

The Assembly met at 1 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased this afternoon to introduce to you and members of the Assembly, seated in your gallery, Mayor Ben Weber and his wife, Irene, who are here to witness some of the short proceedings first, and to participate in the installation of the new Lieutenant Governor.

Mayor Weber and his wife, Irene, will be here for a reception, and I'm sure that most of you know the mayor as you've toured through the city and he'd be very pleased to meet with you and have a discussion.

So I ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming Mayor Weber and his wife, Irene, to the Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeping: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature, Lieutenant Greg Girard from Nipawin. Maybe I'd ask you to stand, Lieutenant Girard, if I could.

Lieutenant Girard and his wife and family came to Nipawin about four years ago, Mr. Speaker, from Ontario, and they've been a very valuable and productive contribution to our community in the short years they've been there. Among other things, they've been able to build a brand-new church building on Main Street in our town that we're all very proud of.

I'm very proud to have him in my constituency and proud to have him here today, and I want you to help me welcome him to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to introduce to you and through you to members of this legislature two esteemed guests who have travelled a long ways to be here with us today — Nadya Shestak and Mykola Svediuk are honoured guests from the Ukraine. And Nadya is from the capital of Ukraine, Kiev, where she is a senior musical director of the Ukrainian State Television and Radio Company. She is a talented vocal soloist and very recognized in her homeland.

Accompanying Nadya is another honoured artist from Ukraine, Mykola Svediuk. Mykola is from the Ukraine city of Odessa where he is a recognized composer and arranger of Ukrainian songs, and is laureate at the Festival of Ukrainian Song.

Both Nadya and Mykola are here in Regina to perform during Mosaic which begins on Thursday. They will

be performing at the Poltava Ukrainian Pavilion along with the Poltava orchestra and dancers. And certainly all members are encouraged to participate in Mosaic. It's a wonderful event.

And I'd like to all of you to say in your applause, BITAEMO to our guests from the Ukraine, and give them a very special welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I want to draw the attention of the members to the west gallery — some young people who are up there, dressed uniformly and looking very good. These are the Meister Singers from the Swift Current Composite High School. They are conducted by Marcia McLean, accompanist Janet Wittal, and they have chaperons with them — Colleen Eliason and Sheila Wiebe.

They are here and members will be impressed by their performance during the installation of the new Lieutenant Governor this afternoon. I'd also like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the House, to join me in extending our welcome and appreciation for the fact that they will be here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to add greetings to the Meister Singers this afternoon. I was a proud member of the Meister Singers when I lived in Swift Current, and we were so thrilled when we put together a record of our performances at one point, of which I still have a copy.

So we would like to warmly welcome you again to Regina and the legislature for your performance today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Meadow Lake Stampede

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this time to inform the Assembly of Meadow Lake's biggest event of the year. Yes, even bigger than the water boiling contest at the winter festival and still bigger than the dunking the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) at the dunk tank at the jaywalkers' jamboree.

It's the Meadow Lake Stampede and it's taking place June 30 to July 3. The Meadow Lake Stampede, one of Canada's longest running, is enjoying its 74th year this year. This occasion attracts both talent and tourists from literally around the world. Participants come from all over Canada, the United States, and we often have participants from as far away as Australia and New Zealand.

Every year tourists from all four western provinces come to Meadow Lake to enjoy this fantastic weekend. Events planned for this year's stampede include the pancake breakfast, the queen contest, dancing, bullfighting, bucking broncs, horse-racing, corral events, and chuck-wagon racing. Things will get started June 30 with a stampede parade and the opening ceremony is set for July 1.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the Meadow Lake Stampede is the busiest time of the year, excluding Christmas.

I want to close by congratulating the stampede committee for another fantastic effort, and I urge everyone to come and enjoy the fun and excitement of the Meadow Lake Stampede June 30 to July 3.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mainline Rural Development Corporation

Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to announce to the Assembly that the Mainline Rural Development Corporation has recently completed the processing and packaging of maple syrup, harvested from the first run of tapping into local maple trees in the Broadview area.

The Mainline Rural Development Corporation, in conjunction with four participating landowners, were able to tap 400 litres this season. The corporation joined forces this year to test the feasibility of producing maple syrup in the valley.

The harvest this year did not do as well as expected, but this was due to undesirable weather conditions — a very cold March and warm April hindered tapping. For ideal tapping, temperatures must fluctuate around the freezing level. In spite of this, interest in maple syrup harvesting and production has risen considerably. There is some serious talk in the Broadview area about expanding for the next season.

Marketing of the syrup has begun and is now available throughout local markets, and it's also been sold at local trade fairs, including Grenfell, where I was able to purchase a bottle. Packaging for the product varies from traditional containers to limited edition bottles which were etched by a local artisan.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see a promising . . . a new industry beginning in the Broadview area and some more good economic news coming from rural Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mosaic '94

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Where is it that you can taste haggis from Scotland, jerk chicken from the Caribbean, Ukrainian cabbage rolls, tostados from Latin America, and some good old German bratwurst, topped off with desserts of mango ice cream from India and Austrian apple strudel and so

much more?

No, not at the Dome cafeteria. This array of international cuisine can only be had at Mosaic, Regina's three-day celebration of its multicultural heritage. Mosaic '94 kicks off this Thursday and runs until Saturday in what is guaranteed to be four quarters of great folk fun.

Only \$8 buys you a ticket to 24 of the most exotic cultural stops in the city. In a matter of minutes, you can travel from India to Africa, to the Caribbean, to the Philippines, in a whirlwind tour that even Jules Verne never thought possible.

As usual, the three days will leave you breathless from travel, bedazzled by the glitter of folk dancing, bemused by music, and absolutely beaming from the aroma and taste of great foods.

I'd like to recognize and congratulate the work of the thousands of volunteers that make this festival such a success. I could not think of a better way to spend three days, and I invite all members to come and join in the fun that we call Mosaic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, or perhaps in the spirit of Mosaic, I should say, danke schön, Herr Vorsitzender.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Environment Week

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform my colleagues that next week, June 5-11, is Environment Week. This is a time for us to work together and find new ways to help our environment, in our homes, in our neighbourhoods, cities and towns, and throughout Canada and the world.

It is a time for us, as well, to renew our commitment to sustaining our environment and ensuring that we continue the many positive things that we have already done, such as composting, recycling, and reusing. We must act now and work together to reduce, reuse, recycle, and recover to ensure that our children can enjoy a healthy world.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to encouraging Saskatchewan residents to help keep our environment clean, this week is an opportunity for us to go out and enjoy our natural surroundings and teach our children to be good stewards of their environment.

At Nicolle Flats in Buffalo Pound Provincial Park the annual nature festival takes place at the end of Environment Week on June 11 and 12. Everything from a songbird hike and pond dipping to Project Wild's children's activities and the Clean Cat Show can be enjoyed that weekend. In addition, free family fishing weekend also takes place then. This weekend gives families the opportunity to fish anywhere in the province without a licence, with the exception of national park areas.

