

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of concerned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan with respect to closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The names on this petition are all primarily from the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker, and Weyburn. Thank you.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I also would like to present petitions of names throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

People have signed the petition from such places as Regina, Carlyle, Assiniboia, Kisbey, Moose Jaw, Arcola, Kenosee, White Bear, and many other southern Saskatchewan communities.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today too to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker.

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from Regina, Manor, Kenosee Lake, White Bear First Nation, Watrous, Carlyle, and throughout Saskatchewan. I so present.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to present petitions of names from people throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are primarily from Regina, but I notice a few from Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan. I so present.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to present petitions of names of people from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer

reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider the closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are all from Regina South.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today again to present petitions of names from people throughout southern Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider the closure of the Plains Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed from many concerned citizens in southern Saskatchewan, from Vibank, from Avonlea, from Glenavon, from Wolseley, from Grenfell, and a few from Regina, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

And those who have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Carnduff, Carievale, and Glen Ewen, and also some from Regina.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, they're from Regina, they're from Leslie, they're from Estevan, they're from Pilot Butte. They're all from throughout Saskatchewan. We even have one here from Edmonton, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on day 39, the 39th time I've been up with my colleagues and the people of Saskatchewan to try and save the Plains Health Centre here in Regina. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are mainly from the Carlyle area, and Manor, and Wawota. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Jess: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and to the other members of the Legislative Assembly, 73 grade 4 and 5 students from Langham, Saskatchewan. I'd like to introduce them individually but maybe in the interests of time, we won't. They're sitting in the west gallery here. Teachers are Heather Dack, Debby Dear, Evelyn Kasahof, Bob Wardhaugh and several chaperons. And I will be meeting with them later at 11:30 in room 218, and for a photo as well. And I would ask the members to welcome them to the Chamber this morning.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of our caucus to welcome two very important groups in our province who are in the galleries this morning. We have with us both the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) executive groups. And we'd like to welcome their leaders — Sinclair Harrison with the SARM and Murray Westby with SUMA, and of course all of the other delegates.

We would also like, Mr. Speaker, to pay a special good morning to Neal Hardy, a former member of this Assembly who of course is now with the SARM board of directors. And we're very happy that they have taken the time to come out and watch the proceedings.

We know that Neal will enjoy the day because he spent so much of his life here himself, and has gained a very great reputation with the people of Saskatchewan as a minister of honesty, of integrity. And the proof of that is the fact that he now sits with the board that he used to be the minister in charge of. So we would ask the members to please welcome them today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce to all members of the House . . . we have with us RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) training cadets, first nations people from throughout the province, Mr. Speaker. And they're here to do a 17-week upgrading and skills course. At the end of this course, Mr. Speaker, they'll be able to apply to the RCMP.

Along with them are Bruce Van Goozen, Dorothy Bird, Jean Jewers. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give them a welcome first of all in our language.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

Mr. Speaker, I will be meeting with them at room 125, at your boardroom, and we'll have pictures and questions. I would like all members to please give them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to also join with the member for Maple Creek in welcoming local government officials — the president of SARM, Sinclair Harrison, president of SUMA, Murray Westby; and other local government officials. I would like to welcome them here today and I would ask for the floor to join me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, we are in the process this morning of taking a break from a meeting of the municipal round table and I appreciate members opposite taking note of these very important people who have joined us for question period while we're taking a break for the meeting, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to introduce them individually and ask them to stand and be recognized.

The president of SARM, Sinclair Harrison; president of SUMA, Murray Westby; board members of SARM, Neal Hardy. Oh sorry, the president of the rural administrators association, Audrey Trombley. I can't see who's behind. Directors of SUMA, Mike Badham, George Bristow, Doug Still; and administrator of SARM, Ken Engel; and of SUMA, Keith Schneider; and Merv Norton is in behind.

And I would like to ask everyone in the Assembly to join with me in welcoming these people to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce my daughter Jeanette and her friend who are in Regina to take their massage therapy course.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, I also want to welcome the people that are here for the policing program. It is of course that I agree with the member of Cumberland that it is nice to see native people be involved with the policing of their own communities and other communities.

And I also want to welcome my former partners in SUMA. We sat up many hours in discussing issues of northern Saskatchewan. It's nice to see them take an interest in what's happening here, and we also encourage them to continue dealing with northern issues. So I would like to ask the Assembly as well, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, to welcome the policing students and the members from SARM and SUMA.

Thanks.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I'm particularly pleased to see Mayor Doug Still from Humboldt with us today. Humboldt is, we say, the most thriving town in Saskatchewan, and it is certainly due to the work of Mr. Doug Still and others who do draw people together to in fact make it the most thriving community. So we're pleased to have you with us, Mr. Still, and I'd like the Assembly to welcome Mayor Doug Still.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

10th Anniversary of Chernobyl

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, today marks the 10th anniversary of the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, near Kiev, Ukraine — the only peacetime nuclear disaster, we like to say, as if that makes the event any less significant or the consequences any less disastrous.

This modern-age disaster was brought about by our civilization's insatiable appetite for energy — an appetite that in many places ignores all environmental and safety considerations.

Mr. Speaker, we don't like to say this out loud, but we should admit that here in Canada, where we have some investment in peacetime nuclear industry, we would like to say that this kind of disaster could not happen in a democratic country. That is the wrong lesson to take from Chernobyl. It happened once. It could happen again here or anywhere else, if production is the only good.

The statistics of Chernobyl provide all the narrative we need — over 160,000 people evacuated, 259,000 hectares of land removed from civilization, untold cancers and birth defects for years to come, and an official death toll of over 30,000 from radiation-related causes.

The Saskatchewan Provincial Council of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress has prepared an information package on Chernobyl for use in our high schools, to be released today. Understanding, as well as eternal vigilance, hopefully will prevent another disaster like Chernobyl. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Retirement of Dave Ridgway

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues and I would like to pass along our best wishes to one of the classiest football players in Canada — Dave Ridgway.

Mr. Ridgway announced his retirement this week after 14

terrific seasons with the Saskatchewan Roughriders. He is one of the Riders' most dependable players, kicking field goals almost automatically and scoring 3,151 points in the process. That's why Saskatchewan fans and his fellow team-mates began calling him Robokicker.

Mr. Ridgway was totally dedicated to Saskatchewan and loved playing for the people here. He was instrumental in bringing the Grey Cup back to Saskatchewan in 1989 with his dramatic last-second field goals against the Hamilton Ti-Cats.

I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in expressing gratitude to Dave Ridgway for playing out his heart and soul for Rider fans for 14 years. We wish him well in his future endeavours.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of us may remember the Grey Cup of 1966. All of us remember the Grey Cup of 1989. And I bet that each one of us can replay in exquisite slow-motion detail in the VCR (video cassette recorder) of our minds the last-second field goal which clinched the cup for the Roughriders.

Dave Ridgway has retired. Robokicker, the Rider who kicked that field goal and 573 others, along with 541 converts and 111 single points for a total of 2,374 career points, is hanging 'em up.

If those points were votes, Mr. Speaker, Dave Ridgway would make — and quite possibly will make — a very respectable showing.

For the moment though I know that all members and all Roughrider fans will realize that Dave Ridgway's retirement from football is one of those significant moments by which we mark the passage of time. We will still support the team but for a while there'll be a hole in our enthusiasm.

We mark his retirement because of his football achievements of course, but quickly we should also recognize that Dave Ridgway is an involved, contributing citizen to our community. And it is important to note that he chose to retire rather than wear the uniform of another team. That kind of loyalty we understand in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as an ardent Roughrider fan, I bid and I won at an auction a few years ago, the kicking shoe of Robokicker, used when he kicked eight field goals in one game, July 23, 1988, against Edmonton. That shoe, Mr. Speaker, has for me a very pleasant whiff of nostalgia for an era just ended. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatoon Imperial Selects Female Midget Hockey

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand proudly once again to add to my weekly sports report from the Humboldt constituency. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize

the Saskatoon Imperial Selects, who won the Western Shield, emblematic of female midget hockey supremacy in western Canada.

The Selects won the provincial gold medal and advanced to the western Canadian championships held recently in Winnipeg. They were victorious over teams from Alberta, Manitoba, and British Columbia.

In particular I would especially like to pay tribute to two girls from the Humboldt area who played with the Selects, Chantale Benning and Nicole Knittig. These girls helped their team win provincial gold and walk away with top honours at Westerns.

Congratulations to the coaches and players of the Saskatoon Selects and in particular Chantale Benning and Nicole Knittig. We're very proud of you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

IPSCO Anniversary

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to mention a special anniversary. On the northern outskirts of Regina in the constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley is a site that is still strange in a land-locked agricultural province. I am talking about IPSCO, Mr. Speaker, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary, a celebration kicked off with a luncheon yesterday and continuing with several other events over the next while.

Mr. Speaker, the economic importance of IPSCO to Regina and to Saskatchewan is well-known. It has close to 800 unionized employees with a total of around 1,100 — that is 1,100 individuals and families, Mr. Speaker, whose livelihood comes from IPSCO.

On this 40th anniversary, there is much to remember and much to look forward to. But two memories among many are worth bringing forward. One, this steel mill in the middle of the Prairies was begun in 1956 because the government of the day knew that progressive social policies need an economic base. Tommy Douglas backed the loans which founded IPSCO, and the government took an equity position which it held for years — an early example of partnership between government and industry.

Two, the steel workers union has been a part of IPSCO since 1957 and have been a vital part of its development since. My congratulations to workers and management, past and present. We wish IPSCO 40 new years and more of productivity. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Shellbrook Credit Union Expansion

Mr. Johnson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Wednesday, April 24, the Shellbrook Credit Union opened a 3,000 square-foot expansion to their facility.

Mr. Speaker, in 1961 the Shellbrook Credit Union began on

Arthur and Winnie Berg's coffee table. From there it moved to Agnew Motors and to John's Shoe Store. In 1974 the credit union moved into a permanent building. In 1961 the credit union had assets of \$13,000. Today it has assets of 39 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Shellbrook Credit Union has been an important force for the economic growth in that community. In addition to the ordinary financial services that it provides, it has been an important partner with local chamber of commerce in promoting Shellbrook retail.

Mr. Speaker, I've been a credit union activist for over 20 years, and I'm not surprised that the credit union is doing so well. Over the years people working together to help one another build a network of financial institutions right across this province, and in doing so they built Saskatchewan cooperative and community values from the bedrock of ongoing success from our credit unions and for our province. The credit union way is indeed, Mr. Speaker, is the Saskatchewan way.

I ask every member in this Assembly to join me in congratulating the Shellbrook Credit Union in their hard work and success.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Optimist Oratorical Contest

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I was honoured to be a judge at the oratorical contest sponsored by Optimist International of White City area.

The contestants were young men and women from grades 6 to 9. The winner of the boys' contest was Jeremy Matlin, speaking on the Quebec referendum. And the runner-up was Jason Selzer, the power of advertising. Both are from Greenall School in Balgonie.

