

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

The Deputy Clerk — I wish to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker will not be present to open this sitting.

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Deputy Speaker: — I hereby inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of election and return of Judy Junor as member for the constituency of Saskatoon Eastview.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you, Ms. Judy Junor, a member for the constituency of Saskatoon Eastview who has taken the oath and signed the roll and now claims the right to take her seat.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Ms. Junor, I want to say welcome to the Legislative Assembly and I hope that your time here will be one that serves to be a record of honour to yourself and to your constituencies. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Let the hon. member from Saskatoon Eastview take her chair.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Pages

The Deputy Speaker: — Ladies and gentlemen of the Assembly, I wish to introduce the pages for this portion of the session to the members of the Assembly. And I'll ask that the pages stand as I introduce them: Graham Condo, Ellen Crumley, Diane Normandin, and Megan Saum. These are your pages for this session.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Resignation of Member

The Deputy Speaker: — I also wish to inform the Assembly that I have received the resignation of Mr. Buckley Belanger, member of this Assembly for the constituency of Athabasca, effective September 2, 1998.

In view of the resignation of the member for Athabasca, items of business standing in the name of Mr. Belanger will be withdrawn from the order paper.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of, again on behalf of concerned, very concerned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan:

Petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to consider saving the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that those essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

The signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Melville.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I present a petition this afternoon . . . the prayer of relief which reads as follows:

Your petitioners humbly pray that your Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent its closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

I so present.

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise today on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to present a petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by the good people from Coronach. I so present.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens of this province that are concerned about the closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

I so present, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise with my colleagues and the some 110 to 120,000 people that have signed petitions in this province and . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Now the member knows that the prayer is all that's allowed to speak, and a small preamble, but nothing more.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people that have signed these petitions are all from the area of Coronach. These are the last petitions we have. It's up to the Premier to stop this foolishness. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Now the hon. member was warned once about the prayer and no preamble and no debate.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm happy to present a petition. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately start work on the rebuilding of our secondary highway system to provide for our safe driving on what are becoming known as pothole roads; to enter into negotiations with SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) for a long-term plan of rural road restitution reflecting future needs and to provide safety for all drivers as the new trucking regulation changes safety factors on these roads.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Deputy Speaker, these folks come from Bienfait, Portal, Frobisher, and Estevan today.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that the government should immediately start work to rebuilding on our secondary highway system; that the government should reach necessary agreements with other levels of governments to fund the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway; thirdly that the Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act to save the Plains Health Centre; that the government work with aboriginal Metis leaders in an effort to end the practice of night hunting; that the government cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco; and finally that the Hon. Assembly may be pleased to take immediate action to ensure that the required level of service in radiology is maintained in the North Central Health District.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 68 move first reading of a Bill, the

Crown corporations managers' salary Act, an Act limiting SaskPower management salaries.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 71 ask the government the following question to the Minister of Highways:

What plans do you have for painting lines on secondary highways so that rural people and highway travellers can navigate these highways through winter storms and heavy fogs without being killed or injured?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very pleased today to point out someone in the Speaker's gallery that I'd like to introduce. Dr. Jim Melenchuk, Leader of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party, is here this afternoon and sitting next to him in the Speaker's gallery, Dr. Adam Niesner, Jr., who is a Liberal candidate for Regina Wascana Plains, who'll be picking out a seat in the legislature here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'd also like to welcome people that we saw earlier — I believe they may or may not still be in the galleries — however, Mr. Gordon Gunoff, business manager of IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers), Barb Byers, president of SFL (Saskatchewan Federation of Labour), Rosalee Longmoore, president of Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, and Stephen Foley, president of health care council of CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees). We welcome them to the Chamber.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Before continuing, I would like to remind everyone that it is a long-standing tradition in this House that visitors in the gallery are not allowed to participate in the proceedings either by clapping or with verbal . . . and I would ask the co-operation of the visitors in that. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to add my welcome to all of the workers in the House, in addition to the third party. Thank you for coming today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition we would certainly want to welcome all of the guests to the legislature as well. It's difficult days. We certainly all understand that. The proceedings here will be of great interest I'm sure. And we'd ask all members to join in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Condolences

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I stand today just recently . . . in respect of and in paying tribute to the late Michael Fredrick

Mitchell. Fred Mitchell died on Saturday, October 17, at Stanford University Medical Centre near San Francisco, California.

On behalf of my colleagues I extend our deepest sympathy to Fred's wife, LuAn, their children, Freddie, Ryan, and Jinji-Jo, and to the rest of the family.

