

EVENING SITTING

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Debatable)

Return No. 5

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As previously agreed to, I'd like to move, seconded by the member from Saltcoats, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 5 showing:

To the Minister of Labour: (1) a list of all public sector job classifications that are not gender neutral; (2) if there are any, why a gender distinction is made; (3) if pay equity is negotiated with the public sector unions, the procedures that will be used to evaluate the work of gender specific jobs; (4) in negotiating pay equity in the public service, whether the government will identify jobs which tend to be held by one gender; (5) and the criteria for judging the gender tendencies of a given job classification.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, on the conclusion of the vote, table the answer to this item.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 6

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Kelvington-Wadena, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 6 showing:

Regarding the Executive Council's order of September 6, 1995, authorizing the Crown Investments Corporation to borrow \$100 million: (1) the specific purposes this borrowing was authorized for; (2) whether the purpose or purposes behind this borrowing helped create any jobs, and if so, the number; (3) the reason this borrowing was over and above what the Department of Finance had anticipated for the Crown Investments Corporation in the 1995-96 budget; and (4) the terms of the financing obtained.

Seconded by the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, on the passage of the vote, be tabling the answer to this.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 7

Ms. Draude: — I move, seconded by the member from Melfort-Tisdale, to move an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 7 showing:

To the minister responsible for Indian and Metis Affairs: (1) the percentage of the department's last budget that has been spent on administration staff; (2) the number of grant allocations that are being awarded to Indian organizations

and the grant amounts; (3) the number of grant allocations that have been awarded to Metis organizations and the grant amount; (4) of the grant amounts allocated, the number that were awarded north of the 54th parallel to Indian organizations as well as south of the 54th parallel; and (5) of the grant amounts allocated, the number that are awarded north of the 54th parallel to Metis organizations, as well as south of the 54th parallel.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will on the — before I take my seat — be moving an amendment. I will be moving a deletion of numbers (4) and (5), questions (4) and (5). Now I recognize this is going to rob the question of much its value for the member from Athabasca because it was really (4) and (5) that he wanted to know.

What the department has told us is that grants are not segregated by north or south. Almost all the grants are given to provincial organizations and thus the question is not capable of being answered because they have no idea where the money's spent. Grants are not given to local organizations, they're given — in almost all cases — to provincial organizations, and thus the question cannot be answered.

Thus, I move, seconded by the member from Cumberland:

That this Assembly delete sections (4) and (5).

Amendment agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, on the passage of the vote, be tabling the answer to the amended question.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 8

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, as previously agreed to, I move, seconded by the member from Cypress Hills, to move an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 8 showing:

(1) Whether a reduction in the provincial sales tax is being considered; (2) if so, when will it be implemented; (3) whether this proposed reduction will be brought in the next budget; (4) the amount that the PST will be reduced; (5) whether such a reduction will be instituted equally throughout the province or whether provisions will be made for the special competitive situations of border communities.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, on the passage of the vote, be tabling the answer to this question.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 9

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Wood River, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 9 showing:

Regarding the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan, CIC: (1) The names of all corporations under CIC's direct or indirect control on which Mr. Don Ching serves as a director; (2) the amounts of remuneration he receives as a result of these directorships; (3) the dates on which the appointment or appointments were made.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, on the passage of the vote, be tabling the answer to this question.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 10

Mr. McPherson: — I move, seconded by the member from Kelvington-Wadena, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 10 showing:

Regarding SaskPower: (1) the number of industrial class customers that have negotiated rate reductions with the company since the government allowed it to go ahead with power rate increases on January 1 of this year; and (2) the total value of those rate reductions.

I so move.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm going to, on the conclusion of my comments, urge that this one be defeated. We are told by Saskatchewan Power Corporation . . . and again, in many of these cases, you accept the information you're given; there isn't a lot of time, with this many questions, to delve into each or even to have the staff delve into each one of these individually. What we are told by SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation) is that there are, in Saskatchewan, a relatively small number of industrial customers, and in some of the classes there's only one; in some classes there's only two or three. The disclosure of this information would therefore disclose confidential information between SPC and its customers. It's their policy not to give information about specific power charges to specific people, and that's particularly true of industrial corporations. Therefore again, contracts, these things are confidential and their release would jeopardize this confidentiality. I will be urging the Assembly to defeat this motion.

The Speaker: — I can't recognize the hon. member who is standing because he's already spoken to the motion.

Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, to raise a point of order.

The Speaker: — What is the point of order?

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, it would seem to me that when a question has been raised — and I'm not exactly sure; maybe you could clarify it — but it seemed to me that in debates in the past, if a question's been raised and the minister has suggested that by not giving an answer . . . that the House Leader can certainly get up and raise another question and ask why. That's when the debate would normally begin. So I'd like a

clarification on that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The rules of the Assembly, as all hon. members will know, require members to move the motion at the conclusion of their debate. If a member moves a motion without other comment, it meets the same purpose. It concludes the debate.

The hon. member for Wood River moved the motion and the Government House Leader spoke contrary to the motion and the debate continues. And as is the rules of the House, all members will recognize that no member can speak twice to the same question.

So the point of order is not well taken.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I direct . . . or is it debate or do I have to direct a question or . . .

An Hon. Member: — It's a debate.

Mr. Gantefer: — Okay. I would like to then comment on the argument that was raised by the Government House Leader in terms of industrial classes of customers. It would strike me that when I listen to the reasons and the rationale for this great power adjustment and rate adjustment that was going on, it was never implied in my mind that we were talking about all of the benefits that were going to be shifted from the residential and farm customers to be shifted onto one industrial customer that the minister seems to be indicating it would be improper for that answer to be given so that it would disclose that individual company or corporation's position.

It strikes me, Mr. Speaker, that when I recall the whole argument that led up to this whole, massive change in what the rates were going to be, is that there was a fundamental thing that was implied in that, is that there were a multitude of customers that were going to leave the SaskPower network, if you like, if this action was not taken.

(1915)

And now the minister raises the argument and says they're unable to be able to do this. They are unable to disclose this information because it would violate some individual confidentiality. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that that is very much at odds with the logic of the first position.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it's important as well that the people of this province would like to have an answer to this question. All across the residential and rural areas of the province, they have now come to have to realize the reality of those power rate increases on the residential, and on the small commercial, and on the farm customers. And they need to know exactly what economic benefit or the magnitude of the economic benefit that this shifted policy is going to mean for the province.

All along, we've heard how open and accountable . . . and how it was going to be something that we could document quantitatively, what this would mean for economic development across the province. And I find it really strange

that now we get this kind of an answer that refuses to even identify what the total amounts of this benefit are going to be to these large industrial customers.

As I recall as well in the debate, and I could stand to be corrected, but it seems to me that the largest industrial customer for SaskPower was indeed the city of Saskatoon. Now surely if that's so, that there wouldn't be a great deal of problem with the city of Saskatoon explaining why this has been a massive shift in terms of commercial rates.

I know there are other large industrial customers in the province, and I don't think that they would object if, as a cumulative body . . . that they would be pleased to see what the change in rates mean. For example, I believe a number of those major customers probably publish annual financial statements; would disclose what they're paying for the utilities; and what their hard and soft costs are in relationship to their operation. And again, I really question why the government would be so reluctant to release this information.

Not so much that it's going to jeopardize any of these individuals. They know what the rates are. The argument you used was that they could go to Manitoba or to Alberta or anywhere almost that they wanted to and get these cheaper rates and it is incumbent on the government to match those rates.

And so what I think that is increasingly important is that if you're going to make these massive shifts in public policy using either the government's forum or using Crown corporations, because they are a tool of government, that you should be prepared to disclose what the total ramifications of dollars that are going to be involved in this. So that the people that are paying more, who know exactly how much more money they're paying, can understand where it's going and potentially begin to understand what the benefit is going to be.

