

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 13, 1995

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to present petitions from the Consul and Swift Current as well as Maple Creek areas of the province. I will read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate adequate funding dedicated towards the double-laning of Highway No. 1; and further, that the Government of Saskatchewan direct any monies available from the federal infrastructure program towards double-laning Highway No. 1, rather than allocating these funds towards capital construction projections in the province.

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

And I want to thank Violet C. Demchenko for sending these in today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a new set of petitions to present today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to support Bill 31, An Act to amend the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code (Property Rights), which will benefit all property owners in Saskatchewan and specifically firearms owners, in order to halt the federal Liberal government from infringing upon the rights of Saskatchewan people.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from Saskatoon, Prud'homme, Mankota, Prince Albert, Vonda, Tisdale, Bjorkdale, all across the northern part of the province. Mr. Speaker. I present them.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition that I'll read the prayer of:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers.

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

Mr. Speaker, these are constituents of mine from the communities of Woodrow, Assiniboia, Limerick.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to oppose changes to federal legislation regarding firearm ownership.

And of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate adequate funding dedicated toward the double-laning of Highway No. 1.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day 31 ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management: as the Battle Creek reservoir proposal has now passed through all of the initial surveys, environmental evaluations, and public hearings, will the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, SERM, instruct his officials to complete the necessary process to activate this project and bring it to completion?

Mr. Speaker, I have another notice as well. I give notice that I shall on day 31 ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Water Corporation: will the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Water Corporation agree to work in cooperation with the Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, SERM, and initiate the reactivation of the agreement with Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, PFRA, to bring about the completion of the Battle Creek reservoir project?

I'm pleased to table these now.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly, a former MP (Member of Parliament) for Red Deer, Alberta, Mr. Doug Fee, seated in your gallery.

He is today chief executive officer for the Canadian Angus Association and he's in Regina assuming his duties in that responsibility. And I'd like to have all of the members of the Assembly join me in welcoming him here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd to take this opportunity to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly two constituents, Jack Twietmeyer and Ken Grandy

from Oxbow. They're also members of the Moose Creek Wildlife Association and I'd like to ask everyone to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Battle Creek Dam and Irrigation Project

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to thank the minister of the Saskatchewan Water for sending his top officials out to a water-user meeting in Consul, Saskatchewan last Friday evening. A large group of interested people attended with the hope of getting the Battle Creek dam and irrigation project back on track. This dam, far from being a major or a megaproject, will have a tremendous positive spin-off for the area and for the province.

First, it would provide the opportunity to properly regulate the water flow and sharing arrangements with the Americans. A representative from the American users association informed the meeting that they support the project and would benefit from it.

Second, irrigation potential would benefit the local area as well as to have an enhancement for the existing projects throughout the Battle Creek and the Frenchman River basins. Increasing the feed and livestock numbers would certainly result.

Third, the recreational opportunities as well as the benefits of water for migratory birds and for other wildlife would provide an obvious long-term increased tax base for the province. PFRA response to environmental concerns is that every negative impact can easily be offset by positive action.

The need for water in a semi-arid region should be obvious. Friday's unanimous vote in favour of this project should clearly show that it is time to get on with this project.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Brier Championship in Halifax

Mr. Jess: — I would like to acknowledge the Brad Heidt rink of Saskatchewan which competed in the final of the Brier yesterday in Halifax.

Although Saskatchewan was defeated 10-8 by Manitoba in the final end for the championship, we are still very proud of skip, Brad Heidt of Kerrobert; third, Mark Dacey; second, Wayne Charteris; and lead, Dan Ormsby.

This Saskatchewan foursome was down 7-3 around the mid-point of yesterday's final, but came back to tie the match 8-8 going into the final end, to show that they were not going to give up without a fight.

It should be noted that Brad Heidt defeated Manitoba's Kerry

Burntyk 6 to 5 in an extra end to earn a bye into the final yesterday. So both matches were extremely close and I am sure the final could have gone either way.

I know that the community of Kerrobert is proud of Brad Heidt for advancing to the final. His team's record was 8 and 3 in the round robin competition — good enough for second place. That's very good when you consider competing against several veteran curlers who had won the championship before.

I would also like to congratulate the Manitoba rink and offer them best wishes heading into the world championship in Brandon in April.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to acknowledge the record of the Brad Heidt rink. But I would also suggest that they will be back, Mr. Speaker. They're a young team, they're a good team, and they just missed it by a whisker. And I'm sure they'll be back.

Commonwealth Day

Mr. Britton: — And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would like to, on behalf of the opposition caucus, join with the Lieutenant Governor in acknowledging Commonwealth Day.

Commonwealth Day is observed by 50 very diverse nations around the world. The theme of Commonwealth Day this year is the year of tolerance. The Commonwealth itself is an excellent example of tolerance at work. In an age where narrow-minded nationalism is on the rise and strife is rampant in the world, it is inspiring to see an institution like the Commonwealth that shows how many people from many different lands can cooperate for their mutual benefit.

We in Saskatchewan are proud of our participation in the Commonwealth. And I am sure the coming year we will be mindful of this year's message of tolerance as we strive to live together in harmony in this very culturally rich, diverse province of ours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Royal University Hospital Ranked Among the Best

Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon is in a very real sense the flagship hospital of the provincial health care system. In patient care, research, and teaching, it is first rate and has been for the 40 years of its existence.

This is not just the opinion of a proud Saskatoon MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), Mr. Speaker. It is also

the published evaluation of the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation, the CCHSA.

Recently a three-member survey team from outside the province conducted an intensive accreditation review of the hospital services and departments. The team also met with Saskatoon District Health senior administrative staff and board members. The CCHSA team awarded the Royal University Hospital a full three-year accreditation for quality service and management, among the highest award possible.

I suppose some MLAs might claim that the team members were just bureaucrats with briefcases and calculators, but I trust the objectivity of the nurse, the doctor, and the hospital administrator who made up the team.

Mr. Speaker, the team reviewed how well services at the hospital met patients' needs and managed resources within the health system. It praised both medical and administrative staff in its final report.

Mr. Speaker, all University Hospital personnel deserve our congratulations. John Malcolm, Saskatoon District Health president said it best: excellence is a team reward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Retail Banking Outlet Opened in Vanguard

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a privilege for me this morning together with Canada Post, the Bank of Montreal, the village of Vanguard, to open a small retail banking outlet in that community. The community has had a devastating effect put on them by the Department of Health and this offsets many of the things that were done in that case.

The special thing about this was, this morning as we gathered around to cut the ribbon and have a cup of coffee and cake, was the community's involvement, the community's wish to have this succeed. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why I'm proud to have had that opportunity to be there this morning.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Accelerator Laboratory at University of Saskatchewan

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Where does NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) go when it wants to study pulsars and other deep-space energy sources? To the University of Saskatchewan of course. And I'm pleased to report that the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) in my constituency has once again received significant international attention. This time the focus is the Saskatchewan Accelerator Laboratory which will play a key role in future NASA projects.

Mr. Speaker, two scientists from the Goddard Space Flight Centre in Maryland are undertaking a month-long project at the

U of S. Their work is part of the construction of an advanced gamma ray telescope which will be launched into space. The U of S linear accelerator was chosen because it is the sole source of calibrated, high-energy gamma rays in North America.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that all members will know that gamma rays remain a scientific mystery, but suffice it to say they originate in pulsars, the sun, active galactic nuclei, and other energy sources that are often referred to as the lighthouses of the galaxy. And as such lighthouses, the gamma rays produced at the U of S may provide important clues to the origin of life and the universe itself.

And so for their continuing excellence in research, I want to commend the University of Saskatchewan and especially all those working at the Saskatchewan linear accelerator laboratory.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ringette Association of Saskatchewan Tournament

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Ringette Association of Saskatchewan held its provincial tournament in Regina over the weekend.

The Regina Stingers won the gold in Junior AA while the Saskatoon Selects took the silver. In the Junior A competition, the Hodgeville Red Devils won gold, Shellbrook Selects silver, and the Regina Seals the bronze.

In the Tween A event, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon Saints won the gold, the Regina Aces the silver, and the Saskatoon Jettes the bronze.

In Belle A, the Zone-7 Ringers — that's in north-west Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — won the gold, Regina Cobras the silver, and the Saskatoon Warriors the bronze.

And I might add, Mr. Speaker, that I had special attention with the Saskatoon Warriors because my daughter plays on the team and I'm very proud of it.

Mr. Speaker, in Deb A action the Saskatoon Renegades took the gold, Regina Knix the silver, and the Regina Brewers the bronze.

Mr. Speaker, ringette was founded in Canada 32 years ago and the Ringette Association of Saskatchewan is now in its 20th season. Canada has 30,000 registered players while Saskatchewan has 220 teams with 2,800 players.

The numbers do not include, Mr. Speaker, a multitude of coaches, parents, administrators, and volunteers who helped to improve and promote this sport.

Mr. Speaker, I have to admit that like many others, ringette is a sport that was not completely familiar to me until about 12 years ago when I began coaching. In the past 20 years it has

spread across the country and around the world. The stick handling and skating finesse from these young women is phenomenal.

I was impressed by what I saw, and I want to congratulate President Vince Kolack and all those involved who made this a very successful 20th anniversary tournament. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Rural Emergency Services

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Minister, on CBC morning hour of March 13, Dr. Kasset of Herbert said that your health reforms have taken a human toll that doesn't show up on the balance sheets. He said, and I quote: I guarantee that a lot of these communities that do not have emergency facilities are losing patients. It may not be documented as such, but we have patients that are brought in dead on arrival. If it's a 10-minute delay, that's one thing, but if it's an hour, then you're going to see a lot more patients arriving at the emergency, and they'll be dead on arrival.

Mr. Minister, your closure of rural hospitals has resulted in rural residents being further than ever from emergency services. Have you done any studies to show how the number of patients who are dead on arrival has increased since your hospital closures?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I too heard the interview this morning. In respect to the specific allegation by the doctor, I've asked the department to contact the district, and we'll be checking into the accuracies there.

But let me say this, and let me again correct the member for the benefit of members of the legislature and the public. Hospitals have not closed. Hospitals have not closed. The facilities that held acute care beds have had the funding for acute care beds withdrawn to be replaced with funding for other purposes.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure that member that in each of those communities, emergency services continue; 24-hour services are available. We have, Mr. Speaker, I repeat again, the best road ambulance system in all of Canada and we have been improving that with the network of first responders across the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the minister. Mr. Minister, unfortunately, as I had the privilege of visiting one of the local hospitals in my community last night, that's not what people are saying. People are worried out there. And we're

fortunate in the Moosomin area that we do have facilities a lot closer than we do have in the south-west.

Mr. Minister, doctors are saying that you have created a serious and dangerous situation. People are further from emergency rooms, and that is resulting in more deaths. And you talk about clinics. If the door's closed at 6 o'clock and the lights are off, what good does that emergency service do?

Doctors are telling you this, Mr. Minister. In fact there's a doctor in your caucus who has tried to tell you this, but did you listen? No. In fact your party went out and torpedoed his political career because he dared to speak out and represent his constituents.

Mr. Minister, we would like some very specific information. Will you give us the number of patients who were declared dead on arrival at emergency rooms prior to your hospital closures and the number of patients being declared dead on arrival since the hospital closures have come into effect?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I will endeavour to provide that information for the member and for members of the House. But let me say this. The member says that the public of Saskatchewan are worried. Little wonder they're worried, when misinformation is brought to this House on a regular basis by members opposite talking about the closure of hospitals.

I repeat that in each of those communities, emergency services are available on a 24-hour basis. We have the best road ambulance system in all of Canada. Combine that with our air ambulance service; combine that with first responders. And if there's anything we should all be worried about in this legislature and in this province, it's the level of federal government funding cuts that are coming that are going to challenge us deeply in every province, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've said I will endeavour to provide the information that the member requests.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, and again, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I find it interesting that you put the blame at the feet of the federal government when the closures were made long before federal restructuring of health care payments.

As well, Mr. Minister, have you ever been in an ambulance, driving down some of the rural roads trying to get to an emergency room in time? I think, Mr. Minister, you would be very concerned if you happened to be living out in Willow Bunch or some of these other centres.

Mr. Minister, we're asking you a straightforward question. We asked this question two or three years ago, and we're still waiting for the answer. You've indicated today you'll provide the answer.

Mr. Minister, will you assure us that you will provide the

information we've requested — the number of patients that have been declared dead on arrival at emergency wards prior to and following the closure of 52 hospitals across the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there will always be the circumstance where individuals will arrive dead on arrival in our health care facilities. This is certainly not new and it will never, never stop. And yes, we will endeavour to put, as best we can, to put that information together for the member.

But now this is the member and this is the party that's always recommending to do things in Saskatchewan the way they're doing it in Alberta. He wants to read the front page of *The Globe and Mail* today where on the front page of *The Globe and Mail* it's indicated that the Government of Alberta is literally closing hospitals — not converting, but closing hospitals in rural Alberta. He may want to phone his colleague and friends in Alberta to see what they're doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Investigation of Phoenix Advertising

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, your colleague in British Columbia, Premier Harcourt, is being investigated for conflict of interest over his government's awarding of millions of dollars in advertising contracts to a company with strong political ties to the NDP (New Democratic Party). The Conflict of Interest Commissioner said that he will launch an investigation under a law that sets out standards of conduct for B.C. (British Columbia) politicians.

Mr. Premier, the parallel between the situation in B.C. and Saskatchewan is striking, yet you have refused our suggestions to have an independent inquiry into the matter. Mr. Premier, would you not agree that your involvement in rewarding millions of dollars of government contracts to Phoenix Advertising, the advertising agency of record for your New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan, should be subject to a similar investigation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, in response to the member's question, let me say one . . . first of all, as I have said in the House before, that other than what has been the practice in the province before, this government does not have an agency of record because the policy under which advertising contracts are awarded has been changed.

I think the member from Morse seems to be living in the past, as I indicated on Friday, in that he remembers a day when something in the order of a hundred million dollars worth of advertising was given untendered to two advertising firms under the former administration, Dome Advertising and Roberts

& Poole, without tendering.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the case in Saskatchewan today. There are a large number of advertising firms who are able to participate in the advertising work of the government because the work is being done through a free and open tendering system, Mr. Speaker. Every advertising contract that comes up above \$50,000 is tendered. There is representation on the panel other than from the government that makes a selection. And that is the way it is today. That is not the way it was in the 1980s, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. Minister, I remind you that the former minister of Justice agrees with us. He said that if someone was found guilty of the offence of accepting a kickback, it should also be an offence to offer one.

Now Phoenix Advertising is the agency of record for the NDP. The president of Phoenix has said that political donations to the NDP is a common part of the cost of doing business with your government.

In B.C. the Conflict of Interest Commissioner agreed to probe government's decision to award about 5 million in advertising contracts to Now Communications Inc., a company with strong ties to the NDP. And those contracts were tendered, Mr. Minister. It would appear that the situation is almost identical.

Mr. Minister, why the reluctance to pass this on to our Conflict of Interest Commissioner?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, had the member not been sticking so closely to his script, he would have not had to repeat something on which he is in error — and that is that there is an agency of record for the provincial government.

There is not, I repeat again, because we do our contracting for advertising through a tendering process, Mr. Speaker, and when the contract comes up there is a selection panel which selects the advertising firm that will be chosen. On that panel is somebody who represents the client department, somebody who represents the communications unit, and somebody from the industry, in order to make sure that the public interest is protected, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to tell the member that some other firms that are able now to take part in advertising, which they were not able to take part under the former administration . . . True, Phoenix is one of them. Cooper Quine & Fraser, Brown communications group, Palmer Jarvis, McKay Goettler, Wawryk Associates, Quest Communications, Smith & Smith, Tap Communications, and the list goes on. As it should be, Mr. Speaker.