Mr. Speaker, while attending university, Fred spent his summers working in the Saskatoon and Vancouver meat-packing plants of Intercontinental Packers, where his late grandfather, Fred Mendel, taught him the meat business. Fred Mitchell worked in all areas of the plant and progressed through various management positions, becoming president and chief operating officer following Fred Mendel's death in 1976.

Fred served as president of the Canadian Meat Council where he was named an honorary member in recognition of many of his contributions to the meat industry.

In 1995 Fred Mitchell left Intercontinental Packers. When he returned to the company in late 1996 it faced some problems. Under Fred's leadership the company made a remarkable recovery including the completion of a private sector recapitalization, a \$14 million expansion, and modernizing of the company's Saskatoon plant, specifically increasing sales and jobs.

Fred's accomplishments were recognized by the international management and consulting firm of Ernst & Young where he was named Young Entrepreneur for the Prairie Region in the turnaround category.

Mr. Speaker, Fred Mitchell's extended family was Gourmet Foods. All you had to do was walk through the plant to understand the respect, admiration, and loyalty bestowed upon . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The member's time has expired.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise with great sadness and regret today to pay tribute to Fred Mitchell, a prominent businessman and citizen of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Fred Mitchell died Saturday at the age of 51 following a long fight with cystic fibrosis. It comes as no surprise to members of this Assembly that Fred Mitchell was not only successful in business, but also gave of himself to his community and to the province.

Mr. Mitchell joined the staff of Intercontinental Packers in 1965 as a part-time employee. He eventually rose to become president and CEO (chief executive officer) of the company, despite serious health problems that plagued him in his life.

Among his many interests and causes, Mr. Mitchell was also a supporter of the Arthritis Foundation of Saskatchewan; sat on the Board of Governors at the University of Saskatchewan; was a past member for the Centre for International Business Studies

advisory board; served as past president of the Canadian Meat Council and was the past president of the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this by no means exhausts the lists of the boards and organizations Mr. Mitchell served on. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the loss of Fred Mitchell leaves our province a poorer place today.

On behalf of the official opposition, I'm sure all members . . . and I'm sure on behalf of all members, I want to express our deepest sympathies to the friends and family of Mr. Fred Mitchell.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Housing Starts Increase

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What's very noticeable in Prince Albert right now, Mr. Speaker, is the activity in the construction field. When I visited many people in the industry, both workers and suppliers, over the last month or two, I found that they were very busy and they were looking for people to hire.

So this led me to check on the statistics on housing starts. And, Mr. Speaker, the statistics pleasantly affirmed what the workers and business people were telling me. In fact January to June housing starts in Prince Albert showed a 12.5 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, in Regina they showed a 25.9 per cent increase and in Swift Current, my colleague's town, they showed a 74.5 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker. This is in private homes, multiple homes, condominiums. In the province as whole there are 1,420 new dwellings going up — that's a 31 per cent increase over the last year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these residences are needed because we do have a steadily increasing population growth in Prince Albert and in Saskatchewan. In fact it's been growing for 19 consecutive quarters — that's nearly five years.

Doesn't it seem odd to you, Mr. Speaker, when you hear members claim that people are leaving the province in droves? I guess when they're leaving, one of the last things they do is they buy a permanent residence in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Condolences

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to on behalf of the Liberal caucus join the Minister of Agriculture and the member from Canora-Pelly in expressing our sincere sympathy and condolences to the family of a great man, a great business person for the province of Saskatchewan. I would like to add our sympathy and condolences to all the people that share in this great loss.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Opening of Outlook Bridge

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the beautiful fall morning of October 8, I was delighted to join the Minister of

Highways and Transportation, the hon. member for Arm River, and a large crowd of residents, builders, and community leaders to officially open the new Outlook bridge.

Also joining in the opening were two members of the Conquest band which had played at the opening of the original bridge in 1936.

This was indeed a celebration of progress — progress from the ferry to the first bridge, and progress from the first bridge, which was increasingly being battered by loads a little too big for the available space, to this new, wider, open design.

The economy on both sides of the river is booming, and this new link will ensure that that growth continues in traditional agriculture and specialty agriculture, in processing and manufacturing, in tourism, and in every other area of our economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this beautiful river, the Saskatchewan, has given our province its name, it has defined our history, and its bountiful clear water reflects our hope in our future. This new bridge across the Saskatchewan represents the partnership of all Saskatchewan people to work hard, to fulfill our hope to keep Saskatchewan the best place on earth in which to live.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Welcome to Member from Saskatoon Eastview

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to welcome the member from Saskatoon Eastview to the legislature. It's nice to finally meet one of those \$100,000-a-year nurses the former minister of Health likes to talk about.

Mr. Speaker, it's more than a little ironic that on the first day the former nurses' union president takes her seat in this House, she is here to pass back-to-work legislation.