Mr. Speaker, it strikes me as that one of the things that we miss too often is that we miss the opportunity to fully understand how important the Crown corporations are as a lever of government policy. SaskPower president, Mr. Messer, has a very important and powerful influence on public policy, and the members opposite know that. And if they make these kinds of decisions as terms of public policy, they sometimes can hide behind the office that they have and these guys are all scared of them. So we need to have that information in this House and we need to know it because it's important for the people we represent.

All across the province when this rate hike changed, or this shift, if you like, occurred, the argument was that it was going to be revenue neutral. Well if it's so revenue neutral, and if that is a case in fact, then why will the government not disclose the benefits that these major corporations are receiving, because everyone knows how much it's costing them.

And so, Mr. Speaker, while I think that it's important that we try to move through these things with relative ease and an amicable atmosphere, I also think it's important that the taxpayers, the people that are utility users in this province, understand that there's fair and equal treatment and that the real

benefit that was important to extend to the major corporations in order for them to have their competitive advantage maintained or to get into a competitive fair play, that they clearly understand that.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I will sit in my place, having recorded that I'm very much in favour to this information being disclosed. And I regret very much the government's decision to not disclose it and I would ask respectfully that they quickly reconsider their position and disclose this information.

Motion negated on division.

Return No. 11

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member for Kelvington-Wadena, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 11 showing:

Regarding Mr. Donald Ching's service as a Director of SaskTel's subsidiaries, LCL (Leicester Communications Limited) Cable and East Midlands Cable Group of the United Kingdom: (1) whether Mr. Ching received all of the 25,000 pounds sterling that was annually paid to SaskTel by LCL or the East Midlands Cable Group for his services as a director; (2) if Mr. Ching received only a portion of this money, the specific annual amount; (3) the amount Mr. Ching received for travelling and lodging expenses incurred in serving as a director while SaskTel owned the company; (4) whether the fees or expenses paid were done so on top or as part of his base salary . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I'm going to have to call the hon. member to order. In reflecting, and this is the difficulty with having leave without writing, but it is the Chair's recollection of the agreement that was reached, when providing the leave for caucus colleagues to move a motion, was if the member whose name the motion is standing in the order papers is not present in his seat. And so I will ask that the question be called again.

Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. McPherson: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Put your point of order.

Mr. McPherson: — The point of order that I am raising is that in fact that wasn't the agreement that we had reached at with the understanding of the House leaders. The point was that any member from any caucus could move the motion and regardless of whether that member was in the House, or present or not, was not raised amongst the House leaders. So this would go contrary to the agreement reached by the House leaders.

The Speaker: — The Chair is not able to interpret based on information that he didn't have and is not able to make a ruling based on understandings members may have had.

I do recollect very clearly — order — I do recollect very clearly when putting it to the House, because I recall saying to the

House that this was unorthodox and that I repeated it twice to ensure that it was clearly understood, and both times I very clearly recollect saying that the leave was to provide for moving of the motion if the member whose name the order was listed in was not present in his or her seat. And so I find the point of order is not well taken.

Why is the member on his feet?

An Hon. Member: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What is the member's point of order?

Mr. McPherson: — The point of order for me to make my case puts me in . . . with a problem with the rules of the Legislative Assembly because I can't refer to members who are or are not in the House. But if you would allow me so, the member from Thunder Creek is not in the House at this point and that's why the member from Arm River was — or is — moving that motion.

The Speaker: — The hon. member, I think, is challenging the ruling of the Chair and he knows that that's not appropriate. His point of order is not well taken, and I'll ask that item no. 11 be called again.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As previously agreed, I move, seconded by the member from Kelvington-Wadena, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 11 showing:

Regarding Mr. Donald Ching's service as a director of SaskTel's subsidiaries LCL Cable and East Midlands Cable Group of the United Kingdom: (1) whether Mr. Ching received all of the 25,000 pounds sterling that was annually paid to SaskTel by LCL or the East Midlands Cable Group for his services as a director; (2) if Mr. Ching received only a portion of this money, the specific annual amount; (3) the amount Mr. Ching received for travelling and lodging expenses incurred in serving as a director while SaskTel owned the company; (4) whether the fees or expenses paid were done so on top or as part of his base salary as CEO (chief executive officer) of the Crown Investments Corporation; (5) whether Mr. Ching was appointed to this position by his own authority as CEO of CIC or whether he was appointed on the authority of someone else; and (6) if so, the person who made this appointment.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, we're going to amend this one as well, and I know, given the recipient of these expenses, this is going to be controversial.

The answer I've got here isn't very helpful because it's not accurate. The answer given by the . . . on this paper isn't accurate.

Fortunately I know what the problem is. The problem is the expenses were billed to Leicester Cable. I happen to know this because I had attended one or two . . . attended one directors' meeting and the expenses were all billed to Leicester Cable.

The difficulty is that SaskTel no longer owns Leicester Cable. It's now owned privately by actually Goldman Sachs of New York, and thus the information is not available to us. On that basis (3) falls and so does . . . and then (4) falls with it.

So, I will be moving, seconded by the member from Rosetown-Biggarr:

That this Assembly delete questions (3) and (4) and renumbers (5) and (6) to (3) and (4) respectively.

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, this is a problem of course which multiplies, because we're talking here about three people who were supplied to that particular board of directors by SaskTel. So not only do we have Mr. Ching here in question, but I do believe we also have Mr. Garry Simons and Fred Van Parys as well.

So this is a question which really could have been asked in triplicate, and unfortunately we haven't heard the answer of course that we had wanted to hear this evening.

The fact is that these monies were to be paid by Leicester Cable to SaskTel for the purposes of SaskTel having provided the expertise, these particular directors, to the LCL board. I would have thought, given that the government constructed this agreement, which was one to the amazement of many taxpayers in this province, I might add, because in the Intergovernmental Affairs minister's own words at the time, the monies that were got from the sale of LCL Cable versus the offers that had been made only months earlier from the date of the announcement, there was just a . . . the offers had only been a fraction of what had been offered.

So I would think given that that this government would want to claim a few more bragging rights in this regard. Let people know how you turn a dog into a darling. This was a company, this was a company who, by the International Chamber of Commerce's own ratings from zero to ten or one to ten, they rated, in terms of their own peers and their own industry, a two out of ten.

So I think the taxpayers in this province are quite curious about how you can do that, and in fact you could do a great service to many people back here, back here in our own province, if you could tell people how they take and turn an investment such as that into such a grand turn.

But as I say, this is a case where there's three particular directors that were offered up by SaskTel, and I believe that the agreement for sale that we had requested that was denied to us should have had something structured in there where these particular fees could have been disclosed to the taxpayers of this province.

Now I could say further about this, but I'll just leave it at that.

(1930)

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to concur with what my counterpart has said, but I would also find it

completely amazing that the openness and accountability goes out the window the minute we start talking about some of the patronage appointments that this government has made: Jack Messer, SaskPower; and now Don Ching.

Everything is going fine, we're getting our answers until all of a sudden we get into the nitty-gritty of the NDP (New Democratic Party) Party itself, and then the openness and accountability stop.

I find in the Don Ching case, it's very interesting and there's a lot of questions that should be answered. And I think it's only fair to the taxpayers of this province that these few questions we've asked on Mr. Ching, who keeps surfacing in these jobs that are handed to him by this government — I might add cushy jobs at a very high rate of pay that the taxpayers of this province are picking up the tab . . . and it seems we have no right as taxpayers to know what he is getting for this or anything else.

So, Mr. Speaker, I find this is really not the way . . . I didn't plan this legislature . . . or think when I got here that this is how it would work. And I don't think the taxpayers of this province deserve this. They deserve a lot better.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Amendment agreed to on division.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, on the passage of this, be tabling the information.

