

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two residents of my constituency in Saskatoon: namely, Shelby Harder, age 8, and I'd ask her to stand up; and her mother, Tracey Harder, also from Saskatoon.

And I hope they enjoy the proceedings today and have an enjoyable stay in Regina, and would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the members of the Assembly here today several friends of mine up in your gallery. And I emphasize friends; if I keep introducing friends, people will genuinely believe that I do have friends.

Seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker — and I ask them to rise as well as I introduce them — is first of all, to the right, Kelvin Greschner, who has just received . . . and I've just noted it so I get this right, and this is complimentary of the federal government. He has received the Prime Minister's award for teaching excellence in science, technology, and mathematics. Kelvin, if you'd stand, please.

And with him, his wife, Elaine. And seated beside her is Nicole Klassen, and beside her is her mother, Marie Klassen, formerly Greschner. Some will recognize the name as well. Donna Greschner is a human rights commissioner, and this is her family and also grew up with all these folks.

So welcome, and join with me in welcoming them. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly a good friend of mine, Mr. Bob Francis from Gull Lake, Saskatchewan. Bob is up in your gallery today, Mr. Speaker. He's in Regina with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation meetings, and Bob is the secretary-treasurer, of course, of our school unit down at Gull Lake, so I would invite all members to join with me in welcoming Bob to the city.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming to the Assembly, Greg Eyre, who is on staff with UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers)

and has provided that union with good leadership over many years.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to the members of the Legislative Assembly through you, Mr. Garf Stevenson, who is seated in your gallery and is the former president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and who is a well-respected member of the province's agriculture and business community. Mr. Stevenson is going to be a one-person commission on district health board elections, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the members to join me in welcoming him here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Skating Rink Repaired

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a small community, the loss of any facility or business is more than just a change in the available services. Such a loss can often be a real blow to the vitality of the town. We hear too often what happens when a curling rink, a recreation hall or a business is lost. The town of Lake Alma in my constituency recently had a set-back but I'm happy to report that the fine people of that community and surrounding district quickly set about to correct the problem.

In February, a heavy snowfall caused the roof of the skating rink to collapse. Fortunately no one was hurt, but this was a tough blow. The town set about almost immediately to repair the damages.

As Bob Thue of the Lake Alma Recreation Board said, the people in the community really took the effort to heart. With almost total volunteer labour, the rink has been restored. Repairs are almost finished and the rink will be ready for use next season.

The repair's, Mr. Speaker, on time, on budget, and a dedication ceremony will occur in the fall. This Saturday I'm looking forward to attending a fantastic fund-raiser at Gladmar for Lake Alma's rink. It will be a banquet, auction, and cabaret.

The people of Lake Alma and surrounding district, I want to congratulate them for their determination to keep their recreation facility functioning. They recognize that there is more than a building at stake here and have acted in their own best interest.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Wolseley Senior Girls' Basketball Champions

Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to at this time extend our sincere congratulations and acknowledge the achievements of the Wolseley senior girls' basketball team who won the 1994 AA

Provincial Championships. After bronze medal finishes in '92 and '93, the gold medal was particularly satisfying for the team.

The season was the most successful ever for a Wolseley team. The girls finished with a record of 38 wins and 4 losses, including tournament championships in Kenaston, Outlook, Leask, Indian Head, Wolseley, and Lumsden, plus district, regional, and provincial titles.

Team members Angie Magel, Sarah Magel, Ann Bieber, Cherri Armstrong, Glenda Lemcke, Lindell Haywahe, Amy Frederickson, Aimee Beliveau, Erin Moss, and Kristin Miller are to be commended for their long hours of hard work and commitment.

And also a special tribute to their coach, Gary Frederickson, and the parents and families of this team of champions. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Yom Hashoah — Holocaust Remembrance Day

Ms. Lorje: — Sundown today begins the solemn day of Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, the day during which we formally remember the 6 million European Jews murdered between 1939 and 1945. They were slaughtered, along with gypsies, Slavs, homosexuals, and mentally handicapped people, all in the name of purification.

Mr. Speaker, I do not choose my words casually. These murders were not accidents of history; these Jews were not the statistical victims of social and economic forces careening out of control. These were executions, one by one, individual by individual, committed by individuals, and committed in large part because of the silent compliance of the rest of the world — by us.

These unspeakable crimes happened in Europe but we in North America stood by, like Paul at the stoning of Stephen, and did nothing until it was too late. This, I think, is why we remember. We remember those who died, of course, but we also remember with universal shame that this crime against our fragile humanity was the responsibility of all humanity.

We therefore should vow with collective determination, never again — never again in Europe; never again in North America; no more in Sri Lanka; no more in Bosnia; no more in Indonesia or East Timor; no more in any part of this fragile planet, our island Earth.

The lesson of the holocaust is that the seed of racial hatred is within us all. If we are not on guard, it can bloom again. If we remember — as we must — we can hold back the dark night a little longer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Trade Show — indEX '94

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a much happier note, I am pleased to report that the ninth annual indEX '94, which is western Canada's premier multi-industry trade show, is going to be going on today, tomorrow, and Saturday at the Regina Exhibition Park — indEX '94 features the latest technology in manufacturing, construction, high tech, industrial biotechnology, transportation, and environmental businesses.

A new inventions showcase features inventions from start-up businesses wanting to test the market and/or seeking manufacturers. There's also an international business centre and trade luncheons that enable business people to make connections with trade representatives and on-site seminars offered by a variety of industries that provide current and very practical information.

The theme for the '94 show, Mr. Speaker, is diversification opportunities. I have viewed their information very carefully; this looks like an exciting show, and one that I urge anyone who can, to drop by the Regina Exhibition Park April 7, 8, or 9 for indEX '94. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Globe Theatre Gala Performance

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to do a bit of bragging on a constituent of mine in a quiet, modest Canadian way. Last week the Deputy Premier announced that Prince Edward will visit Saskatchewan in August.

One event planned in his honour is a performance at the Globe Theatre in Regina, the theatre of which he's royal patron. The play to be performed is *Dancing in Poppies*, a play set in Saskatchewan and co-authored by Professor Ron Marken of Saskatoon, and Professor Gail Bowen of Regina Lake Centre constituency, playwright and mystery writer extraordinaire. Adapted from their novel, *1919*, the play was commissioned by the Globe and produced in February of 1993 to full houses and excellent reviews.

And once upon a time in Canada, Mr. Speaker, a visit by a significant person might mean hiding our Canadianism. Our culture was imported culture from Britain first, and if we wished to be daring, from the U.S. (United States). Our colonial status lasted long past 1867.

I don't want to make too much of one gala evening, but it does seem significant that the best foot being put forward for Prince Edward is a Canadian one, specifically a Saskatchewan foot, and particularly one from Regina Lake Centre.

I congratulate Susan Ferley, artistic director of the Globe Theatre, for having the artistic courage and good sense to present a portrait of ourselves to our royal visitor. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Welfare Numbers

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of questions I'd like to address to the Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Minister, yesterday we pointed out to you the number of persons on welfare exceeded 81,000 and you tried to defend your dismal record, Mr. Minister, in this area by reading off a list of money that you had thrown at the problem. Mr. Minister, that's the usual NDP (New Democratic Party) measures that you use; that's the way you measure compassion, by talking about the money that you throw at a problem.

Mr. Minister, I believe that compassion is shown and measured not by the number of people who are receiving government assistance but instead the number of people who no longer need government assistance. And by that yardstick, Minister, your government has shown no compassion. This number continues to grow every month and you have no plans to cut the growth.

Mr. Minister, when are you going to start helping these 81,000-plus people by creating some jobs in this province? When are you going to start protecting the taxpayer that have to pay for that load? Would you explain that to us?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate we see the member again beating up on low income people for the second day in a row. I went over yesterday some of the economic development measures in the last two years, and specifically in the budget that we're debating right now, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to read, because he's out of step with the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce and the Conference Board of Canada on his projections on economic development, let me read from *The Nipawin Journal* where it says, *Nipawin Journal*, February 23, says, the front page: Construction up in 1993. Fourth page: Government delivers on its budget. Fourth page: Budget good news.

Mr. Speaker, they can't stand good news. They left us in a horrendous mess. We're providing support to low income people in spite of their huge debt. We don't give low income people one-way bus tickets out of the province like your people do in Alberta.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There we drag out the blame thrower again and talk about what's going on in Alberta. Mr. Minister, your job is in Saskatchewan. Your job is to try and get jobs for 81,000 people.

And the tremendous social cost that welfare puts us

under. What about the taxpayer that's paying these costs? And some of those taxpayers, Mr. Minister, are taking salary at very little more than welfare. And you're asking them to pay the cost.

Mr. Minister, you said your budget was \$334 million for welfare payments. That's over a hundred million more than was spent on welfare in our last year of government — over a hundred million. And you're the guys who are going to get away from poverty.

Mr. Minister, are you still on target at 334 million, or is the sky-rocketing number of people on welfare going to drive your cost higher? Can you tell us that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not casting blame; I'm trying to set out the facts as they exist.

Your former federal counterparts contributed to dumping through two measures — UIC (Unemployment Insurance Commission) cuts and offloading on treaty Indian families. And the treaty Indian families don't like this.

Ten thousand new cases. Now you're talking about 80,000 beneficiaries. That is 8 per cent of the population is dependent on social assistance. That is too high. But the next closest province dependency rate is 11 per cent. When you compare us to the Canadian average increase, we're doing very well. We're not happy about that; that's why we've got the last budget focused on job creation as our priority.

The reason your social assistance budget was low is because you beat up on welfare recipients. I mean you didn't accept that poverty existed until 1990. I remember that very clearly.

We're trying to focus on meaningful jobs at decent wages. The economic development plan is with the *Partnership for Renewal*. In the budget, for the second year in a row we had tax cuts to small-business people who create the real jobs around Saskatchewan. There are positive signs; get positive because there are good indicators.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very interesting, the response to that last question. You never told me whether you were still on target or not for your budget, so you just kind of lead us around. Well, Mr. Minister, that's a good example of the downward trend that you've thrown the province into.

Every month there are fewer and fewer taxpayers, each paying more and more taxes to support more and more people who don't have jobs. What does your government do to address this problem? Well you keep on giving us more and more medicine that made us sick in the first place.

You raise taxes, you raise utility rates, you put more regulations on business — the very people who create jobs. And the next month the welfare numbers keep getting higher and higher, the job numbers get worse. And then you think of another way to tax the people and then the cycle starts again.

Mr. Minister, when are you going to start protecting the taxpayers, the people who provide the money to run the province? When are you going to put some safeguards in place, to ensure that the social security net has some safeguards against abuse?

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Let me say, Mr. Speaker, these are the facts — there are a thousand more people working this year than were working last year. That is a fact; that is reality. You should have thought about this concern you have for the Saskatchewan taxpayers when you were racking up a \$15 billion debt, what we could do with that \$850 million a year that is accountable to you.

Now your federal counterparts offloaded to the tune of \$40 million; you haven't helped us. And the federal Liberal budget hasn't helped us either. Their last budget took \$40 million out of the Saskatchewan economy on UIC cuts; that is a fact.

Not only did that do that, that is going to result in increased public assistance case-loads. And the federal government is working against us, like your federal government was before. The Liberals are continuing your policies. We need national partnership, Saskatchewan and Canada. We're involved in the economic development opportunities here as best we can with the debt that you gave us. What we need is some leadership from the federal Liberals, not unilateral cuts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you keep talking about what the federal budget done to you. But you and I talked about the windfall profits you're going to get when they cancelled the seniors' \$600 tax credit. I asked you at the time if you're going to talk to the Finance minister and get some of that money to help these people who are on welfare. You never done anything about it.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, I asked you if you are on target with your budget; you never answered. Well we happen to think on this side of the House that it's going to get higher, at the rate you're going.

And let's give you the benefit of the doubt. Just, for instance, even at 334 million, that means the average taxpayer in this province pays more than \$750 a year into the welfare system. Mr. Minister, when these taxpayers are paying that kind of money, they deserve to know what's going toward . . . is the money going towards what it was intended for. Or is it helping those people who really need it, not those who wish to take advantage of the system?

Mr. Minister, when are you going to start taking some

of the steps to ensure that taxpayers are not paying for some of those who choose to abuse the system? Why don't you hire more investigators? Why don't you reinstate the cheque pick-up? Why don't you reinstate direct payment to landlords?

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. The member has already asked four questions and he's entitled to one question. He's gone way over his time already. I wish he'd put his question right now.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your ruling. Mr. Minister, are you even considering any of these measurements?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Well, Mr. Speaker, he's the only person in Saskatchewan that doesn't know that we are on target with our budget for, you know, the third budget in a row. Everybody else knows that. No wonder you're out of step . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Of course we are. You should have thought of that . . . your interest payment cost every person in this province \$2,000 a year. You should have thought of that.

Now listen, if you compare the Social Services budget which is going into public assistance in Saskatchewan, with any other jurisdiction in Canada, we're among the very lowest proportion of the budget to income security. Now you know that because you and I talked about that, so quit playing cheap politics.

You're not interested in low income people because you voted against every initiative in the last two years that would help low income people and we have a . . . and so did the Liberals, so did the Liberals. Every single initiative including the introduction in principle of good labour legislation for working men and women that you say you're concerned about this; so did the Liberals. Women's groups, low income people aren't going to forget that. So we're on target; we're dealing with the problem.

We're also dealing with the problem in another way through New Careers where we're providing assistance and opportunities for clients on assistance for education, training and employment. Other provinces are trying to catch up to what we're doing. We hired investigators a year and a half ago. I already told you about that. So quit playing politics.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

District Health Board Elections

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, today you have appointed another so-called independent commission, namely Mr. Garf Stevenson, to look into the health board elections.

Let's get this straight, Madam Minister. First you appoint the boards, then your appointed boards tell you they want to remain appointed, they don't want

elections any time soon. So then you appoint your friend, Garf Stevenson, to tell you not to hold the elections right away. One NDP appointment after another, and you call that democracy, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, this is nothing but another stalling tactic. And you know it, and everyone else knows it. Why don't you do the right thing, Madam Minister, and hold district health board elections this fall?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I think, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite should be ashamed of himself. Mr. Stevenson is the former president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and he is a well-respected member of the province's agriculture and business community.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I have every confidence, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Stevenson . . . I have every confidence that Mr. Stevenson will consult broadly with the public and will consult fairly and in a consistent manner with people throughout the province and provide us with his recommendations on the matter. I think that this is an important process for the government to undertake.

We have indicated now for a two- or three-month period that we were putting in place a process in order to go out and consult with people and provide the government with recommendations, and Mr. Stevenson has agreed to form an independent, one-person commission to provide us with his recommendations. And I have every confidence that he will do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, Garf Stevenson has already received appointments to a couple of other government boards: the Gass Commission, SaskTel board of directors, Saskatchewan Health Council; and more importantly, NDP Party contributor. And he's being paid, he's being paid, Madam Minister, \$500 a day by your government. So he answers to your government not the people on the health boards, Madam Minister — just like board appointments answer to your government not the people in the health boards, Madam Minister.

You could have saved \$200,000 by cancelling this phoney commission, Madam Minister. You could save hundreds of thousands more dollars by holding the elections this fall. That's what SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) are telling you, Madam Minister, and the people of Saskatchewan.