There is no reason why others should be locked out, as they were locked out in the 1980s, and as they are locked out at the

federal government level, where the Liberals do the same approach as was done by the former Conservatives in Saskatchewan in the 1980s.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, all of the things you said are all the things that I heard about from the Premier of British Columbia. Agency of record, Phoenix Advertising, has said that they are the agency of record. They've also indicated that it is a common part of the cost of doing business with your government. You hide behind the freedom of information Act instead of promoting it. And now you scoff at the conflict of interest provisions.

Mr. Minister, one has to wonder, when you supported The Conflict of Interests Act, if you were not prepared to use it, why wouldn't you have said it at that time? Today is the time to stand up and admit that conflict of interest is where it should be and that's the commissioner that should be looking into it. Will you tell us why you won't?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there clearly are no grounds for allegations of conflict of interest, as the members opposite would like to suggest. And let me just tell you, Mr. Speaker, and the House and the members opposite, the level of satisfaction that there is in the industry who is directly affected by this.

I refer to a headline on February 26, 1992, when this new policy was developed: New policy pleases advertising firm. They agreed. Another headline on May 27, 1992: Competitors for government advertising contracts pleased.

A letter, Mr. Speaker, from Papp communications in which they say:

I remember a time not so long ago when there was no opportunity to bid on government work. The change that you have instituted is still very refreshing and we look forward to future competitions.

Mr. Speaker, there is no better test on the fairness of a policy than the community which is affected by it, and the industry that is affected by this open tendering policy is satisfied with the policy because they say it is refreshing and it is fair. And I say so as well, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

VLT Revenues

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, NDP Gaming minister number five assured us that there was a moratorium on the number of VLTs (video lottery terminal) in Saskatchewan. NDP Gaming minister number six has a policy which indicates that there will be fewer machines

in bars and restaurants so that the government can have 500 machines in the new Regina casino and 500 more divided among the four or more casinos expected to open on reserves.

My question to the minister of Gaming: some VLT machines, Madam Minister, will operate on the current 15 per cent formula to the operators; and some VLTs, it appears, will have special casino status where the government will get a bigger chunk of the revenue. Can the minister tell me exactly what percentage the government will take from the casino VLT machines?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — It was always clear — at least I thought it was always clear — to the member opposite that the VLTs, as they relate to hotels, were separate from the revenue-sharing agreement that's developed for the casinos, both under the original Regina agreement and the later FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) agreement. The revenue-sharing policies are laid out quite clearly and those apply to the whole revenues of the casino as opposed to individual machines or games within the casino.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a letter to the minister, dated a month ago, from the Saskatchewan Restaurant and Foodservices Association, which states, and I quote:

Since the government has now decided to allow more VLT machines through the casinos, will it still be the government's policy to reduce the number of VLT machines previously allotted to our sector? It would only seem grossly unfair to penalize one sector, only to introduce VLTs to another competing sector.

My question to the minister of Gaming: Madam Minister, how can you claim to be fair to all when you've broken every agreement you've ever had with exhibition associations, with the restaurant and foodservices association, and you've devastated charities in the process?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I'm trying to understand what the member opposite is saying. It sounds like she's saying she wants expanded gaming, more machines, and more machines in more locations. I would wonder if that's accurate.

The agreements that have been made have acted in such a way to protect the revenues. The exhibition association revenues are protected. And we have returned revenues both to the lotteries fund, the bingo association, and to the communities in terms of the VLT sharing of revenues — the 10 per cent which is going back to SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations), and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association).

So I would have to say that, in our view, the policy has been developed slowly and responsibly. We've set a cap on the number of machines. And we certainly will be having ongoing discussions with the hotel industry regarding making sure that it's a level playing-field within that industry so that one hotel is not benefiting at the expense of another hotel. But we're trying to establish as fair a playing-field for all the participants as we can.

And I think our policies, where we've returned revenues to the various areas where we've seen impacts, is in keeping with the earlier minister's commitment to monitor the situation and to create solutions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You can continue to have a run-on sentence as long as possible, Madam Minister, but the truth is, no one understands the gaming policy of your government because each and every minister of Gaming has changed the policies over and over and over again.

Mr. Speaker, all over Saskatchewan, charities are feeling the pinch from government competition. All one has to do is read the newspapers: high school sports lottery may lose \$250,000; Arts Board funding cut; hospital foundations experience drop in Nevada ticket sales. The government's greed for gambling money is not just hurting those addicted to gambling, it's killing community fund-raisers, Mr. Speaker.

And now the government actually wants more. They greedily refuse to give a share of the revenues to local business people who have VLTs in their establishments and community organizations. But then they go and cut a special deal for themselves and their casino partners.

My question to the minister of Gaming: why does your government have one measure of fairness for small-business operators and exhibition boards and charitable organizations, and then quite another set of rules entirely for yourself?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I feel bad about this, but I'm going to have to remind the member opposite of all of her positions on gaming since we've started this discussion. On July of 1992, she was worried that first nations casinos would threaten provincial revenues . . . her favourites: racetracks, bingos, exhibition casinos, and video poker.

FSIN vice-chief Roy Bird asked her to wake up and smell the coffee and support Indian people, instead of working against them.

Then she told us to hurry up and start the VLT program regardless of public consultation because we're foregoing revenue, 50 to 60 million, that the province could have had. You didn't say that communities couldn't have; you said that the province couldn't have.

Then in a letter to hotel owners, she indicated her support for the role for video lottery terminals to recirculate income through hotels and lounges hard hit during the recession.

And then she flip-flopped again and attacked the VLTs for sucking money out of the public's pockets. And then in 1994, she said we don't need a referendum on this issue, and that was subsequently confirmed by Darryl Mills, who said, we're not committed firmly to any position. So I'd have a hard time understanding where the consistency is in your position on this.

I think we're quite consistent. We believe that gaming dollars should go to public benefit. And the consolidated revenue fund into which these revenues go is certainly shared for highways, health, education, and that's the way we believe it should be.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find it most interesting that the minister has to read off some list. If she'd put them in context, they can table every word — every word, Mr. Speaker — that I've stated on gaming . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order.

Ms. Haverstock: — They can look at every word in *Hansard* on gaming from this particular caucus. And it is indeed consistent, unlike the minister of Gaming one, minister of Gaming number two, minister of Gaming number three, minister of Gaming number four, minister of Gaming number five, and now this minister of Gaming number six.

The Speaker: — I would like to have the member ask her question.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is this: Madam Minister, you indicate in fact that you have been consistent — that your government has been consistent. Would you tell all of this Assembly today exactly what your Premier's stand is on casino gambling in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — If I recall correctly, the Premier's position on this issue, Mr. Speaker, is that he's not particularly fond of gaming in any of its forms. He thinks that an honest day's work for an honest day's wages is a good way to make a living.

But the fact is that many people do view gaming as a form of entertaining and they do view it as part of the hospitality industry. And because of that we've made a number of decisions. One of them to, as far as possible, within giving our folks a level playing-field with other provinces, to limit, to control and regulate, to protect charitable revenues, to ensure public use of funds, to deal with problems such as education and prevention, and to involve all people in the benefits.

And I would add that the only thing consistent about your policy is the fact that it changes every day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Potential Rail Strike

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Mr. Minister, it looks like Saskatchewan farmers are about to be hit again and this time by the rail workers' unions.

The Canadian Auto Workers union are threatening to go on strike later this week. If that happens, Mr. Minister, there will be severe effects on farmers in this province. The federal government has moved to protect fishermen on the east coast from Spanish fishermen, and I'm wondering if Ottawa is prepared to act as quickly to protect Saskatchewan farmers from these national unions.

Mr. Minister, have you contacted the federal transportation minister and asked him what he is doing in the event of an immediate rail strike and what actions have you taken on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers to stand and . . . hurt severely by a national rail strike. What have you done, sir?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, we have indeed been in touch with the federal government with regards to this rail strike for quite some time now. It's a grave concern of ours that grain will not flow, as well as other transportation goods, of course.

I don't think we've gone so far as to suggest they take the tanks out and shoot across the bow, but we certainly do insist that the grain continue to move and that the federal government take whatever action is necessary to get us a national transportation policy, which they seemed to have abandoned with the Crow and other things. But certainly the least we expect is that the trains will continue to move in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, as you know this province is transportation dependent. In fact IPSCO have already issued lay-off notices to 563 unionized staff because of a national rail strike.

Mr. Minister, can you specifically tell us then what the federal minister said in the way of an action plan if the national strike occurs. What kind of time lines is he giving you that will be implemented into action? What about that, sir?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, we have not gotten a definite answer from the federal government as to what their — the federal Liberal government — as to what their action plan is. Given their record on a national transportation system and their disregard for it in removing the Crow benefit from all of western Canada, we're not sure they have a plan for a national

transportation system.

But we will continue to make the case. And they have heard the case from us, and the ball is now in their court.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, have you specifically asked the federal government to implement back-to-work legislation, either verbally or in writing? And if you have put that in writing, would you be prepared to table that in this legislation and share it with the farmers of this province . . . back-to-work legislation in event of a national rail strike? Are you prepared to do that, sir?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, we have not called specifically for back-to-work legislation. We believe that there are better ways to solve it. We believe the federal minister should get involved directly and get a solution not only that gets the trains rolling but gets peace in the sector, and that the grain flows and the trains run with a national plan and with some hope of continuing in the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, we have heard that rhetoric from you and members of your party over and over and over again. When the crunch hits, we know in this country what has happened in the past that we've had to have back-to-work legislation in order to get the trains moving again and get the grain loaded. Why are you so hesitant, time after time in this legislature, to not call for it in advance so that everybody knows clearly in this province where you stand. Are you on behalf of agriculture or against it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, we believe that there are better ways to solve labour disputes than back-to-work legislation. That should always be a last resort, Mr. Speaker. If their settlement is done through negotiation and if the federal Liberals can lead the negotiation in order to get a peaceful settlement, it will last much longer and be much more productive.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 45 — A Bill respecting Trading in Real Estate, the Real Estate Commission and Brokerages, Brokers and Salespersons Trading in Real Estate

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill respecting Trading in Real Estate, the Real Estate Commission and Brokerages, Brokers and Salespersons Trading in Real Estate.

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

Bill No. 46 — A Bill to amend The Wascana Centre Act

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Wascana Centre Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 47 — A Bill to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act.

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

(1415)

MESSAGE FROM THE QUEEN

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, as has been mentioned earlier by a member in this House, March 13, 1995 is Commonwealth Day in the Commonwealth. I have a message from Her Majesty the Queen.

The General Assembly has proclaimed 1995 as the United Nations Year for Tolerance, a choice which is particularly appropriate for the golden jubilee of the United Nations organization itself. The same theme has been chosen for the year's Commonwealth Day.

We in the Commonwealth can teach the rest of the world something about tolerance because it is at the heart of the unique association to which we belong. Although our countries are spread all over the world and face many different problems, we know a great deal about each other and it is therefore easier for us to understand each other's point of view even when we disagree.

That understanding is essential to a tolerant society, which is not simply one which gives to the individual scope and freedom from restraint; rather, it is a society which actively develops the people who belong to it, brings out their gifts, and enriches their lives because it values their diversity.

It does not condone persecution or the harming of some people by others, but it knows how to make allowances when things go wrong. It can forgive mistakes as well as giving encouragement and guidance on how to avoid them. It knows also that enhancing the quality of life of the individual brings benefit to the family, to the community, to the nation, and to international relations.

That sort of tolerance is something which all of us must learn if

we are to restore peace in the world. And here the young people of the Commonwealth have a special part to play. The young have the vision and ability to make the world a better place and are not fettered by experience. They can see where older generation have made their mistakes through intolerance, and they can do better.

Over the last year we have been shining examples of this quality in action in the emergence of a new South Africa, which I shall be visiting next week, and in the recent signs of change in Northern Ireland. We pray that these examples will inspire everyone to try harder to make tolerance a universal rule of life.

On this Commonwealth Day, as we make the traditional affirmations which are at the centre of the Commonwealth Day observance, I send to all of you, with these examples in mind, a message of encouragement and hope in the future.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask for leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Education Week

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity, as the Minister of Education, Training and Employment, to call the attention of the Assembly to the celebration of Education Week in Saskatchewan this week. I have proclaimed March 13 to 19 Education Week, to focus public attention on the most important people in our province, and that is our young people and our children.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members of the Assembly to participate in the special activities that may be happening this week in their home town, in your schools, and with the children and young people of your community. Many events have been organized by students, parents, teachers, administrators and support staff, to promote a very important theme — making tomorrow come true.

Saskatchewan people, above all else in this country, have placed a high value on education and meeting the needs of all of our children and our youth. Excellence has been the hallmark of our educational system, and our quality of education has played a major role in sustaining the quality of life of our province.

Our vision, our collective vision for education, includes every child and youth in this province. We're all concerned about the growing numbers of young people who have difficulty learning because of social, economic, and emotional problems that come with them to school. That's why we must all work to create an environment in which children can learn — a place that is sensitive to their culture and what they know.

Breaking down the barriers, helping those children and families, is one of our greatest challenges. That is why \$4.8 million is devoted to special needs children in this year's budget; and that is why we have taken a collaborative, integrated services approach to delivering education services.

And that is why the Saskatchewan action plan for children has been so successful among families, communities, and schools. Investing in education and training is the very best investment we will ever make in our province. Together we believe we are making tomorrow come true for students, every day and every week in our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to respond to the minister's . . .

The Speaker: — I'll have to ask the House whether the member has leave to respond.

Mr. D'Autremont: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, to respond to the minister's statement on Education Week?

Leave granted.

Mr. D'Autremont: — It's a pleasure to rise today to recognize Education Week in Saskatchewan, and I would like to thank the minister for sending over a copy of her ministerial statement prior to her delivery.

The role of education, Mr. Speaker, has changed throughout the years. We have gone from one-room classrooms teaching grades 1 to 10 to the state-of-the-art institutions with modern technology, such as using the Internet on the information highway.

However not all teachers and students are fortunate enough to have the most modern of benefits. Teachers in some jurisdictions of our province are struggling with fewer resources, a shortage of staff, and ever-growing classroom sizes, and at times deteriorating facilities — all told, a crumbling infrastructure as a result of cuts and downloading by the NDP government in this province and the Liberal government in Ottawa.

Although many teachers, school boards, and administrators are facing such challenges, our children continue to receive a good education. Saskatchewan residents have risen to great heights over the years. Former prime ministers, even our own Lieutenant Governor, all born, raised, and educated in this province — accomplished individuals whose success can in part be attributed to Saskatchewan's top-notch educational system.

It is important to recognize the talents of our teachers, the resilience of our educational institutions, and the eagerness of our students.

On behalf of the opposition caucus, I would like to acknowledge Education Week and to offer our profound thanks to all the hard-working people and groups in our education system.

I would like to extend a special thank you to the bus driver and teachers who are accompanying the grades 4 to 9 class from the Alida School who are going skiing today at Ochapowace. They are indeed dedicated, to take out a bunch of students skiing on a day of rain.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Bergman: — With leave to reply to the statement?

Leave granted.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the minister today in recognizing Education Week. Our society is built on the foundation of education, and teachers in Saskatchewan deserve the profound gratitude of all of us. They are responsible for educating our children for the 21st century.

Despite their efforts, graduates of our education system are experiencing problems, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to share a letter from a Regina North West constituent, a constituent who is a prime stakeholder in education. She is a student. Her name is Lynsey Angielski. She writes:

The greatest problem facing me today is jobs, or shall I say lack of them. I am a second-year university student. I have sent out numerous applications to many organizations and establishments, yet not one has been called for an interview.

