or other benefit plan.

If an employee wishes to designate his or her same-sex partner as his or her beneficiary, and this is contemplated by the terms of the plan, it is not the government's role to step in and say that this cannot occur. Some pension plans refer to spousal benefits and do not provide for a designated beneficiary. These plans have been the subject of some litigation in other provinces and that litigation has been mentioned in debate in this House, and the question in those cases is whether same-sex partners are included in such plans.

Courts have come to different conclusions on the issue but the cases have shown that it is the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the interpretation of the charter and the effect of the charter upon the provincial benefit plan legislation which will continue to be pre-eminent in guiding courts throughout this debate. Whether or not we amend our provincial legislation as proposed in Bill 38 won't have any impact on the decision that the courts will ultimately reach on these questions.

Fourth. I would like to respond to comments that the amendments to this Bill, in the context of section 25,

will allow the promotion of homosexuality in schools. I know that this is a legitimate concern. It's been raised in the House and been raised outside the House. Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the . . . It is inaccurate and misleading to argue that section 25 has this effect. I say that with respect. But I say it with certainty.

In the description of the Human Rights Commission's mandate the code states that the commission shall develop and conduct educational programs designed to eliminate discriminatory practices. This mandate is not ambiguous. It is not about promoting homosexuality. It is not about teaching homosexuality any more than it is about promoting a particular religion or a particular marital status.

It is not about school curricula. School curricula are determined by school boards and by the Department of Education. The inclusion of all the other grounds that are in the code and have been in the code for years don't give the Human Rights Commission the right to determine school curricula. And neither, Mr. Speaker, do these amendments.

The commission cannot require any school to teach homosexuality. Likewise the commission cannot require any school to teach Seventh-Day Adventists doctrine, or Methodist doctrine, or Catholic doctrine, or to teach the benefits of being married as opposed to being single.

What the commission is responsible for doing, Mr. Speaker, is educating the general public about what is in the code. The commission provides information about what does constitute a discriminatory practice and what does not. For example, if an employer wants to have someone come to his or her workplace to explain what behaviours are considered to be sexual harassment, the commission will provide that service. The commission's responsibility is to educate and promote an attitude of tolerance. Those who read something more into the commission's mandate are simply not correct in that interpretation.

Fifth, Mr. Speaker, some members have raised concerns about the code's restrictions on the publication of information which is considered hate literature — literature which has the effect of denying to homosexuals the right to be free from discrimination in employment or in public services. This is prohibited under the amendments to the Human Rights Code.

Some question whether this will have the effect of restricting individual expression on this issue. It is important to remember that the code itself in more than one provision guarantees freedom of expression.

Contrary to what some opponents have stated, section 14 will not prevent churches from quoting from the Bible or teaching the Bible or teaching doctrinal positions.

Several members have wondered why sexual orientation is not defined in our amendments. In fact a number of grounds are not defined, Mr. Speaker, so

this isn't unusual. The only grounds that are defined in the code are age, creed, disability, and sex. The other grounds — race, religion, colour, marital status, nationality, ancestry, and place of origin — are not defined. All but one of the provinces which have added sexual orientation to their legislation have not defined it either. The fear underlying this objection appears to be that the code legitimizes conduct which is otherwise illegal, and to address this concern the government will be introducing a House amendment during the committee stage clarifying that the amendments will not protect illegal activity. The Criminal Code will continue to have precedence.

I would also like to respond to the concern about affirmative action programs. Section 47, which is the section under which affirmative action programs are approved, has been in the code since it came into force in 1979, since 1979. So far affirmative action programs have been extended only to four categories — women in non-traditional occupations, persons of aboriginal ancestry, the disabled, and most recently to visible minorities — four grounds. Although the commission has a broad right to order affirmative action programs for employers covering all matters in the code, they have never gone beyond those four heads.

The affirmative action programs which exist are programs that have been voluntarily undertaken by employers and submitted to the Human Rights Commission for review and approval and that is the way it will continue to be, Mr. Speaker. The groups, these four groups, to whom affirmative action programs have been extended in Saskatchewan are consistent with groups included in affirmative action programs across the country. There has been no move in any jurisdiction to include other groups with these programs. I'm aware however, Mr. Speaker, that amendments to this provision in Bill 38 cause concern to a large number of people. A lot of people have expressed their concern to my colleagues and to my friends across the aisle. And we will therefore be introducing a House amendment in the committee stage which states that affirmative action programs shall be extended only to the four groups recognized at the present time.

Finally I want to emphasize again that these amendments do not in any way make any value judgements and they certainly don't force those value judgements upon anyone else. All they promote are the principles of tolerance and fairness, principles which surely have the unanimous support of this Assembly.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that my comments tonight have clarified some of the misunderstandings which continue to impede this debate. I know, even from the debate that occurred this afternoon and this evening, that there are other questions to be addressed. And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, and my friends opposite, that I will be most happy to deal with those during the committee stage.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 38.



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

The division bells rang from 8:15 p.m. until 8:45 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division

**Yeas — 22**

Romanow	Pringle
Wiens	Murray
Tchorszewski	Hamilton
Lingenfelter	Johnson
Shillington	Draper
Kowalsky	Sonntag
Mitchell	Roy
Upshall	Wormsbecker
Hagel	Crofford
Bradley	Kluz
Lorje	Langford

**Nays — 5**

Muirhead	Toth
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	

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

**Bill No. 90**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 90 — An Act to protect the financial viability of NewGrade Energy Inc.** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm certain that the Premier would like to definitely let her rip, as he has indicated, because the discussion that's taking place here — and it's unfortunate that maybe the negotiations haven't been able to move along with the same ability and capability that the members would express in this House.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that as an opposition we have a moral obligation to the constituency of this province, to the electorate of this province, to at least address some of the issues here. And one of the major issues and major concerns before us today . . . as we've just noted on Bill 38 where the government has gone against the wishes of the majority of the people of Saskatchewan and continue to plow ahead with its Bill, Bill 38, amendments to the Human Rights Code.

