

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of 4,800 individuals who are concerned about the effects of certain changes to the health care delivery system that have been proposed by the Saskatoon District Health Board.

The preamble of the petition reads:

That the decisions made by the Saskatoon Health Board to close the emergency . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. The member should know that he can only read the prayer, and not the preamble. The member may proceed in reading the prayer.

**Mr. McPherson:** —

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the Minister of Health to examine the proposal to close the emergency and cardiac care at the City Hospital and to involve the medical staff at City Hospital in an open review process before any decision is finalized; examine all proposals for alternative approaches with a view to seeking a solution to keep the emergency cardiac care unit open at City Hospital; to delay any renovations at Royal University Hospital needed to accommodate the decision to close emergency and cardiac care at the City Hospital until a full consultation with City Hospital nursing staff, medical staff, has taken place and their alternative proposals have been examined; to respect the voices of the thousands of taxpayers who have signed this petition to ask that the new City Hospital financed by their tax dollars will provide safe and efficient health care including the components of emergency care and cardiac care which it was designed to deliver; to report to the petitioner within three days of the presentation of this petition the decision of the minister with respect to the requests outlined in this petition.

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

**NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS**

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on day 72 I shall ask the government the following question:

Regarding the reservoir Sask Water was to construct on the Battle Creek south of Cypress

Hills through money set aside by the PFRA: (1) have all the environmental assessments or studies been completed on this project; (2) is the project proceeding; if not, why not; (3) could you supply a brief chronology on the events from inception date; and (4) when is the estimated date of completion for this project?

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my constituency of Kindersley being as far from the capital as it is, we seldom have visitors. But today, however, this historic day in the legislature, I indeed do have visitors.

I'd like you, Mr. Speaker, through you and to you to members of the Assembly, to welcome 38 grade 7 students from Westberry School in Kindersley. They are accompanied by their teachers, John Yellowlees and Doug Klassen, and 14 other parents, Mr. Speaker. I would ask all members of the Assembly to please join with me in welcoming them to the legislature this afternoon.

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

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the members of the Legislative Assembly welcome with me today and to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, John and Mildred Egnatoff. John was an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from 1948 to 1952 in the constituency of Melfort.

John is the past president of Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, Canadian school trustees association, the Canadian Education Association, and a member of the Order of Canada. Would you please welcome him.

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

**Mr. Koenker:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you today to members of the Assembly, Dwayne Hartle, who was the administrative vice-president at the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union last year. I'd like all members to welcome Dwayne.

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with my colleague from Shaunavon in welcoming Dr. John Egnatoff here. I haven't seen Dr. Egnatoff for a long time, and I had the privilege of shaking his hands on the steps. Dr. Egnatoff and I go along together a long, long way, not necessarily in politics, but there was a time, back in 1958, that I was attending teachers' college, and my English instructor in teachers' college was none other than Dr. John Egnatoff. And my perfect English these days is totally his responsibility.

So, Dr. Egnatoff, welcome here, and good to see you again.

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

**Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce two special guests who are here with us today from the United Kingdom, which is even further away than the member from Kindersley. And they were here and able to witness the ceremony that took place outside. They're in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I'll ask them to rise as I introduce them. Lieutenant Colonel Sean O'Dwyer, private secretary to His Royal Highness, the Prince Edward, and Inspector Stephen Rogers, police officer for His Royal Highness, the Prince Edward. Both of these gentlemen are here to prepare for the working visit of His Royal Highness, the Prince Edward, to Saskatchewan in August.

I would like to ask all members of the House to join me in extending a warm welcome to Saskatchewan and to this Assembly today.

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

**Mr. Kujawa:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to the House a pair of special guests. I would ask them to rise as I introduce Darlene Clarke, who is with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, involved in education, and she has with her a guest. And talking about being far-out, I'd like to say that this is even further out. The special guest is Larissa Ponomarenko from Ukraine.

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

**Mr. Kujawa:** — She is interested in educational psychology, has been working on that here. And the member from Prince Albert Carlton and myself hope to be guests of hers in the Ukraine in July of this year.

Welcome our guests, please.

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a very special group of individuals to introduce to the House today on behalf of both the Minister of Health and myself, and I want to assure members that none of them are far-out.

They are, Mr. Speaker, representatives of a variety of health and caring and concerned organizations in our province. I was privileged to have them join with me this morning as we released publicly a consultation on health and safety issues that we have done with young people in the province.

We have representatives in the House today from the Saskatchewan Heart Health Coalition, Regina Heart Healthy Partners, the Saskatchewan Interagency Council on Smoking and Health, the Provincial Health Council, the Saskatchewan Public Health Association, the Saskatchewan Cancer Society, the Saskatchewan Lung Association, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Saskatchewan, Driving Without Impairment advocates, the Saskatchewan Safety

Council, the Students Against Drinking and Driving, the Canadian Automobile Association of Saskatchewan, and the Regina Health Board. I would appreciate it if all members would welcome these very special guests.

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

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the Deputy Premier today in welcoming our two distinguished guests from the United Kingdom here today to our Assembly and to the ceremonies which are taking place today.

We are all looking forward in this province to the royal visit this fall. They are always very special events to us in this province and, as a member of this Assembly, I've had the privilege to be part of many of them and we very much look forward . . . So I hope that you do your work in a fantastic way and that everything will be well prepared for the Prince's visit and I'd ask all members to help me welcome them here.

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

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Saskatoon Multicultural Council

**Ms. Lorje:** — Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago the Saskatoon Multicultural Council was formed to celebrate the rich variety of cultures that have come together in Canada, to encourage recognition of our differences while promoting unity, and to combat systemic racism in our society.

On Saturday I will be attending the anniversary celebrations of the Multicultural Council in the Centennial Auditorium in Saskatoon. One obvious and effective way to eliminate racism is to promote understanding amongst ourselves. Celebrating the arts and entertainment heritages of our different cultures is one way of promoting such understanding.

The show is called "Magic Carpet Ride: Celebrating our Roots". It will be a multi-media presentation of song and dance. At least 14 dance and music groups representing our rich mix of cultures will take part.

Mr. Speaker, the evening is dedicated to entertainment and I know we will be entertained, but we will also be reminded in almost a subliminal way that what makes our society unique and vibrant is its multiple roots. In recognition of our variety lies our unity; in recognition of our unity lies the means to eliminate racism, or as the Saskatchewan motto says: from many peoples, strength. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Tribute to Saskatchewan Express

**Mr. Knezacek:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to announce to the Assembly that the Saskatchewan Express is engaging on its 13th season. Saskatchewan Express offers Saskatchewan singers,

dancers, and musicians performance opportunities as well as special training for production in arts administration personnel.