But that's why you had to hire Garf Stevenson to tell you something different, wasn't it, Madam Minister? Madam Minister, why don't you spend this money on

health services and the delivery of health care services rather than on phoney commissions set up and staffed by Garf Stevenson, Madam Minister? Why don't you just hold the elections this fall as the people of Saskatchewan want?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the hon. member from Kindersley and the official opposition, as the Minister of Health has indicated, really ought to be ashamed of himself with the line of questioning which he has undertaken.

But this person and this group is shameless. They are simply incapable of exhibiting shame or acknowledgement of the predicament that they're in. Here the member from Kindersley gets up and he says, why don't you get up and just hold the elections? Maybe the hon. member might in his next question tell us, under what criteria, on what boundaries — on what boundaries. You tell us what you think the criteria are.

Don't tell us we had two years. You have fought the Bill; you have fought the appointment of the commission; you have fought the wellness model. You are sticking your head in the sand, working against health care reform, and then you get up in this shameless, partisan attack, when we're trying to establish the ground rules for fair elections to fulfil the statutory obligation. No wonder you people are in single digit numbers as far as public support in the province is concerned.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, you and the Department of Health have had two years to set up these district board elections, and you know it. And when you've set out elections like . . . when you set up a process like this, with a politician at-large like Mr. Garf Stevenson, of course he's open to criticism, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Premier.

But that's no problem for you folks, is it, Mr. Premier? Hold the elections whenever you want. The people of Saskatchewan want them now, Mr. Premier. They want them this fall. SUMA and SARM want them this fall. And they're the people who represent folks all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister. And you could be saving hundreds of thousands of dollars at the same time, Mr. Premier. But oh no, you've got a problem with holding these elections, don't you, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, the question is very simple: will you or will you not hold elections this fall, as SUMA and SARM and other groups across Saskatchewan are calling for?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — You know, Mr. Speaker, the would-be leader of the Conservative caucus, the junior member from Kindersley, had better change his

approach or he will not be leader of anything. Mind you, I don't think being a leader of the Conservative Party . . . He exhibits such an agitation and such a high anxiety about this health care reform.

We're talking about a person who has headed the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, 60,000 members, and elected — 60,000 people, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, and a member who is very prominent in the business community as well. You, sir, will stop to nothing and you will stoop to nothing to destroy anybody in your attempt to kill health care reform.

I tell you, you're back in the 18th century. You're not going to succeed. We're building the finest health care system in Saskatchewan. Garf Stevenson and every other publicly minded, publicly spirited citizen is helping us in that task. And I tell you, you should grow up and join in too.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, I'll tell you why there's high anxiety in some constituencies around this province . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Well I don't know how many people we have on their feet at one particular time, but we just can't have this constant interruption. Members ask questions, and no sooner have they asked a question, then they're interrupting with the person that's giving the answer.

The person who asked a question is being interrupted by the members who are trying to give the answer. We can't have a half a dozen or a dozen people speaking at one time. Please have respect for each other in asking a question and answering a question.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, I'll tell you why there's anxiety in some areas of this province: three hospitals in my constituency alone closed as a result of you and your health care reforms.

How many closed in your constituency, Mr. Premier? How many closed in your constituency?

The Speaker: — Order. Will the member from Turtleford please come to order. He's been yelling across the Chamber all afternoon. I ask him to please come to order.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Mr. Premier, and then on top of it all, you and your government and the Department of Health set up this phoney commission at \$500 a day for an NDP partisan and pay him that kind of money when health care is going down the drain in this province, Mr. Premier.

Why don't you and your Department of Health do something honourable for the people of Saskatchewan and hold the elections this fall, what people all across this province are calling for?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the question, this particular question is laughable — laughable.

An Hon. Member: — Listen to the people — SARM, SUMA.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — The member seated from his position says listen to the people. You know, even SUMA in the big cities is going through a redistribution of wards. You have to have ground rules for the election. You've got to figure out where the districts are going to be; you've got to figure out who's going to be eligible to vote; you've got to make sure that there's a person who does this fairly, who knows both rural Saskatchewan and urban Saskatchewan — a person who's got experience.

You know, this kind of low-level personality attack of people who cannot defend themselves is absolutely unparalleled in this legislature. I tell you that the Conservative Party I didn't think could sink to the depths that it has sunk today. But it is possible for them to sink even lower yet.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, this kind of mud raking, this kind of an attack, all of which is intended to destroy the health care reform which is leading North America, all of which is intended to destroy the necessary changes, will not work, Mr. Speaker, because the people of Saskatchewan know we're on the right track. Come on, get on to building rather than destroying.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Infrastructure Program

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier this afternoon. Mr. Premier, the Saskatchewan government tried very hard to be the first to sign up for the federal infrastructure program in February. And Saskatchewan people are anxious to know what the plans are for our province.

Can you tell us how many Saskatchewan jobs the infrastructure program will create directly and when the first project will begin?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, we have carried out an extensive consultation process, and much work has now been done but is not yet complete with respect to the infrastructure program. I'm advised by the minister in charge, who is the Deputy Premier who is away at a conference in Halifax on trade barriers, that the cooperation between the municipalities, rural and urban, and the federal government has been very good.

We expect that there will be hundreds of jobs created by this over the two-year period. I do not want this to be viewed as an attack on the infrastructure program, but it must be remembered that the total amount of money will only be \$173 million over two years.

We welcome it, but with that size of contribution it's hardly going to set off major job creation. It's

welcome, because any kind of job creation we can get will be of assistance to us. And we appreciate the federal support. The numbers will be finalized once the programs fall more clearly into line, which should be within the next 10 days, two weeks, or so.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Premier. As I said, the Saskatchewan government tried very hard to be the first province to sign up which should have given us the jump on putting people to work first.

Today's newspaper headline says: "Man., Sask. hard hit by job losses". Yesterday, the *Winnipeg Free Press* covered the Manitoba government announcement that 131 projects worth more than \$130 million are now in place. However, Mr. Premier, the province of Saskatchewan is only now sending out application forms for the infrastructure program to municipalities as of April 5, and I know that members of this Assembly received the same kind of thing.

And I say, application forms, Mr. Premier? Can you explain why it has taken so long for the province of Saskatchewan to get the project applications out, and how long it will take for the approval and tendering processes to take place so that people can actually start applying for jobs in our province?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, let me say two things with respect to this question: first of all, I want to avoid — although I could get into it — a blame-casting situation where there are explanations with respect to the delays pertaining to the federal government's aspects of infrastructure. But I'm going to avoid that. Because I think, on balance, our situation has been fairly good and working fairly well.

Secondly, what we want to do . . . I wish the hon. member from Kindersley would contain himself — he's just a jack-in-the-box today with his comments, and I don't know what it is that got into his pants, but just calm down, please, member from Kindersley.

So what happens here, is a situation of making sure that we get the right projects — the right projects — not just any projects, but the right projects, which are long-standing.

Now the job loss situation is as you pointed out. I might add, however, no small measure of the blame for that is due to the fact that the Bank of Canada and the federal Liberal government has permitted interest rates to climb in the last couple of weeks or so. The biggest inhibitor of jobs in an export area or in any area, the biggest impact on farmers, on small-business people in this province is the high interest rate policy which is being followed by the current, brand-new Liberal government.

And to me, I'm worried about this because it seems like there's no change from John Crow to the new Bank of Canada governor and no change from Martin and Mazankowski with respect to the interest rate approach. It is right, we have job losses. Our biggest

problem here is high interest rates. I hope that you would have some influence with your federal counterparts in ensuring that the interest rates come down.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Premier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your comments, Mr. Premier, are most interesting considering that they really are a commentary on your understanding of investment and the overall context of the North American . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has included — apparently Manitoba has had none of the difficulties you're talking about in getting cooperation from Ottawa — they have included a \$10 million project which will provide jobs in street and sidewalk and lane repair for 1,800 people currently on welfare in Manitoba.

In February, as has been discussed already today, the number of people on welfare in Saskatchewan rose to 81,562 from 80,593 the previous month. And that is dangerously close to 10 per cent of our entire population being on welfare — not unemployed, but on welfare.

Can you tell me what your objectives are in terms of directing infrastructure monies to ensure that the thousands of welfare recipients in Saskatchewan are offered some hope and opportunity through this program?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, again the parallelisms of the questions that we get from the Liberals and the Conservatives is underlined by this question. The Conservatives for the last two days have been doing their best to beat up on welfare people, and the Leader of the Liberal Party is not quite as, how should I put it, unsubtle or blatant about it, but she comes in in any event with respect to what can you do with respect to welfare people.

I say that the task here is to make sure that the projects are well thought out, that they create jobs, that where we can employ welfare people we employ them. But there are a number of people also who are unemployed who are not on welfare. It depends on the nature of the job and the nature of the applications which are accepted ultimately. The trick here is jobs.

I say again, the economy in the province of Saskatchewan — and I would say throughout the West — is more affected by the level of interest rate increases than it is anything else. We don't have enough money — Ottawa and Regina. I note the Prime Minister said this morning in a press conference that the federal government is broke. We do not have enough money, Regina and Saskatchewan, for make-work projects. You can make more jobs and get economic activity by having a low interest rate policy which will assist our farmers and our small-business community, and that is an economic fact.

So I say to you Liberals, please, the jobs on infrastructure are coming, the program is going to be a

good, solid program. Do something more than that, get the federal Liberal Party off this high-interest kick and let's get people working again at it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 52 — An Act to amend The Education Act

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Education Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 32

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Shillington that **Bill No. 32 — An Act to amend The Labour Standards Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well one nice thing about a debate that can follow from one day to the next is that we have in our minds, fresh, all of the things that are of particular interest on the subject. And of course today we are talking again about the amendments to The Labour Standards Act, formally known as Bill 32 to the people in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I took some time yesterday to point out that I felt very strongly that we had to look at this Bill, not just from the perspective of the business community, but more importantly, that we should spend some time talking about this Bill from the point of view of the workers of this province.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that more and more we are coming to discover that the workers in this province are opposed to this Bill. The workers in this province do not want changes to The Labour Standards Act that will in fact cause them to lose jobs or cause the job base in our province to deteriorate or to grow smaller, for whatever reasons. And they are quite willing and anxious to have a compromise position that would allow them to work with dignity and respect, but also to allow the province to expand the job base so that there would be opportunities for all of the people who need jobs in our province.

I pointed out yesterday, as you will recall, Mr. Speaker, that we had many, many letters and correspondences from a lot of business people, and yet we only had a very few letters of input from those people who actually defend this legislation. The only real significant defence of the legislation came from

the union people in Saskatoon. And the other defence of course was a newspaper article wherein Barb Byers has been quoted as being upset by the proposed amendments that might change the Act.

Now we need to deal with that, Mr. Speaker, because here is a serious conflict of interest between Barb Byers and the workers of Saskatchewan. What Barb Byers is saying to the people of Saskatchewan is that she doesn't particularly like what the government might do with this Bill and therefore people should accept the fact that it would then end up being a good Bill even though it were detrimental to the province. It's reverse psychology that the woman is using on us, or trying to, and of course we saw through that a long time back.

The reality is though that she bases her disagreement on the Bill on assumptions that would take power away from union leaders, and that is her gripe with the changes that are proposed. She is not defending the needs of the workers of this province in her arguments and in her debate. She is totally opposed only to those changes that would take power out of her hands and the hands of union leadership. Therefore she does not represent the workers of this province. And I don't think we need to take her very seriously any longer in this debate, because quite frankly she is a self-serving person who is only trying to serve her own power-grabbing interests.

(1415)

And with that I want to go on to the real needs of the workers of this province and what they particularly need in legislation. And there are some things, as I've pointed out yesterday, that workers in this province definitely need and a lot of those issues have been addressed in this legislation. And people from all across the province . . . particularly I'll deal with the position of SUMA and SARM and some of these other organizations to begin with, but basically they have said that they too agree that some changes are necessary in the labour Bills and that they should be done. They must not of course be done without consultation and a fair and reasonable debate on the issues so as to determine how legislation can be brought into effect that will allow all sides of the issue to coexist together and to maintain a job base as well as protection for the workers of the province.

And so I think with that, Mr. Speaker, I should enter into the records a few points made by some of the folks in the province that have been corresponding with us. I have here a letter from SUMA and it's actually a press release that they released for the general public, so there's no secret about this, the government members have had it. But the general public may not have had access to this too much, so I will read it into the record and then make my comments based on the materials therein.

Now on March 30, 1994, SUMA joins the public sector coalition calling for delay in the passage of the labour standards amendments. It says:

The Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, SUMA president Ted Chodol, today announced the association has joined a coalition of public sector employers calling for a delay in passage of amendments to The Labour Standards Act. This is clearly an unprecedented move by associations representing public sector employers, Chodol said.

Collectively, public sector employers represent the single largest employee group in the province. The fact that we have marshalled our resources in a common call to table the amendments indicates just how serious our concerns are. Chodol estimates that the coalition, which includes SUMA, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, greater than 40,000 employees.

Now, noting that the coalition is not opposed to needed changes, Chodol pointed out that SUMA is not confident the amendments meet the criteria and is concerned that the amendments will unnecessarily disrupt existing collective agreements.

He goes on, Mr. Speaker:

In a meeting yesterday with the Labour minister (and his name is there) our association asked for more time to analyse the impact of amendments for our sector, said Chodol. We asked the minister to table the Bill until the next legislative session and to use that time in fine-tuning the language of the Bill and to draft sector-by-sector regulations.

Chodol noted that because the regulations will define how the amendments impact on the workplace, says it is imperative that they be drafted before Bill 32 is passed. We raised with (and the minister's name is here) concerns on how the amendments will impact existing collective agreements and how they might displace part-time workers or cause a reduction in benefits as a cost-saving measure, Chodol said.

In each case, the minister told us those concerns would be addressed through regulations. If the regulations will be that powerful, we want to see them before the amendments pass the legislature. Chodol added he does not understand why the provincial government cannot concede to the coalition's request to table the Bill.

Now (the minister's name again) has told us that the amendments will not be proclaimed until the regulations are written, a process that could take anywhere from six months to a year, Chodol remarked. Our request to table the Bill meets the minister's time line and gives all

interested parties the time needed to provide responsible and sound public policy.

The Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association represents the interests of urban government, including cities, towns, villages, and northern communities, to the provincial government. For further information, you could contact the president.

Now, Mr. Minister, an awful lot of ground is covered in this statement. And it is probably yet the briefest and most concise piece of work that we have describing completely and fully where the problems lie between the government and the people of this province.

As Mr. Chodol points out, they do agree, as you will have noted, that there are changes needed. There are things that they agree with in the legislation. However they do see some serious problems because the way the Act is written, these 40,000 employees presently being employed by the public sector groups, all have collectively agreed to contracts. Collective bargaining process was used. The members of the unions and the union leaderships have come to agreements with management and they have signed contracts. All of these contracts, Mr. Speaker, could in fact become null and void upon the proclamation of this legislation as it is presently written, which would mean we could throw the whole province into absolute chaos.

This is the concern that the president of SUMA is expressing in one segment of his complaints. The fact that you could have 40,000 people without a legitimate contract or a contract that was no longer in existence, that had become void because of the legislation, that, Mr. Speaker, could result in all of a sudden, for example, the union leadership saying, well perhaps the judges — as we talked about the other day, were going to get 20 per cent increases — and they might say, well if those fellows were worth that much, we are too; so now we're going to have a strike unless we get 20 per cent increases.