In the girls' contest the winner was Krista Fogel of Pilot Butte — Holocaust remembered. And the runner-up was Kerry Ekberg of White City School speaking on polylingualism in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I was very impressed with the overall quality of the presentations last night. The topic given to the students was, now is the time. The presentations were thoughtful and well delivered. The evening left me with the impression that the future is definitely in good hands.

The Optimists have done an excellent job of helping young people to develop public speaking skills. It is important to express yourself clearly and distinctly, no matter what you do in life. The oratorical contest is just one of the many activities that this Optimist Club is involved in. They also maintain a park, support the community centre, offer scholarships, organize family and bicycle safety events, support a number of youth groups, drug awareness programs, services for hearing impaired, and other programs. I'd like to congratulate Irene and Rick Temple for their work, Albert Sikma, the club president in the White City Optimists, and the winners of the last night's contest for their excellent presentations. Thank you, Mr.

Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Northern Health Care

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister — my question is for the Minister of Northern Affairs — Mr. Minister, for years northern Saskatchewan has been suffering from the lack of program support and the lack of health care by the provincial governments. Health care is a deep, deep concern to the people of La Loche.

Mr. Minister, the hospital there is nothing but old trailers pushed together. And, Mr. Minister, in Ile-a-la-Crosse the hospital is an old brick building that is in dire need of replacement.

Mr. Minister, will you stand in this House today and tell the people of the North what plans you have to improve the quality of health care in the northern Saskatchewan, including the Athabasca constituency?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to report that in regards to training programs in regards to that issue, we have established not only NORTEP (northern teacher education program) program in northern Saskatchewan but the NORPAC (Northern Professional Access College) program. That is the top-notch program in health education for people from northern Saskatchewan.

I would also like to report, Mr. Speaker, that in regards to today, we will be going to northern Saskatchewan, and we'll be talking about the La Ronge health centre, you know, a commitment by the NDP (New Democratic Party) government in regards to health facilities in northern Saskatchewan that we never saw anything of with the previous government when they were in power.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, the member should be looking at the Liberal Party in Ottawa. They have devastated cuts of \$114 million, not only in education and social services and housing, but also in health, Mr. Speaker. That's where he should be directing his question to, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, this is Saskatchewan; this is not Ottawa. During my last visit to the northern community of La Loche, I visited the building that residents are forced to call a hospital. Let me describe the scene for the Legislative Assembly. Ceiling panels littered the floor, while they waited for someone to repair faulty wiring. The roof was leaking and in a horrible state. Staff morale was low and the doctors were severely overworked.

How can the minister sit there and tell this Assembly that health care is important to his government when he knows how dire the hospital situation is in the northern part of province? Where is his compassion, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, our commitment to health care in northern Saskatchewan is miles ahead of the commitment by welfare from the Liberals in Ottawa, I'll tell you this much.

In regards to what's happening in health care facilities, we have a long-term plan, Mr. Speaker. We have met with the people in La Loche in dealing with the situation. We will be, of course, dealing with this in the future in regards to the money that may become available. But, Mr. Speaker, the cut-backs by the Liberal government in regards to health care in this province is not only devastating for all provincial citizens, but for the citizens in La Loche and northern Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, this problem has not materialized overnight. The lack of commitment to health care in the North has been ongoing for many, many years and many, many governments. Housing shortages, unemployment, isolation, and road conditions all have a detrimental effect on health delivery.

Although this government is more than willing to develop northern resources at a rapid pace, they have yet to make any real commitment to health care in northern Saskatchewan. Will the Minister of Northern Affairs or his Premier make a commitment to channel some of the profits derived from northern resources back into health facilities so desperately needed by northern residents?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to again make this known. Today we'll be announcing a \$14 million facility in northern Saskatchewan at the La Ronge health centre.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, in this constituency we will be moving up Athabasca region at Stony Rapids. We will be having a long-term plan in regards to La Loche, Mr. Speaker, and he'll be very pleased; at some point in the future we'll be also announcing that.

But I'll tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, in regards to commitment. In regards to commitment, for the very first time in northern Saskatchewan, in elected control of northern Saskatchewan, we had elected boards of education with the NDP government. We had elected municipalities in regards to the Northern Municipal Council Options 80 proposals — again, controlled by Northerners. We've allowed the first elected controlled boards in education and health with NDP government again, Mr. Speaker. That is our commitment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hospital Waiting-lists

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just this morning, Mr. Speaker, I spoke with Mrs. May Mole from Regina Beach. This woman is on a six-month waiting-list, waiting for an ENG test at the University Hospital. The test would check her inner ear and nervous system. She is already suffering from dizziness and fears that her condition could be drastically worse by the time she gets the test. She is also suffering from MS (multiple sclerosis). I know she has sent the same letter outlining her concerns, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier and to the Minister of Health, as well as to me.

Mr. Speaker, once again we bring yet another example of people crying out for health services in this province. Can the Minister of Health tell us today when this begging will end?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I thank the member for the question, Mr. Speaker. I've been in Ottawa, as the member may know, so I haven't had a chance to actually look at this letter, which I see has been copied to me. But I certainly want to do so and check out the situation and report back to the member. I really wouldn't want to discuss Mrs. Mole's circumstances in public, but I certainly will look at the case and get back to the member.

I want to say to the member though, Mr. Speaker, that actually the waiting-list for referral to specialists and tests and hospitalization in Saskatchewan is not worse than in other parts of the country. I think it's actually somewhat better. And the member should know as well that the waiting-lists have not got worse with health reform in the last few years; in fact they've got better, Mr. Speaker.

But I think the member knows that if you go back 10 years or 20 years, waiting-lists have always been a problem. They've always been a political football. They continue to be.

I'll certainly look into it and we'll certainly work . . . do everything we can to improve the situation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to finally hear that the minister is really interested in what's happening to the people of this province and will take a special interest in each and every case that we bring forward.

Mr. Speaker, we'd also like to see the minister stand up in this House and take responsibility for the quality health care service that this government has promised to people of Saskatchewan. Mrs. Mole turned to us simply because she has nowhere else to go. She's getting no response from Sask Health along with the other hundreds that are calling us daily.

It's no secret to the people of Saskatchewan this government's health reform has created long waiting-lists. And many times, Mr. Speaker, it means a difference between life and death.

Will the minister now admit in this House today, Mr. Speaker, that their wellness model is nothing more than a sham and a detriment to the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out many times in this House, and I'll point it out to the member again, one of the things that is really causing us difficulty in the health care system is the lack of commitment from the Liberal Party on health care. And the fact is that as of April 1, we lost \$50 million from Ottawa for the health care system.

I want to say to the member, in terms of our health care system in Saskatchewan and health reform, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to communicate with some U.S. (United States) veterans about health care. And I got a letter recently from the Paralyzed Veterans of America and they said to me — and this makes me proud about our health care system — they said, among other things:

I also found your recent reorganization of your health care delivery system to be both innovative and well planned. Our federal and state governments here would do well to incorporate some of your ideas.

And how true that really is, Mr. Speaker. We have a wonderful system, a good health care system. Sometimes the waiting-lists may be a bit too long — we should work to improve it — but we're very proud of the medicare system we have.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Highways Asphalt Purchases

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are to the Minister of Highways. Mr. Minister, it is my understanding that the Department of Highways purchases a great deal of asphalt from Montana, even though there are two refineries in the province — Husky in Lloydminster and Saskoil in Moose Jaw.

Now we support your government buying from the lowest priced supplier, but we have to wonder, why is an American company able to provide us with asphalt so much cheaper than Saskatchewan companies?

Is it because of our uncompetitive tax structure? Mr. Minister, why does Saskatchewan Highways purchase most of its asphalt, hauled by Kock Oil, from the United States instead of from the refineries at Lloydminster or Moose Jaw? Is it because our tax structure is so bad and makes it so hard for Saskatchewan refineries to compete on a level playing-field in this market?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Highways, I'll say I understand the member's question to be why, with all the road work going on and the vast amount of highway construction we're doing . . . where is the asphalt being purchased.

I don't have the breakdown on where the asphalt is being

purchased, but I will endeavour to take notice and bring the answer back to the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I want to remind the minister that if he's taking notice on a question, then he must simply do that. Next question.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a supplemental question for the Minister of Highways, and the minister can answer for him. Now, Minister, Saskatchewan asphalt producers face an even further disadvantage when competing with the U.S. firms, so you might just as well take note of this problem and solve both problems at the same time.

When Canadian asphalt is trucked into Montana, it is hit by a 10 per cent penalty under the Montana preference policy. There's a similar penalty in North Dakota. However, when U.S. asphalt comes north across the border, there are no such penalties.

Now, Mr. Minister, what discussions have you or your government had with the Montana and North Dakota governments about having these penalties removed? What steps are you taking to level out the playing-field, to make it more fair for Saskatchewan companies to compete in this market?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting, that question, which verges on protectionism, coming from that member of the party that fought for free trade. Now they're saying, what are you doing to protect our industry.

And I say to the member opposite, he can't have it both ways. He can't be part of the Mulroney crew who forced and jammed through the Free Trade Agreement and now pull your support away from the Devine administration and say now we want protection for our industry.

And what I would ask the member opposite is, sit down and have a chat with himself and ask, where am I on this issue. Do I want free trade or do I want protectionism?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

District Health Boards Finances

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. In January, Mr. Minister, the Provincial Auditor provided you with a number of reports on individual health districts. The auditor's report shows that the health district boards are not getting the information they need to do a good job of managing their health districts. In fact the auditor said some boards don't even know if they're running deficits or surpluses because they're not getting adequate information.

Mr. Minister, your government has had these reports for several months now and we have yet to hear what you are doing to address these serious problems. How can health boards operate effectively if they aren't getting the financial information they

need, and what are you doing to address the problems raised?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Actually it is not correct, Mr. Speaker, to say that we haven't announced an action plan with respect to this matter, because we did announce last fall that we're undertaking a project to review the financial accountability in the health boards, and in fact we're proceeding with that. And we're just in the process of hiring people in the private sector, through a tendering process, Mr. Speaker, to work with the boards about financial accountability. And we'll certainly be doing that and they will be reporting this year.

I want to say to the member, that actually one of the other things the Provincial Auditor said is that some considerable progress has been made in improving accountability through the health boards in the last three years, more so than we've ever had. There are still some problems we have to work on.

And in summary, Mr. Speaker, I would just add that we do want to work on these deficits. My experience has been it isn't always the best advice to get, advice in terms of dealing with deficits, from the members of the Conservative Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Members Conflict of Interest Legislation

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the last comment certainly could draw a lot of discussion and debate, but there's no point in getting into that right now.