I hope all the people of our province will join me in

celebrating Environment Week, June 5 to 11. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Casino Agreement

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister of Gaming. Now, Mr. Speaker, getting straight answers from the government opposite is nearly impossible at the best of times. But yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the government gave us a real treat. The minister of gambling gave us four answers to one question.

Why did you give nearly \$2 million up front to the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations), was the question, Mr. Speaker. The answer was either: (a) to develop the partnership with the government; (b) to defray costs already incurred by the FSIN; (c) to provide the FSIN with their share of profits from the current casinos; or (d) to prevent another Oka.

Now, Mr. Speaker, four answers for the price of one. Now rather than risking getting four answers to my next question, this is what I'm going to do, Mr. Minister. I'm simply going to ask you: will you table in this Assembly a complete accounting of that \$1.75 million that you have given to the FSIN in front money? Will you table that now?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, let me thank the member from Rosthern for his question. With respect to the four answers that I gave yesterday, the answer is yes to each and every one of them. Because those are all part and parcel of what we're trying to achieve within the partnership. With respect to an accounting, it is actually at this very time quite difficult because the money has not been spent nor has it been disbursed.

But what I want to suggest to the member from Rosthern and explain to him is how this process will take place. The money will be paid from casino profits in the interim casinos to the tune of \$1.75 million. It is in lieu of a share of the temporary casino revenue, and it will be paid to the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations for them to distribute to the band level to be used partly for administrative costs. And it will be accountable to the Legislative Assembly through the normal process, that being Public Accounts, and I'm sure the member is quite aware of how that accounting takes place as he sat on that particular board.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I guess in a way that's a good answer, Mr. Speaker, because we're back to the status quo and back to the old ways, and perhaps that's better than four answers.

Mr. Minister, from what you've been saying so far, I get the clear impression that you have no intention of

telling us what is really behind that \$1.75 million. Everything is going on behind closed doors; it's going on in secret.

Your legislation, Mr. Minister, to set up a super Crown corporation for casinos, is really no different. In announcing the deal, you said that 25 per cent would go to the FSIN and 25 per cent would go to the charities, to the Metis, and the exhibition associations. Yet, Mr. Minister, note what I'm going to say now. That is clearly not in your legislation. It is not in your legislation. The only ones that are guaranteed anything are you, the government, and the FSIN. The charities and exhibition associations only get a prescribed percentage set by cabinet ministers. And that could mean nothing. If you so choose, you could pay them nothing.

Mr. Minister, why have you not guaranteed the charities, the Metis, and the exhibition association the percentage of profits that you have promised them, just as you did for the FSIN?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well if the member is not clear, let me make it clear in this legislature, and let me say to the charities and to the exhibitions and to the Metis that this government in policy has committed to 25 per cent of the net revenue to be established through a fund, through the Consolidated Fund, for their purposes.

Now if the member isn't clear on that, I can repeat that when he stands up and asks me again and I certainly will attempt to do this.

What this legislation does, member from Rosthern, is it establishes the Crown corporation to conduct the development and to oversee the operations of the casinos, the expanded casinos. It sets up a board of directors that will allow for four government appointees and three by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

Mr. Speaker, the legislature needs to be . . . the corporation will be accountable to the legislature, and I'm sure the member is aware of that. What the Bill does is outlines the arrangement, the agreement that we have made with the Saskatchewan Federation of Indian Nations. And I don't know how much more clear we can be. The Bill is before him; he can clearly read what's in it.

And I say to the three parties that we've mentioned — the Metis, the charity, and the exhibitions — that there will be 25 per cent of the profits of these expanded casinos that will be shared by them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I want to indicate to the member from Rosthern that when the minister is on his feet, he's not to arise on his feet. And just for his edification, the minister had taken less time in answering than he had taken in asking the question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, an answer like that seems like forever because, Mr. Minister . . . You listen to me and I'll tell you what's not in that legislation: there is no guarantee of 25 per cent — nothing. It's up to you, a cabinet minister, to decide what's to going to be put into that fund, and then it will be 25 per cent. There is no guarantee, Mr. Minister, none at all.

Now the only thing that it guarantees is that you and your colleagues will be able to do with that money what you want. And I'm going to quote. It says: to any person, organization, or association in Saskatchewan, for any purpose prescribed by cabinet.

That's what your legislation reads, Mr. Minister. And that means that the profits are at the whim of you and your cabinet — you and your cabinet and anybody else that runs cabinet, whether you want to have the proceeds go towards buying Mr. Messer an island up in northern Saskatchewan, as the Minister of Energy will know what I'm talking about. That means that charities and associations will get less than the 25 per cent that you have promised.

Now, Mr. Minister, is this part of the game that you are playing to ensure charities, Metis, and exhibition associations do not mount an opposition to your initiative? Are you telling them to cooperate, or you will not get a penny from gambling? Isn't that your real motivation, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, what I can say to the member is that on behalf of the Premier and the Deputy Premier and the other members of cabinet and the members of caucus, we commit to those three entities 25 per cent of the net casino revenues.

Now I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it is quite clearly day 77 of this legislature and time that we adjourned because if the member from Rosthern can only muster that in the line of questioning, it's time he goes back to the farm and does some spraying or seeding or whatever he does at this time of the year.

Mr. Neudorf: — Well fortunately for the member opposite, I don't go spraying and I don't go seeding, so I'm prepared to be here for a long time on this issue, Mr. Minister. Because what you're doing is you're playing games — you're playing games. Everybody, and I mean that, everybody that we have talked to, from exhibition associations to small-business people, have privately said that your hand-picked officials have acted like muscle-men in your so-called round of consultation. That's what they're telling us, Mr. Minister. It's not my words — those are their words.

You have used threats, you have used strong-arm tactics, and you have even issued gag orders to make sure that your gambling empire toes the line. Mr. Minister, you and your government are slowly sinking into a pit. That's what you are doing. So, Mr. Minister, what I'm going to ask you once more, as I did

yesterday and as I did the day before, will you table this Bill to allow all of the partners in this endeavour to have a say, not only where and how the casino gambling should be allowed but for some basic, fundamental, democratic input into the Bill of this magnitude? Will you table the Bill?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, let me say to the member again that this is . . . and this Bill establishes a Crown corporation that deals with the accountability of casino revenues. And I want to say to the member opposite that that is the way this government will function. It is important for us that public accountability, which is the hallmark of this government, be established in this as well as in other areas.

Now I can't say to the member opposite that he hasn't got the opportunity to discuss this, because that's what this legislative forum is for and we'll go through it clause by clause, I'm sure, and I anticipate the questions and I'm looking forward to the questions.

But the basis of this legislation is to establish accountability for the revenue from the casinos. It's also the basis to establish the partnership with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and I think that those are what we set out to achieve and that is what this Bill will accomplish. And if the member is not satisfied with that we can certainly discuss it on a clause-by-clause basis when we go into third reading.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskPower Legal Costs

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for the minister responsible for SaskPower.