It's amazing how a cabinet minister's salary in office can make one a lot more flexible in their views, and a few of the NDP (New Democratic Party) backbenchers there should be paying attention, like the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, we would like to congratulate the new member for Saskatoon Eastview on her election to this legislature, and we look forward to watching her vote today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

YTV Series Filmed in Lumsden

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

My good news story is similar to hundreds of others taking place all around our province lately thanks to a thriving and rapidly growing film and movie industry. In this case, I am delighted to report to the House that Lumsden is one of the latest Saskatchewan towns to be in the movies.

In September two episodes of the YTV series *Incredible Story Studio* were filmed in Lumsden, which of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a delightful community in my constituency. The *Incredible Story Studio* is a program that is in its first season this fall on YTV, Canada's leading youth network. This show takes stories written by Canadian children aged 10 to 14 and turns them into short movies.

The stories that were filmed in Lumsden last month will be part of the show's second season which starts airing in January 1999. One episode is called *The Mystery of Sam McNall*, written by 13-year-old Robbie McLellan of Regina.

The second episode is *Moving is Such a Hassle*. It was filmed at the riverbank, the playground on Broad Street, and the two locations on Colbourne Street in Lumsden.

Saskatchewan's own Minds Eye Pictures is involved with the shooting of this TV series and most of the actors are from Saskatchewan.

Please join me in congratulating the town of Lumsden on this their second foray into TV programming.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskPower Negotiations

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, today I'd like to surprise the House by offering applause to a deserving Saskatchewan New Democrat. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I regret to inform the heavy-handed, uncaring members across that it isn't to do with anything that they've done recently. And after today, if the members hear any applause it will very likely be because they clap for themselves.

But thankfully there's still one New Democratic who deserves applause and can generate a hearty round of it from the average working people. I'm not certain whether it's his recent crashing experience on the road that almost goes to Avonlea but Dick Proctor, unlike this government, appears to know what is fair for working people. Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unlike the members opposite, instead of crossing a picket line of working folks, Dick Proctor showed he cared and turned around.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I close I would just like to advise the Assembly that out of respect and kindness to Mr. Proctor, I'll be sending him a newspaper clipping here and it points out, and I quote, "Romanow road 339" is just as bad as motorcycle . . . just as bad on motorcyclists as the potholes in the gravel on Highway 334. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

ORAL QUESTIONS

SaskPower Management

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

Mr. Premier, we are here today because of the NDP's gross mismanagement of SaskPower. This labour dispute that should

have been resolved between the union and SaskPower management; instead your NDP patronage managers have failed once again. That's the same NDP patronage gang that brought us Channel Lake and Guyana. That's the same NDP patronage gang that left us . . . that may leave us on the verge of a power shortage this winter. I've got my power generator hooked up out at the farm and I would advise everyone else in Saskatchewan to do the same thing.

Mr. Premier, will you admit that your NDP patronage managers have completely botched up the labour negotiations? Will you admit that the reason we are here today is because of NDP patronage and mismanagement at SaskPower?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite from Kindersley who indicates to us that had he been in government, indirectly he says he would not have these problems, I want to say very clearly that we all know what you would be doing if you in fact were in government. Because I have here quotes from an interview done with you in 1995, it says PCs (Progressive Conservative) — that's when you were a PC before you slipped across and became a Reformer — PCs definitely alive at the end of 1995. And I want to quote what you said at that time. It says here and I quote the member from Kindersley saying:

We would be looking at wage rollbacks. I think many people would look at the situation and suggest government employees are extremely well-paid when you compare them with private sector workers. Well I think there is a view towards downsizing government. I think there is also a view, we would support it, that government would be looking at ways to reduce payrolls.

You talk about rollback. I ask the members and the people of the province, are you in favour of rollbacks that that member clearly indicated is the policy of his party?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Premier, and look at who is bringing in legislation today — you. For the last few years SaskPower has been run by a bunch of people whose only experience at power was how to get power, not how to provide it to the people of this province.: Jack Messer, your campaign manager; Carole Bryant, your election planning co-ordinator; Bill Hyde, the Minister of Social Services campaign director.

Mr. Premier, I wouldn't trust these people to plug in a toaster let alone run a million dollar corporation. And what have we learned and what have you learned from the NDP's mismanagement and patronage in SaskPower? Absolutely nothing.

In fact just the other day in Crown Corporations Committee we moved a motion to end patronage — in the Channel Lake hearings. And what happened there? The NDP unanimously voted it down. Mr. Premier, when are you going to learn? When are we going to see an end to NDP patronage and mismanagement over at SaskPower?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to members opposite when they talk about the issue of people we appoint and people we hire. During the review done in 1996 of our Crowns and the following appointment of new boards, we appointed people like Frank Proto, Susan Milburn, people like Bill Heidt from over at Crown Life, Tom Kehoe from Swift Current, Jimmy Scharfstein from Saskatoon, and the list goes on and on.