Over the years they have fostered an outstanding reputation across Saskatchewan and Canada. Saskatchewan Express brings a special kind of dynamic, home-grown entertainment wherever they perform.

The cast was selected after intense auditions which were held in March. The turnout for this year's auditions was tremendous, as 86 performers who represented 35 different cities and towns across Saskatchewan hoped to be a part of Saskatchewan Express. I would like to congratulate the 14 performers who were selected, and I would especially like to commend Devra Straker, a vocalist from the town of Saltcoats in my constituency.

Saskatchewan Express will be performing throughout Saskatchewan this summer including extended runs at the Saskatoon Prairieland and Buffalo Days exhibitions. They will also be touring to St. John, New Brunswick in August to perform at the 10th anniversary of the Festival by the Sea.

Mr. Speaker, once again I would like to congratulate the performers who were selected to this year's Saskatchewan Express. And I would also like to urge everyone to go to see a performance by these talented artists. Thank you.

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

#### **Seed Potato Sale to Idaho**

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to bring to the attention of the Assembly more good news from the Rosetown-Elrose constituency. Yesterday the Hon. Andy Renaud and I were privileged to attend the unveiling of an exciting new venture for Saskatchewan, a venture which is a natural outgrowth of the energy of the people of the Lucky Lake area.

Yesterday in Lucky Lake, the Coteau Hills Potato Corporation, a company of about 25 people from the area, announced its agreement to work with two potato seed producers from Idaho, Randy Bauscher and George Grant, through their new company, Sask-Ida Farms Incorporated, to begin a new agricultural diversification project.

These partners in this first phase of their development will grow approximately 600 acres of potatoes for sale as seed. Idaho farmers experience 20 per cent higher yields with seed potatoes from Saskatchewan than with seed potatoes produced in their own state. This provides a special market for our product in Idaho, and also results in opportunities to market internationally with special emphasis on Mexico and the Far East.

Mr. Speaker, I'm excited by the special opportunities for farmers and agricultural businesses in my

constituency which will result from the expansion of this project to include more potatoes, local processing, and the development of other new crops and agricultural diversification products.

I wish to congratulate my constituents on their initiative in this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Fire on Neudorf Farm**

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Friday the Neudorf farm came within a whisker of having the largest pork roast in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, 2,500 round bales and seven of our barns at our hog operation fell victim to a fire which started Friday at noon. Mr. Speaker, we consider ourselves very fortunate in that only a few animals were lost and most importantly no one was injured in fighting the blaze.

On behalf of my entire family, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Hague, Osler, and RM (rural municipality) fire departments who did a tremendous job, the men and women of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), and Duncan Campbell and his water bomber crew of the forestry fire management branch. And I would particularly like to thank the nearly 200 people from the Hague area who joined in rounding up the many animals which had scattered throughout the countryside, many working through the night.

Mr. Speaker, it was certainly heartening to see that kind of generous support which was so quickly and unselfishly given in our time of need. The spirit and cooperation and goodwill, which Saskatchewan people are famous for, was certainly evidenced last Friday.

While material loss was sustained, it is nothing compared to the God-given health and family we still enjoy. What could have been a tragedy was instead a reaffirmation of my belief that we have the greatest province with the greatest people in the country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Saskatoon Summer Tourist Attractions**

**Mrs. Teichrob:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to make what should be at least five statements in one.

This summer, as every summer, Saskatoon is the place to be if you're looking for cultural events, musical events, sports events or if you just want a tall, cold drink in a congenial setting.

For instance, from June 24 to July 3 the Saskatchewan Jazz Festival will be presenting 350 artists in 120 performances, many of them free. Two headliners are the Jay McShann Trio and the Mighty Clouds of Joy Gospel Choir.

Once more we have Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan — Shakespeare in a tent, performed by very talented people. Headlining this summer is *Hamlet*, a play about a politician who couldn't make up his mind.

For the absurdly inclined, the play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is also on the agenda. For those who like their drama a bit more experimental, the Fringe Festival on Broadway is their cup of espresso. The Fringe features street theatre, buskers, challenging new plays, and good times.

We have the All Arabian Horse Show, the Saskatoon Exhibition, the Wanuskewin Heritage Park and our own Folkfest; and in August, *Les Misérables*.

Something for everyone announced in 90 seconds — pleasure for the whole summer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave, to introduce other guests.

**The Speaker:** — It's unusual because we're still in statements by members, but the member may proceed.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll make a short statement by this member and ask all members present through you, sir, to welcome a group of students in the grade 4 class at William Grayson School in Moose Jaw, who I didn't realize earlier were . . . I'm happy to say, are seated in the east gallery.

Mr. Speaker, these students are here accompanied by their teacher, Pat Barbier. I would ask all members to welcome the students.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Gambling Help Line

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister of gambling.

Mr. Minister, yesterday it was revealed that the people at your gambling hot line have been referring the calls they receive to members of gambling anonymous without their consent. And that's a total violation of the confidentiality that organizations like Gamblers Anonymous operate under and shows a real lack of understanding of the problem of gambling addiction by your government. And I quote:

This is a flagrant violation of confidentiality, the

sacrosanct traditions of Gamblers Anonymous, and the integrity of Saskatchewan citizens by a minister and a government which has obfuscated, insulted, and misled Saskatchewan people on this whole issue. These actions demonstrate total ignorance of the problem of compulsive gambling, the government's total inability to deal with it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask you now: will you, under the circumstances, issue a formal apology to the persons whose confidentiality you violated? And will you give us assurance that this deplorable method will stop immediately?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to explain to the member and all members present precisely the system that is in place surrounding the 1-800 phone-in line for those who will feel they have a problem with gambling.

On a 24-hour basis, Mr. Speaker, that line is available to residents of our province if someone dials the number. That is, the phone is answered in one of our mobile crisis centres by trained crisis counsellors. In conversation with that trained crisis counsellor, the counsellor may determine that a referral to a group like Gamblers Anonymous or some other community group is the appropriate referral.

Mr. Speaker, as early as last November, when we were working then with the existing alcohol and drug 800 line, we contacted a number of individuals who have been involved with Gamblers Anonymous, including those who are indicated in the media yesterday. Mr. Speaker, each of those indicated their willingness, in fact their enthusiasm, to assist in this regard.

As of yesterday when it came to our attention that some may now feel that their role here is inappropriate, I asked officials of the department to follow through, contact again each of those individuals. Four of the individuals remain enthusiastic in offering their services in this regard; two have said they would no longer prefer to do that. And we are thanking them for the work they have done and will look for others to fill their place.

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Further to that topic, Mr. Speaker, obviously someone is not telling the truth. And yours comes from the very same minister who held a big news conference last week and said the 800 number line is up and running and it's working well. Five seconds later we phoned it and it said it was out of service; that it was not operating, Mr. Minister. I remind you of that.