Mr. Minister, we have often criticized your government for failing to create any new jobs in this province. I just wanted to note that you have managed to create quite a bit of work for at least one sector however — the legal community. You have lawyers defending your breaking of personal contracts, lawyers defending your breaking of GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contracts, lawyers defending you against the Provincial Court judges, and now lawyers defending against . . . defending Jack Messer, at a cost to the taxpayers of over \$7,200.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would provide this House with a complete breakdown of the \$7,200 legal bill that the taxpayers spent in defending Jack Messer.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Yes, I'd be happy to do that.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, in addition to the \$7,200 bill, several hundreds of dollars were also spent in preparing affidavits from the two unfortunate bureaucrats that you and Jack Messer decided to hang the goat horns on.

What's interesting, Mr. Minister, is for all the money you spent on this matter you never bothered to get an affidavit or any kind of statement from Jack Messer himself. So what we have here is two SaskPower employees swearing that, to the best of their knowledge, Jack Messer knew nothing about his son's activities, but Jack Messer himself never made any statement to that effect.

Mr. Minister, you spent all of this money to get people to vouch for Jack Messer. Why didn't you get Jack Messer to sign a statement as to whether or not he knew about his son bidding on these contracts? How can we be sure that Jack Messer's not using his considerable political influence to help his son's company get further government contracts, either through SaskPower or any other government agency?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes a number of points that I think I need to respond to. First off, the member is correct — the dollar amount in terms of providing independent evidence by the people involved to answer allegations by the member from Kindersley cost us several thousands of dollars. He launched a character assassination on an honourable individual from the province of Saskatchewan over a contract that was less than \$50,000. And although we had to pay out \$7,207 in legal fees, if you add up the people's time within Crown Investments Corporation, also within the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, the amount would be thousands of dollars higher beyond that, to have very clearly that the accusations made by the member of Kindersley were completely false.

In regard to the declaration or affidavit from Mr. Messer, Mr. Messer offered me an affidavit which I decided that we did not require because of the information that was already there. Because it could be construed as me constructively dismissing Jack Messer by doing that, I'm not prepared to do that on false evidence put forward and accusations by the member from Kindersley.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Investigations of MLAs

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, your government has avoided addressing some very serious issues, and the official opposition has been deafeningly silent.

In January 1993 it was announced that at least three MLAs were under police investigation. As well there have been two other members accused of misusing their communications allowances for partisan purposes. The people of Saskatchewan are looking to you and to the Premier for leadership in getting rid of the black cloud of suspicion that hangs over the Assembly until these kinds of issues are resolved.

Mr. Minister, why are these investigations taking so long and when can we expect some results?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, you and the member, indeed all members, will know the delicacy with which these questions must be answered. The matter is the subject of an investigation, as has been reported in the media, and has been confirmed. The investigation is ongoing. It is in the hands of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police). I have no report as to when it may lead to a conclusion, and I am just not in a position to report to it on the House. And, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that it is really quite improper for any Minister of Justice to comment on an investigation, or even to comment that there is or is not an investigation.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the people of Saskatchewan are the ones who are asking questions here. And what they're concerned about is the extraordinary length of time it seems to be that these investigations are going on. An equally serious issue, the allegations have actually been levelled against the Premier, against in fact the Minister of Justice during the Milgaard trial, and there is an implication that evidence has been deliberately suppressed. As long as the investigations continue without any form of resolution, there are going to be doubts about integrity of people in public office.

Mr. Minister, will you advise us today of the current status of the Alberta Attorney General's investigation into this matter?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — I'm really, really shocked that this line of questioning is taking place. All members know that the supervision of this investigation was given to the Government of Alberta. They will report when they report. They don't tell us when they're reporting; they don't tell us how their investigation is going today. They're conducting it, and they will report to us in due course. And I would have thought that the member would know that.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, your government's attempt at reform is undermined when scandals loom large. These are things that continue to be asked of my office. Why is it that there doesn't seem to be anything happening as far as investigations are concerned? And there is suspicion surrounding this, so we might as well bring it out in the open that there indeed are concerns about this.

Last fall the police believed that \$564,000 were allegedly diverted from Conservative caucus allowances for political purposes. No charges at all have been laid to date.

As with any situation of this kind of seriousness, people are anxious to have this issue resolved, so that those who are being implicated by suspicion will either be exonerated or they will be charged.

Mr. Minister, can we expect some resolution to these grave issues so that public trust may be restored?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, the member puts herself forward, I would assume, as a potential premier of this province, having accepted the leadership of a party. And I'm really shocked that these questions are being asked.

I have already dealt with this in response to her first question by saying that the matter is in the hands of the RCMP and that is public knowledge. They are proceeding with the investigation on their own, and it will come to a conclusion when it comes to a conclusion. We don't do anything to slow it up and we don't do anything to slow it down or hurry it up.

We keep our hands free of these investigations. These investigations must be conducted with integrity and free from any kind of political interference at all. And that includes publicly commenting on the investigations as to how they're going or whether there is one or whether there isn't. And I would think that the member would know that.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, we are acknowledging the indignance of you in attempting to not address some of these issues. In the spring of 1993, charges were laid against 13 people. Five of those individuals have pleaded guilty in the collapse of the Saskatchewan Trust Company. There are now some suspicions that lawyers who handled these questionable mortgages must accept some responsibility. And one law firm involved indeed is the former firm of yourself and the Premier of the province.

Now an article in the *Western Report* suggests that the actions of one of the lawyers involved happens to be being shielded from charges by the Saskatchewan Department of Justice. This is what was reported in *Western Report*, Mr. Minister; and the lawyer was indeed a partner to which I was referring at the time of the incident.

Mr. Minister, I would like you to assure the people of the province today that the Department of Justice has initiated an independent investigation into this matter and that this is being done outside of the Saskatchewan Department of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I'm controlling my anger with some difficulty, with some difficulty. That scurrilous report in the *Western Report* was the subject of a newspaper article and it was responded to myself . . . by myself, and the member knows my response.

Now if the member wants to make any allegations against me or against the Premier or against the deputy minister of Justice, then get outside that door and find yourself a television camera and make the statement, because I would love to deal with it.