I realize that I have no job experience. I have never had a job throughout high school because my parents thought it was more important for me to study, so I could get excellent grades and be accepted in any post-secondary program. That is exactly what I did — I studied, got good grades, and ended up in education. Because of having no work experience, businesses would rather not hire me even if they know how desperately I want to work.

I also have another problem. If I don't get a job this summer, I can't go back to school in the fall. Even though I live with my parents, student loans says that my parents make too much money, which is hard to believe since my father is unable to work any more.

I suppose my question to you is: what are you going to do to help students like myself find a job?

Mr. Speaker, graduates of our schools are having difficulties making tomorrow come true. During education work, I believe

it is time for the minister to more fully address the growing problem for the graduates of our education system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I seek leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, 31 guests from the United States, who just joined us in our Assembly. Perhaps it's appropriate as we celebrate Commonwealth Day and provincial Education Week that we have in the west gallery 31 grades 9-12 students who are in the science club in Sherwood, North Dakota. They're here today travelling with their teacher, Arlyn Keith, and their chaperon, Nora Keith.

As part of their attendance here in Regina, they'll be touring our Legislative Assembly building, as well as sitting in and viewing first-hand a little bit of our form of democracy, the parliamentary democracy that is part of our Commonwealth tradition here in Canada and in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'll ask all members of the Assembly to extend a welcome to our neighbours from the south to Saskatchewan, to our Assembly, and we hope that you'll enjoy your visit here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — With leave, I'd like to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — I'd like to join my hon. colleague from Moose Jaw welcoming the guest students from Sherwood because my hometown is Carnduff in the south-east corner of the province, and I spent many, many times over in Sherwood playing ball against the Sherwood and the Mohall and some of the teams, that's right. And so that's only about 20 miles from my home town, as you will know, and so I have very, very good childhood memories of your community. And I know that the members will again welcome you warmly to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, to change a member on a committee.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Substitution of Member on Committee

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too, before I start, would like to welcome the students from the United States, and as minister of trade just say that United States is obviously our biggest trading partner and you're a very, very important group to the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the member for Regina Churchill Downs, that by leave of the Assembly:

That the name of Lloyd Johnson be substituted for that of Evan Carlson on the standing committee on private bills.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 39 — An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to move second reading of The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 1995.

Mr. Speaker, we worked very closely with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan since the fall on these amendments, and several provisions in the current legislation require amendment because of changes in our health system and because of the way physicians are regulated.

Mr. Speaker, the current Medical Profession Act grants the minister authority to require the college to issue special licences to psychiatrists and medical health officers employed in the provincial public service, although they may not yet meet the full requirements for registration as a specialist. However, as of April 1, 1995, these positions will be transferred to the district health boards as part of the transfer of all community-based health providers.

So, Mr. Speaker, the amendment proposed will ensure that these physicians do not lose their special licences and allows for future special licences to be issued to psychiatrists and medical health officers employed by the health districts.

Mr. Speaker, three other amendments before the House will ensure greater public accountability and are consistent with provisions of newer professional legislation. One change extends the period of time in which the public can take civil action against a physician for negligence from the current 12 to 14 months.

(1430)

Another amendment allows the college's committee which investigates patient complaints, the ability to apply to the court for subpoenas for witnesses to testify. Mr. Speaker, this will assist the college in properly investigating complaints. A third amendment requires the college to file an annual report with the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment and the legislation concerning provisional or temporary licences will make the Act more flexible by removing reference to specific countries' qualifications. Such detail is subject to change over time and it is better suited to by-laws. The Minister of Health will continue to approve by-laws regarding all licenser requirements including those for provisional licences.

Two other amendments concerning the use of the college's use of legal counsel and the assessment of fees are also proposed to make the Act more flexible. Matters regarding fee payment will now be included in the by-laws.

Mr. Speaker, we have consulted not only with the College of Physicians and Surgeons but also with the Saskatchewan Medical Association during the process of working with the college on these changes. And as is currently the practice, any policy by-laws which might be developed by the college pursuant to this Act will be forwarded to the Saskatchewan Medical Association for comment prior to any consideration by the Minister of Health.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of this Bill, An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I notice in the explanations that the minister gave are similar to the explanation that we received on our desk when we received the Bill, and I want to just point out that there will be some significant questions as it relates to some of the ideas that you've brought forward, and particularly how they will be handled in relation to the Department of Health, relating their mandate to control and licence some of the medical professions as it's outlined here, and how they will be designated to be used through the health district boards. So we're going to take some very specific time to ask those questions.

Also, we're going to probably be asking some pointed questions as it relates to the legal part of the Bill that you've identified — the way that legal . . . or the way that documents can be used by the legal profession and how they will be required to be used for disciplinary measures.

There's also some significant questions that we're going to raise as it deals with extended limits of action prior to 24 months consistent with the new professional status of these individuals. And we're going to be in a position where we will be comfortable, I think, after we ask the questions, but because of

the dynamic of the information that is required to be delivered to us, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 40 — An Act to amend The Land Surveys Act

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proposed amendments make changes in three areas of The Land Surveys Act. We bring them forward for the Assembly's consideration after full consultation with the surveying industry.

The changes are, first, to allow the minister to make regulations defining what constitutes a legal survey monument and assign responsibility for distributing the monuments.

Second, to transfer authority for the instruction manual which guides surveyors to The Land Surveys Act from The Highways and Transportation Act.

Third, and most importantly, the amendments will allow surveyors to use new technology in locating and setting boundary lines.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's geographic information system is in the midst of modernization. The Central Survey and Mapping Agency is a part of Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

Saskatchewan geographic information system has the reputation that's just about the best in Canada when it comes to involving users and industry and building a solid foundation for this new technology. The result will be improved and better integrated management of our land-based resources.

The new system is targeted for completion within the next three years, and it will be as economical as it is successful. A total cost, Mr. Speaker, of about \$27 million — a quarter of what it cost in B.C. and a third of the cost in Alberta. What's more, in Saskatchewan the cost is shared among the provincial, municipal, Crown, and industry sectors.

Local governments, provincial departments, and private business are already using the new system. Saskatchewan cities use it for planning and managing transportation, recreation, and social programs. For Weyerhaeuser and the PFRA the uses include water, forestry, and soils management. It's part of Ducks Unlimited waterfowl and land management activities. And the list goes on.

Above all, it's an active and dynamic system. One that emphasizes cost sharing, data sharing, and development of new, practical uses through an ongoing land information users committee. The present Bill arises from such consultation and it's part of the effort to modernize land information, to make the best use of the latest in satellite and digital technology as well as the surveyors' traditional transit and chain.

I will of course be pleased to detail the changes in committee,

Mr. Speaker, but it may help members if I outline them now. They're hardly earth shaking, and there's no financial consequences.

The first change allows the minister to make regulations defining what constitutes a legal survey monument. This proposal is the result of consultations by CSMA (Central Survey and Mapping Agency) with the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association, and the private survey industry.

It isn't a high-tech change, Mr. Speaker. A new, standard iron survey post has been developed, and proposed changes to the Act will accommodate the new monument. Related changes anticipate further modifications of monument inscriptions and identifiers.

The second change relates to the manual of instructions provided for the guidance of surveyors. In the past, authority for the manual resided in The Highways and Transportations Act, which made sense as the Central Survey and Mapping Agency was part of that ministry. It no longer resides there, and it's therefore only appropriate that the authority for the manual move as well.

The final changes relate to the manner in which boundaries are determined. The present Act does not reflect current advances in technology such as satellite surveying and digital mapping. Proposed changes — that professional surveyors use whichever process fits the situation, and the result will benefit the survey industry and property owners with more efficient demarcation of property lines.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, the Bill proposes changing The Land Surveys Act in three principal respects: greater flexibility with respect to survey monuments; transfers authority for the surveyors' instruction manual from the Highways Act; and permits the land survey system to keep up with new technology. I'm therefore pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Land Surveys Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just before I move adjournment of the debate on Bill No. 40 — An Act to amend The Land Surveys Act, I'd like to make a few comments.

It appears to me from the minister's statements that the minister and her government and her officials did take some time to talk to the surveyors' association and representatives from that association. And as the minister has indicated, it appears that this association is in agreement with the number of the recommendations made in the Act.

I think the need to review the Act and do some consulting is important. Because, Mr. Speaker, we've seen in the past where the government has talked about consultation, and at the same time, depending who they brought in to consult with, that the types of regulations that have been brought forward have not necessarily met the needs of all the folks involved through the legislation and through regulation.

And so I think it's, as well, important that while the minister has the ability to put in place regulations, we trust that the regulations will indeed meet the need of the surveying sector out there and the surveying industry, versus maybe just a few of the individuals or certain surveying groups.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that some of those questions be addressed. If, as the minister has indicated, that this has all taken place, that everyone's been consulted, and there has been concise feeling that these changes are necessary, these changes would indeed help the industry, and that the regulations would not be stepping on anyone's toes but will fit within the realms of the guidelines, then certainly, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day we will be more than willing to support the minister.

There's no one disputes the fact . . . or I shouldn't say there's no one. No one disputes the fact, Mr. Minister, that changes have taken place in technology. And every sector of our society, every industry, and every group of individuals that work within the different sectors of our society, look at ways of making their area of expertise more efficient, to help it to work better as well as taking advantage of the new technology.

And I'm sure that, Mr. Speaker, when we get into committee we will find that certainly there have been a number of changes that address some of the changes in technology the minister has talked about helps modernize the information. And I certainly think that's important. And it's not just the surveyors' associations that are interested. This falls into other areas as well.

And so, Mr. Speaker, while on the surface we appreciate the comments that the minister has made and bringing to our attention the different areas that the Bill deals with, we feel that it's important that we take somewhat more time to review the Bill, review the comments made by the minister, and the direction of the Bill, so that we can indeed address any concerns that are brought to us, or any questions that may arise, more properly in the future.

And therefore at this time I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 41 — An Act respecting Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to bring forward this piece of legislation on behalf of Saskatchewan's land surveying community. As minister responsible for SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) and its Central Survey and Mapping Agency, we've been working hand in hand with the surveying community for several years to ensure their governing Act was modernized and met the needs of a rapidly changing and growing business sector.

While the Act is non-controversial and originates outside government, I'll briefly cover its intent. The current Act has not

received major amendments in some 30 years, so the Act is, realistically speaking, a new piece of legislation. The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Act is similar in title to The Land Surveys Act which is being amended this session, so some clarification may be useful.

The Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association has been working on the Act for several years and has consulted with its memberships, related disciplines, and government, and over the past two years they have worked with the legislative services to refine the legislation. The Bill reflects the trend towards a more integrated approach to surveys, mapping, and land information management systems. In the years since the last major amendments, the surveying industry witnesses the same technological changes that are transforming the rest of society.

For its part, government and the Central Survey and Mapping Agency are ensuring a healthy and growing mapping sector. CSMA's leadership in modernizing Saskatchewan's land information infrastructure depends heavily on the private sector. Government depends on the capabilities of some 40 firms to undertake its projects. Put another way, CSMA employs only two survey crews of its own; private firms do the rest of the work. We depend more on the private sector for our survey work than any other province in Canada. And by modernizing land information, we also help modernize the land surveyors.

For example, having the capacity to offer satellite-based surveys sets them apart competitively and allows them to offer superior service to clients. There is a market for sophisticated geomatics products and services both inside and outside the province. Saskatchewan is already in the forefront of these developments and our surveyors are attracting attention internationally. But to keep pace, our surveys must adapt as well, and this is where the Act comes in.

For surveyors, the 1990s mean dealing with the satellite information as well as traditional surveying transit and chain. In turn, that means a greater degree of knowledge and training. The profession is growing, Mr. Speaker, and the governing Act must grow with it. This Bill will update the association's discipline procedures so they meet the standards set for all professional legislation in the province.

Other changes will bring the legislation in line with professional legislation in areas of public representation on council, right of appeal for rejected membership, by-law-making provisions, and upgrading educational standards. Surveyors will retain the exclusive responsibility for determining boundaries. Changes will allow people in related disciplines to become members of the association, reflecting a more integrated approach to land information systems.

(1445)

In summary, Mr. Speaker, the land surveyors Act is more than 30 years behind the times. The new Bill will better reflect the current needs of the surveying industry.

Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association has been working on changes to the Act for several years. Our government feels it's appropriate to advance these changes at this time. I'm therefore pleased to move second reading of An Act respecting Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors. Thank you.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again, Mr. Speaker, the Bill presented to us, Bill No. 41, An Act respecting Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors, appears to be an updating of an Act that certainly has had a lengthy time period before it's really had any update in the Act and modernizing the Act.

And I certainly don't have any problems with that, and I'm sure that our caucus won't really find any problems in the fact that we're modernizing the surveying association, of land surveyors. And I'm sure the professionals out there are more than looking forward to this Act being brought forward.

The minister made a comment about the private sector involvement, and no doubt there are many private companies that do surveys across this province, and certainly there isn't a municipality that doesn't rely on the professional help of surveyors in developing, designing, lots or farmsteads or land locations within their particular jurisdiction.

As well it's interesting to note the minister mentions satellite surveys, and the business, whether it's agriculture or whatever sector we're involved in now, satellite surveys certainly are playing more of a major role. And I am certain that as we discuss this, it will be interesting to have discussion on this Act regarding satellite surveys and the role they play and how they are utilized to come up with a better way of or more complete way of identifying areas and laying out surveys in . . . as well as using the chain as well that has been used for years.

However, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of questions that will arise, and we don't have all those questions in front of us today. It would be appropriate, I think, for us to review this legislation a little further, and therefore at this time I move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 42 — An Act to abolish the Rules Against Perpetuities and The Accumulations Act and to enact Consequential Amendments

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. At the conclusion of some brief comments, I will be moving The Perpetuities and Accumulations (Repeal) Act.

I want to say to hon. members briefly that this Act was passed a very long time ago, designed to discourage the tying up of the great estates of England through various generations. It was possible in English law to leave property to children but to leave it in such a way that they could never sell it, thus ensuring that the estates of the landed nobility could never be alienated and would always form the dukedom of Marlborough, to use an

example of Churchill's family.

That caused some problems in English law, and this Act was passed some hundreds of years ago actually. That has ceased to be a problem, to put it mildly, and there's now little danger in farmers wanting to tie up their farms through generations yet unborn.

The law has now got to the point where it's causing some problems in different areas. This law is causing some very real problems in the area of oil and gas law, with oil companies. Scarcely a week goes by but what the Attorney General's department does not have someone from some oil company calling us, complaining about this particular law. It serves no use. It is causing some considerable problem, and we're therefore going to repeal the rule.

I therefore move second reading of The Perpetuities and Accumulations (Repeal) Act.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, as complex as the minister has made this Act appear, we probably will have significant questions as it relates exactly where all of the problems have arisen in relation to this.

I guess one of the other things that we will be looking into is how it will impact if it's taken away, and the areas of concern that people may have, and then we will be asking the minister to explain those details to us. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of this debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 43 — An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 43, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 1995.

The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act establishes a level of provincial assistance to be allocated to both urban and rural municipalities. The amendment provides for an overall adjustment in the funding provided to urban and rural municipalities through the revenue-sharing program.

This year there will be no reduction in the revenue-sharing pools for urban and rural governments. In fact, Mr. Speaker, another \$2 million is added to the revenue-sharing pools this year. This funding had been previously redirected to the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency in 1994-95. It is now being restored. The provincial government has taken this initiative in consultation with the urban and rural municipal officials.