We phoned Mr. Gribbon this morning, Mr. Minister, and he told us that these people never gave any sort of consent to have their names and phone numbers given out in this manner. And he told us that these

people agreed to become Gamblers' Anonymous contact persons for their areas, but did not expect to be receiving calls in the middle of the night. And because your government has basically abused their trust, three of these people have already told Mr. Gribbon that they have no intention of working with your government any more.

And I quote again from that news conference, Mr. Minister.

This government in general, and this minister in particular, demonstrate complete disrespect and contempt for Saskatchewan people. There's no better illustration than the way it has handled this particular situation.

And, Mr. Minister, what were you thinking? Where did you come off passing out the phone numbers of people who are neither trained, nor willing now, to provide this kind of counselling service in this particular fashion, Mr. Minister?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I repeat, and I repeat again for the record, each of those individuals had been contacted as early as last November and asked if they would be willing to allow their names and numbers to be used as referral points to Gamblers' Anonymous, along with a wide variety of other community-based organizations which are being referred to.

Only if appropriate, through the mobile crisis centre, will names . . . will phoners be invited to call these people. All six were contacted; all six agreed. In our phone calls yesterday four of the six have reconfirmed — in fact with enthusiasm — their willingness to serve in this capacity.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when the member refers to the situation of about a week ago, when the 1-800 line first came on stream and failed to produce in those first two hours, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member we learned about that at 20 past 2 and the line was functioning again at 20 past 3.

Now that compares with a situation of four years and \$6 million and members opposite still couldn't get GigaText to work.

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you can joke all you want but I don't think Mr. Gribbon and the people of Saskatchewan are laughing along with you at that kind of grim humour that you're trying to express here this afternoon.

What you've got basically here, Mr. Speaker, is a glorified answer servicing — that's what your line is all about. And you aren't providing the counselling yourself. You are simply referring calls to volunteers, and this is exactly what Mr. Gribbon and his group has to say as well. And I quote:

Some might rather compare your situation to solicitation, Mr. Gribbon said. But it's rape. The government doesn't pay for Gamblers Anonymous and it hasn't obtained consent to use members' names as a resource.

Unquote, Mr. Minister.

So what that begs the question then: if you're not doing any of these things, what are you doing with the \$550,000 you're supposed to be using handling your hotline? If you aren't providing any direct counselling services, where is the money going, Mr. Minister?

Your gambling hotline, would you please admit, is a disaster. And this money is obviously not being used effectively. So, Mr. Minister, will you seek some real, meaningful input with Gamblers Anonymous? Will you talk to these people about how to run your hot line so that you actually will be helping the people whose problems you are helping to multiply?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, let us be clear about one thing. Mr. Gribbon is not speaking on behalf of Gamblers Anonymous; he is speaking on his own behalf and on behalf of his own organization. Let us be clear about that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad for this opportunity to answer these questions, because apparently the member has neither not read nor understands the program that we put in place to prevent and treat gaming addictions, Mr. Speaker. The 1-800 line is one small part of that program.

I repeat again: on a 24-hour, 7 day-a-week basis, in this province, those who feel they may have a difficulty or may wish information or may wish information to help someone who they know has a difficulty, they may phone that line. The line is answered in the mobile crisis centres by skilled, experienced crisis counsellors who, in the phone conversation, will with the caller assess the need and the appropriate direction to follow. It may mean immediate crisis counselling. It may mean referral to one of our very highly trained counsellors in the Department of Health. It may mean referral to a community organization like Gamblers Anonymous.

**An Hon. Member:** — Why don't you get out of gambling and you don't need this hot line?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Now, Mr. Member, if you would listen, the situation is this: we had six people . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. I want to remind the member from Rosthern that I just gave him ample time to ask his question and the minister is trying to answer his question for him. So I would please ask him not to interrupt.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — To complete, for the member's interest, if it is felt appropriate by the crisis counsellor

at the mobile crisis centre that a referral should be made to a community organization like Gamblers Anonymous, that then is done at an appropriate time of day or night.

Mr. Speaker, the six individuals who had indicated their willingness to serve as these referral points for Gamblers Anonymous were again each contacted yesterday. The contact in Prince Albert, the contact in Lloydminster, the contact here in Regina, and the contact in Saskatoon have all agreed enthusiastically to continue the work.

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

#### **Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency Requisitions**

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the minister responsible for Municipal Government. Madam Minister, a number of RMs in the Prince Albert area have had enough of your government downloading in its responsibilities onto municipalities and property taxpayers.

In fact, the nine RMs of the North Central RM Association, Mr. Speaker, have decided to withhold their entire SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) levy this year in protest of your government's actions. They're encouraging other RMs to take similar action and so far they tell us that many of the RMs they have talked to are seriously considering this option.

Madam Minister, before you have a full-scale tax revolt on your hands, what actions are you going to take to lower the SAMA requisition and lower the tax burden on municipalities and property owners in this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — On behalf of the minister, I would advise the Leader of the Opposition that there is in fact a Bill before the legislature which will be up for discussion, if not today, tomorrow, where these questions, I think, could be more appropriately addressed.

The legislation, we believe, does address a number of the concerns which have been outstanding for some time and, I might add, predate the time that this government took office. These problems arose under the administration of which you were a prominent member.

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

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Minister, the legislation is a great deal of the problem. The increases in the SAMA requisition since your government have taken office are astronomical, sir. Let me give you a few examples of what's going on out there.

The RM of Buckland, the SAMA requisition increased

from \$6,700 last year to 18,000; the RM of Prince Albert, 5,900 to 15,400; the RM of Lakeland, 2,000 to 5,000. This is at the same time that you've cut revenue sharing by 8 per cent and continue to download more and more responsibilities onto the property tax base.

Mr. Minister, when is this attack on rural municipalities and rural people going to end? How many more municipalities will have to withhold their levies before you start to listen to the people in this province, Mr. Minister?

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

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — The reduction in funding to municipal governments in the macro, in the average, is about on par with the average reduction in spending in this government. That comes about as a direct result of the years in which the Conservative government was in office, of which you were a member, and which mismanaged the finances of this province so badly.

When you seek to find the author of this problem, you need look no further than yourself, the member sitting beside you, the member to the right of that, and in particular the member who sits three seats to your right. There's the author of the problem.

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

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the author of the problem is a government that doesn't listen. It's interesting, Mr. Minister, that your colleague, the Minister of Justice, has set an example, and more and more people in this province are starting to follow the example of the Minister of Justice.

Obviously, Mr. Minister, these RMs are legally required to pay their levy, but as your colleague is wont to say, there is the law, Mr. Minister, and then there is justice. And municipalities in this province haven't received much justice from your government, Mr. Minister, in the past three years. So now they've taken the appropriate action.