They also show that they are more than determined to move ahead with Bill No. 90, An Act to protect the financial viability of NewGrade Energy Inc. And I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the terminology they are using is . . . they're calling this an Act to protect the financial viability when in fact the reality is, Mr. Speaker, it's just another way this government is showing its willingness to impress and impose its views on the businesses across this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of points I want

to raise, but a headline caught my attention, Mr. Speaker, and it's from the *Star-Phoenix*, Friday, May 14, the headline is "Business/government relations reach crossroads." And I'm quoting from the article; it says:

The Romanow administration has reached an important mile(stone) in the life of its first term. Which direction the government turns next will largely determine the tenor of the remainder of this term and its potential for a second stint in the corridors of power in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, the article goes on to read:

This watershed is characterized by two important developments — the blowout with the alliance of business groups and the Regina upgrader fiasco.

First, the relationship with this new coalition of business groups.

And we go back to a comment that was made in this House a number of days ago by the Premier himself.

In recent days, a war of words has erupted over a call for an economic summit meeting issued by the business group. Premier Romanow reacted angrily to the idea saying he was blindsided by the suggestion. The government and the business group, he said, had been in close contact on economic issues. Each had kept the other side appraised of events as they unfolded. Then, all of a sudden, this call for a summit and criticism of the government's economic performance comes.

The business coalition's reaction to the Premier's reaction is one of incredulity. They can't believe his thin skin.

We felt betrayed over the budget, offers one member of the coalition who says they were promised the government would cut \$2 in expenditures for every dollar it raised in new taxes. When the budget was released, the exact opposite happened.

And we're all aware of that, Mr. Speaker, and we've had a fair bit of debate on this Assembly . . . on that particular point in this Assembly over the past number of months. And I'm sure that that question will be raised when and if the government finally screws up its courage to bring forward Executive Council and allow the Premier to come before this Assembly to answer questions in estimates or the Minister of Finance to come before the Assembly . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And the Premier says he's willing to come any time.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would ask if the Premier would have his members here tomorrow and would bring Executive Council to deal with so that the Assembly can get into estimates on Executive Council. And I believe that the Premier really holds true to his word,

he will do that. He will be honourable. He will bring his executive. He will order his House Leader to allow him to come before the Assembly with this Executive Council and all his assistants and try to answer the questions, try to explain his way out of the way his government has manipulated and coerced the people of Saskatchewan into accepting and, as you will, just going along with what they're doing, in many cases simply because as we've seen and as the Bill before us shows, they have a willingness to hold an iron fist — iron fist, it seems to me I've heard of that term over the years — an iron fist over their heads while they negotiated.

"On the government's side," — and I continue on with this debate here.

On the government's side, the reaction went something like this. They, meaning business, have to give us some room to move on issues. Having flexibility, they argue, allows things to get done. One example they cite is the AECL deal which was revived through quiet co-operation.

But the real irritant on this particular round is labor legislation. Despite the apparently amicable relationship between business and government, the administration was planning labor law changes that terrify the business community.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, we've been discussing this, and there are two Bills presently before this Assembly, and I understand there's a third Bill on its way in tomorrow regarding labour legislation and the strengthening of labour legislation. And time will tell what that Bill has in it. It will be interesting to see what the member from Regina Rosemont is proposing and the fact that his colleagues were not willing to accept his position on some stronger labour legislation.

So when you look at the two pieces of legislation that are before the Assembly today, and the one that's coming tomorrow, and the Bill before us on the upgrader, Mr. Speaker, one has to wonder when will we ever see in this province a time and an opportunity for businesses to really feel comfortable in dealing and working with the province of Saskatchewan.

Maybe the business community felt it was getting too cosy with the government and some members, feeling they were being co-opted, rebelled.

Who knows the debate that has taken place?

Mr. Speaker, as another article headline reads, "Set politics aside to rescue the upgrader." One has to wonder if the government are not just crying because they didn't get what they wanted, if they're not crying because of the fact that they appointed a commissioner, Mr. Justice Estey, paying him \$200,000 to give a report, hoping that at the end of the day he would bring a scathing report back to them criticizing FCL (Federated Co-operatives Ltd.),

criticizing the former government, and criticizing the federal government on all the partners.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day Mr. Estey I believe tried to be as reasonable and as fair as he could. The government specifically asked former Supreme Court Justice Willard Estey to explain once and for all how the deal was made. Perhaps not surprisingly Estey refused to do that in his report on the upgrader released last week.

And then the article continues:

While no one gets what it wants, Estey has at least provided a means out of the impasse.

And we've heard a lot about that over the last couple of days. In fact, Mr. Speaker, as I was driving in for the House this morning, I happened to have the radio on. And I don't often listen to the Harasen line. It just so happened that Mr. Leland and Mr. Empey were on the Harasen line explaining their side of the issue regarding the NewGrade upgrader and FCL's side of the proposal.

And it was interesting that at the end of the day they said they have been willing, more than willing to sit down and on the basis of the Estey report, sit down with the government and work out a fair and amicable solution to the problem before us.

What the editorial says here:

While no one gets what it wants, Estey has at least provided a means out of the impasse. The provincial government wanted an indictment of the Devine administration for having entered the deal under pressure in a provincial election. It didn't get it. In fact, Estey refused to go into the history of the deal in spite of the fact it was part of his terms of reference.

So one has to wonder. And it's fortunate that Chief Justice Estey lifted himself above the proposals to try and bring in as fair a report to the legislature and to the government as was possible under the terms that he was given.

Mr. Estey also . . . the article also says:

The NDP also wanted an outside opinion to agree that FCL is being unreasonable about renegotiating the agreement. It didn't get that either. In fact Estey points out that FCL has insisted on no financial exposure from the start. For its part, FCL wanted to stick with the status quo. It didn't get that. Estey said the company has a large stake in the financial integrity of Saskatchewan and in the risk of excessive taxation of the residents of the province.

So when you look at the report in general, Mr. Speaker, that report points out a number of things that have taken place and offers a number of suggestions. And certainly it's within the hands of the government to take the report and to be fair and reasonable with

Federated. It's also in the hands of Federated to reach out, based on the report, and be fair and reasonable.

But, Mr. Speaker, to have a Bill before this Assembly suggesting that there is only one way to do it — and the only reason I can see for the Bill right now, the government will argue that the reason for the Bill is that they don't see a way out of the impasse — in fact one has to wonder how serious they are about trying to work their way out of the impasse.

Are they really interested and trying to come to a resolve to the issue? Or are they more interested, Mr. Speaker, in flexing their heavy muscle again as they did with the farmers on the GRIP (gross revenue income program) Bill, as they did in the GRIP debate, Mr. Speaker, where they took away the contracts.