The Speaker: — I'm sorry. The Chair is going to have to rule the comments of the Government House Leader out of order as he has already been recognized in this debate on this question.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 12

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As previously agreed, I move, seconded by the member from Kelvington-Wadena, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 12 showing:

Regarding the New Careers Corporation: (1) the number of projects in which New Careers placed its clients during 1995; (2) the names and descriptions of those projects; (3) the locations of those projects.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, on the passage of this, be tabling this very weighty answer to the question.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 13

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As previously agreed, I move, seconded by the member from Wood River, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 13 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission: (1) the number of individuals currently employed by the Government of Saskatchewan; (2) the number of those employees that are full time and part time; (3) the number of those employees that are permanent, temporary, casual, or contract; (4) the number of those employees that are in scope, out of scope; and (5) the number of positions that are currently vacant; (6) the average salary in each of the departments; and (7) the manager-to-staff ratio in each department.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm going to be urging the Assembly to defeat this. The focus of this question is the public service and what happens after the lay-offs. After the budget there were a large number of lay-offs. Indeed it is, I think, in this last budget, some 7 per cent of the total public service . . . the lay-offs equalled 7 per cent of the total public service. It was a very, very large number of lay-offs after this budget.

I'm also proud to say that that occurred without any in-scope people being laid off. Those entire vacancies were managed through lay-offs . . . I'm sorry, not through lay-offs, through bumping, through transfers, moving people around departments. So while the number of positions which were reduced was extremely large, to lose 7 per cent of your public service in one fell swoop was quite a feat — to be able to manage that in such a way that nobody was actually laid off.

However there are — as a result of that process — there are a large number of people bumping, the in-scope people bumping, and that goes on for months. Someone A bumps B, B then has two or three weeks actually before they've got to bump and so on. It goes around. Thus the information is not available, and it won't be complete within any relevant time. So we are unable to answer this within a relevant period of time. And that being the case, I am urging the Assembly to defeat this motion.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm totally amazed that the government took this question to be something to do with lay-offs and bumping. I asked the question about employment, who was actually working. And I think because these people are paid by the public, we have a right to know how many people we're paying. That's what I've asked for. I didn't ask how many people were bumped around the province here.

We've asked, we would like to know, how many people there are actually still working. I've been listening to the Minister of Economic Development here for the last five months bragging about job numbers. And I'd really like to know how many of these job numbers had something to do with government hiring and not hiring.

I think if we can take some of those numbers that aren't as . . . I think real numbers, I think I want to know how many people are actually working out in the province there. And it has nothing to do with those that aren't working. I really am disappointed that this type of answer can't be given to us.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, to the members opposite, it is quite amazing. We hear the

members across are talking about open and accountable . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Now the Chair apologizes for my error again. The hon. member has already spoken to the motion and cannot be recognized a second time.

Motion negatived.

Return No. 14

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As previously agreed, I move, seconded by the member from Thunder Creek, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 14 showing:

To the Premier, regarding political staff and appointments: (1) the number of individuals currently employed by the Government of Saskatchewan as a result of political appointments; (2) the average salary for these political appointments; (3) the total number of ministerial assistants currently employed by cabinet ministers; (4) and the average salary for these ministerial assistants.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The member from Kelvington-Wadena can safely return to her seat. On the passage of the vote, I intend to table the answer. Just so that we might save wear and tear on the carpet over there, there will be no need for the member from Athabasca to flee on 15; no need for the member from Melville to flee on the next one. We're going to table the answers. So we can save wear and tear on the carpet, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 15

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To move an order of the Assembly to issue a return showing:

To the minister responsible for SaskPower: (1) The average increase in percentage terms of northern Saskatchewan power bills since the January 1996 rate hike; (2) whether there has been any consultation with business or consumer groups in the North with regards to the subsequent impact of these power hikes on the already high power bills; (3) whether there are any public awareness plans in place now to assist home owners and other SaskPower customers on ways to reduce excessive power use in the North; (4) what SaskPower is doing to address the constant power failures that occur in northern Saskatchewan; (5) in terms of the long distance power must travel to bring service to the people of the North, the percentage of power loss that has incurred over these long distances; (6) the reason the people of the North pay higher power rates as the rest of Saskatchewan when they receive a lower quality and quantity of service.

Seconded by the member from Humboldt.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, on the passage of the vote, be tabling the answer to this question.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 16

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 16 showing:

To the Hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General: (1) the annual salary of the senior Crown prosecutor who is employed at the North Battleford Crown prosecutor's office, and who was suspended with pay on October 25, 1995 arising from the investigation surrounding the Robert Latimer case in North Battleford; (2) the amount the said senior Crown prosecutor has earned since he was suspended with pay; (3) the length of time the said senior Crown prosecutor will remain on suspension with pay.

Seconded by the member from Melfort-Tisdale.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, on the passage of the vote, be tabling the answer to this question.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 17

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 17 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation: (1) the total amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity in the fiscal year 1995-96; (2) the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement that was in place at that time and the total amount that would have been subject to the CCTA (Crown Construction Tendering Agreement).

Seconded by the member for Humboldt.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm going to . . . There's going to have to be a bit of faith here. I'm going to delete . . . I'm going to move that the Assembly delete the second section, and I want to make the argument to the members that this question is answered in question 41 and the information is more complete and it's better set out.

So, the members opposite, I can see how this happens. These questions may be asked sometimes days or even weeks apart. The information is largely the same and so I'm going to delete no. (2) but will be providing that information and more under question 41.

I therefore move, seconded by the member from Redberry Lake:

That this Assembly delete section (2).

(1945)

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not quite sure — and I don't know if I can ask at this point for clarification — but it strikes me that the questions are somewhat different and the minister, in asking for a leap of faith, is asking for a combined number. And I guess what I'm concerned about is that we're very much interested in the specific and detailed numbers for each of the specific corporations. And you recognize of course the difficulty in the way you have to pose questions by individual entities, by individual years, created a lot of these duplications.

But I think from our point of view we're very much concerned that not only the total amount of capital work be tabled in each of these questions for each of these entities but that the amount for each specific entity of the capital projects that would be subject to a CCTA-type agreement would also be noted. And so I'm not quite clear if that's the intention of 41 and we'll get that information if there is. I have no further objection but I would really like if the member opposite would clarify that for us, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the House — order — the question before the House is the motion by the hon. member for Canora-Pelly, seconded by the hon. member for Humboldt. And I think in this one, in the interest of clarity, I'm going to read it.

To move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return 17 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation: (1) the total amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity in the fiscal year 1995-96; and (2) the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement that was in place at that time and the total amount that would have been subject to the CCTA.

And then the amendment, moved by the Government House Leader, seconded by the hon. member for Redberry Lake:

To delete section 2.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the concern that we have over on this side of the House is in fact are we to expect that all of the motions regarding Crown Construction Tendering Agreement, and asked for in each of the departments, will we have that breakdown if you're going to provide that answer to question 41?

This is the problem that we're dealing with. If we're not going to have it broken down as to each and every department, then it isn't answering the questions that we needed answering, and that's why the member was asking for this clarification.

So unless I can get a signal from the Government House Leader that in fact we are having them broken down by department, then we have a concern as to the speed on which these are going to be moving through . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well then if the Government House Leader then would go on

record . . . or perhaps a better way of doing it is if he would ask for leave to move directly to 41, and then we'll come back and we'll know exactly what we're dealing with after we see what's being tabled.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There seems to be some confusion here, and I'm not sure that this is indeed open and accountable government.