Mr. Minister, where is the money supposed to come from? The RMs have already seen their taxes go up, their services cut, the property values in many cases continue to decline. Will you withdraw that SAMA Bill which is the irritant, Mr. Minister, and go back to the negotiating table and tell these RMs when you are going to stop downloading on them and increasing the property taxes of the people of this province? When are you going to do that?

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

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Speaker, by and large, the municipalities have been supportive of this government's attempt to deal with the legacy of debt which your administration left. And they're particularly relieved that they're not in the province of Alberta, which still has a Conservative government.

You might, for instance, take the municipality of Lloydminster, which the member represents. On the Saskatchewan side, they get a grant of several hundred thousand dollars from this province, \$350,000. From the Alberta government, what do they get as of this year? Zero.

So among the things the municipalities are thankful for, one of them is that they no longer have a Conservative government in office.

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

### Rural Health Care

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is directed to the Minister of Health. I recently received a call from a constituent who had to travel to Saskatoon in order to have surgery at University Hospital.

The day she arrived tests were done and she was told that surgery would take place the next day. She was informed that there were no beds available and that she would have to find another form of accommodation for the night.

Madam Minister, this is becoming all too common. Madam Minister, I want to know today what actions you are going to take to ensure fairness and affordability of health care for rural residents.

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the individual case that the member refers to, I of course cannot comment on that individual case.

I can say however that it is not uncommon, and hasn't been for years, for surgery to be rescheduled for one reason or another, particularly if hospitals get a number of emergencies that come in. If the surgery is not prioritized as number one, the emergency, the more serious situation will be dealt with first. So this happens and has happened in the past. And every health system is subject to these kind of occurrences, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to providing health care to rural residents, rural residents in Saskatchewan enjoy a very high quality of health care. And as we move to develop more community-based services, which we have been doing over the last two and a half years and will continue to do on into the future, we will be able to provide an even higher quality of health care services for rural residents.

Rural residents enjoy access to acute care when it is needed. They enjoy access to physicians, to other health care professionals, and we actually have a very good health care system in Saskatchewan for them.

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

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 52 hospitals that were closed by that minister would be very interested in hearing that they still have that access she talks of.

Madam Minister, rural people have no option but to have their surgery performed in larger centres. They pay the expense of travelling to the city, and now are being told that they must pay the additional expense of hotels. Madam Minister, this is a form of discrimination against rural people and what are you prepared to do about it?

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows that rural residents have always gone to the city for any serious surgery. There have been very little surgery done in small hospitals. In fact it has amounted to things such as wart removals, for example, Mr. Speaker. Surgery of the nature that people travel to the city hospitals for is simply not offered in rural hospitals.

And for the member opposite to suggest that it is, is being dishonest because he knows it isn't; he knows his constituents have travelled to larger centres for years, Mr. Speaker. And if the member opposite wants cardiac surgery done in a small hospital of 10 beds or less, I think he's dreaming. I mean it shows his understanding, or lack of it, of the health care system.

Now with respect to the hospitals closed, these hospitals have been converted into health centres. They provide basic emergency services — x-ray, diagnostic services — they provide programing in health prevention . . . or disease prevention programing, and more community-based programing out of it. There will be a broader range of services for a broader range of people in his communities. And the member opposite knows that that's in the process of being developed.

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

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By the minister's answer, I can tell that she has a very poor understanding of what actually occurs in the hospitals in rural Saskatchewan. Madam Minister, they do far more than wart removals, at least until you shut their doors.

Madam Minister, this particular woman was able to pay for her room. However she told me of an elderly woman from Melville in the same situation who could not afford a hotel, drove home, and then back early the next morning for the surgery. That made an already stressful ordeal much worse.

Madam Minister, members of your government, including the Premier, have spoken out strongly against deterrent fees. Is having a system in place in which rural people have to pay 50, \$60, \$70 a night for a hotel room, not a deterrent fee to proper medical care?

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the member's suggestion that the health care system doesn't meet people's needs, let me make this point. We spend some 1.5 billion in Saskatchewan on health care and we have a very good health care system that meets the needs of the residents of Saskatchewan. The

important issue is to ensure that our health care system is affordable for future generations, and that it is more responsive and more effective and delivers health care services that people really need, and that improves the health status or improves the health of the population generally.

That is what has to take place in Saskatchewan.

With respect to rural residents coming into cities for surgery, as I mentioned before, that has been going on for years. It has been going on for years. There have always been a number of expenses in the health care system, such as dentists, such as other health care services of that nature, that people have paid for. No one has suggested because they have to pay for some of these uninsured services that the health care system is a mess and they don't have access to health care services, because they do.

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

#### **SaskPower White City Office**

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question this afternoon is for the minister responsible for SaskPower. Mr. Minister, on March 7, on behalf of a woman from Southey, I asked why you were closing the White City SaskPower office when the lease does not expire for three more years. You responded by saying that the White City office is not going to be closed.

On March 11 I asked about the White City office again. Once again you told me that the White City office was not scheduled for closure.

In last Saturday's *Leader-Post* there was a notice that White City SaskPower customers . . . to the White City SaskPower customers that that office is indeed closing effective May 16.

Mr. Minister, why did you mislead the House on two separate occasions? Or is this simply another case of being overruled by the organ-grinder, Jack Messer?

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

**Hon. Mr. Anguish:** — The hon. member is correct, the White City SaskPower office is closing. To put the answers in context I gave on the two dates the member referred to, we were talking about the overall reorganization of SaskPower, Mr. Speaker, and I was offering the answer in that context. I want to confirm that the SaskPower office in White City is closing. At the time when the member had asked the questions, it was not being anticipated by myself or the management at SaskPower.

But I want to tell you very clearly the situation of the SaskPower office in White City. It was a cushy rental deal made up by the former administration, the most expensive leased property that SaskPower had in the entire province. We were able to get out

of the lease — and not through the political favours that the former government was handing out. We were able to get out of the lease, and White City will be serviced out of the city of Regina where most of the employees would centre out of in any event.

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

#### **Health Board Elections**

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, two following questions are for the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, yesterday an ad appeared in the newspapers which was a shameless admission to the fact that your government has no intention of holding health board elections in conjunction with municipal elections this fall.

Your one-man commission headed up by Garf Stevenson placed an ad, and I quote:

To accommodate the busy schedules of Saskatchewan residents during the early spring, the commission plans on holding consultations beginning in mid-June.

Madam Minister, that's a sad joke. You know full well that your one-man commission could be having hearings right now in Saskatchewan's major cities, starting in Regina.

Madam Minister, is it not your plan to delay Stevenson's findings long enough to prohibit fall elections? Will you admit that this afternoon, Madam Minister?