But I want to say that although the member from Kindersley didn't become the leader of the new Saskatchewan Party — an individual by the name of Mr. Hermanson did — and I want to say that his position as it relates to who should be hired and what we should do with employees of the government is, I think, shocking.

Because what he said is this: "that the MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) in his caucus" — that would be you people here — "knew where the skunks were in government, the people who had to be fired". That's what he said.

And good old Yogi said that he would fire all of them. That was the guy that didn't win. But that is the policy of your government. And I say to government employees in this province, and as it would relate to . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. I would say to the minister opposite that if he wants a little bit of help in identifying the skunks, I'm sure some of the people in the gallery could help you this afternoon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. I would remind the member from Kindersley not to bring the people in the gallery into the debate on the floor.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, the Saskatchewan Party is going to support the back-to-work legislation, not because it's a good solution, not at all. But because of NDP's mismanagement, it's made it the only solution.

We realize the government has to keep an eye on the purse strings, but it's a shame you were paying to . . . the same kind of close attention when you blew \$5 million on Channel Lake. It's a shame you weren't paying the same kind of close attention when you blew \$2 million down in Guyana. And it's all because the people in charge of SaskPower are NDP patronage appointees that have no idea what they're doing.

Mr. Premier, when are you going to bring in some professional, qualified managers to clean up the mess at SaskPower? When are you going to put an end to the NDP patronage that's resulted in back-to-work legislation here this afternoon?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's obvious what the

member opposite is referring to in a roundabout way because we know what the Devine government did with Crowns during the 1980s, obviously selling off Saskoil and the Potash Corporation, Sask Minerals, the gas fields, preparing SaskEnergy to be sold. We know what we're talking about from that member.

More than that, Mr. Hermanson is quoted in the *Eston* . . . the *Press* review, and he says this about the Crown corporations. This is the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party. He said:

That his government, if elected, should be allowed to sell off the Crown corporations . . .

That's what he said.

That's what you say as well when quoted, when quoted . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well you challenge him; ask whether or not it's true. It is true, and I quote again:

The Saskatchewan Party leadership candidates meet in the Kindersley constituency.

And what did he say there? Hermanson said, he said:

That his government, if elected, should be allowed to sell off the Crown corporations on a selected basis.

Well SaskPower, SaskPower is the one that you're talking about today. And I say to the member opposite, come clean. That's your plan, that's your strategy, and you should put it in your policy so everyone knows what it is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Management Salaries at SaskPower

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my questions are also for the Premier.

Mr. Premier, you seem to have a double standard here. You talk tough about maintaining your 2 per cent wage guideline, but your NDP-patronage managers continue to get huge pay hikes. Last year, two-thirds of SaskPower's managers got pay hikes averaging 8 per cent — 8 per cent, Mr. Premier — four times your salary cap for union workers.

Mr. Premier, why the double standard? Why is there a cap for workers and no salary cap for NDP-patronage managers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Again I say to the members opposite and to that member in particular, Mr. Speaker, that we know what the policy of that party is as it would relate to privatization. And they're talking about privatization.

And what I would ask that member opposite, what I would ask that member opposite, is to check what has happened with what was Saskoil as to the differential between hourly waged employees and the CEO. That's what he should ask himself. Because he will know that the differential in Saskoil, now Wascana, now CanOxy, between a wage earning person in that

corporation and the CEO has more than doubled. That's what you're talking about.

You're speaking, as always, out of both sides of your mouth. Because if you look at the differential between the CEO in SaskPower and the hourly wage earners, you will find that the spread is lower than in any private sector corporation in Canada. So be honest, come clean, and tell us what your privatization plan is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Premier, over the weekend I had a SaskPower worker clearly indicate the double standard that you guys are allowing to have happen. He said when a SaskPower lineman goes up a power pole to fix something and makes a mistake, he winds up dead. When a SaskPower manager makes a mistake and blows millions of dollars in Channel Lake or Guyana, the NDP give him a big fat severance package. What's that about fairness? What does that say about your double standard? If workers are going to live with 2 per cent, then managers should live with 2 per cent. Will you pass legislation today holding the line on salary increases for managers?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say obviously when we review the pay scales of our employees and managers, we want to be fair to both managers and employees, and to the people of the province who pay the salaries. But what I would say to you if you're honest, check the Potash Corporation, we're in a privatized situation, and see whether or not, see whether or not you people who privatized the Potash Corporation — which is your plan for our Crowns — whether or not there would be a cap on managers under your scheme, Mr. Hermanson's scheme, to privatize our Crown corporations.