And of course we all know that that's an exaggeration of the realities of life, but here we have to consider a little bit of exaggeration in order to make our point. And the point that has to be made is that if the union leadership had 40,000 people at its disposal to strike at one time in the public service sector, then they certainly could hold the province up for ransom. They could ask for something that would be absolutely too expensive for the taxpayers of the province to ever be able to afford, and we would be in utter chaos. Because all of these people could walk out on strike, and yet if you gave them what they wanted it would break the bank. We would literally cause the province to become bankrupt.

And that is the fear that Mr. Chodol and the other representatives on these groups fear. They fear that this legislation may cause the door to open for such absolute chaos in our province.

Now the paper goes on, Mr. Speaker, to explain that the minister had told certain people about the

amendments and how they were going to be handled. He had made assurances that the regulations and the amendments would be brought in together and here we have a government who has not done what they said they would do. They told the president of SUMA and the other leaders of this province that the regulations would be brought in with the amendments, and most people don't realize that regs and amendments are different.

There's a serious, serious difference between the two methods of application of the way the legislation will work. Amendments of course are the changes to the actual legislation but they are very vague and they can be very general. They can be so vague and so general, Mr. Speaker, that in fact what they will say is that a particular area of the legislation will now allow the government, through regulation, to make whatever changes they want to make. And of course those regulations can be made when the Legislative Assembly is not even sitting and they can be made by orders in council, which of course would be a decision of cabinet, and no one in the legislative process would ever see those regulations or be able to debate in this public forum how the impact of those regulations would affect the people of the province either in one sector or in the province as a whole.

And so because these people who represent these umbrella groups are very political in their own worlds, at a level of politics which is community politics — mayors and councillors, the third level of government we call them in Saskatchewan — they do understand the political system because they live with it, they study it, and they have an understanding for it.

And because they understand what might happen to them, they said to the minister: we will not agree to the changes that are needed or any other changes unless you bring them all in together so that we can see them as a package. We want to know what's going to happen all the way through this process.

The minister apparently, according to this document, has made that promise that he was going to bring the regulations and the amendments in at the same time so that everyone in the public could and would be able to assess the impact on the entire province from this legislation with its regulations. Now, apparently, according to this document, the minister has backed out. He has not kept his word by not bringing forth regulations and therefore the business community is very upset.

That is what has forced their hand into doing what Mr. Cholod points out is a very unprecedented thing to do, which is to try to mount public pressure against the government of the province — the very government that they depend on and need and have to deal with on a day-to-day basis in order to have their cities and towns survive.

All kinds of infrastructure deals have to be made and people have to get along. So it is not normal at all for these leaders to deliberately pick a fight with the government, because they depend on one another far

too much to have that make sense unless it's on an extremely critical issue. In fact this issue is so extreme and so important that the people of the province have decided that they have to do this extreme measure, which is to make a news release against the government's Bill, the Bill No. 32.

So with that kind of pressure being applied, we would have thought, Mr. Speaker, that the minister in charge would have reconsidered his position and would have introduced the regulations and the amendments and kept his word to the community at large, in particular to the municipal groups and the other business people in our community.

But they haven't done that, and we seriously have to wonder why. What could possibly be in these regulations that would be so terrible that the people shouldn't know what they are? Is the minister afraid to tell the people what he's actually going to do them? Or is he afraid that the union leaders will be upset when they find out what the regulations really are?

Who is the minister afraid of? Who is he afraid is going to be upset? Perhaps the business community, perhaps the municipal organizations, perhaps the union leaders, or perhaps everyone. But the reality is that he must be afraid of something or he would bring these regulations in and let the people of this province judge them before this forum adjourns for the summer.

So it seems to me that with the explanation that Mr. Cholod has given about how the timing would work, that it would be very clear that no one would be seriously hurt if we put this matter off until the fall.

Now as Mr. Cholod points out, the minister has told them that the amendments will not be proclaimed until the regulations are written, a process that could take anywhere from six months to a year.

Now if that's the truth — and I'm sure that most people would like to believe that a minister would be factual in his determination of timing and the process that he's going to follow — most people would, I think, have to take the minister at his word on the surface at least, at the outset. And they would have to give him the benefit of the doubt as having told them what he intends to do is factually going to happen. And only if the minister didn't do what he said he was going to do, that you would in retrospect have to expose him for what he really had done.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, it makes eminent sense that if the minister has told the community at large that he is going to take six months or a year for this whole process to be melted together and to be written up, then in fact Mr. Cholod's argument is correct that no one could be hurt or upset by putting this whole matter off for another six months.

(1430)

If it's going to take six months to a year before you can empower anything or enact anything or have any

effect from the Bill, then surely it wouldn't hurt to not pass the Bill itself until next fall, which is probably six months away.

So I think the argument is very well made, that we ought to take some time, table this Bill, and write up the regulations. Perhaps we need to bring Garf Stevenson in again to research the regulations. Perhaps Mr. Stevenson could research the amendments and perhaps he could make a one-man commission report on how it should be done. And if that's necessary, fine and dandy. We could give him another \$500 a day to do that as well. But in the end, after six months, we could at least then see what the government's intentions are for the province of Saskatchewan.

People will say, Mr. Speaker, well why is it so important not to pass the legislation? Why not just trust the government? Pass the legislation and then we'll trust the government to do whatever is necessary to make things work.

Well the problem is, Mr. Speaker, that very few people in our province trust this government for any reason whatsoever, at all. There just is no trust left in the political system or the judicial system in our province. With the breaking of contracts that has gone on in Saskatchewan over the past two years, there's absolutely nobody in this province that has any faith or confidence in any contract or any promise made by this administration.

So there is the problem. People simply don't trust the government to pass legislation and then make it work to the betterment of the people. They are absolutely frightened and they are appalled at the way in which this administration flouts the law whenever it chooses to for its own particular benefit.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the legislation, once passed, will provide no more opportunity for the general public to have input. There is no guarantee that this minister would keep his word and have meetings. There is no guarantee in the legislation that he would in fact listen to the people. And because there is no guarantee that there could be meaningful input into the regulations in the way that they are structured, people simply don't feel they can trust the government with everything that is so important and near and dear to their hearts, in their lives.

And this gets down to the fundamental realities of existence for many of the people of our province. For business people in the business community, if you cannot be competitive, then you are going to be out of business. The profit margins in business in Saskatchewan I would suggest are probably as narrow today as they have ever been, and certainly by talking to many of the older folks in our community, they have to be paralleled only by the time of the Great Depression in the Dirty Thirties.

And with those kinds of margins of profitability in business, with those kinds of limited amounts of movement within the dollar ranges that people have

to work with, it only takes a small bit of change in the system to cause people to start to lose money. And once that happens, it is only bankruptcy time or time to move out of the province.

Many businesses of course choose the latter. They will move to Alberta, British Columbia. They'll go to Montana or North Dakota or some place else. Even a few of them might even end up in Ontario, who knows, although I doubt it. I don't know why anybody would want to jump from the frying pan into the fire. But they do move out of Saskatchewan because they have to try to survive. Either that or they declare bankruptcy and they're gone.

The reality is that those businesses that might have come into the province will no longer come in. I alluded yesterday, Mr. Speaker, to people in Manitoba who had called me and told me about the reality that people they were representing in the manufacturing industry and the financial industry were in fact very seriously worried about the labour legislation that was being changed in Saskatchewan.

And they in fact were sending a representative to this province, to this city of Regina, to study the legislation to find out if their clients could still competitively come into this province. And they feared that they would have to advise them that they could no longer make a decent living or a decent profit in this province and they were going to leave. The member from Regina, of course, suggests that it's good to get rid of them — goodbye, get them out of here, who needs them.

Well I suggest to you people that you need them. More than anybody else in the world, you people need the businesses and the investments because without them who's going to pay the bills for your 81,000 people on welfare and your other 70,000 on unemployment insurance? Who is going to pay the bills for the 150,000 people that you've got sitting around in this province looking for jobs that you haven't got?

Twelve thousand less jobs in this province today than there was a year ago. That's the statistics that were read here the other day; 12,000 fewer jobs. And you call yourselves a government that was going to eliminate poverty and dispose of all of the need for food banks. Food banks now lined up twice as long as they ever were, begging for food. Having farmers even donating land to try to grow some food to feed people.

And your government is the most disastrous failure that we've ever seen in the history of this province. Every promise that was ever made, every commitment you've ever made, you've forgotten it or you've broken it. Absolute, total chaos is what we're heading for in this province. And this labour legislation is really the shovel that's digging the grave to bury Saskatchewan.

And that, my friend, is exactly where you're going with this labour legislation. You're burying Saskatchewan in a hole that it will never dig itself out of in all of the history of my lifetime and yours put

together. Because we will be so far into debt, because our tax base will be gone and our job base will be gone, that there won't be one person left in this province who has the ability to get out.

Everybody will leave that has the opportunity to go. There's a few of us old guys that are just too stubborn to go, but the rest will all leave. And certainly that means our children. Children without jobs. And why? Because we have labour legislation that is so onerous that nobody will build or create or develop a job.

Even the government itself can't create a job in this province. The only possibility we had today would have been if the Premier would have resigned and then we would have had at least one seat open so that somebody else could have had a job. That's the only way you could have created a job in this province today. There is no other activity going on that will create work in the province of Saskatchewan.

I want to take some time, Mr. Speaker, to go into some of the arguments that have been passed on to us as to what is wrong with this legislation and why it needs to be changed. I want to do that because it needs to be on the record, Mr. Speaker, so that the minister in charge, who I'm sure will be studying this very carefully, will know why he has to make the changes that people have asked for.

Now we had from the public sector area a little list made up to point out to the minister what is going wrong, some major concerns. And they put it down in point form so that we could discuss it in debate here today.

Now the lack of prior release of the amendments — it says here that:

Despite numerous commitments to employer groups, the provincial government chose not to provide advance release discussions of proposed amendments. Such actions do not contribute to cooperative partnerships in the development or implementation of labour policy. Our respective associations take great exception to the manner in which the province reneged on its obligation to employer groups.

And that, Mr. Speaker, that, Mr. Speaker, says it in words as polite as you can get. The minister told them one thing and then he did another. And then we wonder why the people of this province won't trust the government. That's about as polite as you can get at saying that they were stabbed in the back, that they were told one thing and then the government changed its mind and didn't do it.

And so I don't think I need to dwell on that any more because the people of this province know exactly how that happens in every facet of our society over the past two years.

We start with the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contracts and 60,000 farmers that had those contracts broken so that the net effect now of course is

that we have \$350 million of money sitting in a pot that should have come from the federal government into the hands of farmers and it didn't happen. The breaking of those contracts has cost this province the spin-off effect of \$350 million that should have passed through the hands of the farming community, money that would have been spent for sure because the farming community is well known for its ability to put cash flow into an economy.

And what has happened? That money now sits there while we have a government on the opposite side of this House who says that they hold the federal government responsible to help the prairie farmers, and yet it is their actions that has stopped this money from coming to the province — an absolute disgrace. But that of course is only one contract that was broken once . . . one type of contract which of course affected 60,000 individual farm families.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have the judges' contract where a lot of people say yes, they shouldn't have got that much. But here we have a contract that is broken again, a very important principle, a precedent in our system, another justification for the breaking of contracts with anybody that has one.

And what is the effect? Surely the judges won't get their 24 per cent; they won't, not for the moment at least. But how did this fiasco occur? This fiasco occurred because people decided that they would trust the government. They trusted the government when the government said we will set up a commission, a three-person commission, that will study the situation and come in with a recommendation; and we will pass legislation that will make it the law that everybody has to obey whatever that commission says.

It was even a three-man commission, not just like Garf Stevenson, his one-man commission that's on the road today. I mean at least he doesn't have to argue with anybody to get their agreement. He'll know that 100 per cent of the commission agrees with whatever he comes up with, seeing as how he's the only one there.

But in this other commission we've got three men. Here's the joke of the whole thing that most of the general public haven't really heard about. These three people are all legal people, all lawyers, I understand. Now here you've got three lawyers appointed to decide what the judges' wages should be and the law that says that the government has to, by its own law, accept whatever they come up with. Every lawyer knows very well who he's going to stand in front of one day — a judge — and what's going to happen to his career if that judge takes a disliking to him. We all know that. I see a few lawyers smiling over there.

Well the reality of life is very simply this: there isn't a lawyer that's ever passed his bar that isn't bright enough to know that you don't cross a judge. So you're naturally going to offer him a whole bunch of money so that he thinks you're a great guy. So you got three guys on a commission that are absolutely bound

to have to give a good decision in favour of the judges.

So what silliness was it to put those three people on that commission? You almost forced yourself to have to break your own law before you even got it rolling by just the fact of who you put on the board. Good, honest people. But they, by the nature of their business, had to find in favour of a high rate rather than a low rate. If you'd have put three farmers on there, they'd have found a way to do it a lot different, I can assure you.

So, Mr. Speaker, very important that these contracts having been broken, now tell everybody in this province that there has been a sweeping signal sent out to everyone — you can't trust the government. You can't trust the legal system either, because now, every contract in this province is up in the air. Any one the government decides they don't like, they simply pass a piece of retroactive legislation and break it — it's cancelled.

And so the general public say, when you come with labour legislation that is so onerous that it absolutely puts us out of sync with everybody else in North America, and the government says we'll fix it with regulations later on — just pass the legislation and go away and be quiet — nobody is going to be quiet because nobody trusts the government.

Nobody can afford to trust this government because it is absolutely a death sentence to your business if you get involved with this government in any way, shape, or form. And if you don't believe it, ask the 60,000 farmers who now know that there's \$350 million of federal money that they can't . . . because of the breaking of their contracts by this government. How about that. A lot of money.

Well, my friends, most people would have agreed that you shouldn't offer judges as much money. But you put yourselves in a box. You cornered yourselves.

And then we hear from the minister from Swift Current — the minister from Swift Current who thinks that Medicine Hat is a nicer city than Swift Current and a bigger city to shop in, and that's his defence of his government policy.

The reason people leave our province, of course, is not because of the 9 per cent taxes that we have to pay extra, it's because Medicine Hat is a beautiful city and they've got more businesses. He never did think that the reason that the more businesses are there is because we drove them all over there.

(1445)

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've been talking about the reasons why the public and the general community want to see this legislation reconsidered. And I want to go on to the no. 2 item that the coalition has raised, and that is the legislative timetable. It says here that:

It is our understanding that the provincial government wishes to complete passage of the

amending Act by week's end. This time frame is too short. No need is so pressing in this province's labour environment that we could not provide greater time to reflect on the impacts and costs of the amendments. We recommend that the Act be tabled to the 1995 session of the legislature, whereby providing all parties with the time needed to thoroughly analyse.

A very simple request and a very justifiable request too, Mr. Speaker.

The minister in his negotiations and discussions and conversations with the SUMA members and other members of the business coalition in this province said that he couldn't bring the results of this legislation into effect until six months to a year down the road, in which case of course there is no need to have the legislation passed and empowered as a law.

Why would you need to pass a law that can't go into effect for six months? Where is the pressing need to have that timing right now? Why not wait till next fall or next spring when you've got the regulations put into place so that everybody can study them, examine them, and know exactly what they're going to do?