Mr. Speaker, a further question, and this one is to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, last fall the Conflict of Interest Commissioner launched an investigation into whether a member of cabinet had used his position to help his son get into a university class. While the member was cleared in that particular investigation, the concern was raised that the conflict of interest Act was too vague in dealing with matters of this nature. In fact the former minister of Justice said the Act was flawed because it doesn't include adult children in the definition of a family member. He promised to review the Act and to make the necessary changes.

Mr. Minister, has this review taken place? Will you be making the changes to the conflict of interest Act as promised by your predecessor?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for that question. The matter that he's talking about is in the process of the legislative review. The timetable that we usually use is that the matter goes into legislative discussion and consultation. And that would be a matter that would most likely come into the legislature next year, given our normal process of consultation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — A further question to the minister. And the former minister asked where I got the information. Well it's *Star-Phoenix*, Wednesday, October 18, 1995.

But, Mr. Minister, we still get the same standard answer. We really aren't getting an answer.

Mr. Minister, we have a solution. We have a piece of legislation or a Bill that we will be presenting to this Assembly. In fact later this day, or immediately following question period I will be introducing a private members' Bill to amend the conflict of interest Act to deal with this loophole. Our Bill will expand the definition of family to include adult children.

Mr. Minister, the former minister committed your government to review and address this loophole. Our legislation does just that. Will you support us in this legislation, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the second question in this area. The issue here is reviewing the conflict of interest legislation. As we've stated previously, we look carefully at suggestions made by the members opposite, and we will include these suggestions in our review of this legislation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Education Funding

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question this morning is for the Minister of Education or her designate. Mr. Minister, it should come as no surprise to you or your government that school boards are already being forced to compensate for education cuts. In some school divisions, they're talking about implementing a four-day week.

Mr. Minister, shortening the school week will have ramifications not only for schools, but entire communities. Working parents will have to fork over an extra 40 or \$50 for child care if they can even find that. Rural day care is not always easy to find, Mr. Minister, and it will be the parents who will be forced to drive their children back and forth to activities when school buses aren't running.

Mr. Minister, have you even considered how your deep cuts to education will affect Saskatchewan communities and who will be forced to make up the lack of government funding?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the question asked by the hon. member, I think the preamble to his question indicates where he stands on the issue. I don't know where the minister stands on the question, so I will bring the question to the notice of the minister and she will bring an answer to the House.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, we've heard from members opposite about the effect on education of the federal cuts and we're wanting to hear what this provincial government has to say. I want to know why when the federal government cuts

funding, it's offloading on the provinces, but when this government cuts funding to municipalities, school boards, and health boards, it's challenging to them.

Mr. Minister, other school boards are also looking at their own solutions to government cuts. They know that this government's decision to increase the equalization factor by 2 mills will end up costing school boards \$12 million and they know that it is the boards who will have to do the government's dirty work.

With program cuts, grade discontinuance, and school closures, we will likely see a massive upheaval of our entire education system. How can the minister continue to stand in this House and say education is funded adequately when the whole education infrastructure is crumbling around the government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, the member knows that that's simply not true. He also knows, Mr. Speaker, to the extent that we're having trouble in this province with funding a lot of our programs is because of the great fiscal pressure being put upon us by the Government of Canada. Now every time we raise it in this House or anywhere else, these people go into some kind of a funk trying to disassociate themselves for what's happening in Ottawa, but the fact of the matter is that it's happening. As I've said before, everybody in Saskatchewan knows it with the exception of those 10 people across the aisle from me today.

Now not only that, but we're now visited with the prospect of changes to the GST (goods and service tax), when we had understood that the GST was going to be eliminated entirely. Now we find that changes to the GST are being contemplated which will in fact make the situation worse in Saskatchewan if they're to be implemented.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Service Districts Act

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Municipal Government. The member for Rosetown-Biggar yesterday gave an example of RMs (rural municipality) in the Rosetown area sharing offices and services. He commended them for this, and I join him. If voluntarily done, we are not against sharing services, but local governments do not need a \$20 million cut-back in funding to force amalgamation.

Will the minister now admit that local governments are already sharing services and there is no need for The Service Districts Act legislation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Oh, Mr. Speaker, we have acknowledged many times in this House the amount of intermunicipal cooperation that's going on in this province. We have . . . well I won't name municipalities, but we have in the

south-west 107 rural municipalities looking at a transportation rationalization scheme. We have 21 rural municipalities in the mid-west that tender for gravel collectively. We have in the Humboldt-Watson area a very progressive waste management project. And we have all over this province, Mr. Speaker, numerous, numerous examples of municipalities that are cooperating to provide services more efficiently and effectively to the people they're elected to serve.

Those decisions are made locally. We respect that. We respect the integrity and intelligence of local governments to make the right decisions. We're cooperating with them, Mr. Speaker, to try to help them meet the challenges of the future. Everyone's cooperating with the exception of the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskTel Strike

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, my second question is for the minister in charge of SaskTel. This government now has two SaskTel presidents on payroll costing approximately 170,000 each year. They are also paying \$50 an hour overtime to management personnel to replace SaskTel unionized workers.

Mr. Speaker, SaskTel's top management also set up a re-engineering program to brainwash middle management. That caused many health and stress-related problems. It also has caused much mistrust toward top management and this government by those same employees. Now, Mr. Speaker, a strike.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister admit that all these problems have been caused by the inefficiencies of the political patronage appointments that this government has running SaskTel?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, first of all we have one president at SaskTel — one president — one president who is receiving remuneration than is less than half of what his counterparts in the rest of the telecommunications industry and Crown corporations in other provinces would be receiving.

We have, in addition to that, some consulting services, but we have one president. We have unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, at this time, a labour disruption at SaskTel. There are those pillars in the labour movement, Mr. Speaker — the right to associate, the right to negotiate, and the right to withdraw services.

We believe in the collective bargaining process. I'm sure that the issues that make people take this kind of a very profound decision are very complex, Mr. Speaker. But the solutions that we've had from the members opposite, offered up, are right-to-work legislation, back-to-work legislation, replacement workers — that's the suggestions we're getting from the other side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

We believe in collective bargaining — that's our solution.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Heritage Preservation

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite always say that I'm preaching gloom and doom and I never offer any solutions.

Well today, I'd like to offer a solution that would benefit both taxpayers and help preserve our Saskatchewan heritage. The way the law stands now, there is no incentive if someone would like to donate money to save or maintain a heritage project.

The government does not have a way to issue a tax credit. And I'm not speaking about a federal tax credit; I'm speaking about something that would be uniquely Saskatchewan — something that would work with our Saskatchewan income tax and for our projects.

An example of a heritage project is our UGG (United Grain Growers Limited) elevator in Regina that will be hit with a wrecking ball this week. I believe that if people could receive a tax deduction, more money would be donated to these projects.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance consider this suggestion and take a positive step towards preserving our cultural heritage?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the positive suggestion by the member opposite. As I've indicated in the past, I think this is a better approach, to be more positive about ideas you have. The only flaw in your suggestion is you're talking to the wrong Minister of Finance. This is a federal taxation issue and I would urge you to work with us to make sure that that change occurs.

But while you're at it, and if you ever get through to Mr. Martin, who now admits that he is sorry about the fact that they've broken their promise on the GST, maybe you could also get a hold of Mr. Chrétien who says he isn't sorry, and Sheila Copps who refuses to resign, to make sure that they also know that you're opposed to that tax change as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

SaskPower/Krivoy Rog Power Station Agreement

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'm pleased to rise this morning to share with you some comments.

Members will recall that the Premier led a trade mission to western Europe and Ukraine in October 1995, and one of the initiatives undertaken at that time has borne fruit. And today I'm pleased to inform this House that SaskPower Commercial, the subsidiary of SaskPower, has entered into an agreement with Canadian International Development Agency to modernize three thermal power units in Ukraine.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, under the contract, SaskPower Commercial will provide technical and managerial assistance, including consulting and training support, on the rehabilitation of three 300-megawatt units — and these are roughly the same size as Shand — at Krivoy Rog Power Station, 400 kilometres south-east of Kiev. And my apologies to anyone who may in fact speak Ukrainian.

However, unlike Shand, Ukraine's 40 coal-fired plants that provide 69 per cent of the country's electricity are inefficient and environmentally unacceptable. SaskPower has striven to balance the need for environmental protection and preservation with the need to provide dependable, reasonably priced electricity service to its customers.

The measures incorporated into Shand have received international recognition and SaskPower has developed a technical and training infrastructure it can pass on to Ukraine.

While this first contract, Mr. Speaker, is modest — it's in the neighbourhood of 3.5 million — the potential for SaskPower international is great. SaskPower hopes this project will create the nucleus of a Canadian-Ukraine business team that will be capable of providing assistance to other rehabilitation work that will be required in many thermal plants in Ukraine and other Commonwealth of Independent States countries.

In carrying out this project, SaskPower Commercial will draw on talent from within SaskPower and other Canadian utilities, will provide approximately 15 to 20 person-years of work.

There's a special link, Mr. Speaker, between the people of Saskatchewan and Ukraine. One of the reasons that draws Saskatchewan and Ukraine together is heritage. Many people in this province and indeed western Canada are very proud of their Ukrainian heritage. It's something that we are proud of and must never forget.

The government commends SaskPower and its subsidiary, SaskPower Commercial, for the initiative it has shown in creating this opportunity, one that fosters goodwill, good health, and good business. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would first of all like to thank the minister for his advance notice and allowing us an opportunity to review the statement and the agreement that's been reached. It affords us an opportunity to review these types of agreements and offer our observations and perhaps suggest that these kind of international relations are indeed necessary, where we have to go beyond our own borders to obtain contracts and opportunities for further . . . not only further developing some of these countries, assisting them and ensuring with our knowledge and technology that the type of incident that occurred that a member opposite made in a former statement, in Chernobyl, does not once again occur. And if we can any way,

help to advance our technologies to those countries to assist them to improve their way of life.

I as well have roots and connections from heritage from that part of the country, and the Polish people and the Ukrainian people do rely a great deal on these types of assistance and as well are very proud of that kind of heritage.

So I applaud the government for doing that and I also would like to add that I hope that some of those positions and the actual employment positions can be attributed to people directly from Saskatchewan. And that hopefully it will be our folks that will be involved and we do not have to draw on people with technical knowledge from other provinces. Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We too are pleased that SaskPower has entered into this agreement which will help improve the economy of Saskatchewan and that SaskPower continues to be able to provide its knowledge to the world.

However, Mr. Speaker, I think it's also unfortunate though that SaskPower is not able to aid in the decommissioning of the Chernobyl plants and in providing other electrical generation capabilities because the Premier of this province broke the AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd) agreement, which would have helped to develop electrical technology further in this province.