Tell us the spread between the hourly wage in the Potash Corporation today and the CEO. Is that your idea of fairness? That's where you're coming from and your only grandstanding today because the galleries are full of people who are concerned about their salary. And I should be . . . the employees should be concerned. We are concerned; you're playing politics with privatization.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, Mr. Deputy Premier, if you're not prepared to get rid of the double standard, the Saskatchewan Party is prepared to help you with it. Immediately after question period we will be introducing legislation that will put a cap on all Crown corporation managers. If workers can live with 2 per cent, so can the managers.

Will you support the legislation? Will you allow that legislation to pass today, Mr. Deputy Premier?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, when the legislation is introduced we'll look at all the parts of the legislation, any amendments that are put forward. But I want to say to the member opposite when it comes to what his plans are for the Crowns and the discrepancy between hourly-wage earners and CEOs, you know what it will be in a privatized format because

you privatized the Potash Corporation and you know the differential between Chuck Childers and the hourly-wage earners. It's not two-and-a-half times which it is between the CEO of Power and the average wage of an hourly-wage earner, it's 10 or 15 times as much.

Here's your policy. It's in your brief you gave to us in 1996 and it says this:

The government immediately takes steps to privatize SaskTel through a public share offering under the guidelines of section 3 of this submission.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say this in the third bullet:

The experience gained from the privatization of SaskTel would enable the province to undertake other privatizations of SaskPower, SaskEnergy, and SGI.

That's your policy, and don't tell me that you're in favour of workers and keeping these corporations that are there now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Labour Negotiations at SaskPower

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Premier, not his seatmate. Mr. Premier, you have publicly stated that you will not subcontract your provincial responsibilities to a third-party arbitrator. However your actions tell a different story. You did it with your own pay; you did it with the judges' contracts; and you did it with your old friend Jack Messer.

How can you justify having a third party decide the huge severance package for your buddy Jack, but you can't be fair and reasonable in the treatment of our provincial employees?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite from the constituency which is represented by the town of Shaunavon, and I know the member is attempting to be sincere about what he's saying, but I want to say to him that I hope that his statement made in January of 1996 where he said, and it's quoted, the headline in the *Leader-Post*, "Opposition prepared to force SaskPower employees to work." That's a picture of you, sir, where you say, and I quote:

Liberal MLA Glen McPherson said Friday, "The people of this province can't afford to have games being played by either side. The power must remain on, and we speak for the consumers in the province."

Here you are urging back-to-work legislation — that's you — saying to the people of the province, I'm the protector of the consumer.

And so today I want to say to you, if your plan is to support the Bill, to support the Bill, do it today. Don't play politics, as you advise yourself right here. Don't play politics.

This is not about . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Mr. McPherson: — Supplementary question, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Premier, you make the claim that you cannot trust an independent party to fairly look at this dispute. Yet when it comes to plugging your pals into jobs all throughout government and especially the Crown corporations, you weren't concerned.

Or when you bought your multimillion dollar jet or blew money in Guyana or Channel Lake, you said nothing. When you lost 16 million bucks on the NST deal or risked hundreds of millions of dollars in your foreign ventures all throughout the world, you said nothing again.

The fact is, Mr. Premier, there's one set of rules for you and your pals; there's another set of rules for the rest of us.

In 1993 you gave your assistants and those of your ministers a twelve and a half per cent pay increase at one shot. Mr. Premier, how can you justify giving your political hacks a twelve per cent . . . twelve and a half per cent pay raise and yet take a heavy hand again and take the rights away from these workers here in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — To the member opposite who yells from his seat about how we're going to vote, obviously we will find that out in a few hours. But I want to say to him that given the fact of your call for back-to-work legislation, back in 1996, I want to say that on Friday, on the 19th of January '96, you said this, and I quote:

If the government comes to us and the people say, listen we have got to bring in back-to-work legislation — hey, we'll support that.

That was you.

Now I say to the member opposite, all of a sudden today, all of sudden today, because you're judging the political wind a little different, because you're in political trouble in your own seat, I know what you're doing. The Liberals are in trouble in all of rural Saskatchewan. I know what you're doing. You're attempting to shore up your vote by flip-flopping on an important issue for your own political benefit. That's typical of you. I remember when we were making tough decisions in this government on this side of the House, you slipped across to the other side without a vote because you believed it was the most popular thing to do. Well I'll tell you there's nothing going to save you, my friend.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Premier, a few years ago your government raised the pay for your MLAs and cabinet ministers. The Liberal caucus refused the MLA pay raise of \$4,400 per person and every New Democratic grabbed that money and ran. That's what you did.