These changes to revenue sharing will provide needed financial relief for municipalities. I am confident that the municipalities will continue their efforts to keep local tax increases to a minimum while still being able to provide essential services to

their residents.

Municipalities have made a considerable contribution to assisting the government with its balanced budget plan. They have done this while maintaining local tax increases to a very modest and reasonable level, and I want to say thank you to them.

In closing, the total revenue-sharing funding of \$79.8 million represents a significant level of financial support to Saskatchewan municipalities, and I urge the members to support this Bill.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 43, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 1995.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to adjourn debate at the conclusion of some brief remarks.

However I just want to say that we're glad that the revenue sharing is up the \$2 million. However, the questions that we will raise have to do with what SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) is doing without it.

And the other thing that we're probably going to raise as a part of the discussion, Mr. Speaker, is the value that municipalities are going to lose because of reassessing, because of loss of elevators and loss of rail lines in relation to the whole process of rationalizing the whole system in grain transportation. And it very seriously impacts into this area because their volume of taxes . . . or their volume of assessment is going to be down so their taxes are going to have to significantly increase.

So we're going to be asking quite a number of those questions, both in the discussion of this Bill, but also in the discussion of your estimates, Madam Minister.

Revenue sharing is an important part of an overall view that the municipalities had at the time that it was initiated. Municipalities could then assume that if the economy went up, they would get increased benefits; if it went down, it would move down. And we've understood that. And with the changes, I'm not sure that the economy went up that much in order to deliver that, but the volume of dollars, the \$2 million, will be greatly appreciated by the municipalities, both rural and urban.

And so with these few words, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 44 — An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 44 amends The Local Government Election Act. The purpose of this Bill is to remedy the existing provision dealing with candidates' deposits.

Mr. Speaker, in 1993, at the request of the Saskatchewan Urban

Municipalities Association, government amended the legislation regarding local elections. The amendment required each candidate running for a seat on a council or the school board in the province's four largest cities to make a financial deposit of \$100. Under the Act, each candidate would recover their deposit if they won their seat or received at least 10 per cent of the vote.

This formula worked well for elected positions involving only one office, such as the office of a mayor or the office of a councillor for a ward. However, questions arose when the formula was applied to at-large elections, where more than one candidate is elected in a city-wide contest for a council or a board.

When the Department of Justice looked into this, we discovered that the formula made it impossible for a losing candidate in an at-large election to retain their deposit.

The losing candidate in a city-wide election would have to receive 10 per cent of the total number of votes cast for all of the candidates. This was certainly not intended when we drafted the Bill.

This Bill makes it clear that losing candidates will retain their deposits in an at-large election if they receive at least 10 per cent of the average vote cast for all the positions to be filled.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is retroactive to July 1, 1993. Some candidates who lost their deposits in the fall election of 1994 in the four major cities will have their deposits returned in keeping with the intent of the original legislation.

The cost to the city and school boards is estimated to be about \$4,000 in the four largest centres. Most will go to the school board candidates, but some civic candidates in Moose Jaw will get their \$100 deposits returned since the city did not use a ward system in 1993.

This Bill will keep local election legislation up to date and respond to candidates' concerns. I therefore urge all members to support this Bill. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 44, a Bill to amend the local elections Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the Act and the amendment that the minister's talking about today is certainly something that is appropriate and long overdue.

As the minister has indicated, in an at-large system certainly you could be left out in the cold. And I think what we need to do is include . . . make sure we encourage people to come forward and seek municipal election. And if we have rules in place that make it difficult and indeed that put people on an unequal footing, it certainly makes that difficult. And at the end of the day, you're going to find . . . you will find, as many communities have, even in our area in this past municipal elections, they had to go and call a second election because there weren't enough names coming forward. People just

weren't that interested.

(1500)

And the election day had gone by; the nomination period had gone by, then the election had gone by, and people hadn't come forward, until finally they had another election call.

And so I think the amendments that the minister's bringing forward are certainly appropriate. And I believe as well that as we review it closer, we'll find that there are some questions that will be coming forward. And we look forward to be presenting those questions. However at this time I would move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 23

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cunningham that **Bill No. 23 — An Act to establish The Agri-Food Innovation Fund** be now read a second time.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I made most of the comments that I wish to on this Bill the other day. I come back to the fact that we aren't talking about a great deal of money here, yet we are talking about a very large board, and we seem to have a mandate that perhaps can't be lived up to.

So what I'm going to do, Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks, is move this Bill on to committee. But I think at that stage we have to really find out from the minister whether there's any meat and potatoes involved in this particular piece of legislation, or if this is just some kind of a bone that's been thrown out to the agricultural community after all of the devastation that this government has wreaked on them in the last three and half years.

And I guess the minister's going to have prove in committee that there actually is something here worthwhile with the amount of funds that he's allocated in order to do the type of job that they've talked about doing — to diversify the agricultural community in this province — particularly in the face of what has transpired with the changes to the method of payment and everything else that is going to happen surrounding that.

Certainly rural Saskatchewan is looking forward to opportunities, and the minister I guess will have ample opportunity in committee to show us how those opportunities can occur with the vehicle that has been designed. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move that this Bill go the committee stage and that we then review it that way.

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

Bill No. 37

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Calvert that **Bill No. 37 — An Act respecting Medical Laboratory Technologists** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments regarding Bill No. 37, An Act respecting Medical Laboratory Technologists, and then before I would move to adjourn debate as we are still waiting for some replies to some of the responses we've sent out in order that we may address the Act more carefully as we move it to committee . . .

As the minister indicated, the background for the Act was centred around the medical laboratory technologists, having been represented by the Saskatchewan Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists, come to the government and approaching the government in 1992 for legislation to regulate the profession for the first time in our province.

And I understand from the comments made by the minister and from some of the discussion we've had that the society had the support of its 1,200 members to approach the government for regulatory legislation. And indeed, prior to this legislation coming before the Assembly, there was consultation between the government and the society on the legislation.

The highlights of the Act are that it provides the society with the power to make by-laws, and by-laws that affect the public will continue to require the approval of the Minister of Health, and I think this is appropriate.

I think we don't want . . . I believe we want to have the ability for individuals and the public at large to indeed be able to address concerns regarding legislation. And we certainly don't want to put all the responsibility in the hands of the different groups or societies or specialists that may have an interest.

The Act outlines the society's responsibilities with respect to investigation and disciplinary hearings. And here again it's a point that is certainly appropriate.

I believe, whether we're taxpayers or whether we're involved in an organization, each and every one of us at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, want to know that the organization we're involved in does have the ability to follow up and if disciplinary action is needed the organization, or the association we're part of, can make those rules, versus somebody else on the outside. And I think that's why the society asked for that.

The Act ensures that complaints of incompetence or misconduct are acted upon in an effective manner, and it establishes investigation and discipline committees that have authority to investigate complaints, apply to the court for subpoenas, and levy penalties, including fines up to \$2,000.

Mr. Speaker, it also indicates that disciplinary decisions may be appealed to Court of Queen's Bench. So if a client or an individual feels that they've been treated unfairly and the discipline they've received is not fair, or isn't appropriate or that they haven't received due consideration, they do have an avenue to appeal.

And I believe that's appropriate, as in our society we all believe that people certainly are innocent until proven guilty. But at the same time we must always look at the fact that, whether it's an organization or professional association — whether it's a member or whether it's a client — everyone must know that disciplinary actions that are taken are done in full compliance as well as being judicially responsible and that the truth then is specifically brought forward and heard.

A public representative will sit on the discipline committee. The person who laid a complaint against the medical laboratory technologists will be entitled to attend the disciplinary hearing and will be informed of the outcome of the complaint.

And certainly I think that's appropriate, because what this does is indicates that when a complaint is brought forward — the complainant on many occasions in the past has felt that they brought a complaint forward and basically it was brushed off or it was filed in file 13 and nothing was really done with it — the fact that the hearing, the disciplinary . . . or the complainant will hear and be informed of the disciplinary hearing and will be able to attend gives them the opportunity then to see for themselves that yes, their concerns were not only raised but action was taken, and indeed this action will then either clarify . . . or it will clarify for the complainant whether or not that was a legitimate complaint or whether it wasn't. But at least disciplinary action was taken and undertaken.

The society will be required to submit an annual report on its activities with Saskatchewan Health.

The minister also indicated that a number of groups were consulted regarding the Act. Groups included the Saskatchewan Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists; it included the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan; it included the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations; and the Saskatchewan society of clinical chemists.

And I believe as well the minister also noted a number of other professional organizations were consulted and were supportive.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, what I would also say is that while these organizations were consulted, we trust that the organizations themselves did consult amongst their members regarding the Bill . . . regarding the changes to the Bill, so that indeed we will find . . . and as we consult with the member organizations out there and individual members, that we don't find individual members coming to us and saying yes, but we didn't realize that this is what our association was asking for, or we didn't necessarily understand that this was what was the intent of the changes to the legislation.

And so I trust that, as the minister indicated, there was a full consultation process that made the government members and the minister and her officials — or his officials . . . were aware of the fact and made sure that the associations indeed covered their membership so that the appropriate actions were taken and everyone will be supportive. And we wait for a final response from many of these associations.

Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to speak on this particular Bill and it's nice to have a piece or two of legislation on the Table that has been drafted in consultation with affected parties. And as I've indicated, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly appropriate that the Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists, of which they are 1,200 strong, did come before the government, not the government — if I understand it correctly — not the government going to them, but they came to the government asking for this Act.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, as we further debate this, it will be interesting to note what role unions may have had, what role they will have in this disciplinary hearings. I suspect that medical laboratory technologists are unionized much the same as the nurses. What role does the union play during a disciplinary hearing? And I'm interested in hearing from the minister who else was consulted on the Bill.

The minister did note during his second reading speech that Saskatchewan Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists were consulted as well as the College of Physicians and Surgeons. But as I indicated a minute ago, a number of other organizations which . . . I don't have the full list in front of me right now. I think it's appropriate that we take the time to further review the statements by the minister in his second reading speech as well as continue the consultative process ourselves amongst these organizations, so that when we do get to committee we will indeed be addressing the concerns that were raised prior to the legislation and any concerns that they may have with regards to some of the technical details regarding the legislation.

And therefore I believe, Mr. Speaker, it's appropriate that we adjourn debate at this time to allow that process to continue. Thank you.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 38

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Calvert that **Bill No. 38 — An Act to amend Certain Health Statutes** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few comments regarding Bill No. 38. I believe, as we heard in the minister's speech, the amendments will help streamline existing health-related legislation. The amendments would also consolidate authority under The Department of Health Act for costs of insured medical and hospital services that must be recovered by the department where those costs were incurred as a result of

negligence on the part of someone else.

It's also been mentioned that the amendments are necessary because of no-fault insurance and the introduction of the new population-based funding arrangements.

The Act also allows Saskatchewan Health to continue to recover negligence-related medical and hospital costs in the new insurance and health funding environment, and I believe in regard to the Act that was passed last spring, it appears that this Act was necessary to bring everyone under the same guidelines and regulations.

Prior to no-fault, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Health could directly recover medical and hospital costs caused by automobile accidents where those costs were due to negligence on the part of someone else, and how . . . as we brought to the attention of the House and the debate regarding the no-fault insurance. That is no longer possible, and it appears to me that what this Act does is indeed addresses some of the points where we raised last year and brings the Act into conformity with the no-fault Act that was introduced last year by SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). SGI has agreed to reimburse Saskatchewan Health for these costs. Costs are expected to be around \$4.5 million annually. Saskatchewan Health will still be able to recover health costs incurred due to someone else's negligence with claims unrelated to automobiles and with respect to non-resident auto accidents.

The Bill also, Mr. Speaker, accommodates cost recovery for third-party liability medical claims in situations where fee for services is not applicable. More specifically, for a population-based funding to medical doctors. The amendment will allow for recovery of hospital costs where payments have been made under The Health Districts Act in keeping with the new global funding arrangements for hospitals.

The legislation, Mr. Speaker, as we see it, also will provide authority under one piece of legislation for medical and hospital costs to be recovered in all situations where the costs are the result of negligence on the part of someone else. Section 32.2 of The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act and section 26 of The Saskatchewan Hospitalization Act will be repealed.

Mr. Speaker, it appears to me that what this Act does is indeed brings the Act into conformation with the no-fault Act that was introduced and brought to this Assembly last year. And as I indicated, I think it's also appropriate that while the government talks about consulting with the people in the industry and consulting with interested groups, that it is appropriate for us to also take the time. And we're waiting some responses from a number of the organizations and groups before we enter into the committee phase.

So we indeed, if there are any questions that may not have been addressed in the Act, as we see now that were not addressed last year when we were discussing the no-fault insurance Act, that it's important that we have that time period to indeed have all the questions before us before we reach committee, so that we

can bring those questions forward. And that at the end of the day, by the time this Act has passed, we will indeed address any concern or any situation that may arise that someone may think of that maybe the department and the minister and his officials may have overlooked, and even some of the industry may have overlooked.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, for that process to happen and for us to make sure we've covered all the details that should be brought forward in this legislation, I believe it's appropriate to move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1515)

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Labour Vote 20

The Chair: — Order. Before we proceed to item 1, administration, we could ask the minister to please introduce the officials who have joined us here today.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to my right, Graham Mitchell, the acting deputy minister of Labour. I have to my left, Jeff Parr, the executive director of policy and planning. Behind myself, to the right, is Terry Stevens, the executive director of occupational health and safety. And behind me, to my left, is Janis Rathwell, the assistant deputy minister.

Item 1

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we've been taking a look at the *Supplementary Estimates* book as well as the *Estimates* for '95-96 under the Labour minister's portfolio and checking how things have been going financially in this department.

I want to welcome your officials as well, Minister. And I'm sure that we will profit the province a considerable amount in the next little while as we try to discover for the taxpayers of this province where in fact you have been spending their money and what you plan on doing as a course of action through your departments.

We want to talk to you, Minister, about studies and projections and direction that you see your department going in, and we want to talk about of course the ways that you are allocating the spending of the money.

We are, in the outset here, somewhat amazed at some of the shocking statements that are coming out of government ministers in the past few days. For example, of course today we heard the Ag minister saying that he doesn't defend the farmers in an action to have back-to-work legislation ensure that the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) workers would get back to

work and move the grain that is so vital to the economy of Saskatchewan and to Saskatchewan farmers. That's certainly a shocking kind of a statement.

But even more shocking to us, Mr. Chairman, was the statement made by yourself with regards directly to those issues that pertain to your department. And that was when you said that pay equity for women is not a Labour issue.

Over the weekend it is reported that you have stated and shocked your own people in the labour union movements by saying that this issue, pay equity for women, is not a Labour issue but in fact should be referred to the minister who is in charge of the Women's Secretariat, and that comes as a rather significant surprise to them but also to myself.

I'm not shocked by this kind of move of course, because I can see why you would want to duck this issue and not discuss it with the Saskatchewan people at this particular time. But I'm sure that the women of this province aren't that particularly interested in your vested interest going into an election mode at this time. They are more interested in getting the answers to their questions.

So having heard those kind of shocking and remarkable statements, Minister, we find ourselves wondering just what exactly the government has got as an overall plan for the entire government, but more specifically today for the Department of Labour.

So I'm going to ask you just in general to start with: what is your direction and your policy towards the labour movement and towards protecting the workers of our province? What is your ultimate goal for achieving from your portfolio some kind of fair play, some kind of a base, a job base, some kind of encouragement for the labour force to look forward to expanding opportunities in our province, or do you have any kind of a plan along that line?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — I thank the hon. member for his question. The ultimate goal is to make sure that labour laws and regulations work.