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

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, I have said on numerous occasions that Mr. Stevenson will report to us as he makes a determination, that there will be interim reports as he goes through this process.

If he wishes to report to us that he thinks we should proceed to elections in October or sometime this fall, then we would receive that report and make a decision as to whether or not we would proceed with elections.

He may choose, however, in his consultation process . . . and incidentally, he is having ongoing consultations at this time. Already he has been meeting with people and doing work in this regard. He is looking at many more issues than when elections should be held. He's looking at a very broad range of issues, and his consultations will go far beyond that because Mr. Stevenson doesn't have a one-track mind like the member opposite.

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

#### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

##### **Environmental Assessment Reform**

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to update the House on environmental assessment reform.



On March 10 I released a summary document describing proposed reforms to Saskatchewan's environmental assessment process. I've been pleased by the level of interest shown by stakeholders in this important legislation. I want to thank those many groups and individuals who have taken the time to review the summary document and provide my department with their views.

Sound reform of The Environmental Assessment Act requires that we involve stakeholders in the review of government reform proposals. Release of the summary document was the first step in that process of involvement. Since that time a number of groups have expressed interest in further consultation on the development of the legislation and the proposed regulations. They have requested clarification in a number of areas such as federal-provincial processes, mediation, access to information, and protection for commercially-sensitive information.

As a result, I'm announcing today that the government plans to provide additional time for further consultation prior to proceeding with a new Environmental Assessment Act. More consultations will provide interested parties with additional time to review and clarify the reforms. It is also an opportunity to involve these parties in developing the regulations before they are finalized. This will take significant time because of all the detail involved.

For these reasons I will not be introducing new environmental assessment legislation during this session. Our first step will be to develop a consensus among our stakeholders as to how these additional consultations should take place.

Mr. Speaker, we believe extensive additional consultation on the legislation and regulations is worth doing and will result in a better product. A reformed Environmental Assessment Act will impact on economic development and sustainable development into the next decade. It is important that interested groups affected by the environmental assessment process feel that they are involved, that their commitment to the reforms are essential to its success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we would have been pleased to have received a copy of the report but I want to respond by indicating that as an opposition we're glad to hear that the government is certainly taking the time to consult. And I thank the minister for having a moment just to chat with him this morning about this whole process.

And what we find, I think what the minister has indicated, certainly businesses, small communities, and RMs are going to be glad to hear that there will be some consultation because I believe what has been taking place over the last while certainly has raised a lot of frustration and concern across the province of Saskatchewan.

And the fact that the government is now opening up this door and allowing for greater consultation is appropriate in view of the fact that most people have looked at this. Everyone has environmental concerns, but they're also concerned with the costs of what we've just been discussing. And so I think it's appropriate we open the door, have this consultation, and come up with a sound and reasonable address to this problem.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### **Bill No. 68 — An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Tobacco to Young Persons and to enact certain other provisions respecting Tobacco**

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to Prohibit the Sale of Tobacco to Young Persons and to enact certain other provisions respecting Tobacco be now introduced and read a first time.

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

### **Bill No. 69 — An Act to amend certain Acts respecting Highways and Vehicles**

**Hon. Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend certain Acts respecting Highways and Vehicles be now introduced and read a first time.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — With leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to do two things. I want to add my greetings to Dr. John Egnatoff, who I got to know in my early days of school trusteeship and with whom we had many, many discussions over the years. Welcome him to the Assembly.

But I want to introduce two other people who've been very important, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, to the educational process in Saskatchewan. George Bothwell has been many times introduced in the House for the work he's done through the library system; and Jim Burnett, who has been a leader in education, both as a professional educator and as a trustee for many years. I welcome them as friends and colleagues. Welcome to the legislature.

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

## ROYAL ASSENT

At 2:22 p.m. Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took her seat upon the throne,

and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills:

- Bill No. 59 — An Act to repeal The Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Reorganization Act and to enact certain consequential provisions resulting from the repeal of that Act
- Bill No. 21 — An Act to amend The Rural Municipality Act, 1989
- Bill No. 63 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act (No. 2)
- Bill No. 41 — An Act to amend The Registered Psychologists Act
- Bill No. 42 — An Act to amend The Physical Therapists Act, 1984
- Bill No. 43 — An Act respecting the Licensing and Operation of Medical Laboratories
- Bill No. 44 — An Act respecting Chiropractors
- Bill No. 30 — An Act respecting Victims of Domestic Violence
- Bill No. 39 — An Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act to create a Family Law Division and to enact Consequential Amendments arising from the enactment of this Act
- Bill No. 58 — An Act respecting Representation in the Legislative Assembly

**Her Honour:** — In the name of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, I assent to these Bills.

Her Honour retired from the Chamber at 2:25 p.m.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave of the Assembly to move a motion of recess which I think everyone anticipates, so I'll ask for leave.

Leave granted.

## MOTIONS

### Recess of the Legislative Assembly

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I move, seconded by the member from Prince Albert Carlton:

That this House do now recess until later in the afternoon in order to pay tribute to Her Honour, the Hon. Sylvia Fedoruk, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan.

Motion agreed to.

**The Speaker:** — Before I move that this House recess, I would like to invite all those people who may not have come for the special ceremony to stay for the ceremony, and also to join us for tea later on in the afternoon.

This House stands recessed until later this afternoon.

The Assembly recessed for a period of time.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Would members please come to order. We will continue on our agenda where we left off this afternoon.

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

### Bill No. 54 — An Act to amend The Trade Union Act

#### Clause 1

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well we certainly can't go into clause 1 on this Bill just yet because it has such an immense impact on our province and the potential of our citizenry to develop and grow and to prosper.

Mr. Minister, we were talking about Bill 54 yesterday and a few times before. We haven't done a whole lot of work on it yet.

We were happy to see your amendments though, and we want to say that we're glad that you're at least modifying somewhat, but we need to work on you a little harder because we've got to see a little bit more give here in order to save the province. And it's that serious. This is the sleeper in the bunch. I've said that before. You know it, everybody else knows it. Nobody's willing to say it, but I'm going to stand here in my place and say that this is the sleeper that could kill our province.

This Bill has the potential to destroy the job base and the tax base of our province. We've related that to you in figures yesterday from the letters that we've received, letters that were examined by members of the press, incidentally. And we're happy that they did that; they did their homework and we're glad they did that. They examined and read the letters for themselves. They checked the numbers and found them to be accurate and correct, and we're happy to report that to you. And you know very well that they are, because you have copies of those letters.

We want the general public to know that we tie this Bill directly to the Labour Standards Bill because they do affect the same groups of peoples in our province and in our society. So once in awhile the chairman will note, as the member from Rosthern indicated earlier, on the side here, we will probably be tying the two together and making some comparisons between the two Bills and how they're going to affect the folks in our province and how they're going to affect our economy.