We're asking for a specific answer. And if it's going to be answered in a further question anyway, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the problem would be including it in these questions. And if the government, represented by the Government House Leader, isn't prepared to make that commitment to us, then of course we're going to have problems with the next 15 questions or so.

The Speaker: — This is rather unorthodox here. There are . . . Order. Order. Now the Chair is not looking for advice about procedure. Members have available to them procedures to accomplish what they wish.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, here again I think we're in a bit of a dilemma because I'm not sure that I can ask for leave to move to a motion that is belonging to the third party. But if that you would find agreeable . . . and you do? Okay. Well I guess we do. Then I ask leave that we move to question no. 41 and have it dealt with.

Leave granted.

Return No. 44

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Assembly do issue a return showing:

To the Minister responsible for the Crown Investments Corporation: (1) the Crown projects contracted pursuant to the terms of the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement in the past year and the cost of each contract; (2) the Crown projects contracted outside the terms of Crown Construction Tendering Agreement in the past year and the cost of each contract.

I so move, seconded by the member from Moosomin.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm going to table the answer to the last question which we've passed. And while that might not strictly be in order, I think it will be in order to point out that I will table the answer to this one on the passage of the motion.

Motion agreed to.

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

Mr. McPherson: — To ask leave for a five-minute recess while we review the response to question 41.

The Speaker: — This is an evening for unorthodox procedures.

Is the hon. member asking for leave of a certain period of time . . . for recess of a certain . . .

An Hon. Member: — Ten minutes.

The Speaker: — The hon. member for Wood River has asked for leave for the House to take a recess of 10 minutes. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

The Assembly recessed for a period of time.

The Speaker: — Order, order. The recess having expired, the House will come to order.

First of all, before proceeding, during the recess the Chair was advised of a procedural error and the House had proceeded contrary to the intention of the House in the opinion of the Speaker. And so let me first of all make a ruling.

It was . . . the motion . . . the leave was requested to proceed to return no. 41. And in error, what was called from the Table on this evening of procedural unorthodoxies was item 39 . . . or excuse me, was item 41 which is return no. 44.

So the House did not in fact follow direction of the leave that was requested and approved by the House. I am therefore, first of all, going to rule the consideration of item 41 out of order on the grounds that the House acted incorrectly on the direction of the leave that it was required to follow, and therefore return to call item number . . . and therefore I rule the decision on item 41 null and void at this point. And then return to item 39, which is return no. 41, which was the direction that the House was given when the leave was asked.

That's the ruling of the Chair, and therefore we will follow then, the leave of the House being granted, to call return no. 41.

Return No. 41

Ms. Draude: — As previously agreed to and seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly, to move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 41 showing:

To the minister responsible for Executive Council: (1) The number of government-funded tenders that were awarded to union-only firms in the fiscal year '95-96; (2) the total dollar value of these tenders; (3) the number of government-funded tenders that were awarded to non-union firms in the fiscal year of '95-96; and (4) the total dollar value of these tenders.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, on the passage of this vote, be tabling the answer to this.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — Now it is the interpretation of the Chair that it was leave only for item 39 and we will therefore return to item no. 18.

Return No. 18

Mr. Gantefoer: — I move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly, to move an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 18 showing:

To the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation: (1) the estimated amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity for the fiscal year 1996-97; and (2) on that estimated amount the total which is estimated to be subject to the CCTA.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There's going to be a whole series of these we're going to urge the Assembly to defeat.

The difficulty is that the members have asked for information about the fiscal year '96-97 which won't be completed until April '97. And there's a whole series of these we're going to defeat. They ask about information for a fiscal year which is not yet complete and won't be.

So I will be urging the Assembly to defeat these, and there's half a dozen or so others.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, in discussion that we had on item no. 17 where we looked at Saskatchewan Forest Products, and there was an indication there that for the fiscal year just expired, '95-96, there was a suggestion that the number of projects, capital asset construction projects that were issued, were zero. And we see in the return (debatable) for no. 41 that SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) is also listed as zero projects at the time. And we find it interesting that Sask Forests Products Corporation was not included in the return for item no. 41.

Now when we start to look at estimates . . . and I know that the series of questions that have been put to the Assembly deal with estimates. What we're asking of the government is that they provide us with an estimate as to what number of projects, at what expense, might be let in the fiscal year 1996-97. There's no accuracy, we understand. But surely based on numbers that were provided for the past fiscal year, for the Crown corporations that have been tabled, that there would be, from the ministers in charge of those departments, that there would be an estimate as to what the amount of project that would be let for '96-97.

That is the point that we have been asking for, and we find that that should be something that the government can consider.

Motion negated on division.

Return No. 19

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 19 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Government Insurance: (1) the total amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity in the fiscal year '95-96;

(2) the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement that was in place at that time and the total amount that would have been subject to the CCTA.

Seconded by the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will on the passage of the motion be tabling the answer to this question.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 20

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 20 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Government Insurance: (1) the estimated amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity for the fiscal year 1996-97; (2) of that estimated total, the amount that is estimated to be subject to the CCTA.

Seconded by the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, this is one of those matters in which they've asked for information for an upcoming year. I only say to the member it has never been the practice — for the member from Pelly I guess it is — it's never been the practice to ask for estimates under orders for return.

Under orders for return, we ask for information. It's never been the practice to ask for estimates. You can ask for estimates in estimates and they may or may not be given or may be given in a qualified fashion.

You can also ask for estimates in the Crown Corporations but it's never been the practice to use orders for return to get estimates and we don't think it's a wise practice. If the members wanted to suggest a Rules Committee or something we could do that, but this has never been the practice. It is not the purpose of orders for return to ask for estimates, it's to get factual information. We will therefore be urging this be defeated.

(2015)

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It strikes me as that this is indeed at least an appropriate time in order to talk about things that have been documented to some extent.

I recall in the Finance Minister's budget speech, I believe on page 7, there was a figure of 600-plus, \$635 million of capital construction activity that was alluded to in the budget document. And those things become part of the psyche, if you like, the expectation, the anticipation of what's going to happen to the province in this coming fiscal year.

And therefore I also think that because the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement is such a thorn and such a problematic

kind of a device for this government, that it's quite appropriate to try to link the information that the minister used in her finance documents to information that then says how much of this \$630 million is going to be subject to the CCTA.

I think it's critically important to the construction industry. It's important to the people that realize that this very flawed agreement is costing Saskatchewan taxpayers as much as 30 per cent more on every project that's undertaken. So I think it's very timely that this indeed be answered in detail by these groupings, not only in the past record . . . because it's really difficult to undo the past. If we're going to have any impact at all on the future, we have to start dealing with today forward. And if you say that's estimates and it's an inappropriate time, I find that just a tad strange.

Mr. Speaker, time and time again we've raised the concerns of the construction industry. We've raised the concerns of the people that realized how much money was being wasted on this ill-thought-out plan and agreement. We've tried to have these questions answered at question period and other so-called appropriate times. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that from our point of view, any opportunity and any device that we can get to try to attempt to get a real answer for the people that are so vitally concerned about this whole issue is quite appropriate.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I find it very unfortunate that the government chooses not to answer this question and to duck behind some kind of precedent or tradition of the House every time that we try to find a new way of getting to the actual factual information that people are looking for in a detailed way. And I know that the construction association, all the workers, are going to be very, very disappointed with the government's attitude, and I have to register my disappointment as well with the government's attitude.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion negated on division.

Return No. 21

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly, to move an order of the Assembly do issue a return no. 21 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation: (1) the total amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity in the fiscal year 1995-96; and (2) the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement that was in place at that time and the total amount that would have been subject to the CCTA.

Seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, you already . . . the members opposite already have the answer under the other return. Moreover this one is awkwardly phrased because it refers to '95-96 and SaskTel keeps its records on a calendar basis. So you've got the information on the other return. This one could not have been answered in any event.