Mr. Goohsen: — Minister, I think as we have been in consultation with one of your back-benchers on this issue, it'll be important that we explore a lot of the areas under the labour issues. Oh yes, and I found the number, page no. 91 here. We are going to be looking at the direction that you want to take this province in through your portfolio under the Labour mandate.

We find that you have spent significant amounts of money with regards to The Occupational Health and Safety Act. We find that you have spent a very significant amount of money on labour relations and conciliations in our province. We find that you have spent a lot of money on the labour standards as they relate to the Acts that you have introduced through your portfolio and through your predecessor's work. We find as well that these expenditures have an impact on the job base for the

people of our province and whether or not in fact there will be a job base.

And so we want to know what your long-term plan is with regards to providing those kinds of incentives that would bring people in from the business sector for example, or even from the point of view of bringing in a job base with expanded Crown corporation activities or government projects.

What do you have for a plan that will help us to get job numbers up in our province and provide long-term stability for the workers of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — The question applies to the Department of Labour, Mr. Chairman. The role of myself as Minister of Labour in the province is to make sure that labour legislation regulations have a balance — to protect the interests of working men and women in this province and at the same time not deter economic development.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well, Minister, it is clear that you don't have a plan and that's of course . . . we tried to get you two times now to answer the very fundamental question as to what your plan is as a government, and obviously you as a minister are a disaster and a failure in all of these aspects because you don't have a plan. You haven't got a clue what you're doing or where you're going, and you state that automatically as a reflex action the first time you get up to answer any questions in this particular estimate period on Labour and the direction of your department.

You don't know what kind of a plan you've got because you don't have one. All you've got is an agenda to serve the needs of the union leaders of this province, and you have no agenda whatsoever in terms of creating a job base for this province or providing any incentive for the people of the business world to bring in a job base for our province.

And so you very frivolously get up and say very quickly, well we're just bringing in good legislation. Well let me tell you; there's a few hundred thousand people in this province that don't believe your legislation is any good whatsoever. It is not only a disaster for the province; it's a bigger disaster for the people who work in the workforce.

The only people who are benefiting by this whole procedure of the laws that you have been bringing in over the last three years are the bosses of the labour unions, and you're doing it on the backs of the workers. You're probably the worst enemy that the workers of this province have got because you don't have a plan to create jobs. You don't have a plan to create a job base. All you've got is plan to try to make your big union bosses get onside in time for the next election so that they will carry your job to the hustings in the next election.

It's got nothing to do with what's fair. It's got nothing to do with what's right. All you're doing is an attempt to create an election atmosphere to get your union bosses onside. You haven't got a plan. That's why you can't talk about a plan — because there

isn't one. Clearly and simply, Minister, you are spending hundreds of millions of dollars of the province's money, of the taxpayers' money, and what are you spending it on? You're spending it on the creation of laws and the implementation of laws that will clearly drive business and surely drive jobs out of this province rather than to bring them in.

Let's talk for a minute about the women of our province and the issues that they bring up: the pay equity issue. Why are you against pay equity for women, Minister?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — I thank the hon. member for his question. I'm not against pay equity. The article that the hon. member refers to appeared in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* this weekend.

What I was saying is that it's not the Department of Labour that is responsible for forwarding the agenda for pay equity in this province, regardless of how that's gone about. And I would say that the Department of Labour is very concerned about pay equity. There are people who study this almost as a science within our department. But the questions that are specific as to the agenda of pay equity in this province would be better addressed when the Women's Secretariat comes up before estimates, and the member can then get very detailed responses as to how pay equity will unfold in this province.

We think that we can stand in some appreciation of pay equity. And across the board in Saskatchewan, pay equity has been addressed in real terms as much as any other province or any other jurisdiction throughout Canada.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well Minister, once again you must be viewed as the biggest disappointment to the ministry of Labour that the women of our province has ever seen, because very clearly they will not agree with you that the Women's Secretariat should, in itself, deal with the issues of pay equity for women. This is clearly a labour issue, clearly a Labour department issue.

Women's Secretariat, as far as I understand it, is a secretariat that deals with other issues and other problems for women, more accurately I think described as the social services kinds of issues that women run into in our society. And I believe that I'm not totally wrong when I say that Social Services have in the past, before the Women's Secretariat was set up, basically dealt with the issues that the Women's Secretariat now deals with; the issues of a labour nature and of wages' nature has always, traditionally, and under precedents of our province, been dealt with by the Department of Labour.

So, Minister, I'd say to the women of this province that you are ducking, that you are passing your responsibilities, that you are attempting to deflect a political hot potato at a time when you want only to do those things that you can to get the labour union bosses onside to fight the next election for you.

And clearly this is an issue that you don't feel you can win any votes on, and so you're ducking. And the women of

Saskatchewan, I think, will realize that and will remember that when they in fact do have the opportunity to pick a new government in the next election.

(1530)

Let's talk, Mr. Minister, about some of the things then that, seeing as how you refused to talk about the important issues of women's equity in the workplace and you refused to discuss with the women of this province how you are spending the money in your department and not showing to them that any of it is going for their benefit, let's talk about some of the other issues then. And perhaps you will want to discuss them a little more openly and fairly.

Not that we are really, truly expecting that, because in all fairness to the people of Saskatchewan, we don't believe that you have a plan in your department to do anything except play partisan politics. But we will give it a try and we will talk about the views of the people and the taxpayers as far as the Labour department is concerned.

Just in passing, because you're so negative to the area of women, I also wondered, Minister, what your feelings are about the opening of the Moose Jaw plant. Did you do any surveys or studies in your department, Minister, that would show us how expensive the strike at the Moose Jaw meat-packing plant, which I understand is going to open today, how expensive was the strike there?

Have you done any studies to find out what the implications are here for the labour force in the province? Have you done any studies or research to find out who benefited in the long run or who paid the biggest bill there? And what was the outcome from your department's point of view?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — In the particular issue that the member refers to, we were involved in conciliation and like to think that our employees had a helpful role to play in the final resolve.

In terms of overall studies as to the cost, the socio-economic impact — if that's what the member's getting at — we have not conducted a study in that regard and do not feel it's our department's responsibility to do so.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Minister, maybe you should take a look at this sort of thing a little more closely. Because my research with some of the people down at Moose Jaw clearly indicated that there is a need for your department to take a long, hard look into this type of situation and find out what's going on there.

The people that I talked to made some very direct observations as to the unfairness that went on in that whole strike process. The people that I talked to clearly indicated to me that again the union bosses who orchestrated the walk-out in that plant, who orchestrated the whole process of the problem of the strike, were paid full benefits, as compared to the labourers themselves who got practically nothing during that strike period. They got

very little pay.

We also had some federal people who were working in the plant who continued to work there for year after year at full pay without ever having to show up for work. They simply were hired and paid.

So the workers got only a very small fraction of the wages that they should have been getting, while the union bosses and the federal employees got full benefits and took full advantage of the situation and in fact had a paid holiday.

So why would you not think it was important to survey that or to study it and research and show to the people of the province what the effects would be?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well we wouldn't study that because it's neither within the role or the mandate of the department to do that. And if we did, the member would likely change his hat and be critical of the department for doing so.

I do want to reiterate that we do have mediation and conciliation services within the department. There was a conciliation role that was played, and we like to think that we were beneficial to the situation which finally ended up in resolve. And hopefully the employer and employees can put the situation behind themselves and get on with on a productive future for that particular business.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well, Minister, wouldn't you think that it might be important to know what happened in this whole strike situation in terms of using that kind of information in the future? Perhaps another situation will occur. And I say, quite frankly, I believe that there is no question whatever but that there will be future problems between labour and management that will almost exactly parallel the one that happened here.

So why wouldn't we do a research into the circumstances around that strike and lockout and the whole process? Why wouldn't we research that to try to discover how we could offset something in the future of a similar nature?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well there have been labour-management disputes since the Industrial Revolution, and I'm sure there'll be management-labour disputes in the future. The role of the Department of Labour is not to study in depth each occurrence that might come about.

The member asking the question seems to have some fairly firm opinions. And we'd be happy if you'd take the time to put them in writing and submit them to the department, and we'll work them into an analysis and provide you with a response to your astute observations.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Mr. Minister, that is really an astounding approach to estimates. I don't think I've ever seen anything quite like it. Now you would rather I put into writing my questions and submit them to you when I'm standing right here and just asked you the question in

person.

Why would I bother to write things down that you won't answer when I'm standing here? Wouldn't that be a kind of a waste of my time?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well the member obviously wasn't listening to my answer. I was referring to one particular issue that you're referring to in Moose Jaw, and if you want to provide your analysis . . . and I wasn't answering a particular question; I was trying to give some value to the comments that you make. But if you see no value to the comments that you make, don't bother putting it in writing to the department and we won't have to answer you.

I would want to point out to the minister that Saskatchewan's labour relation climate's likely the most stable in Canada. The number of person-days lost to a strike or lockout in Saskatchewan over the last 10 years has been a little more than one-third the rate for Canada as a whole.

And I think that speaks very well. It's equivalent to the rate in Alberta or Manitoba, whichever example you want to use. We have a very stable climate for business and labour within this province.

And I think to attest to that you can only look at some of the announcements over the past few months that we've had in Saskatchewan. There'd be the CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce) Call Centre; whether it be the Cargill situation; Hitachi's announcement in Saskatoon today; or the IMAX theatre where a community in your very own constituency, Eastend, will be advertised at likely a couple of hundred IMAX theatres throughout the world, be advertising for your own constituency to attract economic development into that area.

And I think the member should not try and exaggerate the situation as to whether or not there is, in his opinion, situations in Saskatchewan that deserve greater attention. It's statistically correct and in reality correct that Saskatchewan has one of the most stable relationships between labour and management of anywhere in Canada, maybe even North America.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Minister, I want to compliment you on the efforts that you and your government have done in the IMAX area and in the Eastend area. But we had probably better straighten out the record just a little bit. That's not my constituency just yet. It may be in the future with the new boundaries and that sort of thing, if I choose to run again; and if I then after that am elected again, I may possibly represent that area. But at the moment, no, that is not my constituency.

But I certainly feel very close to those people because it is close to home. And I would view them as my friends and neighbours and wish them every success in the world in not only that adventure, but in any other adventure down in that area. There are a lot of needs that can help the province tremendously. In spite of the fact that the population numbers of people are rather

low, the economic benefits that that area of the province can bring to the entire province, those economic benefits are tremendous. And the spin-off there can be many, many dollars to go into General Revenue Fund for the government to spend on the rest of the province.

So realistically, sometimes that's the way things happen. I guess the resource industry is a little like that. Where you find uranium, there aren't very many people sometimes. And yet the economic spin-off of that industry can be tremendous in terms of tax dollars for the rest of the province.

The oil industry is another example. And of course tourism related to something like the dinosaur bones from the T-Rex find in Eastend also falls into that category. I think that does justify of course, the expenditures of many more dollars in those sparsely populated areas than what the population might for example suggest would be warranted.

But the spin-off and the good that can be done and the potential to rebuild the population base on those types of things is tremendous. And I'm sure that you know that, and I congratulate you for that. Certainly we have never been in a position, Minister, of wanting to be critical of the good things that your government does. However, we do believe that there are some things that need some straightening out and some attention to.

The reality is, Minister, in spite of what your opinion is about the Moose Jaw situation, is that it gives Saskatchewan a really bad name when you have industries that are shut down for years and years and years with no resolution to the labour-management problems. That kind of thing is a very bad atmosphere for business. You must realize that.

So if we did a study and an analysis of what went wrong in the Moose Jaw situation, certainly you must be able to see that that could be good as a tool to use to apply in future circumstances that might be somewhat similar. Certainly there must be some way that we can offset these kind of things from happening or short-circuit them or get in the way of them or cut them off at the knees or whatever term you want to use over there. But certainly that kind of information and analysis would be a benefit for the people of the province so that we could get our name as a good place to do business established and enhanced in the province of Saskatchewan.

So I guess I'll let you respond to that before I get into my next question.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well if the member is saying that we can some way assure in future there will never be a strike or never be a lockout by an employer, that's just not the case unless you were to take that democratic right away. And if the member believes in collective bargaining, the member would also agree that there will be lockouts and there will be strikes in the future.

In terms of the particular case that you refer to in Moose Jaw

Packers, this took place as a backlash of major changes in the beef industry. I want the member to be very clear on that. The restructuring is still ongoing as I understand it. The Moose Jaw start-up is particularly encouraging to us. It should be encouraging to you, the employer, and employees. Its restructuring will greatly enhance the marketing of Saskatchewan beef producers. And finally, Saskatchewan is better placed to compete with the beef kill operations with Alberta and other Canadian jurisdictions.

I would want to say to the member in terms of the particular question he's asking about doing a study, is that we have many experts in the industry, we have experts in the unions, we have experts within the department who have a good understanding as to what happened.

And I'm not prepared to direct the department to spend large amounts of money to do an in-depth study with one particular dispute in Saskatchewan which we now see has been resolved. There's ongoing progress; there's continued improvements being made between the managers and between the organized workers of that particular plant. And we're satisfied at this stage with the progress that is being made in that area, and we're happy, as you should be happy, to see Moose Jaw Packers back in operation.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well certainly, Minister, we're happy to see that the workers are back to work and that the operation is operating.

But it didn't operate for a very, very long time. And it didn't operate because there was a labour dispute in which the employees and the management could not agree. The unions represented the employees and of course management represented I guess itself. But they came to an impasse that stopped that whole process for a very long time.

There has to be some reasons why that happened. Certainly it would be a benefit to society in Saskatchewan to know exactly what caused these problems, to see if we could come up with an analysis that could determine how we could offset this happening again in the future.

And that's what we're saying to you. We're saying, let's see what we can do to stop this sort of thing from wrecking our reputation in this province as a place to do business. Because right now we don't have a very good reputation in the business world.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — I disagree with the member. We have a very good reputation in the business world. Otherwise you wouldn't see the Cargill plant, you wouldn't see the Wheat Pool wanting to do expansions within Saskatchewan, you wouldn't see the CIBC Call Centre, the Sears Call Centre — national, international businesses, I venture to say, that see Saskatchewan as a very, very attractive place to do business.

Back to Moose Jaw Packers. Why did it last so long? It lasted so long because there was a very basic difference in terms of

what is happening there between the union representing the working people and the managers who represent the owners of the business.

And you either believe in collective bargaining or you don't believe in collective bargaining. Just because collective bargaining sometimes is very painful for either the employer or the employees, or both of them combined, you can't just then all of a sudden say I don't believe in collective bargaining any more. You either believe in it or you don't believe in it. Where do you stand in the Conservative Party in regard to collective bargaining?

(1545)

Mr. Goohsen: — Well, Minister, I probably should remind you that you answer the questions here and we ask them. But in this circumstance I will answer the question because it's a very simple answer.

We believe in collective bargaining, as you do, from that point of view in the very broad sense of the term. However, let's not take this too literally in the finer analysis, because you can't just have a blanket policy that collective bargaining must be let run rampantly through society without some control over what its outcome will be. There are such things as essential services where a society cannot survive if people don't play their role in society. And you and I of course then would sit down and argue what is an essential service.

I think if the doctors were all to walk out on strike in Saskatchewan and all of the nurses were to walk out on strike at the same time and all of the medical institutions in the province were shut down at the same time and you were to cut your foot off in a grain auger, you would say that medical care is an essential service and we should not allow collective bargaining to be the vehicle that stopped the whole process so that you could get your foot sewed back on.

So realistically, sir, we are very much in favour of collective bargaining but we do believe that there are essential services where things have to be done in order to save society from serious, serious problems.