Are we going to say in the regulations that perhaps the food industry, perhaps the fast food industry — we may categorize that a little more — in the regulations would be exempt from this legislation and that their part-time workers would no longer be affected? Is that a possibility? In that case would Barb Byers be very happy? I don't know. But we don't know if that's going to be in the regulations or not. Maybe it will say in the regulations that we are giving no exemptions, that everybody will be treated the same; in which case of course all the McDonald stores will probably have to close their doors.

Are you afraid that the business community would be particularly upset by that and simply leave the province if they knew what was going to happen? Or do you fear that maybe they would mount a public campaign that would put maybe 50 or 60,000 people on the lawn of this Assembly?

You see we don't know what's coming; that's what the fear is. We need to know what these regulations are all about. There's speculation that starts from zero and goes to infinity on what kinds of changes could be implemented in this legislation through the regulations, that nobody has any idea what is even being contemplated.

It could be just about anything that the imagination could come up with, because there is no indication how many regulations there will be. What would be in the regulations? Who would have input into the regulations? Who in fact might even be the person to sit down and write them? Would the minister write them? Would he invite Garf Stevenson to write them? Perhaps Barb Byers would write them. Nobody knows.

Somebody has to tell the people of this province what kind of a realistic business future do they have. What kind of an opportunity will there still be to stay in business when this legislation is finished? How many people will in fact be able to continue to operate under these guidelines?

And it all hinges on the regulations and the amendments — all of which no one has seen. I dare say the minister may not have seen them because I really don't believe he's even written them. I have my suspicions that not even no. 1 has been written yet, so how could the people know what's in it? How could anyone know? The prospective mayor for Saskatoon says she knows. Unfortunately I don't think the people trust her either but they may elect her as the mayor. And I wish you well. I wish you well.

One good thing about that, Mr. Speaker, would be that we would create one more job in the province because then her seat would be empty and somebody else could get the job by running for it.

I want to go on to the no. 3 item, Mr. Speaker, the timing of the amendments.

It is unclear (it says here) why the provincial government would choose to implement amendments that will produce significant employer costs at this point in our financial recovery.

The amendments make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to attract new industry and employers to our province, especially when compared to the labour environment in neighbouring western provinces. We are equally concerned that extension of existing industries will be thwarted, leading to fewer jobs and fewer workers to enjoy the benefits of these amendments.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, I think what they're saying is that this legislation is going to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. In other words, we won't have investment, we won't have outside people coming in to start businesses, we won't have businesses in our province that are already here able to expand; in fact, they will shrink and become smaller. We will, in fact, create a situation where we have less employment rather than more employment.

Exactly the opposite to the campaign promise that this government made when it was out on the hustings before the fall of 1991. They went around this province campaigning on a pledge to create jobs, to eliminate poverty, and to eliminate food banks.

We now have no jobs, we now have more poverty than we've ever seen since, I don't know even if it's the 1930s, and we certainly do not have an end to the food banks. Every promise has been broken. And in this timing of the amendments portion of the argument, people in the community are saying to this government that the very problems that you set out to solve, to make better, you are actually doing it

worse. You're coming full circle and you're destroying exactly that which you said you were going to create.

The briefing papers, Mr. Speaker, go on under the no. 4 section to the powers of the minister, powers of the director of labour standards, and power of regulations. The minister of course would try to convince everyone that regulations are not really that important, because of course he doesn't want anybody to ask any questions about them. The reality of life is this — and the business community has got your number, sir — the regulations are what the legislation is all about; the regulations are in fact what the legislation will do to the province and to the people in the province.

It goes on to say:

In describing the reasons driving amendments to the Act, the minister has repeatedly talked of centring the pendulum and depoliticalizing the statute. The amendments, however, make the statute more vulnerable to the whims of political parties. Should an administration choose to move the Act in one direction, it is probable that succeeding administrations will move it more firmly in the opposite direction.

You see the legislation will do exactly the opposite to what the government says it wants done. There will be a backfiring effect, and the pendulum will not stop in the centre; it will swing hard every time the administration changes — especially if the history of our provincial political system holds true in the future.

And this morning at our Crowns meeting, some of the members of the government side alluded to the fact that history repeats itself. And if they are true then, they would be true here as well, and certainly then that would mean that we will change political parties with different philosophies from time to time.

That being the case, then most certainly we would see the next administration take this same legislation and drastically change the course of the province simply by changing the regulations and never debating this issue in the legislature. They would simply do it behind closed doors, the same as this government is attempting to do for themselves. And it always seems okay for a government to grab power when it's in power, and it always seems as though that before a government is elected and they sit in opposition, they naturally want everything to be open and above-board.

I recall the members opposite, when they were in opposition, saying totally the opposite of what they're now saying over there about this type of legislation. They would have argued very, very strongly in opposition that legislation that allowed the government to do whatever it pleases through the changing of regulations through an order in the cabinet, should never be allowed. In fact I think I could probably even dig up some quotes from *Hansard* that would echo those exact words from the

members opposite, many of whom have returned.

And so, Mr. Speaker, for political expediency, the government in power tries to make life easier for itself, but it puts into place the very tool that can destroy all those things that they believe as soon as the next election comes, because they will certainly be defeated, and most certainly another government will see things differently. And they will swing that pendulum.

And that is the fear not only for the business community, but for the workers of our province. Because there is no stability in a system that can be allowed to be changed helter-skelter from one extreme to the other at the whims of a few political partisans. We need stability in our government and in our province, and we have to eliminate that ability for the pendulum to swing from one side to the other without even hitting the middle for a brief pause.

And this won't be a brief pause, quite frankly, if you think about it. This legislation, if we passed it this coming week, won't, by the minister's own words, take effect for six months to a year because the regulations won't be done. So you take this whole process another year down the road and we're into 1995 spring already. From 1991 in October we're getting pretty close to four years going on here by next spring. And after that, Mr. Speaker, we're on the downhill side to six months to an election.

So the legislation might be in actual power for six months, or maybe less — maybe three. Maybe we'll have a June election. Who knows? Even if they carried it over in '96, it's an eight- or ten-month legislation in effect. By the time it really gets into effect and starts to destroy the business community of this province and really starts to shrink all of the job base in this province, we could have a change in government and the new government might take this very same legislation, totally change all of the regulations, and it's ball game over for your philosophy and everything you intended to do to try to help the workers of this province. And you're actually going to stab them in the back by putting in a piece of legislation that is drafted wrong and needs to be redone.

It needs to be redrawn; it needs to be retalked about; it has to be restructured. You've got to do everything in this legislation above-board, out in the public with the people that are concerned and put it together right. Pull the thing off, rewrite it, draw it up over again, or table it and work on it over the summer. Let's get the thing right because it's not going to serve your needs.

And even if does for a brief time, it'll be so brief that without any question there won't be any benefit, even to your philosophical needs. Because I've already told you how you're going to destroy the job base. So your economic needs are not going to be served.

You might appease a few union leaders who might vote for you, but the reality is that you've got another organization here with 40,000 employees that totally opposes what you're doing. If all of their employees

vote against you, what good is your handful of union leaders? They can't re-elect your whole government, and the people are not so blind and willing to follow any more that they will simply say, Barb Byers said vote NDP, so we'll all vote NDP.

That's not the way the voters work any more. They're going to look at this legislation; they're going to say this is no good for us. And they're going to say, we'll get rid of this government. So you're not serving any of your needs the way you're doing this process.

I want to continue, Mr. Speaker, with the briefing note that the minister was supposed to have studied. And to make sure that he concentrates on it, I want to deliver it to his ears today.

It goes on to say that:

If it is the intent of the province to provide the Act with more political neutrality, then the powers of the minister to use regulations to define, enlarge or restrict language of the Act must be removed. Similarly, the powers of the director of labour standards must be disciplined through statute.

In other words, you have to put into the legislation the rules that you're going to play by.

You know, this reminds me, this legislation, of playing a ball game where you would tear out the centre 10 pages of the rule book, give them to one team, and tell them you can rewrite them after the seventh inning. And we'll play by whatever rules you come back with in the seventh inning, which of course means that you can have 47 outs for one side and only three for the other, or something silly like that.

But that's what it reminds me of — playing a game without the rules, or with one side being able to rewrite the rules as the game is being played. And then after you play this game, the other team gets to rewrite the rules for the next game. I mean it sounds pretty silly, doesn't it?

But that's exactly what this legislation is; it's utterly, outright silly. When you think about the effects and repercussions that it will have, then it becomes deadly serious because it's people's lives that are on the line, it's their incomes that are on the line, it's their businesses that are on the line, and it is the jobs of the workers of this province that are going to be destroyed.

(1500)

This legislation is wrong. And it has to be redone because there are so many arguments against it and so few for it that it can't be right. When you have a solid, united community against a piece of legislation, as solidly as indicated by the hundreds of pieces of paper that have been sent to me, then it has to become crystal clear to you that you are on the wrong track.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should go on with the more

legitimate arguments that were presented in the briefing papers. No. 5 here says that it was the instructions on collective bargaining were also of particular interest to the groups involved.

The proposed amendments set a dangerous precedent to control the terms and conditions agreed to by employers and employees through collective bargaining. By tradition, the practice of the provincial government has been loath to intrude in collective bargaining even when work stoppages could pose significant threat to public safety. Instead, members of labour have preferred to let parties to the negotiations reach mutually agreed-to settlements. It is unclear why the provincial government would not consider it appropriate to establish minimum standards for collective agreements.

I guess there's sort of a self-explanatory argument in that statement. Everyone knows that in this province political parties of all stripes, in the past, have been very reluctant to interfere in the collective bargaining process. I have not seen an administration that has been targeted as being opposed to collective bargaining. Of course we will have members of the NDP saying that there were such administrations because they weren't in power.

But the reality is that every government in this province over the past 50 years that I'm aware of, has supported the basic concept of collective bargaining. People have been allowed, sometimes at great pain to the general public, to beat out their own problems in that bargaining process.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, sometimes it's not a very pretty process and certainly there are an awful lot of hard feelings at times, but the process can work if it's allowed to play itself through without too much outside interference.

And whenever it has been possible to allow that process to continue, governments of the day have done exactly that — they've stayed clear of it and not tried to get involved. Because certainly it is also true that those governments that have tried to interfere in the collective bargaining process have usually paid a big price at the polls at the next election, because they get marked in Saskatchewan as being people who are not allowing the normal bargaining process to work.

So only in those cases where life of people is genuinely at risk, have governments ever really interfered at any great extent. I remember in the late 1970s there were some problems, and I have some statistical data on that.

In fact that data is worth mentioning at this point, Mr. Speaker, because what it indicated was that under legislation in the 1970s, that is almost identical in terms of what we can see of the legislation, to the legislation that was in power and in practice in the 1970s. We see a very similar kind of document here.

And these statistical datas that I have here, and I'll sort

through my pile a little later and find them exactly, they show quite significantly, that labour unrest in this province was extremely high during that period of time and fell dramatically when those laws were changed in the early 1980s.

And here we are now, once again, about to revisit the past and to bring in the same kind of regressive legislation for labour standards that didn't work in the 1970s, but this government says will work in the 1990s if you allow us to change the regulations whenever we choose behind closed doors. I guess that secretivism is going to make it work this time where it didn't work before.

Well I can't agree with that argument at all, because I think it failed before because it wasn't workable. It created friction. It was, in fact, the very tool, Mr. Speaker, that these people talk about in the government today; the very tool that split labour from management. It drove that wedge in between people and it caused the dissension and the differences between our working people and the people in small business and in management.

That legislation drove that wedge in so firmly and so deeply that there could only be unrest because those people genuinely disliked one another. They didn't bargain in good faith any more because they were so entrenched in their bitterness towards one another that they couldn't see reality or compromise. All they could see was the red of the debate, of argument.

So, Mr. Speaker, having that divisiveness in the community might have been a political tool in an attempt for a government to get the labour movement to support them. But it failed because that government of course was defeated.

And these statistics I referred to prove significantly that once that legislation was taken out of place and the business community and the workers of the province were allowed to freely negotiate and freely collectively bargain their problems, between themselves, without legislative interference, without government interference, all of that labour unrest settled down. And those statistics show very clearly that there was significantly less, very significantly less labour unrest in the province of Saskatchewan once those laws were cancelled.

So, Mr. Minister, seriously, you need to take a long, hard look at what you're doing to the community with this legislation. We need to allow collective bargaining to go on as it has in the past. It has a proven track record of success in most cases where political interference is not included.

The no. 6 item, Mr. Speaker, extending mandatory benefits to part-time workers by extending the same benefits to all workers. This is a very important issue, Mr. Speaker. Here it says that:

There are several alarming elements to these proposals. First, benefit is undefined in the Act, leaving definition within the subjective realm

of regulations or department interpretation. Will the definition follow the narrower, more traditional interpretation of benefit or will it be broadened? Will common definitions apply among all industries or will sectoral anomalies be permitted?

Now thinking about that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly the point that we were making. Exactly the point that there is so much inconsistency in this legislation and so many areas of uncertainty. Even the interpretations are not set out. It is the most vague kind of legislation that we have seen in a while. And certainly it has the built-in potential for disaster such as we've never seen in this province.

Because even the simplest of definitions can be turned around and changed and interpreted totally opposite to what the minister has suggested. And if the minister has told the business community things in the past few weeks that he has already had to change his mind on, what confidence would the business community have that the minister would allow the definitions that normally are used to be ones that would be used in this legislation? He might come up with a whole new set of his own. Absolutely nobody can take the financial risk of taking a chance on this legislation in its present form, Mr. Minister. You're asking too much.

The people of this province just simply cannot afford to have such demanding legislation, such legislation of importance to business and to labour, go through without writing down exactly what the rules are. The people of this province not only need that, they demand that. They demand that you tell them where their lives are going to go and what rules they are going to be playing under.

It goes on here:

Second, employer costs go beyond premiums to include the administrative resources, financial and human, needed to track employees and eligibility criteria. We have grave concerns that as a result of this amendment, part-time workers will see fewer rather than greater benefits, as employers withdraw benefit programs to reduce premium and administration costs.

Just a natural reaction, Mr. Speaker, to a financial dilemma in business. If you find yourself being costed higher for your employees, the first reaction of business is to either eliminate some of those costs or you have to eliminate some of the workers.

You've got a bottom line. And in business, if you don't come in on that bottom line, you soon find yourself in debt. And we've all seen a record in this province of what happens to people that get into very much debt. We've got hundreds of farmers that have been through Farm Debt Review Board and all kinds of bankruptcies. We've got all kinds of businesses going broke in this province every year, especially over the last few years. We've got lots of shining examples of

why we don't want this kind of thing to happen any more.

And this is exactly what happens. As soon as the costs go up, as soon as the administration goes up, and the paperwork goes up, then businesses naturally react. It's an almost involuntary muscle response. They reduce that cost some place in order to survive because they have to match that bottom line. They've got to keep that business out of the red ink or they go broke.

So they'll do whatever they have to to survive. And there's only one alternative, and that is to destroy the very thing that this government is trying to build. They cut back on the number of positions that they have for employment or they cut back on the benefits by eliminating some of the benefits that they give out. And within the legal parameters that they're allowed to do it, they will do it. And many will even do it outside of that area because they feel forced to have to do that.