In fact just said to 60,000 producers across the province of Saskatchewan that no, in this case a contract is not really a contract because we just really can't. Their argument I believe at the time was that they couldn't afford it.

And, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day because they didn't do their homework properly and they missed a deadline in notifying farmers of the changes to the contract, and so they said when we finally got through the debate on the GRIP Bill, well we'll just deem that we had the proper information . . . had been sent out, proper notification had been put in place. And to protect ourselves from any farm group or organization or group of farmers who would decide to put up the equity and the financing to take them to court, they passed also in that same Bill, Mr. Speaker — and we all remember that — they passed a clause in the Bill that said no one could take them to court. No one could challenge them in court. No one had the right to.

(2100)

You know it's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, in all the points that were brought out by the Minister of Justice yesterday when he read his second-reading speech, he pointed out four areas but he forgot one major area. And the fact that section 16 of the Bill does the exact same thing that the GRIP Bill did in that it takes away any ability by Federated to go to the courts and challenge the decision by the government to unilaterally change the contract. As we see, they're using their legislation again just to break the contract.

And one has to begin to wonder, as I said earlier talking about business people, if governments can break contracts at their whim and if this is a democratic . . . if we really live in a democratic country and if we have a moral obligation under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms . . . I believe it was the Provincial Secretary who made that comment the other evening that we have a moral obligation. I believe it had to do with the French Bill we debated last night, Bill 39. And one has to wonder where the moral obligation is when it comes to legislation that interferes with the basic rights of individuals, whether they be individuals or whether they be corporations,

whether they be large businesses. And, Mr. Speaker, that's what the whole debate is about today.

In fact in each and every session since the 1991 election the NDP government has employed heavy-handed legislation to nullify legal and binding contracts, which is solid indication that contracts do not mean a lot to this government. In fact they have even used the rules of this Assembly; they've designed the rules of the Assembly to limit the opposition. They not only designed the rules of the Assembly to limit the opposition but, Mr. Speaker, they have used this Assembly to just get what they haven't been able to do in the . . . (inaudible) . . . public opinion. And one has to wonder whether this government has any integrity left at all, or whether integrity is a foreign word to the NDP government led by their member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

And, Mr. Speaker, one has to also wonder about their ethics. Are there any ethics on that side of the House? And the Premier and a number of his members would laugh about ethics. Well we really have to ask, where are the ethics? Where are the ethics of the so-called revolutionaries, you could almost call them, in the province of Saskatchewan. Where are their ethics, Mr. Speaker?

It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, one thing is true, one thing is sure. This government has been very consistent in their actions. They've been consistent from day one. Consistently attacking people rather than trying to work with people as the minister from P.A. (Prince Albert) Carlton indicated to us the other evening in the debate on the Gaming Commission.

And it's going to be interesting to see where the debate on the Gaming Commission finally boils down as well, Mr. Speaker. But his comment as we were debating his Bill before the Assembly was, a new day had dawned. Well a day new had dawned all right. And people are wondering today what kind of a new dawning really took place on October 22. When they woke up October 22 after their . . . who knows whether it was a major hangover or a mild hangover. But today they're basically wondering if they're not into a major hangover.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at what has taken place, when we see where this government is heading and we look at the days we've spent in this Legislative Assembly for the past number of months, weeks and months . . . And on many occasions the Government House Leader and a number of the . . . in fact I'm sure all the government members are wondering when are we finally going to get out of this place? Well it would seem to me that this House could have adjourned long ago if the government members would have shown that they have respect for democracy in the province of Saskatchewan.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I can go through a number of articles regarding the whole upgrader deal. One such article says, the headline is: Why such a hurry, Roy? What is the hurry, Mr. Deputy Deputy Speaker? What is the hurry, one has to ask. And as I indicated last

night, and this article certainly raises a very strong point, that there is bound to be a fair bit of politics in this whole debate taking place today, in fact in what the government are doing.

But as, I think it's the Premier has indicated in the province of Saskatchewan, there isn't anything . . . you really can't do a lot without politics entering in because of the very fibre of this province. But it would seem to me that when politics starts to mix with business deals then we've gone a little too far.

And so why the hurry? Why the hurry? Unless it's the NDP leader taking on a business group, then it's okay. Is that what it is, Mr. Deputy Deputy Speaker?

And a number of the Saskatoon members suggesting that a deal was signed. Well from what I've heard and from what I've seen and from what I understand, the deal wasn't officially signed till after the election.

And it's interesting to note that the government likes to forget about the fact that they actually were in negotiations as well, long before the Conservative government led by the member from Estevan came to power in 1982.

And it's also interesting to note that these discussions that were taking place over the period of time . . . and we would have to admit that there was a long and strenuous time negotiation that had taken place on the whole debate regarding NewGrade. And one would also have to argue that when we look at our province and we look at the vastness of the heavy oil in this province, and we have talked . . . The member from Estevan, when he was premier of the province and prior to, talked about processing in this province rather than shipping out the raw products. And it seems to me I've heard a few of the members on the government side are now starting to talk a little bit about value added as well. When we look at heavy oil, one has to ask themselves, yes, why wouldn't we upgrade our heavy oil into synthetic crude and market it in our own province so that the royalties stay here, so that the jobs stay here.

When you look at what can be done with businesses I think we just . . . It wasn't all that long ago when the Minister of Economic Development stood in this Assembly and quite proudly praised the group from the Norquay area — Norquay alfalfa processing — a group of individuals who a number of years back decided they needed to offer more. They needed to do more to build something, build for themselves, and then to get into the processing business to create employment in their community.

And the Premier says, what does this have to do with the upgrader? Well it has a lot to do with the upgrader. Because what the upgrader did was created jobs in the city of Regina. It created value added industry in the province of Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, it not only put people to work but it's bringing funds and money into the province of Saskatchewan through royalties and through taxes, taxes paid by the FCL and the NewGrade upgrader, by all its employees. The

same thing as the alfalfa processing in Norquay.

And when I talk about alfalfa processing, I believe it was the Minister of Economic Development stood in this Assembly and praised the group from Norquay for having paid off the loan they had received through Saskatchewan Economic Development, and we want to offer our congratulations too for a very worthwhile and worthy project.