But in the Moose Jaw instance, that of course is not an essential service. And we have never said that you should have back-to-work legislation, for an example, to force those people back to work. What we are saying here today is that you should do an analysis of what went wrong there.

I say, in my own philosophy, that something went desperately wrong when a plant with workers has to be shut down for a couple of years' time. A few weeks, that's collective bargaining; a couple of months, maybe that's still collective bargaining; but a few years? That's not bargaining; that's shut down — everything is finished, stopped, ended, over with. Nobody's talking. You can't tell me that's collective bargaining when nobody's talking to one another.

Certainly there must be something that we could study from this situation that would tell us how to do things better in the future. Minister, I'm going to let you think about that, because you also alluded to the other business areas that are attracted to our province when I suggested to you that we have a bad business climate in our province.

You say that you're very happy that Cargill is going to build a plant — use that as an example — and nothing wrong with that. I'm glad they're going to build a plant too. I have a vested interest in that kind of thing because I'm a grower of the primary product and I'm really happy that they're going to come to Saskatchewan.

But let's tell the whole story, which is that in spite of this government they are going to locate in Saskatchewan because this is where the product happens to be grown. It's just like any other natural resource, only this is a resource that can be grown on our kind of soil in our province.

And so they're coming here in spite of your labour legislation, and they're doing it, of course, with another part of the story that needs to be told — with tremendous tax breaks and a tremendous amount of government money and taxpayers' money being poured into this sort of thing, the very thing that you and your government used to condemn so vehemently when you were in opposition. And of course somebody said this is the old soap opera of how the worm turns or something like that.

But the truth of the matter is, sir, that you do have some success coming in the province but it's in spite of what you've done and not because of it. And we think that you could do a better job and that's why we're here today.

We think that you could have tenfold the opportunities that are awakening in this province if you would face the reality that you have to give everybody an equal playing-field, and not just a few special friends that happen to come along and decide to play the game your way.

The truth of the matter is that you've got a calling centre coming into this province with tremendous taxpayer-dollar input into that process. And we're going to say to you that you ought to, when you allude to this sort of thing, also provide those opportunities to the people who are already in the province, who have stayed and paid the shot through the higher taxes and through all of the higher utility rates that they've had to pay. They've paid the price to stay in this province and you give the breaks to outsiders that come in.

And that is good for the province and we want those people to come, but we say that what is good for the goose should be good for the gander; you ought to provide these opportunities on a fair, level playing-field for everybody involved and not just for a few. This ought to be an exercise of fair play, not an exercise of pick and choose and then try to take all the credit for it.

So, Minister, I should let you respond to that, and then I'll get on to my other questions.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — You're absolutely so inaccurate in the assertions that you make that I think that you must not have attended the Legislative Assembly since it opened for this session.

There's no special treatment. The programs that are there are across the board. Any company that is existing in Saskatchewan or wants to come into Saskatchewan and be new business partners in this province will have the same treatment. The programs that are there are across the board programs, that's been explained many times by the Minister of Economic Development in this Assembly in answer to your questions during question period.

But you might hearken back to the days of your administration, whereby there were secret deals cut within your departments that nobody ever knew about until after the election was over and had to be exposed by due diligence of investigations into some of those activities. So don't mislead the Saskatchewan public by special treatment for special friends that you're talking about, because that doesn't exist. The Minister of Economic Development has explained that to you.

And my response to you is that you are inaccurate, you're misleading the public within Saskatchewan, and I think that maybe you should try and get back to the Labour questions and save the Economic Development questions for the Minister of Economic Development, who is more capable of answering specifics on that than what I would be here today with the officials from the Department of Labour.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do want to ask the Minister of Labour some labour-oriented issues. And I'm glad that he's telling us that the Minister of Economic Development is going to be so forthcoming. Those eight questions we asked about the CIBC Call Centre the other day maybe will get answered, now that the Minister of Labour is on our side in eliciting the truth from the Minister of Economic Development.

Minister, earlier in the day I had the opportunity to pose some questions to the Agriculture minister, who chose to act on behalf of the government, and my responses to some questions dealing with the potential crisis in the national transportation network that the ongoing strikes are . . . being posed to CP (Canadian Pacific) at present; potentially to CN (Canadian National).

And I'm wondering, given that you're the Labour minister, have you also been watching the situation evolve, and are you of a similar view to the Minister of Agriculture, that given that some of these contracts have been in abeyance for a year and half — a year and three-quarters — and a lot of the normal bargaining process has evidently gone on without success, do you agree with the Minister of Agriculture that you would not be in favour of calling upon the national Liberal government to

implement back-to-work legislation in the event of a full-blown national rail strike which would prohibit the export of not only Saskatchewan grain, but would see companies like IPSCO lay off all of their unionized staff and others who we are all hoping will do well in the province of Saskatchewan in the manufacturing sector?

Are you of the same view as the Minister of Agriculture, that that isn't what you as a Saskatchewan government should be calling upon?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — The Department of Labour has been watching this situation quite closely as it's developed over the months, I suppose could be some description, but certainly the more recent weeks, as to what has transpired between rail workers and associated unions and the rail companies in Canada.

I first point out very clearly — and the member should know this; I'm sure he does — that the rails are a federal responsibility, and the authority that we have are by encouraging the federal government to do something, or as the case may be, to not do something.

Both the Minister of Highways and Transportation and the Minister of Agriculture have written to the federal Minister of Transport and the federal Minister of Labour. They've also contacted the unions that are involved.

I would encourage the member to understand that the situation exists today is a lockout. The rail company has locked out some of their employees. I would further want to point out that out of the five major unions that are involved with the rail companies in Canada, three of them have reached tentative agreements I believe this past week, if it's not mistaken, or maybe just on the weekend. Some of them might have been as recent as that. The situation is one to be watched closely.

I am hopeful that the collective bargaining process will have the other two unions, the one that is locked out right now and the other union, the Canadian Auto Workers . . . that they are both able to come to an agreement as the other three unions have come to, so that the grain and other products that Saskatchewan have can move freely through the Canadian rail transportation system.

Mr. Swenson: — Minister, are you implying to the House that those lockouts are occurring without any corresponding picketing action of behalf of the unions — that they're simply locking people out with no locals walking off the job? Are you telling the Assembly that?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — It is my understanding that the maintenance of way union staged a one-day walk-out. As a result the rail company locked out the employees.

I have no intention of misleading the House. I think the hon. member knows the situation and I think that I portrayed the situation accurately to him in this House.

Mr. Swenson: — Well no, minister, I think it's accurate now. You said that in response to a walk-out there's been a lockout and I think that's fair, that when we talk about these things we put them in the proper context for anybody watching the proceedings today; that you don't normally lock people out unless there's been some corresponding action on the other side.

But I go back to the question I asked you before. The minister today said that he did not favour back-to-work legislation. Agriculture in this province today has been hit with hundreds of millions of dollars in losses. The GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) fund, which your government retroactively changed the legislation on, has effectively removed . . . effectively removed by the federal government, \$317 million; by your government, \$188 million; and your government is going to remove a further \$150 million in 1996 demanding repayment of GRIP premiums paid.

Now in the face of that, we also have the federal government now dismantling the Crow rate, method of payment's changing, and we are going to see western Canadian farmers and particularly Saskatchewan farmers now potentially hit with the full cost of moving their grain to market. They're talking anywhere from \$16 to \$35 a tonne in the new crop year. In the face of that, the federal government said there's going to be \$1.6 billion, in some form yet to be determined.

Now, Minister, the reason the question was asked today — we are at the height of the transportation season for a number of those products because as you know, in this province road bans come on in the spring and farmers are prohibited from delivering their product. So everything right now is going absolutely full bore.

What I asked the minister and what I ask you, in the face of a shut-down, and a few days means tens of millions of dollars to this province, to an industry that has already been devastated by both provincial and federal governments, are you prepared to see that situation continue on, or are you prepared as part of this provincial cabinet to request the federal minister to move ahead with back-to-work legislation?

And I remind the minister that in the past, whether it was dock workers, or the grain workers' union in Vancouver or Thunder Bay, or national rail strikes, that because we don't seem to have anything else in place, that has been the practice rather than see the industry devastated.

So I ask you again, are you prepared to help the Minister of Agriculture with your federal counterparts and call for back-to-work legislation if this situation gets out of hand and we see the rail shut-down?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well the political party in Saskatchewan that's done the most to see grain transportation shut down is the party now sitting in opposition. I remember Eric Berntson appearing before the national committee as it met here in Ottawa, telling us that the Crow rate should go, the western Canada grain transportation subsidy should be gone. I

mean your party has a long history of destroying grain transportation in western Canada.

So let's get that straight right off the bat, is that no party has any more responsibility that should lay on their backs than your party, sir, for what you've done to destroy western grain transportation prior to any of these events ever coming along.

I say to the member again, as I said in my opening answer to his question, we favour a collective bargaining process to work. I'm not going to talk about some hypothetical situation in the future. I've laid out the situation as it exists today. Three of the unions have reached tentative agreements. The other two unions have ongoing talks and I hope that they will arrive through their collective bargaining process at an understanding that will continue to have Saskatchewan's grain and other products moving.

If that event does not occur, then we will have to look at the situation, depending on the seriousness of it to Saskatchewan, and we will act accordingly. We believe in the collective bargaining process; we encourage the employees and the employer to sit down and try and resolve their differences; we will do whatever we can to be helpful in that situation.

As a Department of Labour and a Saskatchewan government we stand behind Saskatchewan's economy. We also stand behind Saskatchewan's working men and women as part of the economy of Saskatchewan, contrary to the views expressed so often by your party.

(1600)

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, maybe the minister would like to put a monetary value on what he considers to be serious. Perhaps he'd like to tell us how many millions of dollars rural Saskatchewan has to lose before he thinks it's appropriate that some action should be taken.

And obviously they don't mind losing a little money. I mean they let the federal Liberals walk out of this province with \$317 million in Crow money that had already been budgeted. So maybe the minister would like to give us an idea. Minister, before you start chastising my party on the Crow, I'd remind you that there was about \$7.2 billion on the table. And if your government and some of your Ag ministers would have been not so ideologically hidebound, some of that money would be in this province today and in the pockets of farmers. And you know it. You know it.

You sat in the federal parliament as an MP, and you know full well, sir, that the issue could have been solved a long time ago with a lot more money than what you've put on the table today. And you people should hang your heads in shame for letting the Liberals take that money out of this province; that's what you should do.

So, Minister, would you like to try and tell me how much economic loss Saskatchewan farmers should suffer before

you're prepared to join in asking the federal government to put these people back to work? What would be the dollar figure that you think would be appropriate then for rural Saskatchewan to suffer before you're prepared to act? What would you think, sir?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Not 1 cent. We in this government have strove to make sure that Saskatchewan's economy grows and prospers. We've done that by trying to find ways in which Saskatchewan working men and women and Saskatchewan business reach accommodations whereby it's to the benefit of both parties, plus the people of Saskatchewan as a whole.

So we aren't the ones who want to drive Saskatchewan's economy into the ground. It's the negative doom and gloom that you and the Liberal party preach in this House, flying in the face of the real facts that Saskatchewan's economy is doing as good as anywhere else in Canada under the circumstances in which your former government left it.

So not 1 cent is the answer to you. Saskatchewan's economy will be grown by this government, by the working men and women of this province, and by the businesses that choose to invest here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm glad to hear that because we're going to hold the minister to it. And I hope the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Transportation listen to those words very carefully, because if it's not 1 cent, then if the inevitable I believe happens, because I think there's other fish being fried in this national rail dispute than simply wages and hours of work, that if those other fish get fried — and they tend to fry Saskatchewan along with them — then, sir, we're going to hold your other ministers to your word that not 1 cent of the economic loss should happen in the province of Saskatchewan by a national rail strike. And that you will join with the opposition in requesting back-to-work legislation to put such a strike to an end almost immediately.

Mr. Minister, I don't have any more questions. You've answered my question, that you're prepared to stand on that and live with it. Thank you.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, welcome you and your officials here today.

I have only a few questions, Mr. Minister, and we'll start out with some of the concerns that have been brought to my attention in the last few days regarding group homes, which I guess would fall under your department. In fact it would have to do with the regulations that are under The Labour Standards Act regarding group homes.

And I guess you can fill us in on what some of the problems are as far as the employees of group homes are concerned. Because what I'm being told is that under these regulations, employees can be expected to work up to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,

Mr. Minister. And I think what a few of the questions would come from this is, you know, that to me sounds like some form of slave labour almost.

And I was wondering if you could fill us in on why these regulations would be this way. And in fact what are the impact on some of the individuals that would be involved, and in fact, what impact would we have? And what sort of quality of care would we be expecting? If these are the kind of regulations that you have coming from The Labour Standards Act, an Act which is becoming more evident as each and every day passes by that that not only is it not working out for employers, but even employees are now questioning the many aspects of this Act.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well the member brings up what is a very difficult situation, and has been a persistent situation on governments over several years. In my analysis of the problems for the employees of group homes, is that they do work too long and they get paid too little. If I was in a group home situation I would not be happy with that. And we strive to improve the conditions for those who have to work in group homes.

The member is accurate about his 24 hours a day, although it's different than you would view a normal work day. The reasoning behind the 24 hours is that they like to provide as much of a home situation as possible. So it may well be that for an extended a period of time . . . I'm not sure that it is actually seven days at a time; it may be. I'll get the details for the member on that. But it's to provide consistency with the home-like atmosphere that's developed in a group home as opposed to what the alternative would be in some cases. It would be institutional care.

And so I recognize the plight of group home workers. We've heard that for quite some time. I know that the Minister of Social Services is also aware of the problem. And we try very hard to make budgetary allocations to recognize the problems that actually exist within the group home atmosphere.

If there's more specific things that the member would like in regard to this, regarding our legislation — which is a difficult situation, I recognize — we'd be more than happy to provide those to the member.

Mr. McPherson: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister, and I appreciate the fact that you're aware and you're concerned. And as you were stating, these group home workers are working too long for too little pay.

But the question that I was really getting at is, what are you prepared to do about it if you see this isn't consistent with what we think people in the workforce should be having to put up with today?

And I appreciate what you're saying as far as, you know, providing a home, a consistent home-like environment for the clients of group homes. But still, I mean, as minister in charge

of Labour, what you've got to be also concerned about are the conditions in which these employees have to work under.

So let's just get back to the question: what are you prepared to do to perhaps adjust the regulations of The Labour Standards Act? Fill us in on that.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well we're not being inconsistent. We have continued to dedicate what resources we can to group homes and group home workers. I point out to the hon. member for the Shaunavon constituency that you may well want to have your leader contact the federal leader to find out why in the past year and a half we've had a reduction of, I believe, some \$62 million in offloading that would affect this fairly directly.

And so it would go a long way if the federal government would put back the \$62 million, that we could dedicate a very healthy portion of that to the group home situation. This is a situation of offloading.

I want say we're not being inconsistent. What we want to do with the labour legislation and labour regulations in Saskatchewan is to find the legislation regulations that work to serve the province and the people that it affects.

We were not able to reach that accommodation in terms of the current situation with the regulations that came into place. I feel that that's unfortunate. We'll continue as a government, not only the Department of Labour and the Department of Social Services, but we as a government will continue to work with group home workers to find an accommodation for them that's better than the situation they find themselves in today.

Mr. McPherson: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister, but here you are now, saying that you're doing whatever you can to dedicate resources to the group homes, and yet you're wanting us on the other hand to talk to our federal counterparts about some of the offloading. So are you then telling us that the regulations to The Labour Standards Act are as they are now because of some federal offloading? Is that why you made these regulations?