I can tell the member that the matter of Sask Trust, because of my former connection with the law firm that she refers to, is not an investigation that is reported on to me. It wouldn't be anyway because

investigations are not conducted by the Attorney General and Minister of Justice; the investigations are conducted by the police. Sometimes they get advice on legal points from the Department of Justice, sometimes they don't. But it has nothing whatever to do with my office and the member knows that — the member knows that. She is raising these matters for political purposes and political purposes only, and that is not acceptable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crop Insurance Legal Costs

Mr. Neudorf: — My question is going to be directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, we've just witnessed some, I think, appalling questions from the Leader of the Third Party who is following the normal pattern of taking over question period and then not being able to fulfil her responsibility of completing question period. So again the official opposition is now in the position to . . . in a situation where we have to pull up the slack and make sure that things operate accordingly.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, before we were so rudely interrupted in our sequence, going back to the Minister of Energy and Mines and the court case and the numbers of dollars of taxpayers' money that are going to be spent by this government in legitimatizing some of your actions, Mr. Minister, I want to pick up again on that theme. And I'm going to ask you as minister of Crop Insurance that you are also spending thousands of taxpayers dollars in an indefensible scheme. Your government has just filed statement of defence in the GRIP lawsuit caused by your breaking of legal contracts with 60,000 of Saskatchewan farmers.

Mr. Minister, how much taxpayers' money has already been spent on legal fees defending your government's illegal actions on GRIP, and how much do you expect to spend in total before this matter is finally resolved? Could you inform us of that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously I don't have the numbers with me today. We can certainly get those numbers for the opposition if they so desire, and could have gotten them in estimates had they asked for them at that time.

Mr. Speaker, again this is allegations and we think we're going to win the court case. However, again that's another case that's before the court and when a government is taken to court they, like other bodies and citizens, have to defend themselves and there is a cost to it. Whether you are in the right or wrong there is a cost and that's what's happening. Hopefully this case will not go far, but it's certainly impossible to predict how far a case will go or what the cost will be in the future.

Lawsuits Against Government

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a

question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, a while back the Department of Agriculture was forced to spend thousands of dollars on legal bills fighting Jack Messer and his frivolous lawsuit. Now SaskPower has spent over \$7,200 defending Jack Messer. Of course this all pales by comparison to the half-million dollars the taxpayers are going to shell out defending the Minister of Justice's legal activities and the similar costs which you will incur fighting the GRIP case.

Mr. Premier, why should Saskatchewan taxpayers always wind up footing the bill for the illegal activities of your ministers and the highly questionable activities of high-ranking NDP (New Democratic Party) officials like Jack Messer? How come?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the question included the words, illegal activities of ministers, and I invite the hon. member to carefully consider that word and to repeat it outside the legislature. Will you do that? As the Leader of the Liberal Party will say it outside today.

We are introducing legislation partly because of the activities of your administration. We had to make the changes to GRIP, we had to made the changes to the NewGrade legislation; we had to make the changes which are attached largely because of the fiscal mismanagement which is brought about as a result of nine years of total fiscal irresponsibility.

Now when you make those kinds of allegations, you have an obligation to tell the legislature what you mean by them. I say that we are acting in the interest of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, doing it properly and correctly, and unfortunately we are still cleaning up and will be for many years the mess created by you and you cohorts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move the House recess until 4 p.m.

The Assembly recessed for a period of time.

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Debatable)

Return No. 4

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think what we have experienced over the last couple of minutes here is something more than we would normally be amenable to and that is passing by an opportunity to engage in some debate on issues that we feel are quite important and quite significant and certainly as it has been indicated by the Government House Leader that these issues will be on the order paper tomorrow and I'm assuming that also means then that we will have the opportunity to pursue them at some depth and at some length.

As far as the motions for returns (debatable) Mr. Speaker, the particular issue that we have in front of us

now is this motion and I will read it into the record. This regards the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission and the questions that I asked originally have not been answered and they have rather been turned into motions for returns (debatable), Mr. Deputy Speaker. And therefore that gives us the opportunity now to give the government a second chance at answering these questions rather than simply putting them off into never never land where indeed we do not get an answer to questions that we think are quite significant.

Now we are talking about this issue and this was the question:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission: we have asked (1) that the total amount paid for purchasing video lottery terminals for distribution in Saskatchewan; (2) the amount that was provided for travel, lodging, communications, and all other costs incurred with any meetings regarding the implementation of VLTs and/or casinos in the province of Saskatchewan, and; (3) a list of all organizations, individuals, and corporations consulted with regarding the implementation of VLTs and/or casinos in the province.

That is the motion, Mr. Speaker, as it is in the blues. Now it's obvious that what we are requesting as an opposition, as the official opposition, is answers to some of the questions that are on the minds of many people in this province, with the government embarking upon their gaming strategy as a panacea for all of the financial and fiscal woes of the province, is something that people are just saying, this is not right.

And so therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are asking some fairly detailed questions. And the government already has had, I would say, at least a minimum of six weeks if not two months since this question was asked. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the time element is certainly not there.

If it is the will of this government to be open and to be accountable and to tell the people of this province in their openness exactly what they're getting the province into, what the costs have been, who the people are that are involved in the running of these VLTs (video lottery terminals), then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will give the opportunity for the government now . . . no fancy shenanigans; we don't want anything to detract from the intent of the question. The intent of the question is to hold the government accountable in so far as its gaming strategy is concerned.

Now I know what tends to be the practice is that the Government House Leader will get up and make an amendment to this motion, which in turn will pretty well neuter it, where there will be no response, no answers. And I trust and I hope that the Government House Leader has more sense than the minister of Gaming who, not all that skilfully, dodges and darts hither and yon in every question period and basically refuses to answer the very pertinent questions that are

on the minds of the people of this province.

So there is the motion. Originally it was a question. Now I pose that again to a question to the government members, and we expect to have a fairly good answer outlined for us at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member should move his motion with the seconder.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that therefore that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 4 showing:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission: (1) the total amount paid for purchasing video lottery terminals for distribution in Saskatchewan; (2) the amount that was provided for travel, lodging, communications, and all other costs incurred with any meetings regarding the implementation of VLTs and/or casinos in the province of Saskatchewan; (3) a list of all organizations, individuals, and corporations consulted with regarding the implementation of VLTs and/or casinos in the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I so move, seconded by the member for Moosomin.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 6

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The question that I asked here was:

With regards to the Department of Agriculture's '92-93 expenditure for ministers' travel, please provide details on trips taken by Minister Cunningham, Ron L. Harper, Eric M.T. Upshall, Grant D.G. Whitmore, and Minister Bernard H. Wiens, including the following information: (1) the date of trip; (2) destination; (3) purpose of trip; (4) persons accompanying minister or MLA; and (5) cost of each trip.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to indicate at this time that if it is the will of the province and the government of this province to answer questions, they can do so. And I'm very, very disappointed that the members opposite did not get up on the first resolution that we had here, and indeed give the answer because they have the answer.

I see the Minister of Economic Development is sitting on the answer right now. And it would be so simple for him to get up and expose that answer to the view of the public. And I mention that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, right now because this question that I have asked now and that we are debating as a resolution has been answered, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We got the answer from the Minister of Agriculture.

And you know, Government House Leader, there's nothing wrong with answering a question. This

question was answered fully; it was answered to my satisfaction. And I just want to take off my hat to you in doing a good job. But at the same time I ask you, why will you not do that to other relevant questions as well? Not just when it suits your fancy, when it suits your need. But let's do it all.