I want to talk a little bit, Minister, about the explanations that you gave with regards to the amendments that you're going to provide to the amendment of The Trade Union Act. Those were finally forthcoming, we're glad to see that. Unfortunately, there's . . . now that overnight the business community and a few folks have had a chance to study these a bit, and they say that while you've got a good start here, and they're happy about that, they don't go far enough and there are some sweeping changes that need to be made yet in order to bring some comfort to the community in

Saskatchewan — not just from the business side but even a lot of the labour force now realizes that if there isn't some compromise here, they will have no jobs.

And even though they would like to have the extended benefits of these two Bills, they know very well that it's no use having extended benefits if you no longer have a job. You might just as well then start to work on extended benefits for welfare and unemployment because that's exactly where you're going to end up.

And with 81,000 people plus on welfare already, and another 30,000 on unemployment insurance, and only the Lord knows for sure how many people are out of both of those systems and simply existing on their wits within our society and have dropped out of the whole process and are no longer counted, we've got some serious problems in that area of how many people we've got not working and not able to find jobs, and some not wanting to, but most that do.

So realistically, Minister, we've got to do some really hard work at finding ways to save the job base and to expand it. Now I don't believe that the government should expand the job base by its own direct action, but by allowing business to do that for us. We have to have the government get out of business's way so that they can provide jobs.

There may be room though for the government and yourself to do some things to encourage business, and I'm sure we'll do that through the new organization that takes the place of SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation), and I've just forgot the name of it right now.

**An Hon. Member:** — SOCO (Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation), son of SEDCO.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Son of SEDCO, I guess. Yes, that would be the one. Anyway, you know where we're coming from on that.

So let's talk for a minute. Now we had a list of the things that were specifically bad in the old Bill, and that the business community was particularly upset about. The first one of course was the sweeping powers of the Labour Relations Board. There's a lot of people that are very concerned that this board that used to be kind of quasi-judicial is now becoming a powerful judicial body with the actual right to make decisions that cannot be challenged and cannot ever be changed.

They have become judges, dictatorial type of board, with these kind of sweeping powers that people don't believe this kind of board should actually have. In our society people believe I think, Minister, that the judicial system and the parliamentary system should take control and power over all of these kind of semi decision-making boards. And we are bypassing that process and changing it. That's a precedent in our democratic process that we have to be very careful about.

So I want you to consider the fact that people are very concerned about the sweeping powers of the Labour Relations Board. And rather than for me to orate all afternoon about the problems, I'm going to ask you to explain to the people of this province how the powers of this Labour Relations Board could be accepted. I want to give you that opportunity. How could this board be accepted and allowed to function with these sweeping powers without destroying the confidence of the business community to redevelop the province of Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Chairman, we have done two things with the Labour Relations Board. It is true we have expanded the powers of the Labour Relations Board. Every jurisdiction in Canada has a labour relations board whose basic function is to interpret collective agreements and the rights that arise thereunder. It is like so many other administrative tribunals. It exercises quasi-judicial functions, and it still remains a quasi-judicial body.

It is true that the . . . to a very modest extent the jurisdiction has been expanded, but to a far greater extent the powers of the board to enforce their orders have been expanded. We do so because we believe that it is in the best interests of all parties to have their rights under the collective agreement interpreted by the Labour Relations Board and not at the civil court.

The problem with the civil court is that they are too slow and too expensive. It is difficult to access the civil courts without a lawyer. The civil courts, of which I spent many years of my life in civil courts, civil courts . . . and I have every respect for the institution which I served and if the wishes of members opposite are realized, I may go back to serving in a civil court at some time. So I have every respect for civil courts, but I want to say that they're not structured to do what's needed to be done here.

What is needed is . . . what the member of Kindersley will agree that is needed here under collective agreements is something that's fairly quick, fairly cheap. You don't need a study decision in a year hence; you need something fairly quick and cheap now. And that is true of both sides who need a fairly quick result.

(1615)

So we make no apologies for strengthening the Labour Relations Board. We think it is appropriate that it interpret the collective agreement and the rights that arise under a collective agreement and under The Trade Union Act. We have attempted, and I want to emphasize this to members opposite, we have attempted to take the politics out of the appointment of members to the Labour Relations Board.

This has been a problem for some time. It didn't originate a few . . . it didn't originate in the '80s by any stretch of the imagination. We want to provide neutral people who will be free from political influence who can provide a balanced approach. Ideally, we want both sides to look upon the Labour Relations Board as

a place where they will get a fair hearing. And at the end of the day they can say, whether they won or lost — well, perhaps we lost, but we had a fair hearing and that is a fair board.

And so we have provided in the Act that the chairperson and vice-chairperson shall enjoy security of tenure for five years. The members of the board go from being alternate members, in which they are called on an ad hoc basis for given cases, to being permanent members. These new permanent members will also enjoy security of tenure; they'll enjoy a fixed term for three years.

By so doing, we hope to remove the politics. We hope to wring the politics out of this board, and this is badly needed. We badly need to get the politics out of the system of appointment of the Labour Relations Board.

I'm in no sense being disparaging about current members. I'm in no sense suggesting that they are anybody's political toady. I am just saying that this has been a problem which has plagued this board over the years and we want to eliminate this problem; we're doing so with these fixed terms.

And I will make a prediction for the member opposite: that so long as you and I are in this Assembly — no matter who's in office — we'll not go back to the old way of doing things whereby we have people appointed at will, and we had a board which had difficulty enforcing its rules.

I think this will be the way of the future. We'll have permanent people, free from political influence, and they'll enjoy broad powers to enforce their orders. I really think this is the way of the future.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well, minister, I'd be the last one to say or suggest that we would ever go without a board of this nature. Obviously they are necessary in our society and will continue. However, I'll reserve my judgement as to how they will be picked in the future because I'm not so sure that your process will work or not yet. We'll wait and judge that as it goes.

My next question has to do with the boards and your comment that you have boards of this nature in every jurisdiction in Canada and a lot of other places in the world. In Canada though I think is what we're mostly interested in. I'd like you to draw a comparison for us, how the new powers of this board compare to the powers of other boards in other jurisdictions in our country.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — By and large we're in the mainstream among Canadian jurisdictions. With respect to the general powers given to the board, ours are the same as Canada, B.C. (British Columbia), Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario, to pick the five western provinces.

With respect to our remedial powers, we now have the power to issue compliance orders. Again, everybody's got that.

We also now have the power to . . . The board will now have the power to make rectification orders. And while we didn't have that before, and I guess Alberta still doesn't, among again — I'm going to confine myself to the five western provinces; Ontario and the four western provinces — Canada, B.C., Manitoba and Ontario all share this power to make remedial orders.