So you're essentially saying that you're a little short of cash, so we're going to now put regulations in place having employees be on the work site 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I just can't accept that.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well you don't have to accept it. There's two issues here. There's one of the legislation regulations that protect working men and women and protect employers. The other issue is one of funding. And you'll find that people are willing to put up with greater extenuating circumstances if they're paid a bit more for it. I think that's generally recognized.

So there are two issues. One is in terms of the protection that those workers have. The other is in terms of the pay that they get. The federal funding that has been cut back from this province would go a long way to reconciling one of those issues that the group home workers have.

The other issue that I want to bring to your attention is that during the consultations with The Labour Standards Act, there were extensive consultations, and presentations from group home workers to the government. And I think that the Department of Labour has a better understanding than ever before. And I think that group home workers, although they haven't got everything they want, have a better understanding of what their situation is. The regulations enacted are to ensure that the group home workers are paid at least the minimum wage, which wasn't necessarily the case in the past.

So there have been improvements there for the group home workers. I recognize that there's a case where many of them feel that the protection they had should have gone further. We're looking at that. I'm not able to respond in the immediate future to that, but certainly we do recognize a difficult situation and the valuable role that group home workers, in most cases that work for non-governmental organizations, have played within our society and the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, but you yourself are saying that there's two issues here. One is the protection of workers, and the second is funding. And I'm asking you that the regulations of The Labour Standards Act which are forcing people to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is that a funding question entirely, or are these regulations in place to protect workers?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — The regulations have to do with both. Some regulations have a financial impact. Other regulations have a minimum or no financial impact to them.

There's not as much money in the system as I know the Minister of Social Services would like to see for group homes and non-governmental organizations. That's a reality of the world that we live in today.

I'm the one who's responsible for labour legislation in the province, and I take that role very seriously. We continue to make sure that the role of group home workers is recognized within our system.

And I point out again, it's not insignificant to point out, that there could be a case prior to our regulations coming into place where a group home worker, on a 24-hour basis, would earn less than minimum wage because of what's referred to as sleep time. We've ensured that that will no longer happen.

In the regulations, we assure that the group home workers make at least minimum wage for the 24-hour period. That's an improvement. Has it gone as far as group home workers would like it to go? No, it hasn't. Has it gone farther than group home operators would like it to go? In some cases likely yes, because they're concerned about where they pick up the extra funding to pay for that particular regulation that's in place.

We not only want to work with the workers, we want to work with the group home operators as well, whether they be a non-governmental organization or someone else. And so I think that

we've arrived as close to a balance as what we can get at this point in time.

We'll continue to monitor the situation, and hopefully there will be a better future for those who work in group homes. And as I've already done, I recognize the importance they play within our society. And I know that I wouldn't want to work in those situations, but obviously there's some people who feel there's gratification in the job they do, and they do do a very good job in working in the group homes throughout the province.

Mr. McPherson: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. But the fact of the matter is that you're saying that there's some sort of future for group home workers and that you've brought them from below minimum wage up to, I guess, minimum wage. In fact, I think most of these workers are what, five or five fifty an hour? And you're saying that it's acceptable to have people on the job site for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and as Minister of Labour you're not prepared to do more than what you're talking about — up the pay a little bit? I mean you don't see problems in delivery of care or quality of care that may be reduced because of people having to be in that situation?

(1615)

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — I can't make an assessment on that. I don't know the quality of care in group homes, but I would have to assume that the quality of care in group homes is quite good. The people who work there, for far the most part, are very dedicated. It gives people who are in group homes an opportunity to live in a home-like atmosphere as much as possible, as opposed to care they would get in an institutional setting. And as I say again, the government has looked at this very closely.

I know the Minister of Social Services has looked at this and would like additional funding. The 62 million I talked about that's been offloaded from the federal government would go a long way to remedying some of those particular items.

So I think that we've got to a point whereby the group home workers know that we understand their problems; we've made some movement on it. Have they gotten all they would have wanted to get? No, they've not gotten all they wanted to get. But in today's situation there are very few in our society that get everything they want.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, then can you tell us . . . because your government is the one that's doing the regulations on The Labour Standards Act, surely you've done some sort of an impact study on the individuals of these group homes to see exactly what the ramifications of your regulations are. And can you tell us what your findings are?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well Price Waterhouse has done a study on the impact, financial impact, for employers in regard to labour standards. The exact amount, I don't know whether or not we have that figure here today? I'm informed by the officials it was less than 1 per cent of payroll — the particular

benefits that were provided under the Price Waterhouse study.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, can you tell us if there's another sector or group of employees or anyone else that you would be looking out for as far as being Minister of Labour, that would have these kind of restrictions placed on their lives as far as that? That sort of a workload — 24 hour a day, seven day a week — or are group home workers the only ones that would fit in this category?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well in regard to the way the member describes it, group home workers are in a fairly unique situation. And if you understand the desire to have the home situation reflected as much as possible, then you would understand that that is correct, but because of the reasons that I have already given.

And there are other working people in Saskatchewan who would have as difficult a working situation, but for different reasons. But certainly in the way that the member describes it, is to the stress of continual service in that type of atmosphere, I believe that group home workers have one of the more difficult situations in Saskatchewan.

Mr. McPherson: — So, Mr. Minister, obviously by listening to what you're saying, that unless somehow we can get a bunch of money from the federal government, you're not prepared to do any more for the workers of group homes than what you're presently doing. And it doesn't sound satisfactory to me.

But it does lead us into another area, one of pay equity. And my understanding is that you were at a convention only a few days ago discussing some pay equity concerns. Can you perhaps fill us in on what your particular stand is on pay equity?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — We support pay equity.

Mr. McPherson: — Because at the convention, Mr. Minister, you told the delegates there that it was actually a women's issue and you would leave it up to one of the women in your cabinet to deal with. Is this right?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well I didn't see you there. I didn't see you at the convention. There were three ministers there. There was the Minister of Health; there was the Minister of Education; and there was myself as Minister of Labour. So you don't know what I said.

What I said at the meeting on Saturday was that we support pay equity, and that the minister responsible for pay equity is the minister in charge of Status of Women. And the pay equity issue will be forwarded into that agenda by the minister who's in charge of the Status of Women because that happens to fall under her ministerial responsibilities.

And so when the Women's Secretariat comes before here, you can find out exactly what the agenda is and what the agenda has been in terms of the very important topic of pay equity.

Mr. McPherson: — Well just a few quick questions then. Is pay equity, is it a monetary issue basically, or what is the issue here?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — There's two issues with pay equity. One is the recognition that people want . . . that women in particular want for the contributions they've made to the workplace. The second is a monetary issue because there are cases exist that there is not equal pay for work of equal value, and women are on the lower end of that. And so it's a monetary issue in that society should be wanting to get women onto a pay equity situation all across the province regardless of what they do.

It's a more difficult situation when you go into the private sector. I think what we're talking about in the short term is how pay equity can be enacted within government. We've made some accomplishments in that regard. And I believe if you look across the playing-field for the public sector in Saskatchewan, you find that the lot of women has increased, maybe not as fast as what some women would like it to, but it certainly had improvements within it.

So there's two issues. There's one of recognition for the value of women in our society in the workplace, and second is a monetary issue. And both of those can be quite adequately dealt with when the Women's Secretariat appears before the estimates in this House.

Mr. McPherson: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister, but now you've raised another point because the former minister of Justice — he was the minister of Labour before that — the member from Saskatoon Fairview, actually when he was at a convention shortly after the 1991 election, he informed the delegates that pay equity really was a non-monetary issue, and now you're saying it is a monetary issue. And so I'm just wondering, why is this now being changed, and if you could perhaps explain that.

And in fact, to look at this a little bit further . . . I mean, for you to say, well you support the pay equity, you know, and in fact moving along to something better tells me that you see all the inequities in the system now, and you referred to some of them a moment ago. But can you tell us what studies the government has undertaken to have a look at these inequities and the cost associated with perhaps coming out with a pay equity program?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well there is a monetary cost. That's inaccurate of anybody who would say there's no monetary cost involved in pay equity.

In Ontario, for example, I understand it's cost the government in Ontario \$15 million to enact just the bureaucracy to deal with the issue of pay equity. So you can't say that there isn't a monetary cost to it, even if it was just for the setting up of the administration of pay equity.

There's also a great spread in some areas of Canada where there is not equal pay for work of equal value. If you're going to pay those that are paid less and they aren't getting paid equal for

work of equal value, someone has to put in the money to bring them up to equal pay for work of equal value. So there is a monetary cost.

The question you asked specifically about studies within my department, it's not our department's responsibility for forwarding the agenda for pay equity, therefore we haven't done studies. The questions about studies would be better addressed to the Women's Secretariat when they appear before estimates in the House.

Mr. McPherson: — But, Mr. Minister, you are the Minister of Labour, and I'm asking you questions of people that work in the labour force. And what are you prepared to do? Have you done studies? Are you prepared to do studies? Or have you looked at some of the costing of bringing in pay equity programs? That falls under the Department of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — And you're the MLA from Shaunavon. And I'm telling you that it's the responsibility of the Women's Secretariat. So when the Women's Secretariat comes here, ask them the questions about the agenda for pay equity because they're responsible.

It's not upon me to answer questions that are going to be coming up, another minister who's the minister responsible. The nature of estimates is to look at the department's responsibilities and mandate. Ask me questions about anything you want within my department, but don't try and pressure me for answers to questions that fall within another minister's responsibility.

Agree to an agenda. Agree to an agenda as to what estimates will come up when in this House, and then you can ask the appropriate minister. Just ask me questions about labour, and I'll be happy to answer the questions about labour as it applies to the mandate and the responsibilities of the department of which I have the ministerial responsibility.

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, in Manitoba the Department of Labour undertook studies on pay equity and spent millions of dollars to do it. Now why would this fall under the Department of Labour in Manitoba, and yet you as the Labour minister are shirking all your responsibilities and not dealing with this, trying to say it's another department that should be doing?

This is a labour question; it has to do with the workforce of the province. And you're not prepared to answer it at all.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well the pay equity in Manitoba, first off, applied to the public sector. And so what we're doing is it's at the negotiating table in Saskatchewan is where pay equity is being dealt with today. And the minister in charge of the Women's Secretariat, I think will maintain to you quite effectively, is being dealt with by the minister in charge of the Women's Secretariat.

Now for you to compare us to another jurisdiction, whether it's

Manitoba or Alberta, we don't want to be compared to those other jurisdictions. Or maybe we do, but you can't compare us to those other jurisdictions because on every count we're doing better than those other jurisdictions are. I don't care whether it's pay equity for women. I don't care whether it's economic development. I don't care whether it's unemployment figures. I don't care whether it's gross domestic product. We're doing better in Saskatchewan because we have a sound, responsible government that's putting Saskatchewan back on its feet, to look forward into the future for better times, whether it be for working men and women or whether it be for business.

And especially in the area of pay equity, we're doing quite well in that regard. And the minister responsible for the Women's Secretariat will answer those questions when she appears here before this House in estimates.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, heaven forbid that I would want to compare your administration with any other jurisdictions in this country.

But let's do some comparisons. I'm going to ask you to give me some in regards to the group home operations that we just talked about. In what provinces where they use a group home environment have they had these sort of regulations in any labour Act? Can you provide us with that comparison, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well we would have to provide that. I mean the jurisdictions in other areas of the country don't have that readily available. But I would venture to say that in other jurisdictions across Canada, the lot of group home workers is not appreciably better in any of them than it is in Saskatchewan. I mean when you put them on the scale and compare them to other workers in Saskatchewan, we already talked about some of those difficult situations.

In terms of how they compare in other jurisdictions, I'll give you my undertaking that we'll have a look at that and provide it to the member from either our department or the appropriate department.

(1630)

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Minister, we have talked to you a little while ago about some of the areas that you would be spending some of your money on in terms of research in order to find out how policies that you either do have or don't have are affecting the future of our province.

Now when we talked about the problems over at Moose Jaw, you told us that you weren't really spending any money over there. Yet I do note though that we have in the Labour estimates, Labour Relations Board, that you pay to sit and to talk about trade union problems and employers' and employees' problems and you spend something like 446 thousands of dollars on that area alone, just trying to mediate and resolve

issues.

Now, Minister, having spent all of that kind of money resolving problems, wouldn't it also be fair to say that some of your money should be spent researching to find out if there's ways of stopping problems from happening to begin with? And I want to allude to you for a minute the regulations process that your government has gone into with regards to setting up policy in this province. You did it through The Labour Standards Act and you did it through The Occupational Health and Safety Acts and you did it also in the Workers' Compensation area.

And all of these areas . . . Now you have brought in legislation and you used the process of regulations, after the fact when the House is not sitting, to actually in fact develop the policies that are in effect in our province.

You also did that same process in the Crown tendering area just lately. You used a sort of through the back door approach of developing a policy that everybody in this province knew that you were going to come in with. Nobody would of course, in the government, admit it, because you didn't really want the press to ever catch on to the fact you were doing it. You tried to slip it through the back door.

The truth of the matter is though that this greatly affects the labour force in our province, it greatly affects the playing-field for business in our province, and it should certainly be under your jurisdiction in your department to do some research and do some studying on how this kind of an approach to the labour force and labour questions will affect the economy of our province in the future.

So have you done any studies to determine, Minister, what exactly the new payroll tax of 21 cents per hour for each employer in the Crown sector for tendering, how much will that cost the province? And how badly will that put us out of sync with the rest of our neighbours, like Manitoba and Alberta? And what are the numbers of people that will be coming in to take jobs away from Saskatchewan people as a result of this policy?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — The policy, Mr. Chairman, is under the purview of the Crown Investments Corporation. The Crown Investments committee or the Crown Corporations Committee is the place where you would ask those questions. I have no ultimate responsibility for answering those questions or developing that particular policy. And I would draw to the member's attention that the accurate place and the proper place to put those questions is to the minister in charge of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan).

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Minister, again you're going to try to duck this issue because you know how important it is to the province, and you also know how terrible it puts our business people in a position to be competitive.

The truth of the matter is that if the former minister, now the

Minister of Justice, had an opportunity to deal with this issue, he probably would have dealt with it in a forthright, out-front manner. He would have assumed the responsibility as the Minister of Labour and he would have said yes, it is our responsibility to talk about the needs of labour; it is our responsibility to talk about the needs of the workers of this province and how they will be treated. And he would have told you and me that there is no question whatsoever that the work force in Saskatchewan, if put on an unlevel playing-field, would certainly affect the Department of Labour.

And if in fact another minister of a different Crown brought in a policy that was going to adversely affect the entire province and it had to do with labour, he would have jumped right on this. And he would have gave us a forthright answer and told us that he was going to go to work right away and use some of his budget to research this problem and to find out exactly what the effects will be on the labour force.

Because quite truthfully, Minister, what we have here is a situation where every Crown contract from now on will have an additional cost of 21 cents per hour for every employee-hour worked. That cost is not a cost that is deducted from the wages, Mr. Chairman, of the employee — not deducted from the wages. This is paid by the employer over and above all of the wages, all of the collective bargaining process agreements that include every other cost involved in hiring a person for a Crown corporation project. This 21 cents is an additional cost on top of everything else that the employer must pay with regards to an employee's hour worked.

That makes it a payroll tax because it is an additional tax on the payroll that has no deduction from the employees, no deduction whatsoever off of any other portion of the monies that has to be paid. It is an added outright 21 cents an hour increase in the cost of doing business in Saskatchewan.

That cost of doing business, Minister, is going to greatly affect the ability of workers in this province to be able to be employed. Therefore it falls under your jurisdiction, as the minister in charge of and responsible for Labour because if it affects labourers, that makes it your business.