Your seatmate, the Deputy Premier, is quoted in a August 21, 1982 *Leader-Post* article as saying:

MLAs should take two thousand bucks off their pay and give it to those workers to help meet their demands.

Well, Mr. Deputy Premier, now if you say there isn't a set of rules for you and your pals and another for the rest of us, will you announce today that your caucus is going to pony up that forty-four hundred bucks that you grabbed and ran with; and Mr. Premier, will you agree to give it to the families of these people that you walked out of their jobs . . . locked out.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I say to the member opposite, when it comes to dealing with this issue, we'll deal with it in a professional manner after a great deal of consultation. And you know how this has come about as well as I do. But I want to say to the members opposite, I want to say to the member opposite . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order. Now the hon. member from Wood River has asked a question and then refuses to listen to the answer. Does he want an answer to the question or not? Then I would ask him to stay in his chair and ask the Deputy Minister to give him an answer.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite that when it relates to pay scales of MLAs and when you talk about pensions and when you talk about the salaries of civil servants or upper management, there is a system in place to deal with all of them. The process of negotiated settlements is a principle we believe in and we are doing our best to achieve at every table — collective bargaining through a bargain position.

And I say to the members opposite that sometimes it doesn't work. And in this case it didn't and that saddens us.

But I say to the member opposite, I say this to you, sir, who called for back-to-work legislation in 1996 — you called for it — today you're saying something very different. What has changed? Is it a principle position that has changed? No, it's difficulty in your politics that has changed.

And I'll tell you what you're doing. You're trying to save your political hide in Shaunavon because you're in big trouble because you jumped across the floor, and unlike Buckley Belanger who had the decency to resign his seat and let the people choose, you went across at the dead of night. And I say you're in political trouble.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Negotiations between Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Health minister or her junior, the former president of the Sask Union of Nurses. Madam Minister, will your

government-imposed guidelines also apply to the province's nurses, essentially robbing them of their right to bargain or . . . if they don't accept this heavy-handed approach by the Premier?

Will you explain to this Assembly how legislating the nurses back to work will stop the exodus of nurses, much less attract the some 4,000 nurses the Canadian nursing association predicts this province will need over the next 13 years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd be pleased to answer that question on behalf of the associate Health minister and myself. And to all of the people that have offered us their congratulations or, in some cases condolences, we say thank you very much. We've been enjoying our last month as the ministers of Health in the province of Saskatchewan.

As the members will know, we are not yet . . . we have not yet seen bargaining with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations. It's my understanding that the nurses' collective agreement with SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations) expires at the end of March of 1999. We anticipate that negotiations will begin in due course and we will arrive at a mutually acceptable collective agreement with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Power Supply in Saskatchewan

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Premier.

Mr. Premier, NDP patronage and mismanagement has created a much bigger problem than just this labour dispute. It's now clear that SaskPower will probably not have enough power to get through the winter. While you guys were stirring up Channel Lake and messing up in Guyana, you forgot to mind the store at home.

Mr. Premier, the people of Saskatchewan want to know. Are we going to run short of power this winter? I'm not talking about power outages because lines are down or transformers fail; I'm talking about the lights going out across Saskatchewan because SaskPower has simply run out of electricity.

Mr. Premier, can you stand in your place today and absolutely guarantee there will be no power shortages in Saskatchewan this winter?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite who raises a serious concern and I say to him in the most legitimate way that I can that the reports we're getting from our power corporation is that the power will be on and there will be power supplies to meet the needs of the families and homes and hospitals, schools and factories and steel plants in our province.

But I can say that in western Canada with the very fast growth

of the economy in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, that all of the power corporations . . . Yes, Saskatchewan has one of the fastest growing economies in Canada. The member from Kindersley would know that.

But the fact of the matter is, there is a power shortage already in Alberta — brownouts have occurred. We're confident that we're going to meet our commitments in Saskatchewan. Manitoba is in a very unusual situation where, because of low water levels, they too are having difficulty meeting their demands.

And so this is not an issue of one power company; this is an issue of an economy in western Canada that, because of the resources we're blessed with and the management, I would argue, and the work being done by employees, but we will be able to maintain . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Purchasing Power from other Suppliers

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well with answers like that, Mr. Speaker, if we had wind generation in this province we would have no problems.

Mr. Premier, industry experts including the professionals at SaskPower have been predicting three and a half per cent load growth per year. Your NDP geniuses over at SaskPower, however, have been basing their planning on one and a half per cent. And you listened to your NDP patronage appointments over the power professionals.