It goes on here to say that third:

Insurance industry representatives are concerned that the benefit amendments are unmanageable, the administrative costs could exceed premiums earned, and that the industry would withdraw underwritings.

Finally, we fear that the trickle-down theory of benefit eligibility could mean that benefit programs are dramatically reduced for all employees.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is very significant to the workers of this province, because in fact a piece of legislation that they are being sold on through their union leadership, a leadership that is convinced that they need to tell people that they should support this, these people are being led down the garden path because the trickle effect that is talked about here could in fact mean that in the end this legislation that is supposed to protect people will in fact cost them the very benefits that they thought they were going to get. Because the system won't sustain it and the insurance companies don't know how to manage it.

What does that mean in real words? It means that the room is open for people to abuse the system. Quite frankly, and in plain English, people will be put into a position where they'll be allowed to cheat the system. And they will do that. Not many, probably 1 per cent of the population or less, but there will be a certain element of that and it will be significant enough to cause the program serious problems. In fact it may be significant enough to cost the program its very operational ability.

But in the meantime, the hurt of destroying businesses through high costs has already had the bigger effect of eliminating the businesses themselves and, in many cases, the jobs that the people of Saskatchewan need.

No. 7: advance notice of change in work schedule;

automatic seniority for part-time workers; definition of working days.

Our work environments do not lend themselves to the restrictions imposed by many amendments in the Act. Your department is certain to be inundated with applications for exemptions, exemptions which should then be granted to reflect the conditions normally found within our workplace and over which we have little, if any, control. Time has not permitted a more thorough analysis of impacts for our sector. We appreciate that there may be amendments that would be applicable to public sector employers and perhaps desirable as public policy. These are overshadowed, however, by more serious concerns of the detrimental impact of the majority of proposed amendments.

(1515)

Well, Mr. Speaker, here again the issue becomes so complicated that there hasn't been enough time for the community at large to do a complete analysis, even to write a response to the government, even to bring their arguments to the minister. There hasn't been enough time; that's clearly what I see here. They, you know, clearly point out that without the time necessary to do all of the research, to do all of the studying that has to be done in such a complicated issue as The Labour Standards Act . . . and certainly this is a broad, sweeping Act that affects the lives of many, many people. In fact I would go so far as to say that, in a roundabout way, this particular legislation will affect the life of every individual person in the province of Saskatchewan. If it doesn't affect you directly, it certainly will affect you in an indirect way.

For example, we all eat food to live. If The Labour Standards Act requires that the people that handle food have to be given more expensive considerations, that expense has to be passed on down through the food. So in a very simple example like that, we know that every person in our community, every person in the province, will be affected by this legislation. From that very simple analogy, you can carry this argument to all of the other greater and more important issues — those things that affect you in your life, like buying a home, a once-in-a-lifetime proposition for most people but certainly an expensive one that most folks don't want to see increased in cost.

It goes on to discuss the implications, Mr. Speaker, of the connection to The Trade Union Act as it will apply to The Labour Standards Act, because the two are part and parcel, somewhat the same in that they affect the same general community. And so they wind up by saying that:

We understand that amendments to The Trade Union Act may be tabled next week. If it is the provincial government's wish to involve public sector employers as strategic partners in the development and implementation of labour policy, then our representative associations

must be provided with advance information on the pending amendments.

In other words, here's another Act, that's about to be changed, that will sweepingly change the lives of everybody in our province, expected within a week, and these people, the leaders of our communities in Saskatchewan, are saying no one has told them what's going on, no one has talked to them, no one has asked for their input. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that's unacceptable, totally and completely unacceptable for a provincial government to legislate changes to our province's laws that affect all of our communities, without talking to the people from SUMA and SARM and all of the villages and towns, all of the people who are in that third government area of administering the affairs of our province.

None of those people have been talked to. None of them know what these amendments are going to be. And I can't for the life of me understand how the minister can stand in this Assembly and say that he consulted with people, when you have so pointed a remark as I've just quoted from the public sector community, the public sector employers.

They've said it straight, they've said it blunt, they've said it politely, but the meaning is clear. They weren't asked, they weren't consulted with, and they weren't listened to. And they're very upset — so upset that the head of SUMA, the biggest urban municipal organization in the province, has decided to break with tradition and to establish a new precedent, one that he believes has never been matched before, and that is to call on the government in a public way to totally change the direction that they're going with the legislation that they are bringing in.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot emphasize too much how important it is for the minister to listen to the arguments that have been put forth by the general community on this issue. Because of that need, I want to go on to some of the other organizations and the points that they want to make more specifically to the minister.

Now we talked very briefly about the regional tourism association and the effect that they thought this legislation would have on them. I have a letter from those folks, and I think it's only proper that I read some of that into the record so that the public will know where the stand of the regional tourism association is on this issue.

It begins this way, Mr. Speaker:

The purpose of this letter is to address the effects of the proposed amendments to The Labour Standards Act. My interest is specifically related to their effects on the tourist industry. The economic turnaround is just beginning and dramatic changes, such as you are proceeding, may result in increased lay-offs and new, unnecessary tension between workers and employers.

The employees of the tourism business in this province are the single most important aspect of our sustainability. I remind you that tourism employs more part-time and student workers than most economic sectors. In doing so, we match the staffing needs of our businesses with the flexibility desired by many of our staff. These changes to the Act put those jobs in danger of being eliminated. The proposed changes will result in less, not greater, benefits to the employee as employers are forced to react to increased expense and more regulations.

While there are many areas that require revision, I point out two that are of great importance: number one, the mandatory posting of schedule including break times a week in advance; number two, the change regarding benefit programs. Both of these will have very negative effects on the employees instead of being of assistance.

The Minister of Labour's name is here and then it goes on:

I strongly urge you to delay any further passage of these amendments until you have fully discussed them and their impact with the Saskatchewan business community, specifically the tourism industry. TISASK has joined other business groups to provide you with some important feedback and I hope you will listen carefully.

Mr. Speaker, I think the message from the tourist association is fairly clear. They're saying: Mr. Minister, you have not consulted with us, you have not listened to our needs, you are in fact doing this legislation arbitrarily, you are doing it forcefully, and you are going to hurt the very people that you're trying to snow with this whole process — the working people of Saskatchewan. By trying to tell the working people of Saskatchewan you're going to provide them with more benefits to make life better, you are in fact going to cost them their jobs, especially the young people who work in the tourist industry.

And it is a fact and I agree with the statements made in this letter from the tourist industry. It's automatic that the tourist industry is going to thrive more in the summer months in Saskatchewan than it will in the winter months. During the winter months our students go to university, at the first part of April they begin their examination time, and by the time the April showers come and the May flowers bloom the university classes are over and the young people are looking for work to make a few dollars so that they can go back to university again in the fall.

At that time when the flowers begin to bloom, our tourists begin to stir and they begin to go out to the lakes to fish and they begin to bring in some American tourists and all of the folks from across Canada, and they all end up in our provincial parks and other places of that nature, places where tourists normally

go. Who provides the services in those areas, our provincial parks? Most of them are students, those very university students that need to get some income so that they can go back to school in the fall.

So the points being made by the tourist association are fundamentally correct. Most of the people that will be employed by the tourist association will be students, will be young people looking for part-time work — half a year. The reality is, and they make the point, that the scheduling arrangements and the changes regarding the benefits programs will in fact put the employers in such a position that they may have to reduce the number of jobs that they have available.

That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly cannot be the purpose for which this government has brought this legislation into place. I cannot believe that the government deliberately set out to destroy jobs when they thought they should change labour legislation. I think that it started out by people saying we haven't had a change for — I think somebody said 17 years, that could be off a bit — but it's been a long time. Realistically the business community has said yes, we haven't looked at this problem for a long, long time. And there are some things that are out of tune with the times. Times change, things go on. What we need to do is rethink this legislation, bring it up to date.

I believe in all sincerity that the members of the government thought that's a good idea because it'll help, but all of a sudden we ended up with a few — well, I guess I'll say it — radical opinions that got stuck into the legislation. And those opinions somehow got caught up and put into the legislation and they are destroying all of the common sense that started out in the process. All of the common sense of wanting to do something good has suddenly been gotten lost in the shuffle of a few radical opinions that will dramatically change the face of our job creation structure in Saskatchewan.

The total base of our job creation abilities is fundamentally being challenged and perhaps destroyed. And the tourism letter definitely points out support for that concept. And they point out very dramatically and very carefully and very honestly and very politely to the minister that we must not go on with this; that we must rethink it.

Another plea from another sector in our society saying to the government, stop what you're doing and think about what is going to happen. Think about the repercussions. Think about the way that the society of Saskatchewan is going to be changed. Think about the negative things that will happen if you put this legislation in. Think about the young people whose jobs you may in fact destroy. That's what they're saying.

The common plea, the common call from all sectors of this society that have written to us and talked to us all have the bottom line. End message to the minister: stop now before it's too late; let's do it right. Nobody has said let's not do it at all. We've had people say table it, study it. We've had people say pull it, tear it

up, rewrite it. I've heard nobody say, absolutely no way, never, let's do nothing, forget it, we're out of it, and don't do it. I've never heard that. Everybody I've talked to has said there are some things that need to be done. Most workers want some things to be done. Most employers agree that they should help.

For example, if a grandparent needs some time off to be with his family or if a family member needs to take a little time off because a grandparent has died, those are kind of reasonable things in our society that most employers go along with. But there's an occasional one that gets a little bit hard-headed, I guess, and they don't allow people what is normally accepted practice in our society.

And so we need to update our legislation and guarantee that workers have those fundamental rights to serve their family needs. And that's what the folks in Saskatchewan have been saying. We want the fundamental needs of people to be covered in the legislation, but let's not overkill it. And that's the message that I keep getting.

Another organization that has pointed out to us serious concerns is the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association — a very reputable, honourable association that recognizes and supports and defends and acts as the umbrella group for a significant number of people in our society.

The school trustees association writes a letter, and I think I should quote a little of that, as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that the people of Saskatchewan will know the stand that the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association has taken on this issue:

The SSTA asks government for consultation prior to passage of the amendments to The Labour Standards Act.

(1530)

Very bold print and a very honest, and I think, legitimate request. They go on to say that:

The Saskatchewan School Trustees Association called on the Saskatchewan government today to delay passage of Bill 32. President Dorothy Fortier said school boards are very concerned about the potential financial and operational impacts of the proposed amendments to The Labour Standards Act. This legislation must be delayed, she said, to provide time for adequate consultation.

It has been the understanding of the association that the government, through the proposed amendments, intends to address particular problems in certain workplaces. However, this legislation will have a direct and significant impact on the delivery of elementary and secondary education.

Mrs. Fortier said that the trustees association has undertaken a preliminary analysis of the

impact on the educational sector and has provided government with a report and recommended changes.

Now the government has said that it is not their intention to disrupt positive working relationships, and we concur with the view of the Minister of Labour.

His name is there. And then it goes on to say that:

School boards have worked hard with their employees to ensure their relationships are fair, workable, and practical. These amendments to The Labour Standards Act will disrupt these relationships and impact on the delivery of educational services.

It goes on just a little bit longer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and then I want to review the impact of this letter.

It goes on to say that:

We have made every effort to inform the government of our concerns about this legislation. We are committed to working on this legislation with the government, but we need adequate time and their assurance that a thorough analysis of the impact on education will be undertaken prior to the passage of amendments to the existing legislation, said Fortier.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the letter says exactly the same thing as all the other organizations are saying, only more specifically timed and tuned to the needs of the educational system. So here again we have a particular group in our society who are feeling a direct impact of this legislation — a direct impact of a negative nature if it isn't done right.

And the same basic request though, at the end, bottom line request, as all of the people have asked for and that is for the government to stop, to take some time, to consult more, to listen more, and to be upfront with exactly how the rules are going to affect each one of us as individuals within our own scope of society.

Saskatchewan School Trustees Association people have provided the education for our school children for a long time by helping the administration, providing the teachers with information, and bringing about a workable solution to employer-employee problems over the years.

And certainly while teachers in our province have done a great job, they certainly have had some difficult times. I can recall a lot of stories about how teachers used to work for their board and room many years ago in this province, that many of them were promised wages and of course never got them because the ratepayers didn't have the money to pay the taxes.

An Hon. Member: — They were given a chicken at the end of the month.

Mr. Goohsen: — Exactly. The member tells me that sometimes they were promised a chicken at the end of the month and that was their pay; they might get enough food to live on. Certainly they have needed the protection of labour legislation in order to be treated fairly in this province. But here we find them calling on the government to take it slow with this legislation and do it right. Joining with all of the other people of this province, they say you have not consulted in a meaningful way because you haven't listened and you need to do it better.

The chamber of commerce, another very well-known group, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In our province the chamber of commerce has become a highly respected organization that represents the interests of business throughout the entire province. They go on to talk about the labour standards changes as well. And they say here that the revisions to The Labour Standards Act call for many changes, some or all of which may affect your business. And, they say, here are a few.

Now this was a document that was prepared by the chamber to be sent out to their membership. We were fortunate enough that they gave us a copy and we enjoyed having the opportunity to read it and to study it because it pointed out to the membership what they should be looking for. I think it's important that the Minister of Labour also hear this message.

Because what they say is that employers who offer a benefit package to full-time employees will have to offer the same benefits to part-time employees as well. This will be done on a prorated basis determined by the number of hours each part-time employee works. The prorating will be done in a manner described in the regulations, which have not been prepared. It is not known how certain benefits such as dental plan can be prorated.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this concern that the business community was asked to think about was very real. It was not known if this particular issue could in fact be resolved. And so they set about, the minds of the business community, to thinking of ways that they could resolve this problem that might be arising in the legislation, with the full belief that they would be granted the opportunity at some time to talk to the minister and give their point of view. In other words, this was a question paper that they expected fully to be able to come up with answers to and then provide the answers to the minister so that he could write good legislation.

The bottom line will be when we finish with this, that in fact that response never happened. The minister didn't bother to ask them for the answers; he simply wrote the legislation. And we're not quite sure if he did it or if he hired somebody, but we'll get to that point too, later.

They go on to say in their second point that employers will be required to give part-time employees one week's prior notice of their work schedule. The business community has pointed out very clearly, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, how in many sectors this will be a deterrent for people to be able to get work.

Because quite frankly, in the McDonald's chain of restaurants . . . and I've never run one, but I've been a frequent supporter of the business. My family enjoys the product and I do as well. And so as an observer, often with a hamburger in my hand, I've watched that many of the employees are school-aged children who probably are attending high school or perhaps university. And I've also noted that in the peak time there would be five, maybe six or seven more people working behind the counters than there was in the slacker time of the day.

If I came in at 3 o'clock in the afternoon I could find maybe two young people working. But if I came in at 5:30, there were probably seven or eight. In other words, the management was calling in those people to serve the community and the public their meals at that peak time of the day — a part-time job.

In discussions with people who employ some of these part-time people, they say there are some natural hazards in this business in that when you deal with young people, there are sometimes unforeseen circumstances that come up. No one has said that they blame young people for this. It's simply a fact of life.