I'll therefore move, seconded by the member from Regina Sherwood:

That this Assembly delete section (2).

And on the passage of the motion as amended, I will be tabling the answer to the question.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 22

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 22 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation: (1) the estimated amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity for the fiscal year 1996-97; (2) of that estimated total, the amount that is estimated to be subject to the CCTA.

I move that, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'll be urging the Assembly to defeat this motion. As I explained earlier, it is not our policy to provide estimates on orders for return.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a business person, every business person in this province knows that every year you have to do a cash flow projection for your banker and you have to give him an estimate of what you expect to have happen in the next year. I'm sure that government departments are no different than that. The only difference is, they have the money to be able to make sure they have lots of paper flow and they'd be able to drown all their customers in it if they want to.

This year we've also . . . and all the people of this province are subject to massive rate hikes as well as the reconstruction charge on our power bills. I would think with this reconstruction charge on our bills, that must mean they have some estimate of what they're going to do with all our money. I think this one is a grievous attempt at camouflaging what's going on and I really resent what's happening.

Motion negatived.

Return No. 23

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 23 showing:

To the minister responsible for Sask Telecommunications: (1) the total amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity in the fiscal year 1995-96; (2) the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement that was in place at that time and the total amount that would have been subject to the CCTA.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Once again, as members I'm sure have anticipated, we will be moving to delete section (2). As I explained on the comment, the reason for this is as described earlier. You've asked for the information on the year '95-96. SaskPower's on a calendar year so we couldn't have answered it. Moreover, the information's been provided to you under item no. 39, return 41.

I'll therefore move, seconded by the member from Estevan:

That section (2) be deleted.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended negatived.

Return No. 24

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly, to move an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 24 showing:

To the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Telecommunications: (1) the estimated amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity for the fiscal year '96-97; (2) of that estimated amount that is estimated to be subject to the CCTA.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — As I'm sure members have anticipated, we will be urging that this be defeated. Again, it is not our policy to provide estimates on orders for return. I therefore urge the Assembly to defeat this motion.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to reiterate what the member for Kelvington said to one of the previous motions, that most businesses, especially big businesses in this province, have to project the upcoming year before they can set their finances in order. And I would suggest that the size of SaskTel and the volume of monies that this company goes through in a year would be more reason to even have this estimate down and pat.

So I would suggest to the minister the opposite that it shouldn't be that hard to give us the estimate for this year. We're not asking for an actual figure; we're asking for an estimate. And I would think if it was looked for, it's probably already there.

Motion negatived.

Return No. 25

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 25 showing:

To the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Transportation Company: (1) the total amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity in the fiscal year 1995-96; (2) the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement that was in place at the time and the total amount that would have been subject to the CCTA.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, at the conclusion of my comments, which will be extremely brief, move that we delete section (2). The reason is the same. You've already got the information under another section, and you've asked for this on the year '95-96 when SaskTel . . . this Crown corporation rather, operates on a calendar year — Saskatchewan Transportation Company.

Therefore I move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Northwest:

That this Assembly delete section (2).

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended negated.

Return No. 26

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly, that the Assembly do issue for a return no. 26 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Transportation Company: (1) the estimated amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity for the fiscal year 1996-97; (2) of that estimated amount, the amount that is estimated to be subject to the CCTA.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Once again, this is one where they're asking for an estimate, and once again we do not provide this information. We'll be urging this be defeated.

Motion negated.

Return No. 27

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly, that the Assembly do issue for return no. 27 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Water Corporation: (1) the total amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity in the fiscal year 1995-96; (2) the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement that was in place at that time and the total amount that would have been subject to the CCTA.

(2030)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — For the reasons mentioned earlier, I move, seconded by the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley:

That section (2) be deleted.

Mr. McLane: — Day after day in this House, Mr. Speaker, we hear about open and accessible government — or is it open and accountable, I'm not sure. I don't think any of those actually fit to be honest with you. The Government House Leader has talked about this day in and day out.

And now he's saying that well, since they run on calendar years he can't give the answer. It appears to me, Mr. Speaker, that if this such an open and accountable government, why wouldn't they simply have come up with an answer for 1995 calendar year and one for the calendar year of 1996. We could have saved all this confusion, and he wouldn't have had to stand up here and embarrass himself and his government by saying they can't answer the questions.

So it appears to me that if this government indeed is so open and accountable, and want to be open and accountable for the people of Saskatchewan, then try and answer the questions in the best way that they can instead of strictly going by the book and what they do to be beating around the bush. So I find it totally unacceptable if the government doesn't answer these questions.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 28

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly, that the Assembly do issue for return no. 28 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Water Corporation: (1) the estimated amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity for the fiscal year 1996-97; and (2) of that estimated total, the amount that is estimated to be subject of the CCTA.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It is our policy not to provide estimates on orders for return. I'll therefore urge that this be defeated.

Motion negated.

Return No. 29

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly, that the Assembly do issue for return no. 29 showing:

To the minister responsible for the SaskEnergy Incorporated: (1) the total amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity in the fiscal year 1995-96; (2) the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement that was in place at that time and the total amount that would have been subject to the CCTA.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — For reasons mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, I will move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Southeast:

That section (2) be deleted.

And the passage of the amendment and on the passage of the amended motion, I will be tabling the answer to this question.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I notice the Government House Leader is saying for reasons given before, and in my mind, the recollection I recall that his reasons were that his government doesn't want to be open and accountable. And with that, I will accept his reasoning for that.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 30

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Arm River, that the Assembly do issue for return no. 30 showing:

To the minister responsible for the SaskEnergy Incorporated: (1) the estimated amount of tenders for capital asset construction activity for the fiscal year 1996-97; (2) of that estimated total, the amount that is estimated to be subject to the CCTA.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Again, it is not our policy to provide estimates on orders for return. I'll therefore urge that this motion be defeated.

Motion negatived.

Return No. 31

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Cannington, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 31 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission. Regarding employees and positions cut in the recent budget: (1) the total number of jobs and/or positions eliminated in the recently delivered provincial budget; (2) the breakdown of the number of jobs lost by branch, department, or arm of government; (3) the breakdown of jobs by department and community, as well as the total payroll lost per community as a result of these eliminations; (4) the percentage of total jobs in each community that the elimination of these positions represent.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — This time I think we're going to be able to give the members substantially all they want . . .

An Hon. Member: — Almost.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, almost all they want. Item no. (4) requests the percentage of total jobs in each community that the elimination of these positions represent. We really have no way of knowing the answer to that.

We don't know how many jobs there are in the community. We only really have a rough idea of the population. You'll know the population and you won't know how many jobs there are, and thus it's impossible for us to give this.

However, we're providing all the rest of the information, and I think that is substantially all the members want.

I therefore move, seconded by the member from Carrot River Valley:

That this Assembly delete section (4).

On the passage of the amended motion and on the passage . . . yes, on the passage of the amended motion, I'll be tabling the answer to this question.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 32

Ms. Draude: — As previously agreed, and seconded by the member from Humboldt, move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 32 showing:

To the Minister of Agriculture regarding the closure of eight Crop Insurance offices: (1) whether there are leases for Crop Insurance offices that were closed in February in the towns of Wilkie, Kyle, Wynyard, Carnduff, Outlook, Melfort, Canora, and Wolseley; (2) if so, who holds the leases; (3) the cost incurred in the termination of the lease at each of the said offices; (4) since the rural service centre extension offices in Leader, Kamsack, Melfort, and Fort Qu'Appelle are to be closed immediately, the date for termination of leases for those rural service centre extension offices; (5) the costs that will be associated with the termination of these lease agreements.