But what it has done is brought employment to the area. It's brought economic activity and spin-off to the area, the same thing as NewGrade is doing to Regina. And not only is it bringing it just to their area, but it becomes an avenue by which people across the province of Saskatchewan can realize that, you know, there's more that can be done. We don't necessarily just have to put a kernel of wheat in the ground and watch it grow and pray for the rain and the good warm weather and harvest it in the fall and take it off and put it in the bin and then put it on a hopper car and ship it out of this province, either the east coast or the west coast, and try to market it. There's more to the province.

But we begin to wonder, are there individuals who are going to be willing to take the gamble in light of what the government is doing, in light of their actions even on NewGrade, the fact that they would decide to change a contract.

And it would appear to me and I would suggest that anyone that's looking at building in the province of Saskatchewan better not enter into contracts with the government because they might not mean anything. In fact if they can find their own revenue and avenue of the resources they need and the financing, they would be much better off. But if they're going to do that, they might also want to look at a province that isn't bringing in the types of legislation that binds them so tightly and has such a stranglehold on them, that they haven't got the ability to get out of its grasp and even become productive and productive citizens and productive businesses. So it would seem to me that what they would do is look at other areas like maybe the Albertas of this world or maybe the British Columbias of this world or the Ontarios, wherever.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it is very imperative that the government reconsider, as I indicated last night — the government take the time to reconsider the legislation before us. And the government has the ability.

And if it's not the minister, the Associate Minister of Finance, if the Associate Minister of Finance has come to a point of reaching an impasse where he really isn't able to sit down with Federated; if the government has dug its heels in, or that's one or two members, maybe it's time the government looked at another individual. Not through legislation, but authorize another individual while this debate takes place in this Assembly and while we have other Bills to debate in the Assembly, and while debate takes place on estimates — allow maybe a third party to come in and just take the time, and maybe they would be able to break the impasse. And at the end of the day this Bill

could be pulled from the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would be fair, and it would be reasonable, and it would be right. And it would send a message to businessmen, individuals across the province of Saskatchewan, that Saskatchewan is certainly a good place to come and invest in, and to make your home.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the debate that's taken place, and certainly we've seen a number of headlines; and many articles have been written. And as I've been just discussing for the last few minutes, another headline comes to my attention that says: Government rewrite of upgrader deal could be the last straw.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, when you look at that, one has to ask themselves what do they really mean by the last straw? And I've just gone through a process of indicating why it could be the last straw.

Why would business want to come to the province of Saskatchewan in light of the fact that we're having legislation brought forward through The Occupational Health and Safety and The Workers' Compensation Act, of Bills 55 and 56 — pieces of legislation which have a place. But what they're doing, Mr. Speaker, is going way beyond the real need that's out there. And the Minister of Labour argued yesterday that those Bills are necessary to save people's lives. And yes, Mr. Speaker, we want — or Deputy Speaker — we want people's lives to be saved. We wanted people to be treated fairly by Workers' Compensation. But in the whole process, as with the upgrader Bill before us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also want people to know we want employers, employees to work together rather than against each other.

And all we're doing today is basically creating an atmosphere where the cooperation isn't there. And Federated Co-operatives, what were they built on? They were built by individuals who wanted to work together to build themselves an enterprise and a little store, a country store where they could buy goods in larger volume, and they could offer services to their people, and they could be competitive and bring prices down closer to the level of what people could afford. And that took a lot of cooperation, a lot of hard work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it wrong to ask the government to think of working in a cooperative manner, rather than a dictatorial manner? It's certainly interesting to see the debate taking place in light of the fact that it is taking place with a group of individuals who, through the process of political evolution in this province, were quite instrumental in the implementation of the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) Party a number of years ago and Tommy Douglas coming to power. And that co-op movement has always been quite involved. In fact co-op members over the years have been very involved in the co-op process and in the political process.

Another question has arisen. The NDP and the upgrader deal-making — there's another headline:

There is an element of justice in seeing members of the Roy Romanow government struggle with the political and fiscal consequences of the NewGrade upgrader fiasco. In a way they're reaping what they sowed. This is basically the same group of people who wanted to sabotage the deal in the midst of the 1986 provincial election campaign. But in those days the reason the New Democrats wanted to kill the upgrader had nothing to do with fiscal responsibility or protection of Saskatchewan taxpayers. The motivation was purely and explicitly self-serving electoral politics.

(2115)

And we know the process that took place. In fact those of us who were involved in the 1986 election know of all the accusations that went back and forth between parties, between Federated and between the cooperative movement on the basis of the negotiations that were taking place.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the Bill before us and I look at the government's refusal to really sit down and actually the government's demand that Federated renegotiate the deal, and the fact that Federated gives something, I also ask myself, well if it's right for the government to demand a renegotiation of the contract with FCL in the NewGrade upgrader, then why is it right for the Government of Saskatchewan not to join with the other partners in the Lloydminster . . . in the Bi-Provincial upgrader at Lloydminster.

In a *Leader-Post* article May 28, 1993, "Upgrader needs money". And this article talks about the fact that the Bi-Provincial upgrader being built at Lloydminster needs a little more money for its start-up costs, and we're all aware of all the partners. Saskatchewan became one of the partners along with the federal government, along with Shell Canada and the Alberta government. And it says:

When there was a call last year for \$190 million to finish construction, Saskatchewan alone among the four partners refused to put up its share based on ownership split.

Peterson said Saskatchewan made it clear at the time it wasn't interested in putting in any more money. And he acknowledged there was no legal obligation for it to contribute — even if its partners wanted it to.

No legal obligation. Well it would seem to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that even if it wasn't a legal obligation, if indeed the Bi-Provincial upgrader would follow the same example being presented by the NDP government, the province of Saskatchewan in the NewGrade upgrader deal, they would just go to the federal government and bring forward legislation forcing the provincial government to carry its part of

the debt. And they would have the legal and the legislative authority to do that. So if it is right for the Saskatchewan government to say no, our deal was we would put so much into this Bi-Provincial upgrader and that's as far as we go, and if it's right for the government now to say no, we're not going to go any further, then isn't it right or isn't it fair to expect the deal with Federated is fair . . . But to ask if the government feels so hell-bent to change the rules that they would at least take the time to listen and come to a fair and workable agreement.