It's also very nice, Mr. Speaker, that the minister has recognized the Shand and Rafferty-Alameda projects in his statement — that the Shand project is, in his words, efficient and environmentally sound. We always knew this, Mr. Speaker, that these projects were good projects; that they did meet the environmental recognitions that were needed in this province. And finally, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan would like to have reasonably priced electrical service in this province. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 79 — An Act to amend The Members' Conflict of Interest Act respecting the definition of "family"

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move a Bill to amend The Members' Conflict of Interest Act respecting the definition of "family" be now moved and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 80 — An Act to amend The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that a Bill to amend The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

(1100)

ORDERS OF THE DAY**GOVERNMENT ORDERS****COMMITTEE OF FINANCE****Motions for Interim Supply**

The Chair: — Order. Order. If the committee will come to order we will proceed — both sides of the House, please. I will ask the minister to introduce his officials, please.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Seated to my right is Bill Jones, the deputy minister of Finance. Immediately behind me is Kirk McGregor, the executive director, taxation and intergovernmental affairs branch. To his right is Larry Spannier, executive director of the treasury branch, behind Mr. Jones. On my extreme right is Jim Marshall, executive director of economic and fiscal policy branch. And behind him is Kent Walde, director of Public Employees Benefits Agency.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would again thank the minister, and welcome his officials here today.

It is a pleasure again to speak to the interim supply motion brought before the House today. Mr. Chairman, by bringing this before us again today, the minister gives us yet another opportunity to discuss some of the spending decisions of this government.

In recent weeks, in response to our questions, this government has posed questions in return about where our caucus stands on certain financial matters. They seem to think that we somehow have a contradiction with what we have been saying. For the benefit of this government this should be straightened out, Mr. Chairman. Because, to borrow one of the Minister of Finance's all-too-often-used phrases, they just don't understand.

The minister keeps saying that when it comes to government spending the member from Thunder Creek wants massive tax cuts, while the member from Wood River wants more spending for health care. The minister says that the member from Humboldt wants more money for social services. I'm afraid that it's this sort of characterization . . . which is just that; it's characterization, Mr. Chairman. It's a fictional representation of the events, not a real one. It's time this government examines the real facts with respect to their spending.

Mr. Chairman, we raise issues such as we did yesterday, and we will again today, on occasions like when this motion is brought before us, because we believe that this is just not responsible spending. If there was responsible, fair, and accountable spending in government, there would be less need for more tax revenues.

When the minister raises the questions to us about our policies, I would remind him, it's his policy decisions that are in question here. When the members opposite question why this government wastes copious amounts of money on health

consultants instead of nurses, the people of Saskatchewan believe that this is a fair question.

If things like this were ended, there would be more money available for health care and essential services, Mr. Chairman. Services would be delivered more effectively. And the minister knows this. The minister knows this to be the case.

I would simply ask the minister at this point in time, will the minister commit that you will not spend any more money wastefully with respect to the interim supply motion before us here today? Don't waste any more money on consulting for these next two months, and put more money towards front-line health care working.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm going to be relatively brief and then I will get to . . . relatively brief in responding to your comments, then I will get very briefly to your question.

You began your comments with a reference to the real facts. The real facts are it all began in Saskatchewan. It was here that we defined, first among Canadian provinces, a plan to balance the budget. It was here that we announced it. It was here in Saskatchewan that it was first accomplished. It was here in Saskatchewan that the trend towards responsible fiscal management began, and which is putting this country back on the road to fiscal health.

Prior to Liberal and Conservative administrations in the '70s and '80s, this province had a worldwide reputation; this country had a worldwide reputation for sound fiscal management. Thanks to a Liberal administration, followed by a Conservative administration, we lost that.

Thanks to what began here in Saskatchewan, and the fact that we were able to communicate to the public the need for sound fiscal management, it has become a national trend. And I think Saskatchewan people can take some pride in once again, in once again doing it our own way and in once again providing leadership for this nation on the key issues of the day. It began here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — You mentioned the . . . you asked about front-line workers in the Department of Health. I want to just say that this is not an ideal opportunity to get into details of other departments' estimates. Each one will come. None has been closed and I'm not sure the extent to which your House Leader's communicated this. I'm sure he has. But we will . . . none of them are closed. We'll try to accommodate you in calling back departments whom you want to take a second run at. You're not closed to the Department of Health.

Let me just say with respect to the Department of Health in general in response to your question, it has been our goal in health to ensure that so far as possible, front-line workers are retained and the cuts, where it's possible to do so, is done in administration and not in the people who are on the front line.

The Minister of Health could give you more detail on this but I

believe it to be a fact that we have, in the staff reductions which have taken place in the Department of Health, there have in fact been a greater percentage of out-of-scope people who have been laid off than in scope. The out-of-scope people have carried more than their fair share of the baggage, for which we appreciate and for which we thank them. So the suggestion that this is all coming at the expense of front-line workers simply isn't accurate. The opposite is true, I say to the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would thank the minister for his comment in response. But I do feel though it's worthy of a little bit further comment with respect to health care in a general sense, because money is wasted on less essential things. The opposition is forced to come to this House and raise questions about unfortunate and sad incidents which happen in our health care system. We do so to get the government to be vigilant in trying to prevent what government officials insultingly describe as fallen sparrows.

Mr. Chairman, I fear for the sick and meek in our population when their human dignity is reduced to the importance of sparrows by some of this government's Health officials. I would just ask the minister, how much of the monies that you would be requesting here in this interim supply today would be going towards paying the Health department spokesperson who spoke in such a crass fashion about our sick.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I am not . . . again, detailed questions should really be reserved for the Department of Health estimates. Let me just say in general, I think it's a very poor practice to be attacking public servants in this Assembly. We have access to the Assembly and it is a considerable privilege. We're given an absolute immunity in what we say. But with that privilege goes responsibility — the responsibility not to use it in an irresponsible fashion. When you attack public servants who, by nature of their employment, are unable to respond, you skate very close to using the privileges . . . abusing the privileges which are given when you're elected to our Assembly. And I think members opposite ought to be very cautious in dragging public servants into the debates in this Chamber.

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Chairman, I would thank the minister for his response. I would just mention though that this particular individual is on record, is quoted in the newspaper, this Health department spokesperson, as referring to these individuals as being fallen sparrows. But I will just go on.

Another example of this sort of non-essential spending, Mr. Chairman, has been the creation of a new Department of Post-Secondary Education and the hiring of another consultant to look at our universities. It's fine to review this situation. Here again, however, we have the government spending another pile of money on something that will not teach anything to our students and will not help anyone get the training they need, and this is all wasteful.

We have a capable civil service. We didn't need to hire any more consultants for education when we already have Saskatchewan people who are knowledgeable on

post-secondary education. We also have many interest groups and communities, and — I dare say — political parties willing to offer their opinions.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, we already have enough cabinet ministers to handle the load. Sure there may be a few less than the Tories were when they were in power, but no one knows how having more will make our education system any better. Instead of waiting 18 months to reduce the cabinet, I think the Premier should do it immediately.

Mr. Chairman, at the same time that the Premier says he must keep this large cabinet around to reform government, his Minister of Post-Secondary Education does something that completely undermines the Premier's arguments. If the Premier needs to have a larger cabinet to reform government, why then does the Minister of Post-Secondary Education need to spend \$44,000 on hiring a consultant? And I would just like to pose that question to the minister.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Chairman, with the consent of the House Leader, who is handling the Finance interim supply in the absence of the Minister of Finance — is in a speaking engagement in Saskatoon, a long-standing speaking engagement — I want to say a word about this because this involves cabinet which is the responsibility of the Premier.

The question specifically relates to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education. I want to tell the member — I'm sure he knows this — that it is not our doing. This is not Ottawa bashing. It's a fact. It's not our doing that Ottawa has withdrawn from skills training, post-secondary manpower training, from the national delivery of these kinds of programs. It's not our doing.

To be quite frank with you, I've expressed my view to the Prime Minister; we need to have national standards and they should be involved in this. But because of the Quebec and other situations, this is a manpower training area that they've pulled out of.

Secondly, it's not our doing that there is a reduction of about \$25 million in post-secondary education, coupled with the whole block transfer reductions, of which have been a large amount of debate in this legislature.

Now when you have those factors combined, what would you do?

(1115)

Would you say that we should somehow minimize the importance of training our youth for tomorrow's economy — today's economy? That we should not develop programs like JobStart, Future Skills, and their subsequent emanations? That we shouldn't look at universities to see how they're performing in the 21st century, especially given the fiscal squeeze, that the Minister of Education who's responsible for K to 12 working flat out 24 hours a day wouldn't be able to handle because of the obligations which are involved? What does one do?

I say the reasonable response to this is, if you want to train our people, our kids — forget about the kids; even adults who need job retraining, given the changing nature of the economy — we've got to devise those programs. That's a full-time job. And it should be a top priority and it should tie into economic development, which it does, and it should tie into social services, which it does. And it means negotiations with the federal government, which it does. It means interprovincial relationships and standards because it's now a provincial responsibility, which it does.

This is a sensible move. And the hon. member opposite can say, well it doesn't matter. You can reduce the cabinet to one, two — I mean pick any number that you want. But I tell you in the honest and efficient administration of public service, there is only so much that a minister to do. And if you want that person to dialogue with the public and to listen to the public and reflect the best policies going, you need a Minister of Post-Secondary Education.

Now what about the question of Mr. MacKay — \$44,000. What we want here is a facilitation of the two universities themselves, recognizing the need to eliminate overlap and duplication and for themselves to examine the courses that should or shouldn't be taught and for themselves to take a look at the administrative mechanisms that should or shouldn't be established. And for themselves, mindful of their university autonomy and other responsibilities in the history of the universities, to come up with the 21st century answer for post-secondary education.

Mr. MacKay's job is to get them around the table to facilitate to that, to ask questions, to stimulate thought, stimulate debate. Not in the political way, not in the Saskatoon versus Regina way, not in a partisan way, but in a very intellectual, honest effort to come up with the very best system that we can afford in the light of the cut-backs by the federal Liberal government in Ottawa, which is a fact.

Now you're not going to buy that, and you won't buy it, and this will be my last comment as I take my chair. In the consequence, if you were in government and you didn't do what we did, my criticism of you, if I was in opposition, would be — and it will be, by the way, even in office — of you people is that you are ignoring the future of our young people in Saskatchewan. You've turned your backs on them. You don't care enough about them. You don't care enough about the universities. You don't care about the SIASTs (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology). You don't care about Future Skills and job training. You simply don't care about them. You'd lump them in with all of the problems that K to 12 faces, and those are numerous by themselves as we know. You don't care for them.

You know, I'd like to think you don't believe that. I'd like to think that you're making this statement because it's the political statement to make; that it may be a short-term political hit for you people in a positive way. And goodness knows, if I may say so parenthetically, you need all the benefits and boosts that you can get these days.

But I'd like to think — to the critic, to the Finance critic —

who, and I don't mean to say this in a patronizing way, who I think is very sincere about his job as Finance critic and is probing in-depth as much as he can on these issues of Finance, that truth would prevail, and that your position in a credible, long-term way would endorse what we're doing with respect to cabinet and the size of cabinet and the obligations which are tied into it. That's the explanation for it.