You purport to be an open, honest, forthright government. You could have proved that in the first resolution. You gave indications of that in the second resolution in which you saw fit to answer. So because this one has been answered, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and because I've been able to make the point that I wanted to make, I withdraw this motion.

The Deputy Speaker: — No motion has been moved by the member for him to withdraw, and if the member sits down then we'll just leave it at that and proceed to the next one. Having said that, I would caution the member, if it's not his intent to move a motion, then he ought not to move remarks in anticipation of moving a motion.

Return No. 20

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me state unequivocally at the initiation of my remarks that I do intend to move a motion and that I will be moving this particular motion. And the motion that I will be moving is thus:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, please provide information on special warrant no. 64/94 authorizing an additional expenditure of \$83,902,000 for the corporation including: (1) what area the deficiency occurred; (2) why the deficiency occurred; (3) where the deficiency will be accounted for in *Public Accounts*; (4) and when the deficiency will be accounted for in *Public Accounts*.

This question, Mr. Minister, was also asked, oh, I would say in rough terms, a month ago and we were not given an answer. And for the life of me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know why we were not given an answer, why we were not given a formal answer, because indirectly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in another set of questions during question period, the Minister of Agriculture did in fact give most of the answer.

So we're playing games here, that's all we're doing. I think the government in it's old-style politics is doing precisely that, and that is playing politics. And sometimes it's just within me to say no, says the Government House Leader. I can't help myself; I'm so used to it; I'm not used to this newfangled way of doing politics, where we indeed do cooperate and give out the information.

So I will be again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, very, very disappointed if that member does not, or if the Minister of Agriculture does not, get up and give us a precise answer. Because this is what this is all about — before an open government.

So once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I promised you, I now move that an order of the Assembly be issued for return no. 20 showing:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, please provide information on special warrant no. 64/94 authorizing an additional expenditure of \$83,902,000 for the corporation including: (1) what area the deficiency occurred; (2) why the deficiency occurred; (3) where the deficiency will be accounted for in *Public Accounts*; and (4) when the deficiency will be accounted for in *Public Accounts*.

I so move, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seconded by the member from Moosomin.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I find it interesting that the member would be opposed to this money going out to farmers. It seems strange, coming from a rural part of Saskatchewan, that the member from Rosthern would have some opposition to this money going forward. But I want to say to him that as part of our rural strategy, obviously farming and agriculture is very important, and this was seen as important money to be going out to farmers.

And as to the deficiency and the questions that he has asked here, within the next couple of days we will be answering this question in an unamended form, which is quite unusual from the days when you were in government and used to amend every question put out of existence in order to avoid answering.

So on all these questions you've put today, we'll be giving you the full response, as we tend to do in the House.

(1615)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe it's appropriate that we just take a moment to address this issue and bring it to the minister's attention again. The minister has indicated that in a few days we'll have a response. The unfortunate part, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that possibly in a few days this House may adjourn, and there may be some further questions that would arise from the question we have before us that would be appropriate to bring to this Assembly. And I would think that if the minister is in a position of possibly responding in a day or two, either the Minister of Agriculture or the Government House Leader could give us the question . . . give us the answer to this question right now.

Because I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at farmers across the province of Saskatchewan and the number of concerns that individuals have, producers have with regards to the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, certainly when you see an expenditure of this amount, of 83,902,000, people want to know where the money went, how was the money spent, what was the money used for. And it's only fitting that as an opposition that we would raise

this question, that we would bring it before the Assembly, that we would bring it to the attention of the minister responsible and we would bring it to the attention of the government.

Because, Mr. Speaker, these are taxpayers' funds and these are funds when we look at the agricultural sector . . . And certainly, we enjoyed a beautiful day today, we actually had . . . the spring has been quite a great spring, Mr. Speaker, in fact a terrific spring in the eyes of most people working on the land. And certainly at the present time, crop insurance may not be their major concern — their concern is putting the crop in the ground.

But at the end of the day, a crop was never made just by putting it in the ground. There are a number of conditions that will affect that crop and the eventual outcome regarding the type of harvest that's going to come off.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, people look to Crop Insurance and have looked to Crop Insurance over the years to provide insurance for crop loss. Now unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have had a program that has provided insurance for crop loss, but we've neglected through the years to provide any kind of substantive guaranteed amount, or at least a price on that product that a person would lose.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the major concerns that's been with us for the past decade. Certainly through the '80s we saw a number of . . . we had a number of years where people were hit not only with drought, but hit with frost, and hit with other many types of weather and environmental conditions that were beyond their control. And at the end of the day, they may have had some protection under crop insurance, but the amount of protection they had didn't quite meet the need of the expenses that they were facing.

And \$83 million is a fair chunk of money when you look at the number of producers and the amount of acres that are insured across this province. And to some people it may not seem like a lot of money, but to most producers any amount of cash injection at the end of the harvest is certainly something that is welcomed by most people.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe it's just fitting that the government take the time and not wait two or three days. Who's to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this two- or three-day wait may not turn into two or three months or maybe even next year.

Now it seems to me that the Minister of Agriculture's probably sitting with the answer, has the answer in his back pocket right now ready to give it to us. And the Government House Leader, I'm not sure why he just doesn't allow the Minister of Agriculture the opportunity to stand up and give us the answer, provide the answer so that the people of Saskatchewan, the producers who have paid the insurance premiums to maintain this corporation, will have an understanding of what is being done and how

their dollars and finances are being expended, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm asking the Government House Leader again if he will take a moment, instead of doing it tomorrow or the next day or the following week or maybe three months down the road, if the Government House Leader or the Minister of Agriculture will not stand in their place today and indeed provide the answer to this question that has been asked of this House for — and has been on the books — for, I believe, the past three months, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that would be only appropriate. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

Clause 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, I want first of all to welcome you and your officials back to discuss The Trade Union Act. And I want to take this opportunity to thank you for sending over a copy of the amendments that you intend on introducing into this Assembly and into the Act as we go. I have taken the liberty of sending them out to have them photocopied so that some of the rest of my colleagues can study through them a bit before we actually get into the clause-by-clause part of that process.

But we do appreciate having them and we're going to study them. And hopefully these amendments will do some of the things that we and the rest of the community have been asking for which, very simply stated, is to modify the position that you've taken through the two major Acts in this session; to modify things, to bring them back to some balance so that we can bring some comfort to the community at large — most particularly of course the business community, but also, just as importantly, the working community of our province who of course have seen the very real possibility of the loss of their jobs as a result of taking this legislation too far, too fast.

It is altogether possible in my thinking, Minister, that in time the things you've proposed that are not acceptable today could be acceptable down the road, just as Barry Goldwater's opinions about philosophy in the United States at one time were considered to be so extremely to the right even in American politics that people outrightly rejected him at the polls and very severely criticized him for his positions.