I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that we're debating a Bill that brings in legislation giving the government the ability to do as it chooses rather than sitting down as the democratic process would call for and negotiating fairly. In fact, I can see why Federated and many of its co-op members are wondering where the fairness has gone or what has happened in the province of Saskatchewan.

This party that went to the people in October 1991 had talked about a new day and talked about a new way of working with people, a new relationship that they were going to build, and many people across . . . In fact I believe it was in the neighbourhood of 50 per cent of the population of the day voted for this party, and I'm sure many are beginning to wonder, why did we cast our vote in that way?

When we voted, we didn't believe that the government was going to be as dictatorial or heavy-handed as they've turned out to be. In fact we really believed that this group of individuals was going to be fair. And I would even submit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that many of the present members in the House here, present MLAs representing the government, must find it difficult and at times have a difficult time in their constituency trying to explain what's going on and at times must have a hard time holding . . . biting their tongue or biting their lip when they see what's happening, what's being led by Executive Council and by the member from Riversdale and the few individual hacks he has around him running the province of Saskatchewan.

As Federated has also said, we see a government acting as a dictator, not a government reaching out to work with the people.

I just want to read a few comments made by Mr. Vern Leland, president of the FCL. In an article in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, Saturday, May 29.

The government is proving itself to be little more than an "absolute dictatorship" in the way it is granting itself powers over the Regina heavy oil upgrader, says Vern Leland, president of Federated Co-operatives Ltd.

"Absolute dictatorship. That (a Bill to be introduced Monday) gives the power to a minister to do whatever he wants to do and that is really scary. It's even worse than what I thought."

That provision may prevent FCL from launching legal action against the government for rewriting the deal it made in 1986, but the co-op still intends to fight in the court of public opinion . . .

Leland said FCL is still ready to talk about how to reduce the project's debt but is not prepared to assume the risk for any cash shortfalls.

And, Mr. Speaker, after listening to Mr. Leland on radio this morning, he raised a number of those questions. And in a number of ways he didn't disagree with a number of the points in Mr. Estey's report as well. And he also acknowledged that yes, that the government wants, it does have the right, to ask the FCL to redo the deal.

But you have to ask yourself, what are people really thinking? A meeting in Prince Albert, and this is in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, Saturday, May 29, "Gov't blasted for upgrader flip-flop"

Premier Roy Romanow is going back on a promise he made five years ago by changing the upgrader deal the Conservatives struck with Federated Co-operatives, charges Prince Albert co-op president Bert Folmer.

At an "area consensus meeting" held on April 8, 1988, Folmer recalls asking Romanow what he would do about the upgrader deal if the NDP formed government.

Guess what he said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Folmer says:

The answer Folmer recorded in his diary was that the NDP "would honor any commitment made by the previous government."

And in fact, even in debate in this Assembly we had many of the members, while in opposition, complimented the government for coming to a deal that brought jobs and job creation and value added industry into the city of Regina and the province of Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when you look at it and when you look at . . . and I believe Mr. Estey also pointed out that in light of the fact this is a start-up, this is a new phase, this is something that's never really been worked at that strenuously in Canada before, the upgrader is performing up to its original expectations.

And I don't believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that anyone believed that the upgrader would pay for itself in its first 1, 2, 3 or even 5 years of operation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you're building a project such as this, when a person is entering into a farming enterprise or building a business or establishing a business, Mr. Speaker, what we find is it takes years and many years of hard work and dedication, and people usually plan for a long payback period. They usually plan, if they're good businessmen and women, looking at at least 15 years, if not 20 to 30 years, when they get into a major capital . . . and make a major capital investment so

that they don't put themselves in a financial crunch.

And it would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that it would be only fair that the NewGrade deal be looked at in the long term and the long-term benefits that it can provide to the province of Saskatchewan, and allowing it the ability in the long term to pay down the debt. And if it's taken over the long term, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all know that it doesn't look all that large. In fact the mountain doesn't become that large; it's a lot easier to climb and to get over and to cross it.

So, Mr. Speaker, on one hand the Minister of Finance yesterday talked about the deficit, and I believe it was the member from Saskatoon Greystone had raised a question and suggested that it was very unethical for her to suggest that we should be looking at the deficit in the short term. We need to look at addressing our deficit problems in Saskatchewan over the long term. And I've said that and many others have said that.

And yet a few minutes later the Minister of Justice suggested that we need to look at the upgrader and the deficit of the upgrader, the shortfall, in the short term. Why not look at that in the long term as well? If it's fine to address the deficit of the province in the long term, why not look at the long-term projections on the upgrader as well? I believe that's fair, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I believe many members would also indicate it.

We've also seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the one thing that Federated has going for it that the farmers of Saskatchewan didn't have, they're probably in a better position to go to the courts of this land, to go to the Saskatchewan Appeal Court, to possibly go to the Supreme Court of Canada, to challenge the actions by the government. However the legislation will take away that ability. But it would seem to me that whether the legislation removes the ability, I believe Federated at the end of the day will still accept the challenge — to challenge the legislation per se and then to go after the deal.

And let me just give a warning. Should this legislation be forced to be brought forward, should a forced agreement be brought on FCL, there is a very good chance — mind you it'll may be 3, 4, 5 years down the road before we really get a decision brought on this — but there's a very good chance that this legislation will be challenged in the high court of Canada. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if that legislation is challenged, and if Federated is vindicated and indeed awarded, the fact that they have . . . the government was at fault and was wrong, then, Mr. Speaker, what I believe will happen, it gives the farmers, even if it's five years down the road, the opportunity to go back and challenge the government . . . of the court . . . on the GRIP Bill as well.

So it would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that it would be only fair that we forget about the legislation and get on with the fact of negotiating — negotiating a fair and equitable settlement.

You know one other thing that is interesting, Mr.

Speaker, when we look at this debate taking place, and a lot of the questions that are arising out of the debate and the fact that consensus can't be reached, and one article that says the answer may lie . . . "The war over NewGrade Upgrader escalating", the headline.

The answer (it says) may lie in an old long-forgotten dispute between Federated and the Saskatoon Co-operative Association. In the early 1980s (and certainly members from Saskatoon are probably well aware of the debate that took place in the 1980s) the Saskatoon co-op like many retail co-operatives was on the brink of bankruptcy.