I want to make one last point. We lost five ministers before the last election — three to the election process, two for personal and other reasons. I reappointed those five; same cabinet size. One additional is Post-Secondary Education for the reasons that are articulated. That's the size of the cabinet — not inordinate, not too large, proper, efficient, and sensible. And that's why this government is functioning the way that it is, with approval in the financial and other markets of the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: — Before we continue, I want to bring to the committee, I think that the debate is getting way off track here — and remind them at present that we're not dealing with estimates. We are debating a resolution as it pertains to an interim supply Bill. We're not voting individual department estimates here. Supply Bills are to issue money required in advance before complete parliamentary sanctions. And debate should focus on the need to grant, reduce or refuse supply in respect to the resolution.

So I want to bring this back, that we're getting a little off track here. I invite the members, not only the members asking the questions but the ministers answering the questions, to keep their answers and their questions focused on interim supply and that we will discuss department policies and details at a later date in estimates.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I certainly mean no disrespect to your comments just now, but we as official opposition certainly did enjoy the opportunity to get the Premier involved here today in the interim supply debate. We certainly in no way would wish to narrow the scope. It has certainly been opened up to be a much broader issue, and we do feel there are a lot of serious concerns that need to be addressed. So we certainly welcomed the opportunity to have the Premier . . . and we are very glad that the minister allowed the Premier to make those comments.

So, Mr. Chairman, I and my colleagues certainly would have no problem in continuing. And certainly if the Premier does wish to get up and make a few more comments again, we would appreciate it, sir. So if would just . . .

The Chair: — I want to tell the member from Thunder Creek that I have stated before that we will get into the estimates of departments. That is not in interim supply which is what we are into now.

Mr. Aldridge: — Well thank you, Mr. Chairman. But once again though, Mr. Chairman, we in the opposition fail to see how what we've heard here equates with being responsible, accountable, or fair in terms of spending. If the money to pay

another deputy minister, another minister, and his ministerial assistants were going to the people who really need it — which is the very essence of debate in terms of this interim supply as far as we're concerned, the money is needed for those who need it most — if that was the case, then we would gladly say everything is fair about it, Mr. Chairman. But unfortunately we can't.

Today, Mr. Chairman, the minister here is asking for more money to carry on those same sorts of practices for yet another two months. I say put an end to this sort of stuff today. Don't simply ignore it as many of your back-benchers have been.

Mr. Chairman, in the motion before us today, the government is carrying on a fine parliamentary tradition of allowing grievance before supply. Although we are new in this institution . . . and we appreciate the importance of this tradition. While we are grateful for this tradition, we are not very happy that there are so many grievances. We wish it could be otherwise. Among those grievances, Mr. Chairman, are concerns about how the government raises revenues as well.

After getting the budget, I decided that I really wanted to know how much this government is getting from taxpayers, in revenues from taxes. In 1990-91, this government was getting as much as \$1.998 billion. In this year's budget, the government estimates it will get as much \$2.9 billion. Between this year and last year, there's an increase of almost \$100 million in revenues alone — works out to be in the increase of 3.3 per cent over last year in terms of revenue.

Well, Mr. Chairman, the members opposite like to use numbers. They worry more about numbers than they do about people. In fact if they spent less time worrying about telling us what they think of figures that we present to them, they might actually be able to do something about the people behind all of those numbers, which again, as I say, is the essence of our interim supply debate here today.

They might actually be able to do something about the 70,000 unemployed and under-employed that we have here in this province at this time. They might actually be able to do something about the 80,000 or so people that we have on welfare. They might actually be able to do something about the fact that Regina and the east-central area of this province experienced negative job growth. And I would just like the minister to make a comment about that, if he would.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — I'm going to again . . . and I'm going to withdraw from this debate, you'll probably be very pleased to hear, because of other commitments. But unfortunately, the question that needs, I think again, a response by the Premier.

I can't believe that the member from Thunder Creek . . . I cannot believe that the hon. member honestly believes that because there is a Department of Post-Secondary Education that we are duplicating costs. I mean do you honestly believe that? Because if you do, I got to tell you what the facts are.

Mr. Dan Perrins, fulfilling his job as deputy minister of Post-Secondary Education and the Post-Secondary Education's

functions — if we had not split them into two departments — would still be the obligation of the public purse because he'd be in the Department of Education from K to 12 to post-secondary. That's where it was located.

All we've done is move those people out of K to 12 and put them into a separate department; there is no extra cost involved in this matter. There may be an extra cost involved with respect to executive assistants 2 and a secretary 1 or 2, and whatever is associated with the actual minister's office but, with the greatest of respect, that is minimal compared to the issues that are before us.

So when you get up and you say in your opening statement, here's what's happening, you have two departments and doubling of costs, this is either wilful misleading of the situation or a lack of knowledge; either way, not a very acceptable position to take.

The second issue the member raises is the question of taxes. Look, in this budget we are confirming tax reductions in regard of the aviation fuel tax, a relief now made permanent by the way — it was only one-year experimental.

We are continuing the manufacturing and processing rebate designed to stimulate those who are manufacturers and processors in Saskatchewan. That's a great job creator, by the way, which ties in to your third question.

The debt surcharge is now being made complete — that's \$55 million of tax relief annually to the ordinary consumers, the ordinary taxpayers, not to business people but to all of us who filled out our income tax at about this time of year.

Now if the hon. member says we should be doing more, I agree with him — we should be doing more. But we are cutting and you're not acknowledging that. And we are cutting in the face of a cumulative debt on the Crown and general revenue side of \$14 billion.

We are cutting taxes in the face of the fact that there's about \$850 million a year — two months' interim supply — going for interest payments on the public debt, interest payments alone. And that's a remarkable accomplishment to be able to balance the budget, cut back on the debt, forecast surpluses, which we hope — we going to do our best — to maintain, and provide tax relief and do it in a way to stimulate jobs. And the member will not give us any credit for that.

(1130)

I think this is not a credible position. You can maintain it, but it's not a credible position. This is a position which is acknowledged in the province and outside the province as being a very positive development.

Now with respect to jobs, I think this number can be debated and argued *ad nauseum*. But the Statistics Canada numbers are correct. Since 1992, we have over 10,000 full time permanent more jobs, since that period today, than 1992.

Is it enough? No. Do we need more? Yes. What's our game plan? *Partnership for Growth, Partnership for Growth* with the 21 objectives, because this community helped draft that for us. They like it.

There's no instant fix to jobs. We're not going to, as you suggest when you raise all these issues about the people who need jobs, we're not going to go to the Tory or the Liberal line of large-scale hand-outs or grants. We're not going to bankrupt the province. The business community doesn't want any of that.

What we have is a policy which is very focused, very targeted, and very successful — very successful. It's not perfection. It isn't what we would want. But we're working away at it steadily and the lines are up . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon me?

The Chair: — Order, order. I want to say this discussion on government policy has gone on far too long, I think, and we would get back to interim supply, which the debate has to focus on the need to grant interim supply, and it should stay on there.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And just before the Premier leaves, I would thank him for entering into the debate today. And I do believe that it has enriched the debate here today to just broaden the scope a little bit. And I'm sure I can express this on behalf of my colleagues as well, that I feel that it hasn't in any way done any detrimental damage to the debate, certainly.

But, Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to toss out another figure here to the members opposite, and they might correct it. It's a shame that the Premier does have to leave right now, because I'm sure he would like to correct it too. And I would strongly urge him to do so. But the figure, Mr. Chairman, is 46 per cent. And I'll repeat it once again for the benefit of the members opposite, and once again, it's 46 per cent.

Well the members opposite I'm sure are curious about where this number comes from and what it would mean. Well the number shouldn't worry them. They shouldn't worry about remembering it, because we'll do our share of reminding them over the next little while because it's one . . . it'll continue to haunt them for quite some time, Mr. Chairman. Because 46 per cent is the amount that tax revenues have gone up for this government since 1990-91.

So the Premier, when he entered the debate, can speak of the tax relief that's been provided. But it's incremental, to say the least, when you see how much tax revenues have increased since that time, thanks mostly to massive tax grabs by the government . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. I want to say to the member, I'm having a little trouble myself relating this to interim supply again. I think we're on to government policy and government estimates in individual departments. I would ask him to tie this into interim supply and ask the question, please.

Mr. Aldridge: — Well, Mr. Chairman, this figure is alarming to the people of this province, and this is why I do . . . I will get

to make a point here if you would just allow me just another moment here. Because the reason I brought the number to the attention of the House was the member from Regina Coronation Park and the Minister of Finance, they're always talking about how they must correct our numbers in debates just such as this interim supply debate.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to correct them on this number. I just ask them to correct us on this number. I'd say, go ahead, but it's correct — 46 per cent increased revenue since 1990-91.

You know, people would like this to be corrected, and the Premier acknowledges that in saying he would like to provide further relief. So the people of this province would like the government to correct this. They want them to do something about it. The fact that while they can hardly save for retirement — the people of this province — they can't find jobs and pay for homes or even essential needs, the government has got 46 per cent more in tax revenue.

Why is it, Mr. Chairman, that the government can't offer a more substantial tax break to the people of the province even though they're getting 46 per cent more money? All they seem able to do is cut services and continue to collect more tax revenue. The 46 per cent, Mr. Chairman, does not include the millions more the government collects in utility charges, or even the boom it gained off of resources through royalties and land sales.

The members opposite should get right to it and they should correct this number. Today, however, they're asking for two months supply of money just to carry on the same old practices. I say, correct the problem and get beyond the number so that fewer people in the province are suffering.

The Minister of Finance has stated that the best way to encourage economic development is to reduce the tax burden. Well if a government has so much more tax revenue coming in, then surely it can do something to ease the tax burden a little bit more substantially. Easing the tax burden . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. We're still going back to the individual departments, and I think we're on to discussing of policy and taxation and so forth. And that it not what interim supply is. I think those are to be dealt with in estimates.

And this is several times now that I've warned the member that we have to stay within the realms of interim supply, which is the granting of funds for the operation of government. The individual policies and estimates within departments will be handled in estimates, not in interim supply. I would ask him to put his question to the interim supply motion that is before the House.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I'll try and confine my comments to the debate here today. But I do feel though that this has been of significant benefit. I do believe that the public welcomes the expanded scope of this debate here today. And I would . . .

The Chair: — I want to say to the member that the ruling was

made and it has been stated before that there are other procedures and other ways and means to challenge departments or to question departments. Interim supply is not that place to do it, and I would ask him to hold his questions within the generality of interim supply.

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Chairman, I just have to make a comment with respect to the government and the spending in the Crown corporations, if I would.

Last year the government chose not to take millions that were left in the liquor and the gaming fund and they also avoided taking 60 million that was offered as a dividend from the Crown corporations. Instead, the government chose to take 188 million that originally was planned to use in the gross revenue insurance program.

Why would the minister value spending money on the Crown corporations more than on the families of this province?