While as you know and I know from history, the Reagan administration brought the country fully to the right of the political spectrum to the point where Barry Goldwater would have been considered to be a moderate. And so that's how changes can come in politics.

I'm not going to stand in my place and say that we couldn't go to the left of the philosophical range

enough in the future so that your proposals would be acceptable and might be considered to be common day, ordinary, and even acceptable.

Unfortunately we are not in the future yet; we are here today and we have to face the reality of today. And the reality of today, Minister, is that the suggestions that you've made in your two Acts concerning labour and labour legislation, the reality is that the spectrum has been pushed too far; that your pendulum, as you like to refer to it as, has been pushed too far to the opposite side.

And in your attempt to bring about the balance that you talk about that was lacking in the 1980s from your perspective, you have taken the balance the other way too far for people to accept. Too fast, too far, and to a point where business has thumbs down on what we are doing in our province. And that we see as a very real detriment to our society, we see that as a detriment to our province, and we have asked you to take account of these suggestions made by people in the business community to slow this process down. And as we study through these amendments that you are proposing, that's what we hope to find — is that moderating trend, that moderating influence.

And while we get into studying that, there are a couple of points that I want to make on behalf of the business community that have come up of late and we haven't had a chance really to discuss, and a few questions therein that we will be asking you so that we can get a little bit of an understanding.

Now as I do that I think perhaps it might be fair that I give you an opportunity to explain the amendments to us and what you in your views think that these amendments will do to the picture of the labour Bill. We need to get on the record your interpretation because, as you know, there is the way the law is written and then there is the spirit of the law or the intent of the law, and those kinds of things come into play as time comes by. So what is your intention for the spirit of the law to be?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Chairman, I've answered these questions many times. All the member has to do is refer to *Hansard* for a response as to what the amendments are.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well, Minister, I was more specifically hoping that you would go into explaining to us what your proposed amendments would do to change the picture that you have painted for us over the past. Obviously the picture you have painted to us is the Bill in its original form, which we have all seen.

Now you're suggesting, by handing me these amendments that I haven't read, that there will be changes. So the picture now will be changed according to those amendments. What new picture do those amendments offer for the business community?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There are no amendments here that were not contemplated when I made the

second reading speech. The second reading speech describes the Bill with the House amendments.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You're saying, Minister, that the amendments that you just had delivered to me are nothing new?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — That's correct.

(1630)

Mr. Goohsen: — Well that's unfortunate because I had hoped when you delivered them to me that we were seeing a package of amendments that would be brought in that would include something different than what we had seen before; that in fact you had seen the light of day, that your government had seen the need to go along with the massive, massive pressure from all of Saskatchewan's people to have you moderate this legislation. And I had hoped that these amendments that you passed over would contain some of that moderation. I'm very, very disappointed that you have stood in your place and said no, there is no change and that these amendments really mean nothing to anybody.

So with that in that situation, then we have no choice, Minister, but to present to you yet a few more arguments on behalf of the business community in the last minute hopes that you will change your mind on this very serious issue.

There are people, Minister, in this province who sincerely believe that your legislation will have an element of destruction, a distinct effect of reducing the number of jobs available to people, the distinct effect of eroding our tax base, and the distinct disadvantage to placing our province in a non-competitive position for those people who might anticipate coming to the province.

I have talked to business people who say that under the present circumstances that at the earliest opportunity they will pull up stakes and leave the province. And obviously not everyone can just leave when things get tough. Farmers who own land or have investments in buildings or have pigs in pig barns can't just lift them up and go away somewhere else. We're stuck here.

But there are a lot of people in business that create work and jobs who can pull up stakes and leave in not today or not tomorrow perhaps, maybe two weeks from now, maybe two months from now. But realistically as time goes by — it may take a year or two — that opportunity presents itself where there's an opening in Alberta or Montana or North Dakota and just as sure as the sun does come up in the East, those people will take that opportunity and move out of the province and take their jobs, their creativity, and all of their advantages of tax base with them.

And you will not lose very much as an individual. You will still have your fat pension as an MLA. You will still have your legal firm which will be very busy fighting union disputes. Because you, with this legislation, will

be creating an atmosphere where there can be a lot of work for lawyers and a lot of work for legal firms. So you will be busy, you will have your life pretty well intact, and the only thing is that you will be one of the very few people left in the province.

So I hope you enjoy solitude because that's the kind of life you're going to have. You're going to live by yourself in this little remote city of Regina that will shrink in numbers except for the escalating number of people on welfare. You will have an escalating number of people who will drop through the cracks in society and not have work. Unemployment figures won't go up because you'll orchestrate that. You will have less jobs, less opportunities, but you'll be smiling amongst it all because you will be the king of the hill, the only fat cat in society of Regina because you are creating this new elite of the elite in our province, the union lords who will be the masters of our society and the masters of the people . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. Order. I want to remind the member that in bringing debate to the Bill, he should be directing his remarks to the Bill and not personalizing them or directing them to the personal motivations of the minister, as I remind the member of that and encourage him to direct his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We most certainly are going to direct our questions to this Bill and our debate will certainly centre on it. I have in my hand a news article, Minister, that specifically tells what the business community thinks of the Bill and needs to be changed. So I'll simply quote a little bit of that so that you can concentrate on that and understand where the business community is coming from.

It says here, and I quote, Mr. Chairman:

Mike Carr got up on Thursday morning and had Ned Shillington for breakfast.

Carr, personnel manager for Intercontinental Packers and a member of the Saskatchewan Business Coalition, delivered a stern 15-minute address to the provincial labour minister as the two shared the head table at a Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce breakfast.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm happy to say that at least the minister finally showed up at a function and listened to the concerns of the business community with regards to this Trade Union Act. Unfortunately, though he listened for 15 minutes, he came back to this Assembly and tells us now that he's not going to make any changes. And that has to be a grave disappointment to the people who are waiting for some changes to this legislation.

I think perhaps I should quote on a little bit to be fair in the balance of the way the reported article goes, and I further quote:

"There is a crisis of trust in the business

community in that there is a very much universal feeling that the consultation processes we've been involved in have not served the business community well," said Carr.

"The perception in the business community is that your department has a bias toward organized labour," said Carr. "It makes us wonder if you're able to represent the interests of business in this province."

Now it goes on, and your name is used, Minister:

. . . allowed that business people are feeling slighted . . .

Even you admitted after that day that business people are feeling slighted. And having recognized that, it really makes me wonder why you wouldn't take seriously the comments of a very head personnel person from the Intercontinental Packers organization. Now it is even more particularly interesting when you consider that Fred Mitchell, who is one of the owners of this very establishment, had himself got up and suggested that this kind of debate shouldn't be made in public; that in fact at the public meeting in Saskatoon where 500 to 550 business organizations assembled to discuss this matter over the past weekend, that's where Mr. Mitchell got up and said we shouldn't be washing our dirty linen in public; we should be doing this in consultation behind closed doors.