The workers of this province are going to suffer as a result of this, Minister. And of course the business people are going to suffer. And the integrity and reputation of Saskatchewan to be a place where you can do business on a fair playing-field is definitely going to be hindered, and it's definitely going to be downgraded.

There's no question in my mind whatsoever that you're going to find people who employ folks to do work in the Crown sector are no longer going to attempt to tender in that process. They're going to pass that by because they don't want to qualify for the other rules that go along with this particular 21 cents. Some of the other regulations are that you have to have 75 per cent of your workers unionized.

If that's a fact, some companies will say, if I take a Crown

corporation job and if I live up to that expectation of bringing in 75 per cent of the people into a union process and have them become unionized workers, then when I no longer am working on that Crown corporation project and I go out to take on a private sector tender, I will have those workers now all certified and working for the union. And if I want them to work on the next project, they will already be unionized.

My new employer in the private sector may say, I don't particularly like that because you now have additional costs. He might also find that he's not able to tender in the private sector because he has the additional costs of unionized workers, and therefore he may not be able to compete in the free-market process of tendering. And what's going to happen, Minister, of course that some people then won't tender on the Crown project.

If they don't tender automatically, the less people you have tendering, the more chance you have that the bids will be higher, even higher than they would have been before. Now they automatically have to be 21 cents per hour for the project higher for all of the numbers of hours of all the employees involved. There has to be that escalation of cost built into it.

Who would pay that, Minister? What has your research shown in this term of who would pay for that 21 cents per employer for every hour that they work on the Crown corporation contracts in this new process that has been announced?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — That's not a question that's appropriately placed to the Department of Labour. I tried to answer during the last question of the hon. member that this falls under the purview of the Crown Investments Corporation.

Obviously the member from Maple Creek has done some in-depth analysis. I'm wondering if maybe you could table the in-depth analysis that you have to make all these allegations against what we think will be something very positive, that you turn into a complete negative. Maybe you should be tabling your studies that you've done. If you don't want to do that, save your questions for the appropriate time for the Crown Corporations Committee and ask the minister in charge those very specific questions you have.

We're here today to answer questions that come under the purview of the Department of Labour, sir.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Minister, on one hand you say I should go to CIC. On the other hand, you say I should table some information so that you can deal with it. I don't know if you're flip or flop today, but the truth of the matter is that this issue is of great importance to the Department of Labour.

If you truly represent the labour force of the province — and I think that's what the Minister of Labour is supposed to be doing — you would want to take an opportunity to spend some of your budget to defend the interests of workers in this province. And you obviously are not doing that. People want to know if

this 21 cents . . . who's going to pay for it? People want to know where it's going to go.

The truth of the matter is that I do have an article here that would be very interesting, I think, to everybody, but I don't really think it needs to be necessarily tabled because it is public property already, from the *Leader-Post* here in Regina: "NDP's Fair Wage Policy certainly isn't." That's the headline.

You've no doubt seen that, sir. But because you seem to not know what's going on with this issue and want us to table some opinions and some thoughts with regards to this, I will quote from it a little bit for you so that you can get your mind around the importance that your department should take in this matter in defending the needs of fair play for the workers of this province which you are not doing. What you're doing is making a very strong union base in this province to fight the next election for you and your party. You're not defending the interests of workers.

And it says and I'm going to quote a little bit of this:

When is a Fair Wage Policy not a fair wage policy?

When it's (an) . . . NDP government's Fair Wage Policy, which is anything but.

Now the rhetoric goes on about how you are not, in your government, telling the whole story. And you don't need to hear that again, but it does go on to say that:

Accordingly, the government says (that a) . . . new Crown construction tendering agreement ensures "a fair tendering (policy) . . . for Crown construction work."

The government also says (that) the new five-year agreement ensures "work is awarded to the lowest-qualified bidder."

And, they say, the agreement provides a "level playing field" by allowing non-union contractors to bid and non-union workers to work on government projects. In reality, the Fair Wage Policy is fair only to unionized contractors and tradesmen. It's patently unfair to everyone else, including non-unionized contractors and tradesmen who represent the majority of the construction industry in this province.

Now that's a quote from a Mr. Bruce Johnstone, Minister. And the truth of the matter is that when we researched a little bit on the things that Mr. Johnstone had alluded to and the things that your government have alluded to, we found that 80 per cent of the present contractors in this province are not unionized and do not fall into this category. And if they don't fall into this category and everything has to be changed upside down and turned over, then it must be an important issue for your department. It has to be something that the Minister of Labour would take a hard look at. Simply by trying to dodge the issue or escape answering the questions of the issue by saying that

this is the CIC that's responsible is simply not fair to the workers of this province.

Now CIC of course is a ministry within the Crown that has tried to slip this policy in through the back door so that the Minister of Labour wouldn't be caught with yet another egg on his face after he did all of the other regulatory changes that we're going to talk about before we finish with this department.

But when you made all the changes to the occupational health and safety, the Workers' Compensation Board program and to the legislation on labour relations and also the labour standards issues and you let all of those regulations come in through the back door when the legislature wasn't sitting, now I find of course ironic that CIC would slip this policy through the back door and try to take the heat off the Labour minister.

Well, Minister, we're not letting you off of the stove; you are squarely on it, and the heat is on. And we're going to demand that you take responsibility for the labour force of this province and answer the questions as to what is going to happen to our labourers as a result of these kinds of policies.

Now in order for you to understand fully what other people think of you, I think it's fair that I quote a little more of this article because it says it better than any words than I could ever use myself. Now it goes on to say:

It does this by forcing all contractors, including non-union ones, to pay union scale when bidding on construction projects of more than \$50,000 in urban areas and more than \$150,000 in rural areas.

Aside from (the increase in) the cost of government projects, the fair wage policy requires contractors to hire union tradesmen almost exclusively.

Now how, Minister, can that be a benefit to the workers of this province and how can that keep them on a fair level playing field?

The rules (it goes on) require that three out of four employees hired must be union members and that the non-union contractors must collect union dues from all employees, whether union or non-union.

A couple of questions arise out of that, Mr. Minister. How is that fair to the workers that are non-unionized to have to pay union dues? How is that fair, Minister? Could you explain that to us. Tell the world; what is fair about non-union workers having to pay union dues in Saskatchewan?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — That's an issue that will come up under the Crown Corporations Committee. What the member is referring to is the Crown construction tendering policy. And the details of that are not contained within the Department of Labour. It's not within my purview of responsibilities as

Minister of Labour within the province of Saskatchewan.

And the minister is in charge of the Crown Investments Corporation will be very happy to answer those kinds of detailed questions at the appropriate place and at the appropriate time. The appropriate place is when the Crown Corporations Committee is meeting, and at that time you'll have every opportunity to get detailed analysis of those questions which you asked today.

As I understand this policy, just very briefly, it's not much different than policies that have been used in many places across Canada in other jurisdictions. And I would ask the member to quit preaching this doom and gloom about things that other people view as being positive for the province of Saskatchewan.

The most negative thing that happens in Saskatchewan is what the Conservative opposition says about positive, proactive issues that are helping our province, not only in the terms of working men and women in Saskatchewan, but also in terms of our provincial economy as a whole.

And I think the only thing that's important to me right now in trying to get across to the member that you are asking the wrong questions, although they are very important, in the wrong place at the wrong time. I think that you were likely born 100 years too late; you would have made an excellent snake-oil salesman in a former life. And I'd like you to try to focus on what it is that we're doing here today. We're here today for the estimates of the Department of Labour. I'd be happy to answer any questions that are the responsibility of myself as the minister in charge of those particular areas of responsibility or within the mandate of the department that my officials can answer here today.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Minister, it's rather ironic again that here you are now trying to pass the buck to the Crown Corporations Committee meeting so that you won't have to answer the questions that relate to your department.

It is a plain, simple fact, Mr. Chairman, that the minister is the minister in charge of Labour, in charge of the Labour department. What is the Labour department supposed to do in the province of Saskatchewan? It is supposed to take care of the problems of labour, labourers, people who work for a living. That's what the minister is supposed to be doing . . . is taking care of the problems of the labour force.

Here we have a tremendous issue of importance to all labourers, where a very large segment of the labour force in this province is now being forced to pay union dues even though they're not members of a union. What are you going to do about that, Minister? That's not right, and that's not fair. And you as the minister in charge of Labour should be the minister for labour, not in charge of.

You should be defending the labourers of this province. You

should be coming out strongly against this kind of proposal in the Crown sector because it is bound to spread like a cancer throughout our society, and it is bound to end up being in the private sector and all other segments of our labour force. If you don't stop it here and now, it'll spread through the entire province.

Mr. Minister, what you have got to do is stand up and take responsibility for your ministry. Stand up in this House and say what you're for or against or explain your policies and the policy of this government and show the people of Saskatchewan that you're right so that you can defend what you're doing . . . because you can't do that. I don't believe that you can. It's not fair and it's not right. You are charging 25 per cent of the people working in the Crown tendering process union dues when they're not members of the union. That, Mr. Minister, is wrong. And you ought to defend these people and not be sitting there trying to duck under the guise that the wrong department is being asked the wrong kind of questions. The truth of the matter is that these are your questions; these are your responsibility.

The Crown Corporations Committee meetings are not the place that these questions should be asked exclusively although we can further go into them in that area. The truth of the matter is that this is your portfolio. This is your responsibility, and you're the one who has to answer to the people of Saskatchewan.

Keep giving people the run-around here. Continue to say, I'm not going to answer the question. Believe me, the people from the business community are watching your actions today, and if they aren't watching we'll see to it that they hear about it.

So we'll give you another try because this man, Mr. Johnstone who wrote these articles, made some excellent points. And it's important that you have an opportunity to respond on the record to what these people are accusing you of doing. It is important, Minister, even though you say things that they don't agree with. But I will go on. I want to quote just a little more of this, Mr. Chairman, so that the minister will know exactly what we're talking about. I quote:

The agreement also sets up a fund, which skims off 21 cents an hour of employees' wages (union or non-union), to "create, support and promote programs to continually enhance the unionized construction product".

What this gobbledegook means is anybody's guess, but it sounds better than a union slush fund, which is probably closer to the truth.

Minister, is that a fact in defending the labourers of this province? Are you going to sit in your seat as the Minister of Labour and justify and allow someone in the Crown sector, somebody in CIC, to perpetrate onto the people of this province a policy that creates a union slush fund, as called and alluded to by the people of the press?

Are you going to sit there and say that this is not your responsibility to defend your department and your government? Are you going to sit there and say that people can make these kinds of observations, and you have no argument in favour of what you're doing?

Minister, I think you're not only letting down the people in the labour force; you're letting down your Premier and your government. Obviously you must have some kind of an argument that would justify what you're doing in these areas. Surely you must have some kind of a plan put into place, with all of the monies that you've spent on research and development, and all of the money that you've spent on doing programs of legislation for labour standards and for the Labour Relations Board.

You've spent all of this money . . . of the taxpayers' dollars, and you must have a plan. You must have some kind of explanation for what is going on and the long-term effects of these policies that are going to happen in the province of Saskatchewan. Surely you're not going to let people from the press and the rest of the world go on to say things, as I will quote a little further here, without some kind of a rebuttal, without some kind of a plan. It goes on, and I quote:

Of course, (the) government spin doctors say (that) other jurisdictions have fair wage policies for taxpayer-funded capital projects, including the federal government.

What they don't say is that (the) federal fair wage policies don't use union scale as (a) . . . minimum wage rate, but use an average rate of comparable projects in (the) . . . area.

Now, Minister, isn't that just a little bit far off from what you've been suggesting here today? There is nothing, nothing fair about what you are doing. There's nothing fair about the policies and the programs that you are putting into place.

We have got here, very simply, Mr. Chairman, a payroll tax that has been placed on everybody that works for Crown corporations — a payroll tax, nothing more, nothing less.

It wouldn't even be so bad if that money, Mr. Chairman, went into general revenue so that the Minister of Labour could share that money with the rest of the government expenditures and take his share to do the research and to put his programs into place. But that money doesn't go into general funds; it goes into a slush fund for the union bosses. What do the union bosses need a slush fund for? Minister, obviously all they need it for is to fight an election for you at a time when you're getting close to one.

You've also got a plan here to build and enhance the union movement. You're going to have 75 per cent of the people working on these projects by necessity of a regulation, not even by necessity of a debated legislation in this Assembly, but by a regulation brought in by the minister in charge of CIC. You're

going to force 75 per cent of the people that are working on these projects to be unionized. That, Mr. Minister, is not fair, and you should be defending the workers of this province because they are not going to get the jobs.

We can show you how the union hall process works, just in case you haven't been keeping track of it. Obviously you could go down to the union hall and find out. But the reality is that as soon as you're short of a few technical people in a certain area, within the framework of this tendering policy that you have set up, as soon as you're short of tradesmen, what's going to happen?

They're going to go to Alberta and Manitoba. In your own union hall here in Regina, they're going to be bringing in workers from the other provinces to do the work of Saskatchewan people. You are forcing them to displace those people because in rural communities most of the people that work for the Crown projects are not unionized, and they will not get unionized in time to get registered with your union halls in order to qualify for these tendering programs.

And so what's going to happen? You're going to run out of tradesmen that are unionized, and you're going to have to find that you've some in Alberta and some in Manitoba that are registered with the union halls here, and they're going to get the jobs, and they're going to get priority, and the people of Saskatchewan are going to end up with zilch.

And that's not right, and this is your department, sir. In spite of everything you've said about this policy, it is the workers of Saskatchewan that fall under your department that are going to be hurt by this very policy that you are putting into place.

You are not helping the labourers of this province. You are hurting the labourers of this province, and I am challenging you to do your job and stand up for the workers of this province and strike down this onerous type of regulation that has been brought in through the back door by the minister in charge.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — This government, Mr. Chairman, has done nothing by the back door. If it was done by the back door and hidden away, certainly with the intellect of members like the one opposite just speaking . . . would have never have found it. The test of this government in this ministry is to be honest, to be fair, and to be accurate with working people.

Again, you don't stand up to any of those tests. You are deceiving people by the statements you make in this House. You are inaccurate in the information that you give. You preach doom and gloom upon this province. You purport to support working men and women. And you and your party would like nothing better than to cut the legs out from all organized labour and all working men and women in this province.

The very first Bill of Bills introduced in this legislature was introduced by your leader, the member from Kindersley, to move first reading of a Bill to repeal The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 1994 and The Trade Union Act, 1994. What

protection can you pretend to put out for working men and women in this province? Absolutely none. Be honest. I hope you don't lose your scales as you leave the Assembly here this afternoon.

This government stands for working men and women. We stand for an environment in which working men and women can be involved in the business climate of this province with the private sector or the public sector for the good of the province as a whole.

Our economy is doing well. Our working men and women are doing well. Most people acknowledge in the province that we're doing well, except the doomers and gloomers that sit in the opposition party of this legislature.

When are you going to come clean with the people of this province to support the good will of this province throughout this land, throughout other jurisdictions, for the good things that we've done, for the messes that we've cleaned up from the previous administration that was here, that almost put into total decay the province of Saskatchewan? Ran up deficits, ran down people, ran down businesses, made underhanded deals behind closed doors that nobody knew about, writing contracts on the backs of cigarette packages — that was the *modus operandi* for the administration that you now represent in the opposition benches.

And don't worry about slush funds being built up for election time — of which there are none — because when it comes to election time, you should be more worried about struggling for the very existence of the party that you and your leader ran into the position they are today, one that will have a great deal of difficulty even getting their deposits back after the next election, let alone electing any seats in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.