And who entered in? Federated entered in and bailed them out. But it's also interesting to note that even though Federated, FCL, came in and bailed them out and got them on their feet again, that:

Federated stepped in and bailed out the faltering co-op with millions of dollars of assistance. In return, Federated took virtual control of the co-op's management, over the strenuous objections of the board of directors.

"They became extremely unhappy with FCL because they wanted to do things that FCL wouldn't let them do," said one co-op insider. "There was a lot of animosity that developed."

And one has to wonder, is that part of the argument that's still taking place here that's come to fruition?

And it's also interesting to note who was on the board of directors at that time. The question is:

And who was on the board of directors of the Saskatoon Co-op? None other than Finance Minister Janice MacKinnon, former minister responsible for Crown Investments Corp., and Don Ching, president of CIC.

It may be coincidence that two members of that co-op board now hold high offices in the Romanow government and are directly involved in the dispute with Federated over NewGrade.

It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that almost becomes . . . is close to if not being on the verge of a conflict of interest, having been involved and then possibly raising old wounds or allowing them to come to the surface.

And it's interesting to note the reaction of a number of the members in the Assembly tonight. Anytime you would suggest that there might be implications of any one of their members, they become very indignant. But boy, they sure pride in trying to run down anyone else from any other political persuasion, be they Conservative or Liberal or Reform or whatever.

(2130)

**Bill No. 55**

Mr. Speaker, over the past while I have taken the time to raise a number of questions. I have suggested that it's time that we got down to serious negotiations rather than legislation. My colleagues and I and people across this province certainly feel that the government has the ability, and certainly there are many people who would not disagree if the government went to Federated and renegotiated a deal. And I don't think a lot of the co-op members would be unhappy in sitting down and reviewing the deal and maybe coming up with something that would be favourable and equitable.

And certainly we've heard it from the president. We've heard it from the chairman of the board of NewGrade. We've heard it from co-op members across the province. I've had co-op members call me, Mr. Speaker, and it would be fair, Mr. Speaker, in the face of our democratic principles that the Premier of this province and that his cabinet put this legislation on the back burner and ask and call for and ask an individual to come in and sit down as a third party, if that's what it needs, if that's what it takes, so that the government negotiators and the minister responsible can save face, if that's what it takes, and give Federated the ability to get out of their quarter because I believe what I see in front of us is two groups that are hunkered in each of their corners because everyone's made statements, and no one really wants to give any more. They want to protect their integrity.

Mr. Speaker, it would be appropriate for us to allow for the debate to take place rather than legislation. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest and I would ask the minister responsible, the Minister of Justice, if that's what it takes, to pull the legislation.

And I would think, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Justice would even pull the legislation today, Federated would know that the legislation is still there, available for the government to bring forward. But if the Minister of Justice pulled the legislation, I wonder if it wouldn't open the door for some serious negotiations to take place.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that it would also be a lot easier for FCL to come to the table to negotiate, and even easier for the government because they wouldn't have that heavy-handed piece of legislation over top of them. They wouldn't have the hammer hanging over their heads, forcing them to vote and forcing them to come to an agreement. They would be able to sit down and negotiate in fairness.

And so, Mr. Speaker, as I close today and allow my colleague to enter into the debate, I just ask the government again to take a moment, to give this some thought. Pull the Bill and allow proper and reasonable negotiations to take place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that debate on this particular Bill be now adjourned.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Shillington that **Bill No. 55 — An Act to amend The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, at the outset of discussing Bill 55 that — as Bill 38 was important to the society from a moral point of view, and was very critical to many people, and very important to society in the realm of that discussion, within their lives and their life structure — this Bill too is extremely important because it will affect a lot of people and almost all people in our province. And will affect them in such a way, Mr. Speaker, that in business terms it is as important to them as the other Bill was to people with moral convictions.

The changing of this Bill, along with Bill 56 which will come along next I guess, or shortly, reality being that these two Bills, collectively, are going to change the entire direction of our province in terms of how business will operate and how a business will be allowed to operate in the province. Business will, by the very nature of the changes in these Acts, be more expensive in pure, simple dollars.

That's the whole message here, as far as the business community is concerned. There has been a lot of talk about this — both inside this Assembly and out — and most folks are aware of this part of the argument. But the reality, Mr. Speaker, is that there is an argument on behalf of the working people of our province, that has not been well addressed, and has not been emphasized nearly enough, or perhaps not at all.

I think it is incumbent as the critic for Labour for this side of the House that I take a position of explaining the way in which labour, the employees, will be adversely affected by this Bill, and how in fact many of them are seeing a need now to ask for changes.

The people who work in this province are the backbone of our province. There can be no business without workers, just as people pointed out a short time ago to this government that there can be no health plan without health workers. Just as workers have always worked and strived to get recognition for the work that they do, they have become a very highly educated, sophisticated group of people, especially in the province of Saskatchewan. It is a credit to our educational system and to the development of our society.

In that credit goes an understanding by the people who do the work in our province, the employees in our province, an understanding, Mr. Speaker, that if there are no jobs then they can have no life. Somebody has to provide a job in order for a person to become an employee.

In our society the government provides some jobs. But we are a democratic society. We are not a police state,



or a communist state, and so government does not provide all of the jobs necessary to keep all of society working. We therefore have to depend on business — business people, people who are manufacturers, people who are retailers, people who are distributors, people who organize and plan.

It is a fact of life, Mr. Speaker, that in Saskatchewan we have many small businesses because of the very diverse nature of our province, and because of our geographic location and the reality that we are a province of many, many miles, of many, many miles going many, many miles to everywhere. We are a province that Switzerland can be fit into many times over. Entire countries can be fit into the size of our province quite easily with populations that are 12 and 15 times bigger than ours.

The country of Switzerland for example, Mr. Speaker, 12 million people with 12 million annual tourists going through their country — total of 24 million a year — could be fit quite easily in the south-west corner of Saskatchewan.

That gives you some idea of the size and the scope of our province and the way that 1 million people are spread out over a large area. And that has to be recognized when you talk about how businesses set up their structure to deliver goods and services to the people of our province.

What it means is that big companies that do come into the province rarely make a very big profit compared to the kinds of profits that they're able to make in other jurisdictions where populations are heavier. Therefore they are often very reluctant to set up business in our province.