Mr. Chairman, for the benefit of the minister who was otherwise involved, I would just like to ask him why does he value spending more money on this government's Crown corporations than he does on our families in this province?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — This process can go on for ever. If you're allowed . . . if the members opposite are allowed to begin their comments by saying, you spend money on X and therefore I want to ask about X, no matter how obscure or far it may be, or how great an issue it may be . . .

An Hon. Member: — Or how much out of order it is.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Or how much out of order it is. The interim supply has a relatively narrow purpose. You're voting a month, or two months as the case may be; you're voting a month or two month's supply. This is not an appropriate place to raise general questions of tax policy or spending on Crown corporations. This is not a general discussion of revenue and taxation in the province. This is not what it is.

I say to the member from Thunder Creek. I don't want to . . . I'll put this diplomatically. You should either accept the ruling of the Chair or you should challenge it — and there's a process for doing that. But you simply can't go on ignoring it which I think is what you've been doing.

The ruling of a Chairperson, while I shouldn't be commenting on it, is patently in keeping with the long-term traditions of this House. And certainly we were not allowed when we were in opposition to engage in this kind of a broad discussion.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Chair, in all due respect to the challenge you have before you with this discussion, we take our lead on what has been done in the past. In fact from *Hansard* March 31, 1993, it appears as though this NDP government allowed one of the members opposite to go into a five-page dissertation as a preamble to his question. And so of course, believing that that was correct, right, and just in 1993, we question why it is not right at this time.

The Chair: — I want to simply state that the Chair that is in the Chair right now has said that the questions today are more in line with the estimates when we get into departments. I have made that ruling, and I will stay with that ruling, and I will ask the members to narrow it down to interim supply which is simply granting of two months of funds for the government to operate on.

The departments . . . the policy and the departments of spending within the departments, policy of the departments, is to be done in estimates not in interim supply. The ruling has been said, and I will ask the members to focus on interim supply.

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Chairman, just to clarify. My colleague from Thunder Creek . . . The assurances that the monies that are being asked for are not only adequately but appropriately being directed for the various departments and for the expenditures, just to clarify that the blame that has been laid about the cut-backs with respect to various funding programs, and then the comment by the government that that has all back-filled, it's just to ensure that monies that will be paid out to the various departments for the next month or two months, or whatever we agree on, are appropriate and sufficient and adequate.

The Chair: — I guess I want to clarify here that if the ruling of the Chair is being challenged there is a proper procedure for that. Either the Chair is being challenged, or the ruling will be upheld.

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Chairman, I apologize. It was not merely a challenge, but merely an explanation on the process and procedure that we believed was proper to follow based on the past experiences. I apologize if it appeared to be a challenge.

(1145)

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the minister or the Premier. Last month at about this time, the House gave the minister a sum equal to a twelfth of all the spending for the year.

Over the last year, we've heard the Provincial Auditor suggest that the government should be providing an annual report about its financial performance. It would be a simple opportunity for the government to put together a document which compares proposed expenditures against actual expenditures. More importantly, it would show results of the program spending against the intended, or proposed, goals and targets.

And I'm sure that the minister and the Premier would at least agree with the principle that planning is not complete without final reporting to show whether intended goals were achieved.

Now today, here, Mr. Chairman, the minister and the Premier here are asking for another two-twelfths supply. And I would suggest that before this be given by the House, it would be appropriate for him to briefly report or outline to members of the House whether the intended results were achieved from the last interim supply that was given to this government in the House.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Chairman, I will of course abide by your ruling presuming the question is in order; so that being in order, I'll have to give a response.

We have a business plan and an accountability plan — it's called *Public Accounts*. When we table the budget, it's a forecast. When we table the *Public Accounts* you can go back to see whether or not what we said in '94-95 is accurate by the *Public Accounts* in '94-95.

We do that with the Crown Investments Corporation. We do that with all the Crowns in Crown Corporations Committees. We do that.

All you have to do is just pick up the '94-95 *Public Accounts*, which is a public document, take a look at the budget '94-95 and say, okay, where has the government misled? Where is it off base in its plan?

Our plan is the budget. It sets out a four-year plan. One which, I might add amongst others, receives high marks internally by journalists in the business community and in the fiscal community, and externally.

Now does the plan succeed? You'll know when we table *Public Accounts*. That's why we have a Public Accounts Committee. You get in there and you ask the detailed questions in Public Accounts Committee. You don't ask the questions in interim supply. All we want is two-twelfths or whatever it is — is it two-twelfths that we want now? — two-twelfths for the funding.

If you want to take the Department of Finance and spend 10 days or 10 months with the Department of Finance and go every tax policy and detail, pass interim supply, we'll call the Department of Finance right now. The officials are here. Let's not waste their time. Let's call them and let's call the Department of Finance estimates.

If you don't want Finance, you want Executive Council, let's shut her down right now; interim supply, vote it, and call the Executive Council and I'll be here for 10 hours, 10 minutes, 10 years. Whatever you want.

I mean how can it be said that we don't have this accountability. There is no other government that has this level of accountability. I might add here, by the way, talking about the address, budget address of February 1995, the Provincial Auditor's report of the financial statements, "represent the true state of the government books."

So I mean, you know, I'm not trying to be hard on you on the process of it. I am being hard on you on the process. We don't want to limit debate. You can debate anything you want about the estimates on a department-by-department basis, I repeat again.

That's not what we're doing here. What we're doing here is voting two-twelfths for the government to function. And if you want to pass that today, within the next two minutes, we'll call the department of your choice. You can keep us there for ever

on the department's spendings on a detailed basis.

You can't expect us to answer for every department. Believe it or not, the Department of Finance does not answer for every department. That's why we have ministers.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would thank the Premier for his response. However with respect to the annual report for government, I would just remind the Premier that his own members in the Public Accounts Committee that he referred to, just passed a motion recently to just study the matter of having an annual report.

So his suggestion that there is one at this time is not quite . . .

The Chair: — Order. I think we're doing the same thing.

I want to inform the members that the rulings that I've made here today are consistent with rulings made back in 1990, '91, '92, and '93, so we're trying to hold some consistency here. Now the Chair is trying to be consistent with what interim supply is, but it doesn't seem like we're getting much cooperation from either side here. We're getting too long on the questions which are not zeroed enough, and then the answers are also getting wide astray here.

So I'm going to stay with the consistency of the rulings and I ask them to come back to interim supply which is simply the granting of monies for the government. And any other questions on policy or whatever is handled in estimates by departments and by the ministers.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Chairman, we've been asked as opposition to support the government motion to spend one-sixth of their budget at this time, and I guess it's obvious that we're having difficulty supporting this motion because we aren't aware if the revenues that are expected on the other side is something that's actually matching.

Is it a fair question to ask if the projected revenues are also in the same way? Are they coming in in the same way that the projected expenses are?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the answer to that question is that the budget was passed on March 28 . . . sorry, introduced on March 28. It has not been yet passed. The fiscal year '95-96 closed on March 31. We are today on April 26 I guess, or 27. We only have 26 days by which to judge the revenues. These are done basically, are they Mr. Jones, on a month-to-month basis? On the month-to-month basis. And so far as we know, the deputy advises me, they're on target; the revenues are target.

May I make one general observation. Why our record is received and approved internally but as importantly externally, by rating agencies, for example the credit worthiness of the province, is because the goals and the targets that we set on revenues and expenditures have for four years, roughly been met. I would say more than roughly — have been met, essentially.

And what the investment community and the business community likes, is that for four years we have a solid track record of, as I said — it's kind of cliché, but I mean it — a promise made is a promise kept. There is no guarantee, as the member knows opposite, with respect to oil prices for example. We make a prediction on oil prices which will affect our revenues, but if something happens in the United Nations with Iraq, prices could go one way or the other.

We don't know what the prices are going to be with respect to wheat. All we can do is take our best economists and fiscal forecasters and put them together and come up with the best estimates of revenues that are possible.

For this current year, the one-twelfth, two-twelfth that we're asking you to vote, we don't have the knowledge yet. It's 26 days or 27 days. The deputy says in the first beginning days of this year, they look like they're on target. But you can't be certain until we get the monthly numbers in.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I rise as Government House Leader and not as the minister in charge of interim supply. This House, I think, has functioned reasonably well because our staffs have worked together reasonably well. I think there was an understanding, Mr. Chair, among the staff that these set of questions would go on. And I would like to honour that, although I respect the rulings; in fact I've supported them.

What I think we might do is by leave, agree that this interim supply be given a broader scope for at least the balance of the morning.

An Hon. Member: — But not set a precedent.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — But not set a precedent; that's right. That's putting it well. We do not set a precedent, but for the balance of the morning, because of the discussions that went on among our staff, we will give the interim supply a broader scope. And we're prepared to give leave to do that.

The Chair: — Leave has been asked by the Government House Leader that the scope of questioning for this morning only, on interim supply, and not to set a precedence, be broadened for . . . like I say, I repeat, for this morning only. I can do that and I'd loosen up the rules and move from the rules if leave is granted. If leave is not granted, we will follow the rules. The Government House Leader has asked for leave. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

The Chair: — The questioning then can go to a broader scope this morning.

Mr. Belanger: — Just a couple of questions on interim supply. Obviously the purpose of the Bill is simply to allow government to continue to operate without having to go through the whole scenario here. But how does the government currently supply their third parties? Is there a difference between the school boards or the health districts or the municipal governments? Is it quarterly or is it biannual? How

does regular payments go?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Actually, transferring the money to things like health regions or schools or whatever varies from department to department. The departments, in discussion with the third parties, which I think is your question . . . how do the third parties actually get their money? Do they get it monthly, quarterly, yearly?

The departments work out with the third parties, be it the city of Regina or the transition houses or whatever. You know, I just picked those two right out of the air. They work out the arrangements with them. And it varies from department to department, and it will vary within a department. So there's just no general rule. In some cases it's monthly, in some cases it's quarterly, and in some cases it's annually. So it varies with department and will vary within a department.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you. I'd asked this question previously to the Minister of Finance, and I was a bit confused with the response. But will there be any substantial losses incurred by the third parties as a result of this interim supply motion?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — If the interim supply is passed on Monday, as I think has been expected by parties, there will be no late payments. The last authorization took us to April 30, and I understand that this interim supply is for the month of . . . starts the month of May. So the answer to your question is there should be no loss of . . . there should be no late payments if the interim supply were passed by April 30.

Mr. Belanger: — I guess in the second part of the question, will the government itself realize any savings by this interim supply motion versus the quarterly or the annual contributions that you make to a third party? I'm saying that obviously with the tremendous budget that we're talking about here, there may be substantial savings that does not require the government to meet. So what are you planning to do with those savings, if there are any, and what the figure is.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, there will be no savings. Once we pass the Appropriation Bill in the end of May or whenever, then the departments will have the authorization to spend the full amount, and they'll work out permanent arrangements. This is an interim supply. This authorizes the department to spend two-twelfths of the total funds. And there's no savings. There's no additional cost to the system. There's no additional savings. This simply allows the departments to carry on until the Appropriation Bill is passed, as I say, probably the end of May.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Mr. Minister. I realize there's been a bit of a problem on how much latitude we have in the questioning, but what makes it . . .