You say to them, look, come on down and you can work between 4 and 7 tonight at my restaurant and we'll pay you the wages and we'll keep track of it. And then that person says, okay. So we've got seven people lined up that are going to come in for the night. All of a sudden a ball game comes up, and golly, it sure would be nice to hit a home run tonight instead of work. So one young fellow maybe decides he'll stop and play ball. Or maybe one of the young ladies will decide that gee, those dresses look nice in that store. Maybe I can just take a minute and go in and look. And the first thing you know an hour's gone by and she doesn't make it to work.

What is the fellow in the restaurant supposed to do? Two people don't show up to work; it's a perfectly natural human thing to have happen. Is he now supposed to pay both of those people full wages because they didn't show up? He has to call two other people to fill their place. How is he supposed to do a schedule for that sort of thing?

We're dealing with young people's lives that are just naturally not going to always be predictable.

The fact that it isn't predictable, we have to accept. We only work with our young people and allow them to do these things because we want them to know that we care for them, we love them, and we'll let them get away with stretching the rules. But yet we will teach them a pattern of life that they do work for a living.

And they will of course be told that if you stop and play ball too many times, we'll have to get somebody else to take your place. And I'm sure that happens too. But it does I think in a very, very simplistic way show the problems that you will run into in many sectors of

our industry if you legislate a hard and fast law that becomes the rule in a very broad way.

Then the argument would be used, well in the regulations we'll exempt certain people. And that might be okay if the people of the province knew that those regulations in fact were going to be put into place. And so the community has said, Mr. Minister, provide us with a list of the regulations. Show us what the rules will be. If we are to be exempted, we want to know; we want to have something that we can put faith in; we don't want to write you a blank cheque.

I don't think that's unreasonable for people in this day and age to say to the government, we won't write you a blank cheque. How many of you would sign a blank cheque and give it to me? You'd be a lot luckier giving it to me than a lot of other folks; I guarantee that. Because I truly would take care of it. I'd cash it for no more than I could find out you had in your account and I'd only spend it on good things, I guarantee that. But you wouldn't write me one. Nor will the business community write a blank cheque for the government. And I think that's reasonable.

It goes on to say that employers will be required to fill all extra work requirements with their part-time workers and will have to allocate this work on the basis of seniority.

Here again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we find some very serious problems, unless you put into regulations very basic and fundamental changes that can be made. You must have leeway for those exceptional things in life that won't work into a hard and fast rule. If you have to give the job to the most senior person, it may be that that person is not trained for the job that he's being called back for.

I'm trying to think of a very simple analogy here and I think I have one. If we go back to the same McDonald's situation, perhaps you have one very young man who cooks hamburgers great as they come, just tasty. To perfection — not burnt, not raw — just exactly right. And he does it very well.

But you also have another person who really does a good job of sweeping up the floors. He never misses a speck. He cleans it up perfect. But he's older and he's been there for two years longer, but he can't cook a hamburger. No matter what happens, he just cannot get it right. He burns them or he leaves them raw or he scorches them or he gets too much salt in them. But under this rule, if those two people are both out there waiting for work and the employer needs one of them to come and cook hamburgers, he has to ask the senior worker. The floor sweeper has to be asked first to come in and cook hamburgers.

Now that doesn't make any sense. Of course it doesn't. And it's an oversimplification. But it does sort of give you an idea of how this thing, if you magnify it into the business world, how unrealistic it could become.

That's why the business community has called for a

very concentrated study of how these things will impact our entire society and our entire community. That's why they've asked the government to take another look at this whole situation. And I think it's important that they do that.

They go on to say that you have to watch for the maximum notice requirements or requirements for pay in lieu of notice on termination having significantly increased. For example, under the present legislation a two-year employee will be entitled to two weeks notice. The same employee will be entitled to six weeks notice under the amended Act.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly here again we need to study the implications, the impact. Will it always be possible to give six weeks notice instead of two weeks notice? Will it be practical? Will you, for example, know . . . and I'll use the construction industry this time, to get away from food, because I'm making myself hungry. In the construction industry we often work late into the fall. If the weather is nice, we build roads. We hire a lot of students in the construction industry for all kinds of work out there on the roads. They may even get lucky enough to get one of the better jobs of running a bulldozer.

(1545)

Now supposing that bulldozer only can go until the ground freezes. How many years have we seen it happen in Saskatchewan that we will freeze solid about November 7? Very significant date; I always remember it because it's my birthday. And that's the day we usually are froze pretty solid. Some years though, we have dramatic weather in this province, as everybody knows, and by October 15 we can have a foot and a half of snow on the ground and nobody can move anywhere.

The student who is employed by this contractor could quite easily maybe guess the weather by listening to the forecast two weeks ahead and say, boys, I'm going to have to shut her down in two weeks because the ground's going to be freezing up; we're going to have to quit work.

But when you have the variance in weather that we have in that industry and how it affects that industry, there's no way that that contractor could know six weeks ahead what kind of weather we're going to have and what prospective day we might have a freeze-up.

And it can happen in two or three days. I've seen that, as a reeve of a municipality, having worked with contractors out in this kind of weather. We have in fact had to, one morning, walk out to the site and say, it's game over, boys, we froze up last night, we can't get the outfits running, we got to quit. How would you give six weeks notice to your crew under those circumstances? You would have to give them six weeks notice and pay them an extra six weeks while they sat around and did nothing.

And so it's not workable. And you will say to us: well we'll fix it with the regulations. Very fine and very good. Then write the regulations and show us which industries will be affected and which ones won't be affected. Show us what those regulations will be and how it's going to help.

They go on to say: Notice, or pay in lieu, has also been increased for temporary lay-offs. And that's something that needed to be studied by the business community because, here again, this can very seriously affect the bottom line on profitability.

Directors' liability for wages under the present legislation is limited to six months pay. Under the amending legislation, directors' liability is unlimited and wages are defined to include pay in lieu of notice.

Very significant potential here. I think we need to go over that one more time: Directors' liability for wages under the present legislation is limited to six months . . . Understanding that we do now have legislation that protects in this area.

Now under the amending legislation, directors' liability is unlimited. That means it could go on for two years, three years, four years. No limit — unlimited means exactly that.

And it's also defined . . . wages are defined as, include pay in lieu of notice. In other words, if the directors of a company are the people in charge of a company that for some reason has an administrator who doesn't do his job right, perhaps an accountant or a bookkeeper who is supposed to issue notices, goes to sleep at the switch and doesn't get his job done, then in fact the directors are responsible for that person's mistakes not only in terms of legal responsibility but financial responsibility, and they could be asked to pay out of their own pockets the wages of those workers, under some circumstances.

Totally unacceptable to the business community because it destroys the basic, fundamental characteristics of how corporate businesses are run. And I know that a lot of people will say, oh well, shucks, that's just corporations; why worry about them? Reality of life is, Mr. Speaker, that almost everybody that has any kind of a business now runs it under some corporate structure because that is the business way in which to handle your financial affairs.

A lot of farmers even run their farms as corporate entities because that's a way of keeping better accountability of the business part of their operation and keep it separate from their own personal expenses. It's a lot easier to control your budgeting, a lot easier to keep track of how much actual cash you have to spend. And so most people do that.

I notice the member that used to be in the credit union is agreeing with me. At least I think he is. It's hard to tell from over here. But he's definitely, definitely got to know that a corporate structure is something that a lot of people work with. And even under the cooperative

movement, the co-ops themselves are designed after the principles of a corporate operation. They simply have a few different rules on how they pay their taxes and that sort of thing. But basically and fundamentally, they run as corporate entities.

It goes on to say employers will be required wherever possible to arrange alternate employment within their organizations for workers who become disabled. Now this of course is something that the business community has to consider, something they have to study. They have to come to an answer for a very basic, fundamental problem that can happen to any business.

It's a simple fact of life that occasionally people do get hurt, and employers have to factor that possibility into their plans. Because companies don't just happen, Mr. Speaker — they're planned for. They are planned ahead. They have to take into account the most probable possibilities of all those factors that they know and come to some kind of an estimation of what the future might do. Good businesses are the ones that are able to do that.

They say that absenteeism due to illness or injury is no longer a ground for termination unless it amounts to more than 12 weeks in a 52-week period, or 26 weeks if the employee is receiving workers' compensation.

Here again, we get into an area where one piece of legislation is somewhat affected by other legislation, and we get into the area of workers' compensation and the need for the business community to take into account how these two pieces of legislation will work together and how it will affect their individual operations.

It goes on to say that new rules have been imposed which will govern the timing of shifts and meal breaks. And we've dealt with that, Mr. Speaker, under some of the other letters that were sent to us by some of the other interest groups in the province. And they simply make, I think, the same argument that meal times and shift work are things that have to have some ability to have flexibility.

For example, if a person is diabetic, they obviously need to eat at a specific time. And certainly, most employers would say that if the government were going to put into legislation that an employer who knowingly employs a diabetic should allow that diabetic to eat at the proper intervals so that his disease can be kept under control . . . At the same time though, people who are not diabetics can often work an extra half an hour without stopping to eat, and they may decide that they want to do that in order to finish a job and may, in fact, ask the employer if they can work a little longer to complete a job before taking a meal break. That may be a collectively bargained position.

Those kinds of flexibility are necessary in order for business and labour relationships to flow smoothly. You have to allow the opportunity for people to come to some amiable agreements on their own, even

though you have some broad guidelines — and specific guidelines for specific problems — but not trying to cover everything all at once. Because once you try to spread legislation too thin, too far, you're bound to run into trouble. And I think that's the point people are making.

It goes on to say that:

The requirements benefiting employees in this Act are now minimal legal standards. Collective agreements containing provisions which, taken in isolation, do not meet these minimal standards will thus be altered so that the standards are met without any corresponding adjustment to favour the employer.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, what they're saying here is that once you establish a minimum then you're going to have to see down the road how we might have other things happening as a result of those minimums having been drawn. Now collective agreements that are taken in isolation then are taken as, I think, meaning specific problems, specific areas, certain kinds of businesses that are fundamentally different in the way that they operate, other than all of the others around them.

The only thing that comes to mind of course at this moment might be a mortuary. You don't need too many of them and the work there might be somewhat different than in a lot of other areas. So I would suggest that you might have some kind of an isolated situation that needs to be taken into consideration for the workers that work in that type of a work theatre.

The comments go on — that if you are concerned, please take action today. And the action, of course, was to call the minister and to tell him about the common concerns, the common needs that everybody is going to need in this area of labour legislation.

In a follow-up a few days later, we had The Labour Standards Act update. And it goes on as well, from the Saskatchewan chamber:

Following an ongoing lobby campaign and negotiations with the government to bring about changes to Bill 32, An Act to amend The Labour Standards Act, on Thursday, March 31, 1994, the government informed businesses and labour of a number of changes which will be introduced as House amendments.

The attached document outlines technical House amendments proposed by government with the chamber's comments listed in the right-hand column. The purpose of the proposed technical House amendments indicate the government heard and understood some business concerns; however, the following points are important.

So I want to just bring to the minister's attention these

points because we've had some feedback, Mr. Speaker, which would indicate that they don't feel that the minister actually took into account the debate and the discussions that were held relative to this document.

The Bill is being rushed to third reading with the major impact by regulations. Regulations do not have to be debated. It would be desirable to have the Bill and regulations debated in the legislature as a package. Efforts should continue to be made to convince the government of this.

I don't think there's anything I could say that would make that any more clear than the way it is written right there. Bring forth the regulations, bring forth the amendments, bring forth the Bill, bring them all at once. Let's talk about the whole package out front, in the open, with everybody listening. That's what they've said.

It goes on to say that:

If the Bill receives third reading, the regulations will determine how the law will affect your business and industry. We will continue to monitor the process that is developed for drafting of regulations.

In other words, no implication of knowing what's going on here; simply saying we're going to have to monitor it.

It goes on to say that:

Two controversial sections of the Bill, most available hours and benefits for part-time workers, will be referred to a commission for a report later in the year. Target date is October 1994. Members with part-time employees should be prepared to provide information to the commission on these issues and their impact on your business.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, what they're saying is that nobody really knows what the effect on business is going to be of many of the changes that are coming in this legislation. All of this consultation that supposedly went on hasn't really found out the answers to what effect this legislation is going to have on the people and the businesses in our province. People have speculated on how disastrous it can be, but nobody knows. And it's the fear and the uncertainty that are so important here.

The Bill will not be proclaimed until the fall of 1994 at the earliest. Members should continue to tell their elected representatives about the implications of Bill 32 to their operations.

A very simple letter from the executive director of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce that alerts the membership to continue to try. What she's saying is don't give up. Keep on trying to save your business and your province because it's a good province and

these are the things that we need to be most concerned about at the moment.

Just to make sure that the minister realizes that his only opposition to this Bill does not come from umbrella groups representing large numbers of people, we also have several communications from people in the business sector more on an individual basis, people who are talking about their own specific business in the community.

One such note that I have here comes from the Price Club in Regina. It's dated March 1994, March 30, and says: To Whom it may concern:

(1600)

I think it's important that the minister and the members opposite take note of what this individual has to say. It says:

Re: The proposed changes to The Labour Standards Act.

The following comments are not based on a thorough analysis of the proposed changes, but rather a cursory assessment. I agree with many of the changes proposed, however I do have grave concerns with changes in the following two areas.

First, benefits. In the extremely competitive wholesale/retail sector in which controlling the human resource cost within legislated guidelines is of critical importance, I am concerned with the long-term negative ramifications of the proposed benefits to the part-time employees.

Once again we find people with problems with this legislation that will hurt the employees as well as the employer. Mr. Minister, or Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say:

Number two, seniority relative to assigning additional hours. I philosophically oppose legislation legislating seniority as the primary factor when assigning additional hours. I believe this undermines the rights of a non-unionized employer who has good relations with the staff.

I think that is pretty self-explanatory, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think that I need to go into a long explanation of what this individual is trying to point out to the government because he has said it in his own words very specifically, very clearly, and very decisively. And he wants the minister to take into account the negative impact that this legislation will have on his particular business. So, Mr. Minister, we hope that you in all sincerity will do that.

We have of course a briefing from Jim Chase, the Saskatchewan Construction Association of Saskatchewan here in Regina — Jim Chase, the president. He says: We are forwarding our brief

interpretations of the amendments to the Bill we understand are forthcoming.

It goes on to say that:

You no doubt have the paper released by the government on March 31. You will note that there are two issues not addressed which we have asked the government to reconsider. We will be available to discuss these amendments and of course we are going to be doing that.

So here you have again an umbrella group representing many hundreds of companies in our province who employ thousands of workers from time to time and throughout the years.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that I will go through these and make comments on them. But first I want to deal with a few more of the smaller operations just to make sure that the minister has a basic idea that not all of these arguments are coming just from the big umbrella groups. Certainly the points that Mr. Chase makes are extremely good and we will get to them as we go. I think they're more appropriate though, in a wind-up of our conclusions as we go.

We have people in the small-business community; for example, I have picked out a letter here from the Bow Manor Motor Hotel down at Oxbow, Saskatchewan. I don't know if I've ever even been in that establishment, but I know the town and its whereabouts. And I think it's only proper that I just go on to read into the record some of the comments and thoughts herein.

It begins:

In regards to Bill 32, I must admit I have some grave concerns. To put it into context, my concerns, my wife and I have been in the hospitality industry for the past 15 years in rural Saskatchewan. Being self-employed means to work seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Our entrepreneurial spirit employs 30 full-time and part-time people, and our salaries are close to the \$1 million mark.