So what happens is that we have evolved into a province of many small businesses, small operations, often times family oriented and family operated, with a handful of employees that assist with the work that needs to be done in that particular business.

Farms in Saskatchewan are a good example of family operations that are operated in today's society as businesses who have one or two employees as a rule — some a few more, and many without any. These small businesses of grocery stores in our small town are often family operations where a son will take over from a father who probably had a grandfather as well that started the business many years ago, and they will employ two or three or four people. And as a result, we have a network throughout our province of small businesses with small numbers of employees.

In that context, Mr. Speaker, our business-employee relationship has grown to be more or less a family relationship rather than a worker-employer relationship as is recognized in other areas, for example, in a GM (General Motors) plant down East where thousands of workers may never, ever even see the person or persons that own the establishment.

So we are distinctly different, Mr. Speaker, in that context. And yes, there are exceptions. They are some

bigger operations. We have IPSCO, for example, where many workers work under the employment of a bigger company. But even there, in comparison to the size of operations in the rest of the world, this is not what you would consider a very big operation. And so people do get to know one another on a personal basis. Most of the workers will speak to one another on a first-name basis.

So the reality, Mr. Speaker, is that when you change the rules of how business has to operate, change the cost of business, you are in fact threatening the jobs of the people that work within our province.

Let me expand just a little on that. What the workers of our province fear is that if the cost to their employers gets so high that they can no longer break even . . . and in Saskatchewan breaking even is an acceptable business proposition. An awful lot of people are quite happy just to break even, as long as they don't go in the hole. Obviously they have to make some profit some years in order to continue. But they will continue to operate in the province . . . And the member for Moose Jaw makes it really hard to keep one's concentration. I will continue for his benefit though, because I know he's very interested in why the workers of this province are concerned with this Bill as much as the business people are.

To get back to the line of thought, Mr. Speaker, the differences between the way we run business in Saskatchewan have to particularly be noted because this legislation, in fairness, I believe is modelled after legislation from Ontario. And our businesses are not the same as the businesses in Ontario by any means at all. I know they have some small businesses there, but for the large part my observation has been that businesses in Ontario are very much bigger and very much different.

In Saskatchewan, as I was pointing out, if you can break even, you will stay in business because we have this small-business dedication to our province, dedication to a way of life, a dedication that people must recognize as being the essence of our culture in the province of Saskatchewan. Big companies, multinational companies, often will not stay here if they are in that atmosphere.

I give you the example of Mobil Oil who worked in our area; a very good corporate citizen, but immediately that they fell into this depression where the oil industry was no longer producing very big profits, they simply said, we'll sell our operation to anybody who will buy it — which they did as much as they could — and told me through one of their representatives that in fact they could make a lot more money through drilling in other areas of the world and turn over a lot bigger bucks of profit if they invested in other places. So that's what they did.

But the small business that took over did in fact . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm sure the members opposite want to get into this debate, but it's my turn now.

(2145)

Well, Mr. Speaker, Bill 55, as I've said, has produced some serious concerns for the working people in our province. And they don't want their jobs threatened because, even though we have this determination to stay in Saskatchewan by most small businesses, the reality is that if they can't break even they can't stay here either. And if they have to close their doors and move away, if they have to move to Alberta or British Columbia, then obviously the jobs are no longer going to be here for our workers.

It's almost a penalty sometimes to be a critic, Mr. Speaker, because you miss out on all of the humour. I find the government finally agreeing with me. Well it's good to see the members in such a good mood. That way they will probably be receptive to some new ideas.

I met earlier tonight with some people from my constituency. And they introduced me to their son-in-law who's from Regina, who told me that he's very much worried about Bill 55. It was nice that I was able to meet him and get his opinions because, as I was there, I also got to meet Winston and Lorraine Knoll who are residents of the city of Regina, and he along with George and Dolores Hudick were being honoured with life memberships tonight in the Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan, and just in passing while we were discussing Bill 55, I would like to congratulate them on the honour that they received over there tonight.

It was rather disappointing that no members of the government found it within the scope of their agendas to be able to attend, but I represented the government as I was the only MLA there and took great, great pride in saying to the folks there that I brought greetings from the government as well as from myself on their behalf.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Now while I was going to make the point, Mr. Speaker, that the workers are very concerned about Bill 55 destroying the base of jobs in our province, nothing would do but of course in the course of our conversations about those problems, that we also got to talking about the previous Bill, which was the upgrader Bill, and how in fact the government's direction there might in fact as well jeopardize many jobs. And that too is a big concern.

So workers in general, Mr. Speaker, are very concerned in Saskatchewan that we don't have enough job base left in order to provide any real opportunity. And I want to say that as a parent I'm worried about that as I think all parents are. The reality is that every time we bring about legislation that forces business of the province . . . that reduces the job base, we as parents have to recognize that our children will have to leave the province in order to fulfil their life's ambitions and life's dreams.

And that worries me considerably, Mr. Speaker. It

seems to me that with the highest level of education, probably in all of North America, we have determined now to do only one thing and that is to educate our children to serve the world somewhere else. There's nothing wrong with helping the rest of the world and obviously there's many arguments to be made that they certainly do need the help. But it would certainly be nice as well to keep our children at home and provide them with the kind of lifestyle that they need and deserve, and have them close enough to home so that we could actually visit them occasionally.

I think that I should also though take a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, this evening to express some of the concerns of the business community. And in doing that, I want to point out to you that this is a double-edged sword again for the government because nobody is happy with this legislation.

As I've tried to point out, the workers, the employees of this province are very unhappy about the prospect of losing their jobs and not having places to go to work. The business people are very concerned that the extra costs that this Bill will incur to their businesses will put them out of business; that they will not be able to continue to be competitive in Saskatchewan. Therefore with everybody unhappy, we have no option but to ask the government to seriously consider pulling this Bill and redrawing it.

There is need for Workers' Compensation to be corrected. There are problems. I don't want anybody to get the idea that we are saying that the world around us is perfect. The Workers' Compensation is an Act that assists workers in being treated fairly and properly when they are injured on the job. And that's necessary. And naturally evolution of time will change some things that will require these kinds of Bills to be updated, especially in the technological type of world that we live in.