Right shortly after that I take it, by the date on this article, you went to Saskatoon and that very gentleman's personnel manager blistered your skin politically, saying that, in public, we've got to change these Bills.

Now obviously Mr. Mitchell had a change of heart about washing dirty linen in public or else his personnel manager doesn't agree with that position and feels that something has to be done publicly in order to obtain some fair play for the business community in this province. And I think it's a desperate attempt to try to save the province for future development.

I've got all kinds of newspaper articles, Minister, that you must obviously be aware of. There's tons and tons of evidence of people protesting what you're doing. We have Dale Eisler's article, "Attempts to heal labour/business rift fails." We've got, "More skirmishes on labour laws." We've got the Deputy Premier . . . I'll quote here, from the article:

Saskatchewan business leaders didn't win any concessions with their scathing criticism of the NDP labour agenda and their call for Labour minister Ned Shillington's resignation. Deputy Premier Ed Tchorzewski said Friday, the government fully expects to pass the legislation during the current session, which could come at that end of next week.

Well of course he was wrong about that. That concludes my quotation, Mr. Chairman, of that article.

Minister, obviously the Deputy Premier thought that he was going to orchestrate the end of the session last week. He was wrong about that; and I say as wrong as he was proven to be about that, he is wrong about the way and the direction that you and your government are taking on this labour Bill and both labour Bills. You are dead wrong in this situation. To think that you can plough this legislation through and have it forgotten afterwards is not going to happen.

Now you suggested to me the other day in this very debate on these very Bills that we would be coming into a situation where people in a year's time would forget all about the legislation and they never even would know it existed, as is evidenced and proved, you said, because they had forgotten about The Workers' Compensation Act and The Occupational Health and Safety Act of last year.

Now they certainly, certainly did not forget, Minister, because the regulations, as we found out by your own admission in the last segment of this debate, the regulations haven't even been completed yet. The law from last year hasn't been finished being written yet behind closed doors in this dictatorship government that you run under the guise of being a democratic government. You have a dictatorship writing laws through regulations that haven't a year later been finished, and you say people have forgotten it? Not very likely, Minister.

Now, Minister, we have heard some people speculate that there would be a way for you to get out of this whole mess that would be somewhat helpful at least, if not completely helpful. And I'm suggesting to you that after we have debated this in our caucus and discussed it at very, very long lengths, we have come up with the idea that perhaps you might commit to at least doing something right here.

Perhaps you might consider going along with the idea of delaying the proclamation of certain sections of this Bill until they can be brought to the business community for reconsideration. And that way, even though the Bill itself passes, certain segments wouldn't be proclaimed to be law until later on.

Is this something that you might give some consideration to, Minister? We haven't asked you that question on these two Bills — and I'm going to cover both Bills in this one question because it may happen with one and not the other or maybe both.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Anything is possible. I don't know that we have an official government policy on it. We see a delay in proclaiming The Labour Standards Act because there is the necessity to draft regulations. No such complication exists with respect to The Trade Union Act. And I don't therefore foresee a lengthy delay in proclaiming the Bill. As I say, anything's possible. You're asking me to speculate on a decision which the government has not yet made. But I do not

foresee a lengthy delay in proclaiming The Trade Union Act.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Mr. Minister, what the member from Maple Creek has proposed to you, I think, is not something you should dismiss so lightly. I mean you stood in this House time and time again and told us that there is absolute euphoria out there over the changes that you made last year.

The member from Maple Creek asked you questions about where those regulations are at, and you have to admit in this House that you still don't have them done a year later. A whole year later the evidence of whether they are as good or bad isn't evident.

So what he is suggesting to you is, until you put all of the pieces together — and some of this stuff is already a year old — before you would design the regulations, for instance, around the labour standards, that you might be prepared to delay the proclamation of certain parts of The Trade Union Act which the people find most offensive. Because I think on occupational health, on workmans' comp, on the items that potentially can cost business the most, which you yourself admit now you have not done the regulations for, don't you think it would be appropriate, Mr. Minister, that you delay proclamation of other components which would have the highest cost implication for business until you at least have done last year's homework, so that the business community can actually see the cost? Because you admit yourself that you haven't implemented those sections yet.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, I can only repeat myself. There's been extensive consultation with respect to this Bill. There have been an extensive analysis of it done by Price Waterhouse.

And apart from any comments which are made, as I say, no official government decision's been taken on this; anything can happen. But I just do not foresee the circumstances which would cause us to delay, for any lengthy period of time, the proclamation of The Trade Union Act.

The Labour Standards Act is different.

Mr. Swenson: — Well let's go back to the beginning, Mr. Minister. Do you know the full cost implications to business of the two pieces of legislation passed last year? Because you haven't done the regulations yet. Do you know what, in effect, the total cost to the business community in the province is, given that you haven't finished your regulations?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There's no if's, and's, or but's about it; the cost is going to be a negative figure; it'll be a saving — no if's, and's, or but's about it. That can be easily verified if you want to get into what I think is largely an irrelevant subject. It's not irrelevant, but it's not relevant to this subject.

No if's, and's, or but's about it; the figure is minus. The cost is a minus figure. The business community is

saving money with the changes in WCB (Workers' Compensation Board) and will save a whole lot more when occupational health and safety gets fully in effect in rigour.

Mr. Swenson: — Why then, Mr. Minister . . . and it's you that keeps bringing this into the argument. You have stated over and over again that the reaction to both of the Bills this year will be insignificant down the road because of the previous year's work.

You tell the Assembly now that there will be in fact cost savings to the business community. If that's the case, why the delay in the implementation of the regulations? If you can categorically state in here today that there will be no cost implications on the negative side, what's been the delay in implementing those regulations?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Under The Occupational Health and Safety Act, this is an extremely complex process. I am told that the regulations will comprise about 350 pages. I am told it'll take three months of someone working 9 to 5, Monday to Friday, to draft them. They're a very complex affair.

We have some 20 committees working industry by industry. Each of the committees, one management and one labour — or two of each, but they were balanced — with a chairperson from the department, every one of the committees agreed upon the regulations. There was consensus on all 20 committees. That's now gone to the folks who draft it and that is going to take some two to three months to do. That's why the delay — it is a very complex process.

An Hon. Member: — What are you going to change?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — And the member asks, what will there be to change? There would be a fair amount to change. That's why the regulations have not been proclaimed; it's because they're just being drafted. They're very lengthy and complex.

Mr. Swenson: — Don't you think, Mr. Minister, that you are a tad unfair to this House, to stand and debate and say in response, particularly to the member from Maple Creek, that the questions you ask me are not relevant because of everyone's happiness with this other process? And yet you now inform the House today that we are only going into drafting, that the regulations will be some 350 pages long.

Now the average business person in this province, Mr. Minister, who gathered in Saskatoon last week, is not the kind of person that has a whole crew of lawyers and draftsmen available to them. These are small-business people with very limited resources to go through very complicated government regulations to see how their business at the end of the day is going to come out.