The end result, however, are that in some months our take-home pay is less than that of our employees. Business in rural Saskatchewan is hanging on by its toenails. The climate is not conducive to afford management the security of having work tomorrow. Bill 32 is asking employers to guarantee employees far more than we ourselves can expect, and with thousands of dollars invested.

The parts of the Act that concern me the most are as follows. One, any period of 24 consecutive hours will be known as a working day, meaning that the worker cannot start his next shift until the same hour or later on the following day without running into overtime. The largest portion of our employees are second-income members of a household. The

off-farm or second-income job is desperately needed in these households, but the flexibility of fitting it into the spouse's shift, the farming seasons, children's school hours, and extracurricular activities makes it almost impossible for employees to work within that 24-hour rule.

As long as they have 12 consecutive hours between shifts, as the rules are now, my employees are more than satisfied with their shifts. This allows them the flexibility they need in order to have family time as well as work time to support the family. I am sure that you agree with me that family time is very important, because without it there will be even more problems to face. All schedules now are (I think that's) actually agreed upon by everyone.

The number two point that this person makes, Mr. Speaker, is that the mandatory one week's advance notice to any change in the work schedules, including the precise start and end time of meal breaks, is very important to this man's particular industry.

He goes on to explain it this way:

Our business operates on a fill in for illness or emergency situation. It is impossible to staff on the likelihood that someone will be sick. Operating short-staffed is hard on those that are at work. Because of this, it is impossible to give one week's notice of shift change. People or their families do not plan on being sick or getting hurt. It will put unfair stress on management as well as on the Department of Labour to get the written authorization to vary these schedules in an "under the circumstance clause" on an almost daily basis.

Pretty well self-explanatory, that concern, Mr. Speaker, because here again the amount of bookwork, the costs involved, are simply going to be too great for these small-business people to be able to cope with. Very, very small profitability in the communities in rural Saskatchewan to begin with, and now we're asking them to take on yet another burden of cost and expense. Another burden of more bookkeeping; of more telephoning; of more negotiating; and simply, probably to the point where it's impossible to comply with the rules as they are set up.

Number three (he goes on), the prorated calculation of public holiday pay for all employees. Holiday pay in the past has normally been paid to those who would have worked on that day if it had not been a holiday. Bill 32 proposes that everyone gets paid, even if that person would not have been working on that day. A payroll grab of about 5 per cent or additional costs of about \$11,000 per year will be felt in this time when higher costs on everything else are trying to be dealt with.

Very clearly a real problem, Mr. Speaker, for this small rural community and the business that this gentleman is running over in Oxbow. He goes on to say that:

In closing, these problems that I have mentioned will compound management stress and extend already pressed managerial hours of work because it will mean less profitability to hire more people and therefore less viability for the small business.

All of this, combined with other negative effects happening in Saskatchewan such as low grain prices, rising utility rates, costs of our renovations (I'm not sure about what that word is; it's photocopied and it's not very clear) due to government centralization. Bill 32 as it stands may be the final blow to small businesses in rural Saskatchewan. Bill 32 must be withdrawn or at least substantially altered.

Very poor print there but the message is clear, Mr. Speaker. This is another case where an individual from Oxbow, Saskatchewan, is saying that this government has declared rural revenge on rural Saskatchewan and he cannot live with that and he cannot continue to financially exist if this legislation goes into effect in its present form.

He goes on to say that he looks forward to speaking with you in the near future and trusts that you will weigh these considerations and act accordingly. Here the message at the end becomes very much exactly the same as the request of all of the other business groups who have expressed their interests and their specific needs, many of them varying considerably but nevertheless the same bottom line: Minister, hear our message, hear our words, listen to what we have to say, and do something about what you hear; we don't want to be ignored because we can't afford to stay in business if you don't take into account our specific needs.

The warning is loud, the warning is clear. The union leaders who are being paid off by this administration for their support in the last election, will of course ultimately be the losers. If they kill the goose that lays the golden egg, they themselves will certainly be the ones that will pay the price. Because a smaller job base means less members in the union and less control over less people, certainly is not what the union leaders have been looking for.

So I'm saying to them today that while their intention was to get stronger, in fact by getting legislation that gives them what appears to be what they want, they may in fact be destroying that very same possibility; destroying the goose that lays the golden egg.

And rural people consider it to be a fundamental split created by the minister and the leaders of the union movement. They are saying that a wedge is being driven between rural and urban Saskatchewan once again, and they are calling it a revenge on rural Saskatchewan. A revenge that they believe they cannot tolerate because this province will lose its job

base and its tax base.

I have another transmission from yet another small business, The Bird Machine of Canada. Now this appears to be a business in Saskatoon and they express their concerns. The subject is: Revisions to The Labour Standards Act. It goes on to say that:

The proposed changes to The Labour Standards Act will have a significant effect on our business. The particular concerns are as follows. Number one, we do not employ part-time workers but our full-time workers have their shifts changed on short notice due to a fluctuating work load. It is my understanding that we will be required to give our employees at least one week's notice prior to a shift change.

Our customers often ask us to do work for them on a very short notice which requires me to change the shift schedule at the end of the week for the following week. If we must give a week's notice for shift schedules, we will have to schedule people on the undesirable evening shift whether we need them or not. This will make the employees discontent rather than solving any problems.

Well, Mr. Speaker, here we have yet another problem that is fundamentally different than all of the others that were pointed out in the many letters and correspondences that we've gone through earlier.

(1615)

Here we have another unique situation. In this man's business — I'm presuming that this is a gentleman that wrote the letter, it may have been a lady; I'll presume it was a man — in this gentleman's business he quite clearly states that they don't have part-time workers, whereas most of the other people who have expressed their opinions of problems, have had the area of part-time workers as their major problem and major issue of concern.

These people say that in fact it is the full-time workers who will be having the problem and that the government needs to consider how this legislation is going to affect these full-time workers and the relationship between management and labour in the Bird Machine Company.

His no. 2 concern:

A change of the notice requirement for lay-offs to be much longer than the current notice period will require me to issue lay-off notice, not knowing if the lay-off is actually required.

Now I used an example earlier, Mr. Speaker, about how the construction industry would run into problems with these lay-off notices and now we find another individual with the same problem but a much clearer definition of how the problem will in fact occur.

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

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to introduce four young gentlemen sitting in your gallery, Jeff and John Goohsen and Clint and Justin Guenther, who have come in this afternoon to observe proceedings and I'm sure they are listening with interest, especially Jeff and John, as their dad is debating here this afternoon, and his nephews. And we want to welcome them and I invite all members to welcome these young gentlemen to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 32

(continued)

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I'd have known they were coming, I'd have asked them to bring my glasses.

I certainly am glad to see my family here today and I hope they take note of how interested the government is in everything I have to say, especially on this labour issue that is so important to the people of Saskatchewan.

But anyway, Mr. Speaker, I guess we'd better get on with the subject at hand because it's so important to the people of Saskatchewan to have their opportunity today to express through my words their feelings and their needs, their feelings with regard to the labour legislation and their need to be heard by the minister and their need to have the minister actually listen to their concerns and to act on them and not just simply pass them off.

I was quoting from a fax transmission that we received, a sheet here from the Bird Machine Company wherein they were pointing out their individual problems and the way this legislation will affect their industry and their business. He goes on to say:

As already mentioned, the fluctuating workload from my customers is unpredictable. There is a core group of employees that are never laid off, but there is a group of at least senior who do come and go depending on the workload. With the requirements for a longer notice period I will have to issue lay-off notices to be sure I comply with the legislation. However when the time comes for the lay-off, I may still need this person.

That certainly has to be a serious problem for this type of work. And obviously there will be a request from these individuals for the regulations to be changed such that there would be a special ruling or an exemption for this particular company.

Now I'm going to make a suggestion, Mr. Speaker, that with the evidence that we have mounting and the piles of material that we have had to go through, the exceptions to the rules are becoming so numerous that we will have to have so many regulations, so many regulations governing the individual problems in our province, that in effect it will be unmanageable. Nobody will ever know for sure who's exempt from what because we're going to end up with hundreds and hundreds of regulations to take care of all the specific, individual problems that are occurring in our province and being brought to our attention.

Now this issuing of lay-off notices will create great uncertainty amongst the less senior of my employees which . . .

Oh I'd better finish this. Okay.

Because of proposed changes, I am very concerned that they will not have the desired effect on an important work environment, and ask that you reconsider these changes.

Once again a plea from the public for the minister to listen to their problems and to put into the legislation the necessary changes that will allow his business to continue to work so that he can be fair to his employers, especially his senior employers in this case.

Now we've talked at length about areas where younger workers were going to be hurt by this legislation. Now we have a very clear and distinct example expressed to us about a problem that will result in seniors having a problem at this particular business. And that will go into many other business areas as well, Mr. Speaker. So we have still more people being affected negatively by this legislation.

Now just to go on, so the minister knows that we haven't just picked a couple of these things up, that there are many of them, and he has to know that this is a public pressure demand on him from many sectors so that we can ensure that he will take it seriously and do what has to be done, we have from . . . I'm just trying to decide if this is the one that I thought. Oh yes, Precision Service & Engineering Ltd., and this would be from North Industries Park in Prince Albert, another fine city in our province that has also taken note of the labour legislation.

It goes on:

Re Bill 32, An Act to amend The Labour Standards Act. As a fairly large employer in Prince Albert we have always enjoyed a good relationship with our employees by paying them good wages and treating them fair, not by wielding a big stick. It appears as if the

provincial government could learn from this on dealing with employers in the province, as this legislation is guaranteed not to improve relationships or cooperation with business.

There are some parts of this Act that will affect our operations that we believe have been poorly thought out. The following items are ones that we are very concerned with.

Well, Mr. Speaker, here we have now from Prince Albert, another city in our province, deep and serious concerns about this labour legislation and the effect that it will have on the people in our province. And I think it is incumbent upon the minister to take a close listen to the problems that these people are expressing. Because without any doubt, when we finish with going through these items, the bottom line is going to be the same.

I haven't read all the way through this, but I'm going to make a prediction that the bottom line will be, stop what you're doing and research it, correspond with people, talk to people, and let's try to do it better. Let's get it right.

Dismissal for illness and injury, part (1). This part of the Act does nothing to address an employee who has several sporadic illnesses such as missing three days of work at a time, 14 to 15 times a year. As an employer who relies on an employee being at work to do a job, how could you live with absences such as that? Part of the job performance is being at work and able to do the job, and if an employee is constantly absent because of illness, an employer's only recourse is dismissal.

Now here is an argument that is considerably different than those that we have heard from other segments of society. But it is a specific concern related to this person's business and the people that he employs. So here again, we would probably find these people asking the minister to bring in a regulation that would offset this problem that is being created for his business.

I don't know how many regulations we're up to now, but I suspect that it's going to be in the tens of tens and perhaps even the hundreds. Because here we have another example of how a blanket legislation will not serve the needs of this particular industry.

The number two problem, the reassignment of disabled employees.

The problem I have with this section is that the employee is being made a ward of the employer. There is nothing to differentiate between an employee becoming disabled because of an accident on or off the job, sickness or physical deterioration. Most employers try to accommodate employees who become disabled, but to legislate this into the Act is like asking for a revolt among employers in the future, not to mention a legal

nightmare.

Certainly here again, Mr. Speaker, another very specific area of concern and interest to the community of Prince Albert and Precision Service & Engineering Ltd. They find here, in their business, a specific problem and a specific area of concern that the minister needed to be brought aware of. And he doesn't seem to have built this consideration into the legislation nor has he given any comfort to these people that he has heard their message.

So I say to the minister, hear the cry of the people today. The message they are giving you is that there are too many problems being created with your legislation and not enough attention being paid to the need for solutions.

He goes on to say that there is a third problem area.

The lay-off notice provision is also a problem for this industry. This increase in break in service to 13 weeks from 14 days is extremely poorly thought out. It is obviously put in place by someone who has never had to run an operation where temporary lay-offs due to lack of work are a fact of life.

With this type of provision in place, virtually all of our employees would require a maximum of 10 weeks notice. In times of poor economic or possible lack of work, we would be forced to give lay-off notice to most of our people once a week. Do you know what kind of effect that could have on morale of an operation? When an employer has to lay off workers because of lack of work, they are generally losing money already, without further penalizing them with these types of restrictive conditions. If the break in service time must be increased, four weeks is a much more reasonable time.

Please review the above changes in the legislation with a view in mind of the employer who must try to operate a business and make a profit. Without these businesses and the profits they make, there will be no need for any legislation as there will be no employees to protect.

I think that's a very clear message, Mr. Speaker, for the minister. Because if there are no businesses, there are no jobs. And if your legislation is going to destroy the business base of our province, then we have no need for legislation because there won't be any workers left in the province.

Coming from the Battlefords, another message — another message, Mr. Speaker, requesting the attention of the minister. The message that we have is that this message to the minister either wasn't read or didn't sink in, because people don't believe that the minister is acting on their behalf in taking into consideration their needs and concerns.

I'll just quote a little bit of this letter so that the minister

knows how serious the people from the Battlefords and the Battleford Chamber of Commerce, how serious they are about this matter. They say in their letter:

As our members continue to review the proposed changes to the labour standards regulations, there is growing concern of a negative impact to individual businesses and the Saskatchewan economy in general.

Additional non-statutory benefits such as medical benefits will be difficult to secure and impossible to administrate. Scheduling of part-time workers with an extended notice requirement and seniority-assured work will significantly reduce the existing part-time labour force.

A clear message, Mr. Speaker, from these people in the Battlefords, telling the minister of the problems that his legislation will create for their city and for their businesses and, most importantly, for the employees themselves.

They go on to say that:

We have been advised that existing businesses with head office jurisdictions in other provinces with less demanding labour legislation will be seriously looking at withdrawing their services from such a demanding workplace atmosphere.

(1630)

Now that's pretty significant, Mr. Speaker, because what they are saying is that businesses that now have a head office in another jurisdiction may in fact simply say goodbye to Saskatchewan and pull their operations out of this province.

We've warned the minister about this possibility and the fact that it could be a reality. Now we have the people themselves sending us letters saying, Minister, this is reality; the people who run these businesses simply will not tolerate the headache and the adverse business atmosphere; they will pull their operations out of this province and they will leave.

Now he goes on to say that:

We respectfully submit to you that the proposed changes to the provincial Labour Standards Act will increase unemployment. Implementation must be delayed and some of the proposed changes modified to meet the needs of Saskatchewan business.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, here we have Donna Challis, president of the Battlefords Chamber of Commerce, sending a letter to the people in the government, begging them to listen to their advice; soliciting the minister to make the necessary changes in public to this legislation, so that people will know what the rules are before they sign this blank cheque

that the government is asking for when they say they want this legislation to be passed in its present form, without amendments, and without the regulations being on the table for everybody to see.

But I sense, Mr. Speaker, that the minister is not yet convinced that his changes are needed. And with that view, I want to bring to him the message of yet another small-business person in our province. Because their needs need to be heard, and the minister needs to have the opportunity to be able to say that he has heard from the people.

And if he can't take the time to understand it all because it's so overwhelming, he at least will have it in the record of *Hansard* and he can get his officials to study it later and they can come up with some worthwhile suggestions on how he can revise his legislation and make it workable for this province.