With respect to the power to order monetary compensation to employees, all of the jurisdictions have that. With respect to the power to order monetary compensation to unions, we have that and so does Manitoba, I would emphasize.

They've also now got the power to make interim orders. That wasn't there before. We now have it now. B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario also have that power.

The final thing which we have added is the power to order someone to do or to refrain from doing anything to remedy a breach of the Act. We didn't have that before, but Canada, B.C., and Manitoba have that.

So I think the member can see that the powers given to the Labour Relations Board are not leading-edge stuff. We're not away out in front of everybody else. This is something that most Canadian jurisdictions have. Most of these powers are shared by other jurisdictions in Canada.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Minister, there are some that do believe that you are way ahead of others in terms of being out of balance with this particular piece of legislation. And I think their argument is well made in that observation. And I tend to think that you have oversimplified the effects of this legislation.

So I want to put to you this question: you say that the board will now have the right to rectification, the right to make rectification, the right to enforce its rulings, the right to make an employer pay to the unions certain monies — they can force them to do that. All right, if it's fair ball, then will this board have the right to force the unions to pay monies to the employers where they do an injustice to the employer by illegal strike or some action like that?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — The kind of remedy which you suggest would have to be sought in a civil court. If I understood the member's question directly — and I'm not 100 per cent certain I did — but I think the kind of remedy you suggest would have to be sought in a civil court. The member may want to restate it, and perhaps I may have to ask the member some questions to clarify it. But I think I'm right in saying that it would have to be sought in a civil court.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well then, that proves my original point that the Bill is unfair. It is labour oriented only; it is not a balanced Bill that is made to help society to function better. It's a Bill designed exclusively to make life good for the union leaders and to make them prosperous and powerful. And that is exactly what we

are saying is wrong, is that the thing is out of balance; and the quicker we send you back to the civil courts so that you can work on these cases, the better we'll all be off, unless of course it happens to be a judgeship that you're appointed to.

We definitely want to keep you down to the ranks of working, because that's where you deserve to be when you bring in this kind of a Bill — such a lopsided, out-of-balance Bill, with only power for the unions and only money for the unions to be forced on the public by a Labour Relations Board given the power to make one-sided jurisdictional decisions, one-sided rectifications. And that's not fair, Mr. Minister. That's just not fair.

You want to make a further explanation, and I'm going to let you do that, and that's fair.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I'm sorry, I had a notion that I might have misunderstood your question. I did. Let me read section 5. If you turn to page 4 of the Bill and you look at the section 5, we are amending also section 5 of the Bill in subclause (b) by repealing clause (g) and substituting the following. I'll read this for the member:

“(g) fixing and determining the monetary loss suffered by an employee, an employer (note the employer) or a trade union as a result of a violation of this Act, the regulations or a decision of the board . . . and requiring those persons to pay to that employee, employer (note the word employer) or trade union the amount of the monetary loss or any portion of the monetary loss that the board (members) considers to be appropriate”;

So it does go both ways, and I apologize for having misunderstood the member the first time.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well now we're getting somewhere, Minister. At least we got you woke up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and we're going to go on and ask for a little more detailed explanation of where the minister's coming from, now that we've got his attention.

Supposing there is an illegal strike called by a union against an employer and it costs that employer several thousands of dollars from loss of work or whatever not being done. Does this board now then have the power to rule that that union would have to pay the damages to that employer?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I'm not being coy here, but these are complex cases and these are dangerous questions to ask in the abstract. I'd need a lot more detail about why the strike was illegal, what the circumstances were, what the state of the contract was, whether or not there'd been any unfair labour practices leading up to it. I would need a lot of detail about this before one could render a decision. These kind of hypothetical questions are really very difficult to answer.

To be fair to the member and to be fair to anyone

who's following this discussion outside of the Chamber, you can't really ask these questions in the abstract. It may well be that there would be compensation that could be ordered; it may be that there couldn't be compensation ordered. It would depend on the circumstances of which I don't have, obviously, because the case is hypothetical.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well, Minister, don't be fair to me at all. Just be totally unfair and tell me, is the potential there for the board, this Labour Relations Board with all of its new power, is the potential there for that board to rule that a strike was illegal, that the union called the strike illegally, that the illegal strike cost the employer several thousands of dollars because the work didn't get done that should have got done, and it was their fault. And the Labour Board makes that ruling. Is that potential there that they can make that ruling, and then having made that ruling that they say it was illegal, that you did wrong, can they then say, you have to pay the compensation? And can they make the ruling then that you have to pay it and enforce that?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — The basic answer to your question is yes. I like the way the member phrased it the first time — is the potential there for the board to make that ruling. The answer is yes.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Minister. That's exactly what we need, is to try and find out if there is some balance in this thing. And we need to have that on the record because people will judge your answers as the interpretation of what the intent of the Bill is in cases where it does become grey and fuzzy.

As you have pointed out yourself, there can be many times when specific cases are so complicated that they will be fogged over and grey, and nobody will know for sure whether you are following the intent of the law or the written text of the law. They will come back to *Hansard* and say, the minister said his intention was that it be fair and balanced both ways. So it's important that you put this in the record.

So, Minister, let's go on then a little bit, now that we've cleared up a little bit about this Labour Relations Board, although I do want to say that I do believe that we are wrong by giving this kind of extended power to all of these boards and commissions throughout our society.

This one is not isolated in your government's attempt to give sweeping, uncontrolled power to bureaucrats in our system. And we have the right under one Act last year for people to break and enter without explanation by bureaucrats that have no police training; this follows that same line of general police state kind of approach to life. That is unacceptable in a democratic society and can lead to nothing but trouble in the long run. It won't happen today or tomorrow, we hope. I don't think it'll happen next year, but sometime, some day it's going to happen and our society will, to some extent, collapse just a little bit as a result of these outrageous power grabs that are being doled out by your administration.

Now the second area of concern that was brought to our attention was the first bargaining agreement, that can be ordered. And you discussed with us yesterday that you now have made some amendments to the amendment, that you are going to have the board given some discretion in this area to try to encourage people to bargain in good faith without the Labour Relations Board becoming directly involved immediately.

However, that's small comfort to the business community who know that if in fact a particularly contentious issue comes up — and let's take the Woolco example down at Moose Jaw, because that obviously fits into this first bargaining agreement category where we had all of this trouble because they couldn't get things settled — obviously there would be a lot of pressure on that Labour Relations Board to make a quick decision because the government — I don't care if it is your party, my party, or party XYZ — politics is politics, and no government wants these kind of disputes to be going on because, it's called putting out brush fires in political terms, and that's what you'd want to do and that's what we'd want; everybody would want to use whatever power is available under any Bill to put that kind of brush fire out fast.