An Hon. Member: — Go ahead, toss me your worst. I'll bat it out of the park.

Mr. McPherson: — Well no, I'm not going to toss you my worst. But what I will do in the cooperation that you've showed with leave in having the questions a little more broad ranging

... but at least when you come and ask for the ... which I thought we were going to deal with one-twelfth but you've brought it in as two-twelfths supply. At the time you begin the proceedings, why not then table the amounts that you're asking for each month of the two month supply?

I mean, let's see the detailed list. Why do we have to always come forward and ask for it? Give us the list, and then we'll work our questions, and maybe we'll even be able to keep them a little bit narrower.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — In fact, we will do that. If I can get the assistance of a page, I will table ... (inaudible interjection) ... I'm sure the page will make as many copies as you need. I've got two. Okay, I think I've got a third one. I'm just checking these are all the same. Well here's three. That ought to keep you going for a moment.

(1200)

Mr. Belanger: — Just another question on the losses versus the savings. I guess if a government is required to give up \$10 million in one day as opposed to \$20 million in one day, there's obviously got to be some kind of savings earned, either to interest or less money borrowed or whatever means. So you're absolutely positive and sure there's no savings as a result of this interim supply?

In essence it's going to cost you less money to give out for a shorter period of time, so we would assume that there was savings.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, it doesn't cost the ... We don't expect to be late because we do expect this to be passed by the 30th of April. And so long as that's the case, then with the authorization ... this legislature will authorize the departments to spend the money and do so on time.

If it were to drag into May ... and one would hope that would not be the case. But if, speaking hypothetically, if the matter were to drag into May, I don't know that it would cost the government any money or save the government any money, but it would cause an enormous amount of hardship for somebody's who's waiting for a welfare cheque, for instance.

But it doesn't actually — if we're late or early — it doesn't actually save the government or cost the government any money. A late one, such as we had in April, may cause some hardship, but it won't cost or save any money.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister. Now you're talking about certain departments. There are certain peoples that are not going to get their cheques on time ... (inaudible interjection) ... Oh, they'll all get them on time? But what you can table today, no doubt, is exactly which departments send out what cheques and when they have to go out. I mean surely they don't all have to go out on the first of the month or the thirtieth of a month ... (inaudible interjection) ... It covers two months, but can ...

All right, let's deal with one department. Take Social Services,

all right? So can you send us a list of when the cheques go out in each department or each segment of a department, so we can have some idea, you know, when you're accusing the opposition of holding up people's cheques. Show us what cheques.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Let me give you some examples. I certainly couldn't give you an exhaustive list; that would number in the thousands or tens of thousands. Let me give you an example of the sort of cheques which go out on May 1. That's perhaps an appropriate response to the member's question.

Foster parents, their cheques normally go out May 1. If it's passed by April 30, it goes out on time. If it isn't, it doesn't. Shelter workshops, their payment is due May 1. Activity centres, their payment is due May 1. Transition houses, due May 1. Group homes, due May 1. Early childhood intervention, these are NGOs (non-governmental organizations), due May 1. Personal family violence service, due May 1. Group homes, due May 1.

That's an example of the sort of payments which are due May 1 and which we are very reluctant to be late with.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to ask the minister, in view of the fact that the Minister of Social Services is given authority by order in council to grant certain amounts of money to different organizations, my question is whether or not these ... are these in lump sums, or are they also monthly, or cheques that go to these organizations? And if they are lump sums in fact, then a number of organizations would be having that money on hand rather than having to wait for monthly cheques.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I say to the member from Humboldt, there's no general rule. Some are lump sums. Some are monthly. It depends on the arrangement they have worked out, will often depend on a variety of different factors: their needs, the maturity, and the confidence in the relationship between the department and the NGOs. It depends on a lot of factors. There isn't any single rule that they're paid by, and therefore your question is hard to answer because there's no single system.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. If there is a lump sum given out — in some cases, as you have stated, you thought there would be — is then the interim supply that has been designated for the total cost of maybe that organization, I guess a need for that unfounded for, I would say. So I'm just wondering whether or not ... if you could comment on that, please.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, the legislature authorizes two-twelfths, and as a general rule — there may be some exceptions to this lurking around some where — but as a general rule they only get two-twelfths until the Appropriation Bill is passed when the session wraps up. I suppose the end of May.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the concerns I have, Mr. Minister, is Municipal Government. I see

you're asking for . . . in asking for two-twelfths, \$31 million-plus . . . That's pay cheques. Can you tell me what else that money will go for, like what we're asking for here to be paid?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — This particular department has got two-twelfths of its funding. It would be used, some for salaries, some for grants, and so on. There's no . . . it's very hard to give you a quick summary of the answer. This will go for all . . . The department gets two-twelfths. It's to be used for all the things the department uses money for: some for salaries, some for supplies, some for grants to municipalities, etc., etc. So there's no single rule. The department gets two-twelfths. They've got to manage it until the Appropriation Bill is passed.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chairman, then if that's the case and this is the normal two-twelfths, one-twelfth, I have a big concern here because rural municipalities work on futures. And they've been cut back so much in the last five years that many of these RMs are working on operating money until they receive their futures. And I would suggest that one-twelfth will not come near covering the futures which these RMs and municipalities normally receive this time of year. And you're going to create a big hardship if this one-twelfth will not cover these futures.

Can you explain at this time what these futures amount to. And will one-twelfth, or two-twelfths, whatever is passed here today, cover these futures? And let's not create a hardship for the municipalities.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm not familiar with the detail of how the RMs manage this. I only say to the member that this is the traditional way this is handled. This system hasn't changed in the 22 years I've been here and I'm sure in the 80 years before that. This is the traditional system which we've always followed.

The departments get two-twelfths of their spending. It is up to them to manage it. I don't think — but you might want to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs when her estimates come up — I don't think the RMs generally get their grants until well after the session normally adjourns. The department manages it, and the RMs have managed it, and this hasn't changed in recorded time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. But I think you can sympathize with my concern because I do know as a past reeve of an RM that in April or early May we always received our futures. And in many of the last few years, we have had operating money borrowed to keep running until these futures came in, and then we carried on. So it's a great concern to me, and I know it is a great concern to municipalities out there. And I would certainly hope that we didn't get caught short here and that they were delayed for two months, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, I'm sure the Department of Municipal Affairs would be able to manage it. And these kind of discussions go on between the department officials from the Department of Finance and the officials from Municipal Affairs . . . how much do you need and so on and so forth.

And I remember when we were in opposition. We'd scan this thing with enormous care . . . enormous detail I guess. I shouldn't say enormous care, but enormous detail. Sometimes we'd find a department which got a little more than two-twelfths, and we would leap upon this as if we just uncovered a scandal of enormous depth. In fact this is the explanation. Departments, the Department of Finance put their heads together and they work out all of these problems so that they can manage it until after the Appropriation Bill has passed.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, my question around the appropriation of the combined three-twelfths, if indeed the two-twelfths is granted, is in the area of education. As my colleague from Saltcoats has indicated, I think school boards operate much on the same note as RMs do, maybe even more so because they rely on a funding grant monthly.

From my past experiences, I know many times government did not pay a portion of the grant to school boards until well into May and June, and it causes much liability. Many school boards are overdrawn right now millions of dollars because in rural Saskatchewan taxes usually aren't paid in January, February, March, April, May, and we're . . . Even though you'd look outside today, you wouldn't know that May 1 is around the corner, but it is, and that's the fifth month. That'll be five-twelfths of a school board's spending very, very soon.

My question then is when this interim supply is granted, will the boards of education have received five-twelfths of their share, or will they still be receiving only three-twelfths based on the interim supply, if that is the combined amount that we appropriate?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — If these are problems, they're not new ones. They're very traditional. Again it's up to the Department of Education to take its two-twelfths and manage that until the Appropriation Bill is passed.

I could suggest a solution to members opposite; we could speed up the estimates process, pass the Appropriation Bill, and then they can send the whole kit and caboodle out to them. So you may want to give that some thought. A quick and early end to the estimates, a quick and early end to the debate on the Appropriation Bill, and we'll have resolved this problem.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you for your suggestion, Mr. Minister. But the fact is we have a lot of questions about the various amounts of money that are being spent and the choices that were made as to where that money is being spent.

My final question around education . . . and I know you've indicated that you're saying the department has the choice as to where they spend the money that has been granted by the interim supply. My question then is, in the light of capital projects, for instance in school boards, your budget indicates that there will be capital spending. Will this interim supply grant that monies to allow the capital projects to proceed?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm sorry my attention was distracted. I will have to ask the member to repeat the question.

Mr. Krawetz: — Yes, Mr. Minister, my question is around the capital projects in the area of education. Will interim supply, granting three-twelfths, if that is what our decision is, one-twelfth plus the two-twelfths, will that allow capital projects to proceed?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I think the general answer to the question is yes, but the real answer is that they, the Department of Education together with the school boards working in cooperation, must manage the projects such that the cash flow is manageable within the two-twelfths allotments which we're giving them.

I think the answer to your question is yes. I think by and large the department contacts the divisions, the school divisions, and they tell them that the project in the Canora school, the gymnasium is on. And they begin to do the planning. They just got to manage the cash flow so that it fits within the time frame and the procedures of this legislature, which as I say are as traditional as the ornamental woodwork in here, actually.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Deputy Chair, my question is regarding programs that will be put in place as the result of the budget and department changes that have not yet been introduced. So by allocating this funding, the two-twelfths, there will be money put forward to departments that won't actually be needed yet because that program hasn't been started. Can you just give me some clarification on that?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, the member is of course correct. This authorizes the departments to spend the money. It certainly doesn't require the department to spend the money. Heaven forbid. And they don't have to spend it within the two months. They don't have to spend it by the end of the year; in fact we encourage them not to and to turn it back.

I'm not sure we entirely do as good a job of encouraging them to save money as we might. I sometimes think we should have incentives for departments which underspend. But certainly they're not required to spend it, just simply authorized to.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Deputy Chair. One of the questions here on your interim supply, you have servicing the public debt, 813.217 million. I notice that the first interim supply has zero on there, and as well, the two-twelfth, second interim supply, also has zero. Is this to infer that we're not paying the debt as quickly as we should be in terms of the month-to-month scenario?

(1215)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, I had to get an explanation on that myself, so we're both the wiser here. The interest on the public debt, to which I gather you were referring, is a statutory expenditure, that is, it's authorized by law and thus does not require the authorization of this legislature. Thus no part of the two-twelfths is being used for that, because it's authorized by law and we don't need to authorize it. That's why the zeroes are there. That will be spent and interest will be paid on those bonds where the debentures were. It calls for it, but it doesn't happen because we authorize it. So we're not authorizing it —

it's authorized somewhere else; that's why it's zero.