I have a letter here from Melfort, another beautiful town in Saskatchewan, the Thomson Meats Ltd. It says a tradition of quality, and I'm quite sure it is. It goes on, Mr. Speaker, to say that:

After our February 10, 1994 meeting at our plant here in Melfort, I must tell you how badly betrayed I feel when I read over your new labour Act proposals.

Betrayed is a powerful word, Mr. Speaker, and these people feel that they must put it in writing to the minister so that he can hear exactly how they feel about the way he has treated them. But to be fair, I better continue and bring the whole message:

In our discussions you stated you were going after the large companies that abused part-time workers. We could not argue with that. But what in fact you have done is said that every employer in Saskatchewan is a mean-spirited criminal; we don't treat our employees fairly; they need government protection

Get your head out of the sand. Your inputs are coming from old line union bosses who are so out of touch with the working men these days that their only real interest is to protect their cushy lifestyle. I would have thought dictatorship on all of our Crown corporations should be enough to keep them happy and comfortable.

Powerful statements, Mr. Speaker, from disgruntled taxpayers and unhappy citizens in our province. People who are betrayed. People who feel that the union bosses are being paid off with cushy lifestyles at the expense of the ordinary businessman in our province.

And at the expense of course in the end, the ultimate end, at the expense of employees themselves, the very people that these union leaders claim to defend, when in fact this gentleman predicts that all they're after is a cushy, dictatorial lifestyle for themselves. Possibly true. Something we must take into account.

Well this man seems to have put the target on it so well, Mr. Speaker, that I think I should continue and put the rest of his thoughts into *Hansard*:

Your government keeps telling us to compete globally; export value added products; be efficient, smart small businesses; hire people; and on and on.

Do you forget, or did you ever know that we Saskatchewan small businesses already operate with an unlevel playing-field, and now it will be much worse. Try to schedule under your new rules lay-off notices of 13 weeks. Where is small business to get the crystal ball that you must have to operate like this? And why the cut-off of 20 employees? Is 40 employees a large company? Good question. Why isn't your media full of stories of small Saskatchewan companies abusing their workers? If they were, it might demonstrate a need for this type of action. Who asked for this anyway? Why do you not include something for employer rights? Are we really that bad?

This gentleman asks very, very important questions. I think what he's saying, Mr. Speaker, is if it ain't broke, why are we fixing it? And if it is broke, how come nobody's told us what's broken?

I think this is a very reasonable request of questions that need to be answered for the general public. Why fix it if it isn't broken, and if it is broken, which parts are broken? And identify them clearly and distinctly in public and let the people know what's going to happen and what the resolution to the problem is going to be. In other words, put your amendments and your regulations on the table for everyone to study and to understand.

His letter goes on to say that:

No one will gain from this move. You may pick up a few votes at the start, but did you really need them? Small business is expected to pull us out of this depression. Why are you trying to kill it?

I may sound upset, and I am. When we met with you we did not have a hidden agenda as you did. We were prepared to support you and your changes. Why the double-cross?

Signed by Lorne Thomson, the general manager.

Mr. Minister, I'll challenge you to answer this man and the several questions that he has asked you, because they are legitimate questions and I think they demand that you pay attention and answer his queries and his inquiries and his concerns. A man who now, Mr. Speaker, not only feels betrayed, but badly betrayed.

A man who took time out of his business life to meet with ministerial officials, to meet to discuss the proposed changes, who was told how those changes

were going to work, who had an explanation given to him in such a nice way that he agreed with them; only to find out that when those people went back to the big city of Regina they draft legislation that says totally the opposite to what he was promised.

And his words will echo through this province for generations to come when this government has finished — the government that betrayed the people. This, the government that badly betrayed Lorne Thomson of Thomson Meats in Melfort, Saskatchewan.

There has been and remains a constant need, Mr. Speaker, for the people in this government to know and understand the depths to which the discontent over this legislation sinks through this province. This problem is so serious and so controversial that we need to put to the minister every possible argument.

And so I want to go on to express now the concerns and the needs of one of our bigger corporations. We have just done a few of the smaller business operations and their concerns and they are, realistically, somewhat different than the concerns that the big umbrella groups had, which we talked about and discussed earlier.

But now I want to bring to the attention of the minister, Mr. Speaker, the concerns of one of our bigger industries who speaks for itself — the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Here we have a letter that goes on to explain their points of view.

And I think I'll just quote a little of it so the minister will understand where the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan stands on this issue — the Allan division, re Bill 32, An Act to amend The Labour Standards Act.

Bill 32, as it currently reads, will be a major set-back to any hope of economic recovery in Saskatchewan. Not only will it deter any enterprise who has thought about establishing a business in this province, it will drive away many that are in operation now.

A very clear and loud message, Mr. Speaker, to the minister in charge of Labour. To the Premier of this province this should be a loud and clear message from one of the bigger corporations in our province.

It goes on to say:

The following outlines are concerns regarding the proposed amendments to The Labour Standards Act as they specifically relate to the potash industry in Saskatchewan. Our industry is a major contributor to the economy of Saskatchewan. It is important to note that mining is the second largest industry in the province, next to agriculture.

As you are no doubt aware, the potash industry over the past 13 years has been coping with a worldwide over-surplus situation which in turn

has depressed prices. The net effect has seen our industry undergo significant periods of lay-offs and permanent manpower reductions in order to remain competitive.

Here, Mr. Speaker, we have one of the largest corporate groups in our province, one of our major employers in this province, one of our major money makers in this province, I dare say one of the bigger taxpayers in this province, expressing absolute concern about this legislation and its effects on their industry. It goes on to say that:

It is also important to note that our industry compete in the global market-place. As our cost of production increases, we cannot simply pass off these higher costs. To do so would price ourselves out of the market-place, resulting in further lay-offs and workforce reductions.

My concern is that Bill 32 will significantly increase our costs and place unnecessary constraints on our ability to operate. These amendments are being passed through the legislature without proper review, costing, and consultation. The regulations themselves have not been drafted yet, which may have even higher cost implications for employers.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister must soon be getting the message that the business community as well as the umbrella groups of this province, as well as the third level of government in this province, as well as the employers themselves, and even Barb Byers, is unhappy with your legislation. It must be clear, crystal clear to you by now that it's time to table this legislation until the next legislature is called. Tear this document up and start over. Do it right. Go back to the drawing-board with the people of Saskatchewan.

(1645)

Here we have the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan shivering in its boots as they go on to say in their letter:

It is imperative that employers be given more time to study these amendments and to point out to the lawmakers where potential problems may develop. These amendments will invariably have an adverse impact on the workers of Saskatchewan (and one group which this Act is supposedly designed to help.)

An example of this are the revisions to section 43, which increases the period of lay-off notice to a maximum of 10 weeks. Because of the cyclical nature of our business, we have negotiated into our collective agreement shortened periods of lay-off notice for short-term shut-downs in order to better handle fluctuations in the market-place and ultimately reduce the negative impact of extended lay-offs on our employees.

These proposed changes to lay-off notice periods will jeopardize this situation. We will no longer be able to react to changes in market conditions, resulting in the potential for extended periods of lay-offs or permanent closure.

Here, Mr. Speaker, we have clearly a very significant problem that the Potash Corporation faces because of the uniqueness of part of their business structure. Once again these people will be back to the government saying, we need a regulation that specifically takes care of our problem. I'm not sure now if we're at regulation 50, 60, 100, or maybe 200.

How many specific, individual problems will we come across? We certainly may end up writing a book of regulations. And that book simply may be so large that no one will ever be able to understand how many changes are in it or how it affects the general population when it's finished. We are in a mission of utter chaos.

It goes on though to say that:

The revisions to section 72 is also significant, to say the least. Many of the employers in the potash industry have been unionized for over 25 years. This long history of collective bargaining has addressed many of the concerns that affect individual employees. The revision to section 72 virtually erodes away these many years of collective bargaining in areas such as lay-off notice, notice of schedule change, statutory holiday pay, absenteeism control, to name just a few. Legislation such as this compromises the principles of free collective bargaining and explores areas that are best left to the parties involved to resolve in a manner best suited for their particular industry.

There is a very clear and concise solution, Mr. Speaker, to the problems that exist — let the people who have the problems solve their problem through collective bargaining, the way they've done it in the past 25 years.

I think the message is clear. These people don't believe that the machine is broken and they don't believe that this minister should try to fix it. And if he does try to fix it, they believe that he will probably put the parts on the wrong places and destroy the whole operation.

The letter concludes:

Bill 32 is unacceptable as it reads now. One, technical flaws in the legislation have to be corrected.

Regulations have been developed so that a full cost impact can be calculated.

Three, further consultation with business can be conducted to make the legislation workable and cost effective.

And it says here that if you wish to discuss this further, they would be quite happy to meet with you, Minister. I sincerely suggest to you that you take them up on that offer and that you drive up there tonight, because this is too pressing a problem to wait till the morning. Take them up on their offer; get over there and find out what you can do to solve the problems in this province rather than to be the creator of these problems.

Well, Minister, as we go along in this debate, I find that I have so many documents of complaints that I rather doubt if we'll get them all included, but I'm going to try to get some of the more important ones finished.

We do need to put on the record a few of the comments from the McDonald people that I talked about earlier, because there are several areas of concern and several different operations throughout the province. And to make sure that you understand that it's not only one or two people, that there is a broad spectrum of people out here, of a broad base of concern, we need to follow this further.

I'll quote from a letter that we have here from Alex Marion's restaurants. I believe they're here in Regina — at least that's their address. And it starts out:

As an independent owner-operator of a quick service restaurant, I am writing to express my outrage with The Labour Standards Act amendments introduced on March 11, 1994.

For myself and other members of the food service industry, these amendments represent onerous and costly measures that will ultimately hurt employees, as we will be forced to cut back on the number of people we employ in order to find a more economical and feasible way to run our business successfully. This could result in the automation, or bringing ready-made products from other provinces. This move would no doubt jeopardize this province's economic position.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, another point of view that expresses the problems that can result. Here we have the fast-food industry telling the minister loud and clear, that if they can't survive with the labour laws here, they'll simply start having the hamburgers manufactured and assembled in Manitoba and truck them into Saskatchewan. Truck them into Saskatchewan in the frozen state and then they will have an automatic machine that will feed them through the fireplace, heating them up and dumping them into your car as you drive by. And you'll have self-serve. Put two bits in the machine and out comes a hamburger, probably two loonies but . . .

And no jobs. I can see it happening. You're driving by McDonald's, you throw two loonies in the machine, out comes a big mac. Not one person gets employed. The truck backs up to the back door . . .

You remember, some of you farmers must remember,

the bale loaders they came out with here a few years ago. New Holland manufactured them. Exactly the same process — this is the industrial revolution at its best. The machine drives along and picks up the bale and puts in a stack on the machine. After a while the farmer takes the load and he dumps it off in a stack neatly and he drives away. Not a human hand touched the bale.

But alas, some farmers said, I need to put these bales up in a loft in the barn and I don't want to have to pick them off the pile and put them on the elevator, so New Holland invented a machine that unloads the load, one bale at a time, dumps them on to the conveyor up into the loft, never touched by a human hand.

Why not a hamburger off the truck on an assembly line, manufactured in Winnipeg, comes to Saskatchewan, backs up to the door, pushes the button, the door opens, and the machine starts delivering hamburgers, poppity pop into the storage area on conveyor belts; from there they go through the fireplace into the coin machine and you stick in two bucks and out comes a hamburger. Not one kid employed in the whole province of Saskatchewan; the entire McDonald's industry can survive without labour.

Is that what you really want, to destroy every job that every kid in this province has probably worked at at some time or other after school? No opportunity to make a dime. No opportunity to make a little money for gas to drive the car out to get your girlfriend. What a sick society we are trying to develop when we force our industries to automate every job and destroy them and have nothing left.

The people from McDonald's are telling you loud and clear, shake your head, there's a reality out here that could happen. A reality that we can eliminate the jobs and we can still survive. Is that what you really want — no more jobs, no more people employed? I think not.

It goes on clearly, and I want to give this man an opportunity to be heard on the record:

It is clear that the proposed amendments will result in significant increases in labour costs, making it almost impossible for business operators to sustain their current employment levels. Higher labour costs will also put upward pressure on the price of goods and services in Saskatchewan, giving neighbouring provinces a competitive advantage in business.

Can it be any clearer than that? You're giving competitive edge to the people who don't manufacture or work in this province. Competitive edge to the people in other areas of the country and of the world.

It goes on, on a more specific level:

The implications for the food service industry are disastrous. You are imposing regulations on

food service operators which become of the nature of the industry, e.g., high proportion of part-time employees, seasonal fluctuations will result in excessively high labour costs and restrictions on our ability to operate efficiently.

Can it be any more clearer than that, Mr. Speaker? They have no ability to operate efficiently and be competitive in business.

For example, it goes on:

An unexpected stretch of good weather can bring about a dramatic and immediate increase in food service sales. How can operators meet this increase in demand and also provide employees with a one-week notice of scheduling change? By eliminating an employer's flexibility in scheduling, you are denying any employees the opportunity to work additional hours, and you are reducing the level of service operators can provide to their customers. This measure is simply not workable in the food service industry.

So here once again, Mr. Speaker, this gentleman clearly points out the flaws of this legislation and its inability to work in the province of Saskatchewan. But he goes on:

Given the punitive impact these proposals will have on virtually all areas of the business sector, the integrity of your stakeholders' consultation is highly questionable. It appears that the proposals are intended to address the government's perception that employment standards violations are widespread. This is simply not the case, and it is irresponsible of the government to develop and impose legislation in this manner. Further, many of the legislative proposals go far beyond the concept of minimum standards.

Now, Mr. Speaker, here we clearly have a very upset person in the food service industry who writes to us that:

It is imperative that you consult further with the food service industry to develop legislative amendments which are balanced, workable, and conducive to the economic revitalization. In the absence of responsible action by you on this matter, how can I continue to run a viable interest and in turn do my part to provide jobs?

There are significant questions being asked, Mr. Minister, by a legitimate businessman who wants to know from you how he is to exist under your labour law in the future. What you need to do, sir, is to tear up this legislation, go back to the people and talk to them, and redo this whole mess.

There's no question in my mind, from the tons of correspondence and the many calls that we've had, that people in this province are absolutely united in their request that you change this legislation and that

you start consulting with people with your ears open and take a lesson and listen, rather than to impose your will for purely political reasons — to pay off the union leaders for their support in the last election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — You're paying them off, everybody knows that's what you're up to.

And it is, without any question, the wrong thing to be doing because the people of the province have not been snowed by this action. They know full well what you're up to and they're not going to tolerate you giving cushy jobs — as one person put it in their letter — cushy ways of lifestyle for the union leaders at the expense of the rest of the people in this province; while the workers lose their jobs, while their collective bargained agreements are destroyed by your legislation — agreements that they hammered out themselves, that they put together in negotiations, long and hard hours of work that you're going to destroy with this legislation.

Those people have a right to be heard. Those people have a right to be listened to. And they have a right to have the legislation that will protect the work that they've done in the past. They are not asking you to fix what isn't broken; they're asking you to allow them to coexist in a world that can only function with a coexistence policy and a coexistence style of labour legislation. You cannot appease one side totally, without balance, and expect this province to survive economically. You cannot expect the people of this province to do . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. It now being 5 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.