(2045)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, on the passage of this vote, be tabling the answer to this question.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 33

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 31 showing:

To the Minister of Justice regarding public notification process for released sex offenders: (1) the number of meetings that the minister has held and/or attended regarding implementing public notification process in the province of Saskatchewan; (2) those who were in attendance at those meetings; (3) the number of other notification processes from other jurisdictions that have been studied to date; (4) the number of provinces that have a public notification process in place presently.

I so move, seconded by the member from Rosthern.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm going to urge the Assembly to defeat this one. The members opposite groan. The question, I

think, would be some of these would be impossible to answer, like such as those who were in attendance at the meetings. No registry was kept. In any event, this motion had to do with the identification of sex offenders and it was put forth at a time when the government was still formulating its policy and, as a result of deliberations here and elsewhere, the government did in fact meet what I think were the expectations of the Assembly and passed legislation.

An Hon. Member: — Exceeded your expectations.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Therefore . . . Probably the member from Prince Albert Carlton is probably right. I think we probably exceeded your highest hopes and expectations. Therefore the information has now really become irrelevant, and I'm going to urge the Assembly to defeat it. The members opposite probably say, no harm would be done in answering it. There's a good deal of expense in answering these questions and if they no longer serve a purpose — and this no longer serves any purpose; the legislation's now been passed — we really think it's pointless to put the public service to the expense of answering questions, the whole reason for being for which has disappeared. So I'm going to be urging the Assembly to defeat this motion.

Motion negated.

Return No. 34

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 34 showing, and this will be seconded by the member from Cannington:

To the Minister of Finance regarding order in council 243/96, please provide the following information: (1) whether the assurances that were given to the Johnsons regarding their eligibility for Saskatchewan tax credits were given verbally or in writing; (2) the name and/or position of the government official who gave the erroneous assurances; (3) the Saskatchewan venture capital corporation that was involved in the investment from the Johnsons; (4) whether any other investors were given erroneous assurances with reference to investing in the Saskatchewan venture capital corporation; (5) whether any other investors were given erroneous assurances with regards to any other Saskatchewan venture capital corporation or any other tax credit-eligible investment; (6) whether similar compensation has been paid to other investors, and if so, the total number of such payments over the past year.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm going to urge the Assembly to defeat this. This is perhaps a proper question but I think an improper forum in which to ask the question. This question raises the question of whether or not a certain public servant discharged his or her duties properly. That's a perfectly proper question, but this is probably not the proper forum to ask it.

A proper forum would be for the member to write a letter. If the member felt the matter had not been properly dealt with, the member could take it up. But to answer this motion would have

the effect of public punishing of a public servant. It's not the policy of this government or any other to do that.

So I say to the opposite member, it's a proper question. In our view, it's not the proper forum in which to raise it. It should be raised privately in a letter. We're therefore going to recommend to the Assembly that this motion be defeated.

Motion negated.

Return No. 35

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 35 showing:

To the minister responsible for Agriculture regarding rural service centres/ agriculture service centres: (1) the total number of inquiries that the rural service centres received in 1995; (2) the number of inquiries each rural service centre received individually in 1995; (3) the number of inquiries received in 1995 by the centres that the government proposes to close; (4) the furthest distance a producer in rural Saskatchewan will have to travel in order to reach the nearest rural service centre once the closures take place; (5) whether there is a formula and/or distance cap that has been developed by the department regarding the amount of travel producers must undertake to reach these centres.

I so move, seconded by the member from Rosthern.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I will, at the passage of this vote, be tabling the answer to this question.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 38

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 38 showing:

To the minister responsible for SGI: (1) the number of claims SGI has received as a result of deer damage to vehicles in the fiscal year 1996; (2) the number of claims that have been settled; (3) the total estimated expense to settle the claims made in the fiscal year 1996.

Seconded by the member from Melfort-Tisdale.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I will be urging the Assembly to defeat this. This is not a case where the members opposite have asked for an estimate — they've asked for information, they've asked for information for the calendar year 1996. That information is not of course available and won't be available until the end of the year.

The question therefore can't be answered and I will urge the Assembly to defeat the motion.

Motion negated.

Return No. 40

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move an order of the Assembly do issue for the return no. 40 showing:

To the Minister of Health: (1) whether an individual diagnosed with fourth-stage multiple chemical sensitivity syndrome, MCS, can obtain treatment in Canada and the location; (2) whether out-of-province patients are accepted if treatment is available in Canada but outside of Saskatchewan; (3) the nearest treatment centre if treatment for fourth-stage MCS is not available in Canada; (4) whether the costs associated with such treatment are covered by Saskatchewan medicare.

I so move, seconded by the member from Rosthern.

The Speaker: — I just want to reflect for a moment as to whether the motion was in order.

As all members will know, the procedure that the House has accepted is to permit the motion to be moved by another member of the member's same caucus.

And I will have to rule this out of order unless the hon. member for Cannington can indicate to the House that he has the hon. member's permission and request to move it on her behalf. If the hon. member can indicate that to the House, then I'd ask him to indicate it to the House now.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe my House Leader has talked to Ms. Haverstock about the motions on the order paper from her dealing with this issue.

The Speaker: — I think I'm going to ask for the House to grant leave in order for the motion to be put. So I'll invite the hon. member for Cannington to do that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask leave to be allowed to move the motion originally made by Ms. Haverstock, the member from Saskatoon Greystone.

Leave granted.

The Speaker: — The hon. member has put it on record, the seconder being the member for Rosthern.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We're prepared to grant leave on these matters, Mr. Speaker. Our basic approach is we've got all the answers. We simply want to file them and not have to return to this item another night when the member's back.

So on the passage of this motion, I will table the answer to that question.

The Speaker: — And I will have to rule the member's comment referring to the presence or absence of a member as being out of order.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 39

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I've asked myself for leave and I've given it. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 39 showing:

All correspondence between the Department of Economic Development and the Minister of Economic Development regarding the Crown construction tendering proposal, including the analysis prepared by the department prior to this policy being introduced.

I so move, seconded by the member from Rosthern.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm urging the Assembly on the . . . before I sit down I want to be urging the Assembly to defeat this.

This asks for information. This asks for correspondence between a minister and another. If you . . . by virtue of Canadian law and English law, stretching back through the centuries, correspondence between a minister and his officials has been considered privileged. If you check in Erskine May you will find that to be the case, or Beauchesne. This is a rule of long-standing and certainly applies here.

For these reasons we're going to urge the Assembly to defeat this motion.

Motion negatived on division.

Return No. 42

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to move, seconded by the member from Cannington, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 42 showing:

To the minister responsible for Economic Development regarding the analysis prepared by the Economic Development department prior to the introduction of the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement: (1) whether the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement proposal was clearly identified to be a union preference policy; (2) according to the analysis, the costs of the Crown projects that were expected to increase as a result of this policy; (3) whether the analysis stated that this proposal would force non-union contractors to subsidize union contractors; (4) whether the Department of Economic Development recommended against the proposed Crown Construction Tendering Agreement.

(2100)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Once again, Mr. Speaker, it is going to be . . . I'm going to be urging the Assembly to defeat this motion.

Once again this motion asks for correspondence between the minister and his officials. As I explained in an earlier motion, by virtue of a long-standing rule, as I say stretching back through the centuries here and in England, correspondence

between a minister and his officials is considered privileged and is not tabled.

I'll therefore be urging that this motion be defeated.

Motion negatived on division.

Return No. 44

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move an order of the Assembly do issue for the return no. 44 showing:

To the minister responsible for the Crown Investments Corporation: (1) the Crown projects contracted pursuant to the terms of the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement in the past year and the cost of each contract; (2) the Crown projects contracted outside the terms of Crown Construction Tendering Agreement in the past year and the cost of each contract.