(1630)

There would be a lot of pressure to have them make a decision really quick, and you would throw in some kind of a first agreement bargaining thing that would be ordered, because the board simply has that power to do it. And if you never gave them the power, they wouldn't have to be pressured into using that power.

And I think the business community is saying that even though you've said you want to temper this a little, your word that you want it tempered isn't enough. And I'm wondering if you've considered strengthening your amendment here, to restrict the immediate entry of the Labour Relations Board into these kind of disputes?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — No, we're not. To be candid with the member, we're not giving any serious consideration to that. I'm interested in hearing the member's argument on that, but we're not giving any serious consideration to this.

We believe that these amendments, as they're structured, are what is needed to provide an effective and efficient Labour Relations Board. And we really are not considering any further amendments to this to be perfectly candid with the member.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — As the next few days go on, minister, I think you will want to give some more serious consideration due to the fact that we are anticipating that people in our community will be contacting you to let you know that they, themselves, the people in our society and our community, want these changes — not particularly myself.

But I will be the voluntary mouthpiece for the community for a few minutes here and tell you that what you probably are going to have to do here is to compromise a little bit further in order to appease the people of our province, especially the business community. And what you're going to have to do in that area of compromise is restrict the ability of the board to interfere and to become an interfeeree by their own choice and by their own timing.

What you will have to do is put some stumbling blocks in front of that board's ability to intercede. And I'm suggesting straight out that there would be some time constraints involved. That the board must not interfere within the first six months of attempts to negotiate a settlement, or something along that line. I don't want that to be the arbitrary figure used. I want that to be an example figure for explanation purposes for you.

And I'm sure that the business community will be passing further information on to us in the next few days — and yourself — about the kind of stumbling-block process that they think will have to be in there. Obviously I think they recognize that they're not going to get you to back off on this Bill altogether. You couldn't do that. Politically you have to save face for yourself and you have to appease the union people that your leader has made the deals with.

And of course the business community recognizes that. So they know very well that the compromise has to be just exactly that — a compromise of stumbling blocks, not a withdrawal of the whole process which they would rather see. So we will work on what we can achieve here rather than what people want. And I think it's more important that we spend our time trying to change those things in life that can be changed, rather than to beat our head on the wall trying to change those things that never can be changed.

So I want you to be aware of the fact that we are going to pursue that issue further, and we're going to do that in the days to come when we get more information about a detailed plan by the business community on how they would like to have this thing worked out. And I'm sure they'll be contacting you directly on that.

The next item was of course the certification and decertification and the democratic vote process that they brought to our attention and we brought to your attention and everybody brought it to everybody's attention quite well here for the last couple of weeks. And we were happy with the changes that you suggested in the amendments, where there finally will be a vote.

However there is some confusion in the country about how this vote is going to be conducted and the timing at which it will be interjected into the process. One person suggested to me yesterday that even though you have now put in place the ability for a secret ballot to take place just before certification happens, it is so far into the process of the development of the union structure that nobody could realistically vote it out; that there would be a kind of a brainwashing mind-set

process that would have pushed people into that direction so far that the likelihood of a negative vote or a vote against the certification simply couldn't happen.

So explain to us about your feelings on that timing and how you, you know, appease those kinds of thoughts that people have brought to my attention.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Well we'll certainly consider the member's comments. I just want to say though with respect to all of what you say, is that this has undergone an enormously long, complicated consultation process. It hasn't produced perfect harmony, as the member may have noted. It hasn't produced perfect harmony. We certainly seek that and we seek a state of perfect harmony. We haven't quite achieved it.

I'm not sure a great deal more consultation is going to change things and I am not sure that further amendments would achieve that. When you move in one direction you tend to get somebody moving in a different direction on you, and what you lose in one side, you gain on the other. So I'm not . . . I don't want to encourage the member to believe that we will be making any further amendments to this Bill.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well, Minister, I live with a constant hope and a bright outlook to the future, and I am absolutely convinced that in the last days and the last breaths before we conclude this you will see the need to do something right for society and you will make a few more changes in order to save our province and the structure that we need to have here.

One of the problems, sir, and I hate to be cantankerous about this issue, but I find myself in a position where I can't do anything else except to get a little angry with you. Because the fact of the matter is you did not consult very much with the business community; you only consulted with the union leaders, and you took their opinions only. In fact I wouldn't be surprised if Mr. Rosenau and Barb Byers didn't write this legislation for you and plunked it on your desk and said, here boys, this is what we want and this is what we demand.

You didn't consult with the business community, according to all the correspondence we've got. You've seen hundreds of letters — the same ones we've got. There's be no consultation with them. If you'd have taken the time to consult with them you wouldn't have come up with this one-sided, lopsided piece of legislation. You'd have written in these amendments to begin with. They wouldn't have had to been brought in as a brush-fire political control.

And realistically, as you listen for the next few days — and you're going to be forced to listen now because this has gotten to the point where even you can't ignore it — you're going to be under some tremendous pressure. And I'm going to suggest to you, sir, that in all fairness you should listen to the business community and modify your position somewhat more.

We can't change the past but we can do better in the future. And while you didn't listen before, you can start to listen now. So start to listen and do something about making some changes.

And I've told you quite frankly that we don't expect to see you pull the legislation, although I think that's what would be the best thing that could happen. But realistically we're looking for a compromise that will try to save some semblance of order in our province.

When you've got all kinds of businesses saying to us openly in open letters — this is not quiet, behind-the-scenes, on-the-telephone kind of stuff, this is out in the open, in open letters — that they're going to leave the province, that they're going to take the job base away; that's serious stuff, sir. Because we are the assemblies of the people who make the rules that people live under and if we're going to lose our base, that's serious stuff. Those folks out there need your attention.

I want to go on to the next section, because I have a couple of more that we want to deal with before we get on here. The employers are worried about not being able to communicate with their folks, and I want you to explain that as you progress.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I will be happy to do that. I say to members opposite that we have given all of these matters full and fair consideration, and we think the Bill as it is, is near perfect, wouldn't you say?

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Mr. Minister, this Bill is far from perfect. And that last comment about it being perfect is absolutely out of order. If it was so perfect why would we have had to have all of these amendments come in at the last minute?

Realistically, sir, it's not perfect and I want you to withdraw that remark.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — It isn't perfect but it's near perfect. That's all I said.

I move this committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### General Revenue Fund Social Services Vote 36

Items 1 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 36 agreed to.

### Supplementary Estimates 1993-94 General Revenue Fund Budgetary Expense Social Services Vote 36

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 36 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund  
Women's Secretariat  
Vote 41**

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 41 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund  
New Careers Corporation  
Vote 59**

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 59 agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:44 p.m.