Now you state in the House today that there is no cost

implication, but each and every one of those 500, for instance, who gathered in Saskatoon, is going to have to sit down with those regulations and see how that affects their business. Now a lot of those people last year said there was a cost implication. You say no, there isn't, but you don't even have a clue yourself until the drafting is done with these 20 committees one whole year later as to what will be the case.

I don't know how you can stand in this House and say unequivocally there are no cost implications. We have been told by many sectors of the economy that there is no possible way that their bill will be less — no possible way. And yet you stand here and say that simply isn't true. How can we trust you on the implications of these two pieces of legislation when in effect what you are proposing may not be finished up until we're going into the next election campaign?

And at that point the reality of what is before people in this province will become apparent. You're saying, pass the legislation and trust me. Well they trusted you last year, you're a whole year down the road, you still don't have it done. And then you're going to throw a 350-page document down on the office desk of the average small business in this province and say, read it, sort it out, see how it fits.

And you call that good government. You say to the business community, go out and hire a bunch of people under that type of process, go out and invest more of your life savings under that type of process, come in from some other province or some other jurisdiction under that kind of process. I don't think so. That's not realistic, Mr. Minister. That's why people have asked you over and over again to lay out the framework and the groundwork and bring that to this Assembly and bring that to the people so that they can see what you are proposing, not giving you omnibus legislative power to then re-jig however it pleases you.

That's the problem, Mr. Minister. So we go back to the question asked by the member from Maple Creek. Would it not, under those circumstances, be more appropriate for you to say, because of the complexity of last year's work and this year's work, that we will delay proclamation of the most contentious parts of these Bills.

Set a date on it — one year from now or at least until the legislature reconvenes so that it can be publicly talked about and debated in this House, rather than us giving you passage today of everything, or tomorrow or next week, and then allowing you to go through the processes that you've gone through with the two pieces from last year, which I don't find acceptable, that you would keep the business community waiting that long to determine the costs of their everyday life, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm not sure whether or not you've confused the two in your mind but in your discourse you certainly have. There are very few regulations under The Trade Union Act. The regulations are under The Labour Standards Act which is not now before the Assembly.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, you can try and use whatever out you wish in the committee today to try and avoid the topic, but those two pieces of legislation walk hand in hand through the business community of this province, and you know it. That's why they gathered last week to protest what you've done. It was for no other reason, Mr. Minister, because they go hand in hand.

Now I don't think that's an unreasonable request, given the way that you've operated. They don't know what you potentially have done from last year.

Can you give the assurance then to this Assembly, Mr. Minister, that any pertinent regulations dealing with the two pieces of legislation this year will be done in less time than we did with the two Bills last year?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It's certainly our anticipation it'll take a lot less time. The regulations under The Labour Standards Act are much, much simpler — much, much simpler.

The regulations under occupational health and safety really are very complex. What they are is sort of a series of safety codes for each business, for each institution, and thus the sort of things the hospital needs to do are irrelevant to a mine and those are all irrelevant to a restaurant. Each industry has its own chapter of the regulations.

None of those considerations apply to this. These regulations will be much, much simpler. We anticipate that they will . . . the whole process should be complete and the regulations in effect by the end of the year.

Mr. Swenson: — So you're making the commitment then, I gather from your earlier comments, that the regulations around The Labour Standards Act and The Trade Union Act will probably come in tandem probably with the regulations around occupational health and safety and workmen's compensation which you now say is into a three- to four-month drafting period of time.

In other words, the entire package will probably become evident to the business community of this province sometime in November or December. Does that sound reasonable?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I wouldn't phrase it as a commitment; it's a prediction.

My anticipation is that the regulations under the occupational health and safety will be ready by early fall. And there are no regulations on the Workers' Compensation Board. None are contemplated. None are being drafted.

On the occupational health and safety, there's these very complex regulations. We anticipate those will be available early fall. They will be drafted over the summer, with summer holidays factored into the system.

I anticipate the regulations on The Labour Standards Act will be proclaimed year end. Again that's a prediction. It's not in any sense . . . It shouldn't be phrased as a commitment.

Mr. Swenson: — Well that says to me then, Mr. Minister, that the proposal brought forward by my colleague from Maple Creek is not unreasonable then — not unreasonable at all that you could delay proclamation of certain sections which would leave those sections . . . the implementation period could easily be brought in then in tandem. You could delay two, three, four months, and you don't subject your process to any difficulty then by doing that.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Again, I'm not sure whether or not the member's confused in his mind, but in your discourse you are confusing the two Bills. The Trade Union Act, they are really no regulations under it of any substance and I contemplate no reason why that would be delayed for any lengthy period of time.

It is our intention to delay the proclamation of The Labour Standards Act until the regulations are ready to be proclaimed. You can't read the sections on the part-time workers under the Act; you can't read the sections under the Act from part-time workers and really know what we intend, so much of it is left to regulation. So we contemplate the Act and the regulations and we proclaim them at the same time.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's that contemplation that scares people. It really does. Okay, if there are no problems with the regulations in The Trade Union Act, there are certain sections of it that people find offensive. Would it not seem reasonable then that those most offensive to the business community, those could be delayed by proclamation until the regulation's process on the other Bill are finished?

I mean we're only talking about three or four components here, Mr. Minister — three or four — that probably make or break a lot business people in this province. Would it not seem reasonable talking about part-timers, for instance, that you would delay proclamation of certain sections of the Bill that we are talking about today until the regulations in some of the other parts are evident to the business people of this province? I don't see that being a terrible big problem. You won't have ruined anyone's life out there. And you may give people the opportunity, the opportunity to better structure their life. Now I don't think that's an unreasonable request that the member from Maple Creek's brought forward.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — And if the member understood what I'm saying, I've said several times, we're going to. The member is confusing The Trade Union Act and The Labour Standards Act. Nothing in The Trade Union Act has any bearing on the issue of part-time workers.

Now let me say it again: nothing in The Trade Union Act has any bearing on the issue of part-time workers. That arises exclusively under The Labour Standards Act. It is not our intention to proclaim the Act until the regulations are proclaimed.

So if the member understood what I was saying, he'd realize that I'm giving you, in a sense, that commitment — that we don't intend to proclaim The Labour Standards Act until the regulations are ready. But it's not true of The Trade Union Act, which, by the way, happens to be the subject under discussion.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, The Trade Union Act, you can't tell me there aren't companies in this province that don't employ both part-time and full-time workers . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well there are sections under there that affect you whether you are a full-time or a part-time worker if that business is sold and there is successor rights or there are shifting changes. There are all sorts of things that you talk about in The Trade Union Act that will affect businesses in this province that employ both types of workers.

And what we're simply saying to you on those two or three sections that people find most offensive — and you know what they are — why wouldn't you delay proclamation of those sections? Bring it all forward at once, Mr. Minister, is all we're saying to you and give people time. Is that not reasonable and appropriate?

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.