Mr. Premier, this morning I spoke with Basin Electric in North Dakota. They say the most they can provide Saskatchewan is 150 megawatts this winter. That's 50 more megawatts than usual. They say also that we'll pay a terrible high price for it — as much as three times more than normal.

Mr. Premier, Alberta doesn't have any power for us; Manitoba doesn't have any power for us; North Dakota has a little power for us, and we're going to pay through the nose for it.

How did you let our power supply reach this critical situation? Why aren't you taking steps to ensure an adequate power supply in Saskatchewan this winter?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to just follow this logic because like normal Tory logic there's big leaps of the gears and grinding going on here. Because he says, first of all, the mismanagement of SaskPower has led to shortages. Then he goes on to say that Tory Alberta has these shortages — private sector companies. Tory Manitoba has these shortages, and Basin Electric.

Now Tory logic is what got us to the point of having \$15 billion in debt — \$750 million a year interest being paid. But I say to the member opposite that we are being told, and we believe we will have enough power to meet the demands of the province this winter. But for you to say that it's because of the mismanagement of the engineers and planners in SaskPower is

absolute nonsense. Go and say that to TransAlta and to the private companies.

Why is it that you are so bent on attacking government employees? Why isn't it the fault of the managers in Alberta that they have a shortage?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the minister on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of this Assembly, I move that Bill No. 65, The Maintenance of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation's Operation Act, 1998 be now introduced and read the first time.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 65 — The Maintenance of Saskatchewan Power Corporation's Operations Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I move that Bill No. 65, The Maintenance of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation's Operation Act, 1998 be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, right now.

Leave granted.

The Deputy Speaker: — I will advise the minister that the House will pause momentarily while the Bill is being distributed. We cannot proceed into second reading until all members have the Bill. I would ask the pages to please distribute the Bill to the members.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 65 — The Maintenance of Saskatchewan Power Corporation's Operations Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Maintenance of Saskatchewan Power Corporation's Operations Act, 1998.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I would like to say that the recall of this Legislative Assembly to legislate the end to the ongoing labour dispute between SaskPower and its workers is a reluctant last step. It is a step that we must take to fulfill a clear and immediate responsibility which this government has to the people of Saskatchewan to ensure that the light and heat stay on this winter.

SaskPower is in urgent need of ensuring that essential winter maintenance is completed soon in order to meet this pressing public need. If SaskPower is not able to complete its pre-winter

maintenance and repair work on time, the reliability of electrical services in Saskatchewan this winter will be jeopardized.

(1430)

The Government of Saskatchewan is not prepared to let this happen. Mr. Speaker, this government wants a settlement of this dispute that is fair to the workers and fair to the people of this province.

Our teachers, our public servants, and Crown corporation employees . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Our teachers, our public servants, and the Crown corporation employees at SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) have already reached such agreements. It was our most sincere hope that bargaining in good faith, IBEW and SaskPower could arrive at an agreement within the government's public sector bargaining guidelines.

Mr. Speaker, the inability of these parties to reach a settlement which is fair not only to them but to all the people of Saskatchewan has forced this government to act in the public interest and legislate an end to this dispute.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill puts an end to all work stoppages within the Saskatchewan Power Corporation; extends the existing collective bargaining agreement for a period of three years; directs SaskPower to implement the government mandate by providing a wage increase to its employees of 2 per cent in each of the three years of the extension of the collective bargaining agreement; allows the parties to agree to the application of an additional 1 per cent in monetary and other benefits, excluding salary, which is also a component of the government mandate; and it implements significant enforcement provisions to ensure compliance with these provisions.

Mr. Speaker, this government's commitment to the people of Saskatchewan compels us to bring an immediate end to this labour dispute to ensure an adequate power supply this winter. We will do everything we can to heal the difficult labour relations within SaskPower.

As a first step, it is the government's intention to ask SaskPower to cover wages lost by SaskPower workers during this dispute. The government will ask SaskPower to agree to a non-discrimination clause in the collective agreement. And the government will ask SaskPower to recall all workers affected by the dispute.

Mr. Speaker, as we take these steps to promote a better atmosphere, we also express our profound gratitude and appreciation to the people at SaskPower who worked so long and well for so many hours to restore the heat and light in our province during the snowstorm just over a week ago.

I'm hopeful that all hon. members in this Assembly will support the timely passage of this important Bill. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to provide for the Maintenance of Operations of Saskatchewan Power Corporation.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I got into politics, I kind of suspected there'd be the odd surprise from time to time. But if someone told me

today that I'd be standing in the legislature being asked to vote on back-to-work legislation written by the NDP, introduced by the NDP, as a result of the NDP, the supposed friends of labour, I would have been very, very surprised and thought they didn't know what they were talking about.