I shall move, seconded by the member from Rosthern.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We urge that this one be defeated. The information has been substantially provided in return no. 39. In order to avoid unnecessary expense and duplication, we're not answering this one. I would urge the members of the Assembly to defeat this motion.

Motion negatived on division.

Return No. 45

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 45 showing, seconded by the hon. member for Canora-Pelly:

To the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Indian and Metis Affairs Secretariat regarding the employment of first nations people in the public sector: (1) the number of first nations people that are employed by the Government of Saskatchewan; (2) a breakdown of the departments, sectors, and Crown corporations in which these people work.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — To substantially provide this information, we need to amend the motion.

I want to say as well that the information is a long way from being 100 per cent accurate. The reason for that is that only first nations people who self-identify are registered. And thus those who don't self-identify aren't. And so the numbers working in the public service are probably considerably higher than these figures indicate. This is simply the number of people who self-identify.

I think it might have been open to the government to defeat this or to simply answer it and answer it unknown, unknown, unknown. We've tried not to do that. We've tried to substantially answer the question.

I do need to amend it. Public sector is not a not a term of any

precision, and so we'll be amending that to read executive government. We don't have even a self-identity system in the Crown corporations, so we really don't know how many there are.

I may say before I take my seat there aren't nearly enough. The number of people working in the government and the number of people working in the Crown corporations is nowhere near equal to the percentage of people who are native in this province. So I'll be the first to say that we probably should have answered this and I think the member from Athabasca might have been satisfied if we had just said, not nearly enough. I think with that he would have agreed. I recognize there aren't anywhere near enough native people working in the public sector. However, that's not the subject under debate now.

We are providing the information as best we have it. I do want to warn you that it is really incomplete. With that as a background, I move, seconded by the member from Redberry Lake:

That the Assembly delete the words "the Government of Saskatchewan" and substitute them with "executive government" in section (1); and delete the words "sectors and Crown corporations" from section (2).

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say through you to the member opposite that I appreciate the efforts put forward through the amendment. The reason for the questioning was because there was a commitment by this government, of course, to include a higher percentage of first nations people in the public sector, in employment in the public sector. I would ask if there is a possibility of getting a percentage, possibly, of those people that are now employed that you do know of.

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

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — With leave, to respond to the minister by saying that we don't have the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The Government House Leader has requested leave to respond. I presume he means to the member from Humboldt. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There is, perhaps, I just say to the member from Humboldt, there is maybe a better way to do it. There is a procedure which can be used: to rise and say, before the member takes his seat, I wonder if he would permit a question. I'll certainly do that. I may not have the information, but if you use that procedure, it may not have to ask for leave.

With that as a background, let me say that we really don't have accurate percentages. This is the best information we have. I may say the figures are a lot higher than they were in 1991. We're making progress, but it is painfully slow and I think unacceptably slow from the point of view of aboriginal people. With that in mind, I'll table the answers assuming this passes.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few comments to make in reference to the issues that we're speaking about this evening. I can certainly concur with the minister in reference to the painfully slow analogy of the efforts of trying to employ first nations and Metis people within the public sector.

Several months ago we spoke about the issue of Crown Construction Tendering Agreement and how there was some feeble effort of trying to tie unions in with the aboriginal people and I felt that to a large extent there's more so a political move on the government's part as opposed to a genuine effort to try and increase the number of aboriginal people within the provincial workforce.

And the only thing I would caution governments on is the self-identification process, that there should be some justification in essence of trying to ensure that the first nations and the Metis people that do apply for these positions are reasonably . . . or show reasonable proof that they have Metis or native ancestry.

And the key thing here is not necessarily reverse discrimination, Mr. Speaker. Really the issue is trying to have parity for a small group of people in Saskatchewan in terms of working with and for governments.

And a good example of that, Mr. Speaker, is in northern Saskatchewan where you could possibly have different resource officers working in the North talking about management of lands. You can have different police officers helping police some of these native communities. You could also have correctional officers working in some of these institutions. And if the majority of these people are not aboriginal, then naturally the aboriginal people will not see these systems as theirs.

So there's really a lot of benefit not only from the government perspective but also from society's perspective as a whole to really try and make a concerted effort right across the board for every Crown corporation, for every government department, to try and increase the number of aboriginal people working for the government. Because if they're part of this province and equal, they should have the same type of opportunity.

So I encourage the government to continue on to doing their part and I'm appreciative of the information, but we certainly hope to get a heck of a lot more aggressive in terms of fast-tracking this process so we can see many more aboriginal people, both Metis and treaty, become part of the government and part of the system.

Thank you very much.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 46

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 46 showing:

To the Minister of Finance: (1) the total amount of revenue taken in by the province in fines under The Highway Traffic Act for the year ending March 31, 1996; (2) the percentage of this revenue that was returned to municipal governments; (3) whether the provincial share of this revenue is targeted to any particular government program or does it all go to general revenue; and (4) the dollar amount in fines that were outstanding as of March 31, 1996.

Seconded by the member for Melfort-Tisdale.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I say to you and to members opposite, we don't have to . . . I'm going to urge this Assembly to defeat this motion. We just simply don't have the information. Specific numbers are not . . . this information is not recorded or tabulated and we simply can't answer these questions. In order to do so a special computer program would have to be written and I don't think the members are really asking for that.

We don't have the information; it's not available. I'm therefore going to urge the Assembly to defeat this motion.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this question is of great importance to me because I have a great investment within these fines and I would really have liked the minister to have answered this question. I'd like to know where my money has gone.

Motion negatived.

Return No. 43

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 43 showing:

Minister responsible for SaskPower, regarding employees Mr. Jack Messer and Ms. Carol Bryant: provide a copy of employment contracts for Mr. Messer and Ms. Bryant including details of salary, perks, car allowances, memberships, travel allowances.

I so move, seconded by the member from Rosthern.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, we're going to urge that this one be defeated. The contract for Crown corporations . . . a written contract, where there is one, where a head of a Crown corporation . . . is available and is registered.

This goes well beyond that. This asks for information with respect to Mr. Messer and Mr. Bryant. And they not only want a copy of the employment contract, which I think for Mr. Messer is registered; they want employment contracts for both, you want detail of salaries, perks, car allowances, membership, travel allowances.

Public servants are entitled to some degree of privacy, and that includes these two public servants. There has been an ongoing, constant attack on these two public servants. We think it is unfair; we think they should be judged on their ability and on

the job they're doing. We think the activity and the success that SaskPower has enjoyed suggests that these people are competent and are doing a good job.

The whole power industry is undergoing enormous changes to which SaskPower must adapt or present the public with very serious problems. SaskPower is making those adaptations, it is adapting. These two public servants are discharging their duties, we think, rather well.

We only ask members opposite, and the public of Saskatchewan, to judge them on the job they're doing rather than their . . . what they believe to be their political loyalties.

That being the case, Mr. Speaker, and because we think it unfair that these two public servants continue to be attacked, we are going to ask the Assembly to defeat the motion.

Motion negatived on division.

(2115)

Return No. 47

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With reference to the following homily, I would like to move, seconded by the member from Cannington, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 47 showing:

Minister responsible for the Crown Investments Corporation regarding the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement, CCTA:

1. The dollar volume of total Crown project that has come under CCTA since it was announced on March 3, 1995.
2. The number of CCTA projects, the total volume that has been tendered in urban areas, i.e., population centres over 5,000, where the eligible projects are greater than \$50,000 in size; the number of non-union contractors that have been awarded work on such projects; and the number of non-union employees that have been actually working on these CCTA projects in urban areas.
3. The number of CCTA projects, the total volume that have been tendered in rural areas where the eligible projects are greater than \$150,000 in size; the number of non-union contractors that have been awarded work on such projects, and the number of non-union employees that have been actually working on the CCTA projects in rural areas.
4. In total, a percentage of all person-years of construction jobs on CCTA-covered projects since March 3, 1995 have been non-union.
5. As a result of the CCTA's required pro-union hiring sequence, in the light of the limited number of unionized contractors and employees in the province, i.e., less than 20 per cent of the entire construction sector, the number of contractors and workers on

CCTA projects over the last year that came from out of province.