Mr. Belanger: — Yes, I guess the second part of the question is: so when you have the zeroes in the first twelfth, which I understand, and the zeroes in the two-twelfths, which I also understand, is that saying that we're not paying the debt this month or next month but rather at the end of the year?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No. Because it's authorized by law, it means that we don't have to authorize the expenditure. This is not a list of what we're spending; this is a list of what we are authorizing the government to spend. We don't have to authorize the expenditure on interest; it's authorized by law. So the expenditure will be made, it's just that we're not authorizing it.

Mr. Belanger: — I understand that part of it, that it's going to be paid regardless of whether we hold this up here or not, and I appreciate the response.

My question is, in reference to the public debt, are we paying that daily, weekly, monthly, or are we paying it semi-annually, quarterly? How is the public debt being serviced?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It depends upon the nature of the obligation. You know, there's quite a . . . there's long-term bonds; there's short-term bonds; there's daily borrowings; so on and so forth. It depends upon the nature of the obligation. In some cases it's yearly; some cases it's semi-annually; it's quarterly; it's monthly; it's weekly; and in fact in some it's daily. It depends upon the nature of the obligation.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. And I would just like to express my gratitude and the gratitude of our colleagues here today for having been granted some latitude in terms of our questioning. It was appreciated. And we did appreciate, as I said earlier, the Premier's participation too.

With respect to broadening the scope again a little bit, Mr. Minister, I know that the two-twelfths doesn't include any spending that's made in the Crowns, in our Crown corporations. And the Provincial Auditor has repeatedly said, and he did so yesterday even in fact, that all spending should be placed under the purview of the legislature. His opinion as an accountant was that anything done with public money shouldn't be such that it can't be made public. And I'm sure with the release of the spring report next week we'll hear the same again.

And here before us today we can obviously see that this is just money for the departments, as we've been talking about. However, there's a full 40 per cent of public money that's spent or earned in the Crowns and it only falls under the scrutiny of the Crown Corporations Committee which in turn is dominated by government members with their marching orders to help the government avoid being accountable. It lacks substantive power and freedom.

Those comments in turn do bring me to a question, Mr. Deputy Chair. Why, Mr. Minister, is Crown spending not included more under the purview of the legislature?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Well in a very real way, it is. It is, through the Crown Corporations Committee. It isn't part of this process, because the Crown corporations don't get their money from us. That's not a hundred per cent true. Members will see in the sheet which I sent over a few moments ago, after the total budgetary expense there's been some reference to Crown corporations. There is some money which we vote which goes to Crown corporations.

By and large though, SaskTel, SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation) don't get money from us. They get it directly from people who use their services. They charge for insurance policies, for natural gas, for electricity, for telephone service, and they use that money. So we don't authorize its expenditure because they don't get it from us. That's the real reason.

In fact, however, the Crown Corporations Committee does provide an opportunity for members of the Assembly to scrutinize the expenditure of Crown corporations. It is something that . . . I remember being chairperson of this committee some time ago. At the time, we had the only Crown Corporations Committee in Canada. I don't know if that's still the case, but I know there are very few.

You certainly wouldn't want to be part of that cabal in Ottawa who manage there, because there's no such Crown Corporations Committee. It may not be unique any more. Perhaps it is, I don't know. But most legislatures do not have Crown Corporations; most legislatures do not have the opportunity to opt to pass upon the spending of Crown corporations.

It is true the Crown Corporations does not authorize the expenditures. But at the end of the day, what are we doing here? You're calling the government to account. If there's something lacking in our approach or our management, you appeal to public opinion. That's really what you're doing. In *de jure* I suppose you are authorizing expenditures. De facto, you're calling us to the bar of public opinion. And if we pass the muster, we do. And if we don't, you've scored a triumph.

You get the same process in Crown Corporations. You have the opportunity to call the Crowns before the bar of public opinion, and have them judged wanting or not wanting. And it's true the Crown Corporations has a majority of government members. So does this place. It is true that at the end of the day the Crown Corporations are very likely to pass the annual reports. We are very likely to pass the appropriation Bill in due course, whatever your views on it.

Your real power, the trump card that you've got in your sleeve, is not the ability to refuse the appropriations Bill. With 10 members, you can't do that. Your real trump card is your ability to appeal to public opinion.

And you have exactly the same ability, if you use it, in Crown Corporations. I am not sure of recent times — and I don't mean just last month or so — I'm not sure in recent times the Crown Corporations Committee has been utilized as effectively as it might have been. But it can be very effective in calling Crown

corporations before the bar of public opinion. It can be effective; use it.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Deputy Chair, as soon as some of your members opposite would quit the heckling, we'll get on with it. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair.

I find it interesting that the minister would get in talking about Crown Corporations . . .

An Hon. Member: — A very effective committee.

Mr. McPherson: — Well sure it's an effective committee if in fact you can get responses. But yesterday, I sat in on the Crown Corporations Committee with the Deputy Chair, of course, and other members . . . and posing several questions and we went through the same process yesterday where in fact we can't get the answers that we're asking . . . we question them. You know it ended up being, you know, a terrible fight in there yesterday, and it doesn't have to be. And the problem yesterday was the same as today. You have information that you could have and should have brought forward, and you don't. And you don't. And look at what you're doing today.

You're coming forward, asking for two-twelfths of the money, and the budget will be voted on in very near future. Why didn't you leave it at one-twelfth? Just because you don't want to be scrutinized in another 30 days. You're trying to bypass something. I don't know when the last time, in fact, before a budget was passed, that you were asking for two-twelfths. One-twelfth sufficed last month. Why not again this month?

There again, it's gamesmanship. That's what it is.

But I would like to know, Mr. Minister, you're about how for 22 years or 20 whatever . . . 27 years that you've been in the House, and the process hasn't changed. And yet accounting principles have changed. A few years ago, the government changed to accrual accounting. So tell me how that change is affecting your interim supply.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I have been handed a brief history of the interim supply . . .

An Hon. Member: — Do you have that with you?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I just happen to have the music with me; that's right, as the member from Wood River points out. I could read this for you if you want, but this is accurate, and it establishes that two-twelfths has been a norm. There have been exceptions. Legislatures also voted on occasion one-twelfth. But going back . . . and this document goes back to the Blakeney era. In fact it goes back to the Thatcher era. Two-twelfths has been the rule rather than the exception. Lots of times they voted one-twelfth. I've not counted this up, but I think it's fair to say in the majority of cases two-twelfths has been voted. This is the norm. What we are following is the norm.

What you have is one good opportunity, and I agree you didn't

get it at the beginning of April. That's why we only asked for one-twelfth in April.

The events, the budget, and the weekend, did not give you a very adequate opportunity, but in each legislature you want one good opportunity on interim supply, and this is it. But I think you will find it's not something you're necessarily going to want to repeat at the end of May. There's only so much time in a legislature. You want one good crack at interim supply; you want to deal with these issues. But then you probably don't want to revisit this. You probably want to spend the time at the end of May in other ways.

And I think that's why the tradition has grown up that at least the second vote-off is usually two-twelfths.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Minister. Well firstly the lecture wasn't appreciated but the question . . .

An Hon. Member: — Well it was enjoyed by me, though.

Mr. McPherson: — Well sure it was enjoyed by you. But what you forgot to do is give me an answer to how, in fact, interim supply is affected by your changes to . . . with accounting principles now that we're on accrual accounting. That should be changing what happens here. That was the question. If you want to deal with that question, fine.

Or otherwise we'll come back in May if you want to cut it to one-twelfth, and bring in one-twelfth next month and give us the shot then. Now that we've had to fight with this government time and time again, as we did yesterday in Crown Corps, as we did this morning, to have a little bit more latitude in asking questions. You claim you're open and accountable. Prove it.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I had to refresh my memory. We went to accrual accounting in '94-95 so we've had . . . this is the second, third year I guess. I am told that this process of interim supply did not change with the change in accrual accounting. While it changed many things about our budgeting process, it didn't change this process at all.

This process of getting interim supply was unaffected by the change to accrual accounting.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, but it should have. As the member from Saltcoats was asking before about questions regarding futures . . . is that right? Futures on highways, roads? Because now you can't spend money into the future without having it spent at the time, or in the budgeting year that the announcement is.

So now if we're going into say a spring session of road building or construction, that would put a lot heavier burden on municipal government. So can you tell us how that relationship works with accrual accounting and interim supply?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It really has not affected it. Accrual accounting changes the way we show our . . . the way we spend our money and the way we handle the cash flow. It doesn't really affect that.

I point out, for the benefit of the members opposite, that what's being done this year is a process which has been followed before and hasn't changed. That is, that going back to, and I can't go through this extensively, but going back to at least . . . well '90-91 the legislature got prorogued in the middle of the thing. Actually we never did finish the session in the summer of '91.

But prior to that, in each case actually, we . . . the first cut, the first tranche if you like, has been one-twelfth. And then the second tranche has been two-twelfths. And I think it has largely met the needs of members who need one good go — perhaps at the most, two — at interim supply. It's not something you want to waste, not something you necessarily want to do every month. So this is a pattern which we've followed in the past.

(1230)

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Minister, in the next year there will be a full review of the constitution as required by law. And I know your government shares the concerns of many Canadians about the future of our country and the role the province might play in keeping that country together. And given that your Department of Intergovernmental Affairs is a small one, I wonder if you could clarify something for us here today.

With Mr. Bouchard saying that there may be some potential to renegotiate the constitution and with your Premier calling for a first ministers' meeting, I believe with the Finance minister, is there not a potential for some significant overruns on costs here?

And the increased activity like this — albeit it it's important activity — it could significantly skew the spending so that the two-twelfths asked for here today, with respect to your department, is in fact not actually two-twelfths but it might be less than that. And could you comment on that please, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, there is a significant risk. When my departmental estimates come before the Assembly, you will note, you will I'm sure, note an overexpenditure.

Part of the reason was because of the unexpected result of the referendum on October 30. No one anticipated the result until very shortly before the event. And thus thereafter there was a flurry of activity.

Depending on what the new Premier of Quebec does, there may or may not be yet another flurry of activity, and it's almost impossible to predict. And indeed, within each department we don't always manage to stay within budget, although these folks are pretty firm in trying to get the departments to do that.

What we do undertake to the Assembly and what so far we've been able to deliver on, in contradistinction to any other government during the '80s, what we have been able to deliver on is that we have been able to overall manage the government within the sums allotted by this government, and we have generally been able to avoid overruns. Now last year we got the

forest fires and so on; \$60 million worth of water — that's awfully hard to predict.

I think I have the concurrence of members perhaps at this point in time to move that the Assembly rise, report considerable progress, and ask for leave to sit again, Mr. Chairperson.

The committee reported progress.

The Speaker: — Before adjourning the House, I just want to caution all members to drive safely and carefully in returning to your constituency this weekend. I wish you all a good weekend with your families and constituents.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

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