And so it is necessary, Mr. Speaker, that we correct some of the problems. I identify these problems to be though, not as great as some people would lead us to believe. Statistics tell us that about 1 per cent of the people who are injured and collect workers' compensation. About 1 per cent of the people who are actually in a position of collecting workers' compensation, that 1 per cent of people, are having problems with the Workers' Compensation in a very direct, very human, very personal way. That's extremely important, Mr. Speaker.

Extremely important because that needs to be addressed. When there are even a few people who are finding themselves not well treated by our system, then there must be a way that we can address their needs. I suggest that we could do it under the framework of amendments to this legislation, to be done in such a way as to provide a vehicle where those individuals could get immediate attention by a tribunal, some kind of an appeal process, that would be much, much faster than the process that we presently have.

This is where the system is falling down, as I see it at

the moment. The system has evolved so that everything in our judicial system seems to take for ever to get resolved. Someone who is seriously hurt or minorly hurt, and looking to get back to work, they just can't wait for ever for the system to correct itself in this evolution that we've created in our legal system.

And people who are . . . have injury problems and who have questions of issue with the Workers' Compensation Board and the workers' compensation legislation, are good people who have worked hard but who have most often been hurt as no real fault of their own.

I'll give you an example of the fellow from Davidson, who the other day called and told me how a piece of iron had fallen 120 feet from above the scaffolding on the elevator that's being built there. It struck him on the head; and of course, his helmet is going to be traded in for a gold helmet because it saved his life and he will be presented with all that.

Surprisingly, this gentleman is still alive and able to talk to me on the phone and is well enough, with a little more care and therapy, to be going back to work.

Now this tells you something about the type of thing that can happen to you on the job. Someone from above him dropped something. This person working down there has no idea it's going to come and it hits him. It's not his fault. He's there doing his job because his boss wants him to do that job and this thing strikes him on the head. Why should he be penalized with a system that takes for ever to resolve? And so we recognize that. We recognize that need to try to correct the length of time it takes for people to resolve their personal problems with this board and through this Act.

However, we must caution, Mr. Speaker, that the government shouldn't overkill the thing in order to try to alleviate the problems. We shouldn't create a massive bureaucratic nightmare that will destroy business itself. And here's where we find fault with the Bill. The Bill has gone so far in some directions so as to cost too much money for business to be able to survive while at the same time I really have not identified clearly in my mind where the workers' needs are being addressed.

As a result of that we ourselves, in the opposition, have asked for help from the law clerks and from our researchers to draft amendments for this legislation and we will be presenting about 15 amendments. Those amendments, Mr. Speaker, are based not on my knowledge of the workforce or of the Workers' Compensation although I've been doing a lot of homework on it. I'm not an expert, but I'm going to be one if I keep at it. But the reality is that you have to study it; it's a very complex issue.

So we must take the advice, sir, of people who do know. And so we've gone to the business community. We've gone to people like Dale Botting and Jim Chase and Del Robertson and all those folks that are involved in the business sector that have knowledge

from that side and we said, what do we need in order to clean up this Bill? And they've given us this advice and as a result these amendments have been put into place on words and we will be presenting them as we go along.

So, Mr. Speaker, having said that, having said that we have two problems here and are ready and willing to work on the things that need to be done, we do suggest that the government pull this Bill, that they send it back to the drawing board where it belongs, and let's do it right if we're going to do it at all.

And with that, I think I'll carry on another day and I will move to adjourn debate for tonight.

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

**The Speaker:** — Order. I wish to draw to the attention of the House that the member already has adjourned debate once and he cannot adjourn it again. Therefore, he's out of order.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — My apologies, Mr. Speaker. Apparently I missed one page. I have a few things that I would like to add.

I'm really happy, Mr. Speaker, to see the government members in such a good mood tonight. I'm sure there are people in the world around us who wonder what happens here some days. There we go. I may apply for comedian of the Assembly.

I'll have to talk though a little further, Mr. Speaker, about the need for these amendments. It would seem that this legislation — not very big in fact, just take a look, here it is — it's 14 pages long and that includes the one with nothing on it. And reality being what it is, Mr. Speaker, we've got 15 amendments to this very short piece of legislation; 15 tells me that there must be a lot wrong with this piece of legislation. The business community has told us so. Everyone has said so. I'm even getting calls now from workers who are worried that this legislation will in fact double the cost of Workers' Compensation premiums, that in fact it could go up to 300 per cent more in some specific cases.

So the reality is that if everybody is against this, everybody is worried about it — everybody recognizes I think, in fairness to the government, that we do have some problem areas that need to be fixed — then, Mr. Speaker, why don't we take it off the Table? Why don't we send it back to the people that know about these things?

Get the business community, get the labour union officials, get the non-unionized people together. Let's get them all together in this room this summer after we've adjourned — it's big enough. We'll throw the desks back, throw in some tables and chairs, have all the folks get together and let's beat this thing out like men should and women should and let's talk about it. The women will get in here and straighten out some of the language problems we have and they'll tell us how to do this thing.

I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation can be done a lot better than it's been done here. I am absolutely convinced that if people sit down and spend the time, that they can draw up a piece of legislation that will serve the needs of all of the people of this province that need to be served in this kind of legislation. We don't need to hurt the working people. We don't need to hurt the business people. We can cooperate and get along in this province. I am absolutely convinced of that, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — And we have to do is tear this thing up, throw it in the garbage where it belongs for now, get back to the drawing table. Let's work on it. Let's do it better. Let's get it done right. Let's take the advice of people who have written all of these pages of problems. I've got things here about Bill 55 and how the Workers' Compensation Board changes will increase rates. Look at the length of all this fine print of how these rates will be up. Ten and a half per cent is the lowest figure predicted by anybody as an increase in the costs. Mr. Speaker, that can't be tolerated. The highest was 300. I suspect it's some place in between.

But imagine a province with an economy as depressed as ours where we would demand any segment of society to pay premiums that would be something between ten and a half and 300 per cent more than they're paying now. If anything, we've got to work on something that brings us stability rather than the instability that comes with this kind of a Bill.

We need to have some hope and some optimism in this province, and this Bill is not going to help to do that. We've got to have an atmosphere where people get treated fair. People who are hurt deserve that. We've got to have an atmosphere though where you can stimulate jobs and job development.

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

**The Speaker:** — It now being 10 o'clock this House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

The Assembly adjourned at 10 p.m.