6. On average, compared to similar-sized projects prior to CCTA, the estimated percentage increase in projects costs covered by this agreement.
7. Many of the unionized contractors who work on the Crown projects covered by the CCTA can undertake name hiring whereas non-union contractors under this agreement cannot and must accept whoever is sent by the union for their out-of-work list. The number of name-hired unionized employees that have been working on CCTA projects since the agreement was announced.
8. The number of unionized employees that have worked on CCTA projects over the past year that have been hired from outside the major cities of Regina and Saskatoon, the percentage of total unionized labour on CCTA projects that this would represent.
9. The CCTA establishes a new group called the Construction Opportunities Development Council, CODC, to create, support, and promote programs to continually enhance the unionized construction product. The names of people on this council and specifically their activities over the last year, whether they will be required to soon publicly release an annual report on these activities.
10. The agreement requires every contractor on a CCTA project to pay 21 cents an hour per worker in extra fees. An extra 5 cents an hour has gone into the building trade union. Ten cents an hour has gone to the unionized employee group, CLR (Construction Labour Relations Association). And an extra 6 cents an hour has gone to a special fund to finance the work of this new CODC mentioned in the previous question. All of these extra fees are ultimately borne by the Crown corporations through contract payments. On behalf of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, the amount of revenue through these extra fees that has been collected under the CCTA since March 3, 1995 for (a) the CLR, (Construction Labour Relations Association); (b) the SPBCTA, trade unions; and (c) the CODC fund. In each of these accounts, how the money has been spent.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We're going to urge the Assembly to defeat this one. There has to be, Mr. Speaker, some sensible limit to the expense to which the public should be put to answer these questions. Much of this information actually the opposition have in other questions. Some of the rest of it would take an enormous amount of time that would involve enormous expense. As I say, there has to be some sensible limit to the amount of expense to which the public can be put for these questions.

We think this very long question exceeds what is sensible and reasonable. And we're therefore, on the basis that it is too long, it is too complicated, and it would be too expensive to answer,

we are therefore going to urge this be defeated.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I believe that the taxpayers of this province deserve an answer on this particular issue. You may believe that it's going to be expensive to acquire this information, but this question relates directly to the reasons why you believe that the CCTA should be in place. If you can't answer these questions, then you have no way of knowing whether the CCTA is doing what you claimed it was supposed to be put in place to do.

So if you don't know these answers, you don't know whether or not your own Act, the CCTA, is actually performing as you claimed it was. Unless, Mr. Speaker, unless this particular Act has been put in place simply to provide funding or employment opportunity solely for unionized employees, then the government should know what the answers are to these particular questions.

I would suspect that the government, if they are not, should be tracking what happens to the money, the 21 cents an hour per employee that goes into this union fund, the CODC. What's happening to it? This is money that are coming, because of an Act of this legislature, to an organization and should be tracked by this particular government.

And this is a government Act that we are dealing with here, Mr. Speaker. And for the minister to stand up and say that it would be too expensive to find out what the answer to this money . . . what the answer to these questions are as to what happens to the money, who are the people controlling it and how are they spending it, is ludicrous, Mr. Speaker.

This legislature deserves the answers that these questions bring forward and that this government refuses to supply to this Assembly and to the taxpayers of this province.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well in support of this motion for a number of reasons, Mr. Speaker.

As has been demonstrated over the last numbers of weeks and months, since the sitting of this legislature and before, the CCTA has become a fundamentally flawed program that your government implemented and for a lot of the reasons that are listed in this question.

And it finds me as a very strange comment by the government to say that this is too expensive in order to answer these questions, would be too much expense to the Assembly or to the taxpayers of the province. But who in the world thought about the extra cost to the taxpayers of this province for you implementing this program?

We've demonstrated time and time again that this project, or this process and this program, is costing the taxpayers 30 per cent more to comply with the components of this agreement. And the government has absolutely no problem justifying those extra expenses. And depending on the numbers that you use, the very least that we can use, based on the information tabled tonight, is \$30 million subject to the CCTA agreement. And so we have on one hand where the government flippantly accepts

the fact that 9 million extra dollars of taxpayers' money is being spent in order to implement the CCTA agreement in order to keep the union component of their party happy.

They don't have any problem with justifying the expense of \$9 million, Mr. Speaker, in order for them to comply with this flawed policy; but they have a problem saying that we can release the answers to these questions. I find it very, very strange that the government would take such an irresponsible attitude.

Secondly, I really disagree that these questions should be so difficult to find and to answer. It seems to me that any responsible government, before they even embark on a policy like CCTA, surely have weighed out the answers that have been incumbent to the questions in this section. Because if you haven't been able to think through the implications of what your decision is going to be, then how can you logically proceed?

And so to say that all these research things have to come from scratch is just ludicrous, or it indicates that this government did not think through the ramifications of the whole CCTA policy.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I certainly join in support of this motion and think that the government should think again before they take the position that they are going to defeat it and refuse to answer these very legitimate questions that are being asked, not only by the construction association but independent business and contractors and first and foremost taxpayers right across this province, Mr. Speaker.

The division bells rang from 9:29 p.m. until 9:49 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 8

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Aldridge | McLane | Draude |
| McPherson | Belanger | Bjornerud |
| Krawetz | Gantefoer | |

Nays — 19

| | | |
|----------|--------------|-------------|
| Wiens | Lingenfelter | Shillington |
| Johnson | Whitmore | Goulet |
| Upshall | Kowalsky | Renaud |
| Calvert | Trew | Lorje |
| Teichrob | Nilson | Murray |
| Langford | Kasperski | Ward |
| Jess | | |

Return No. 48

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 48 showing:

To the Minister of Finance regarding order in council 282/96: (1) the reason the order in council was approved on April 30, 1996 when the program ran from April 1,

1995 to March 31, 1996; (2) whether this money was included in the 1995-96 Saskatchewan estimates — if not, the reason why; (3) the department which was responsible for providing the \$7 million; and (4) the programs which received the \$14 million, and how this money was divided.

Seconded by the member for Melfort-Tisdale.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I just want to, before I deal with this motion . . . I said when we began some hours ago that this is the first time we have answered these returns and provided all of the answers at the time the motions were passed. It's the first time it's ever been done.

This occurred, in large part, through a major effort by the public servants. There have been public servants in this . . . not so much in this building but in the city and around the province who have worked long hours to get this ready. I think all of us owe the public servants who have worked to provide this information for the members a vote of thanks. It really is a Herculean effort.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — With respect to this one I'm going to . . . we are going to urge that this one be defeated.

This one deserves a bit of an explanation. There is nothing . . . it isn't clear to the Department of Finance and it certainly isn't clear to me what the member is getting at here.

There is nothing . . . while the action of having the OC (order in council) completed after some or all of the money was spent is not normal, neither is there anything illegal about it, and it's certainly not unique. It will happen from time to time. It wasn't at all clear to the Department of Finance and it wasn't clear to me exactly what you were getting at, so we're going to defeat it.

I remind the member that the minister's estimates are open and that, if and when they return, you can ask the minister this very question and I'm sure she can provide the answer.

So it just was not at all clear to us exactly what the member from Canora wanted, and we thought therefore it would probably be more appropriate to ask the question in estimates.

I will, therefore, urge that this motion be defeated.

Motion negatived.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

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