If someone had ever told me a year ago that the former president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses would become a member of the legislature and her first act in the legislature is to vote for back-to-work legislation, I would have thought that perhaps they should have been seeking some health care. But here we are.

Last March when the session of the legislature began, the big debate around this province was the mismanagement of SaskPower by NDP-appointed hacks. Now at what I presume is the end of the current session, barring any more emergency caused by this government, we are still talking about the same thing, a very serious situation over at SaskPower.

Let's make no mistake about it. This mess, this labour mess that we have before us today has been brought to you courtesy of the inefficient, ineffective management over at SaskPower — management that has been hand-picked by their political masters sitting opposite us.

The problem with the union should never have gotten in . . . pardon me, the problem is this should have never gotten this far to begin with. But the friends of this government handed the problem off to the legislature in the same manner that they hand almost everything else off. They've let this thing spin totally out of control. This is a situation that should and could have been handled by the corporation, had it good management.

Instead once more the legislature is asked to step in and do something about SaskPower's disputes. The NDP should be absolutely ashamed and embarrassed that their incompetence in running SaskPower has forced this dispute, this labour dispute, into the legislature. It should have been handled through the collective bargaining process that you people opposite speak so highly of and say that you support.

That being said, let me begin by making one thing clear. The first priority for the Saskatchewan Party in this matter is the safety of the people of Saskatchewan, both in terms of providing them with a safe and reliable power supply as we head into another expected cold winter and in terms of reaching a settlement that is acceptable and affordable to the residents of this province.

Certainly we agree that the government must pay attention to how much the taxpayers can handle in terms of labour settlements, including wage settlements with its many unions. As I understand the two, two, and two settlement that will be imposed by the NDP will cost the taxpayers about \$6 million over three years.

We opposed binding arbitration because we felt that the figure could come back far higher than the people of this province could pay. We have hoped both sides would agree at mediation and work this thing out without measures taken today. Unfortunately, the collective bargaining process broke down.

We understand the government and SaskPower management not wanting to spend any more money than that. At a time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we have \$2 wheat, 70 cent barley, \$13 a barrel oil, retail sales going down, we don't think the people of Saskatchewan can afford any more unfortunately.

However, I wish the people of Saskatchewan, and the people of Saskatchewan wish this government and its friends over at SaskPower, would have been more worried about watching its nickels and dimes when it came to the ill-fated and ludicrous Guyana deal which cost the taxpayers of this province about \$2 million.

The people of Saskatchewan wish that the government and SaskPower would have been as careful with their management when it came to things like Channel Lake. Perhaps the taxpayers could have saved another 5 to \$10 million. And most especially the people of Saskatchewan — with SaskPower management — have been so worried about their money when they granted themselves last year, far in excess of 2 per cent increases in their own salaries.

While these managers were involved in Guyana, involved in Channel Lake, and while they were prepared to tell the union that they could only receive 2 per cent, the managers at SaskPower were awarding themselves big, fat increases. How can they explain that to the people of this province? It simply defies logic.

But what can we expect? These managers, the people put in place by the NDP administration opposite, NDP political appointees, parachuted into the corporation through the good graces of the Premier himself.

And look . . . and just look at the trouble that all this has led to. We have had Jack Messer, campaign chairman of the NDP as president, running things over there for a period of time. We still have Carole Bryant as vice-president, another NDP appointee. And we have, of all people, of all people over there, we have Bill Hyde, the NDP point man on labour negotiations for SaskPower. His main claim to fame, his main claim to fame, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan was that he was campaign manager for the NDP member from Regina Victoria sitting opposite — the new Social Services minister.

After all the headaches these patronage appointees have caused for the members opposite, do they show any sign, any sign whatsoever that they've decided to change their ways and, instead of rewarding their friends, put people that can actually manage the corporation? Not in the last.

One week ago, just one short week ago, those members opposite, the NDP members on the Crown Corporations Committee voted down a Sask Party motion to end patronage in Crown Corporations. So while those members opposite, while the NDP members opposite claim today to be saving the people of Saskatchewan money through an imposed settlement, I'm afraid the days of mismanagement of our Crowns is far from over.

In moving this Bill the government states it wants to save money and also continue to supply a reliable supply of power to the people of this province. I've already covered certainly the

money aspect. Now let's look at the supply of electricity.

The government, no doubt, wants the people of this province to think that any problems that have come up this winter with our power supply are completely due to the union's handling of this labour dispute. That's what they're going to do, ladies and gentlemen. The moment, the moment, I predict the moment that we see any problems with power supply in this province, the NDP opposite will be pointing at each and every one of you saying it is your fault.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Now the hon. member knows not to include the visitors in the gallery in the debate, and I would ask him to proceed and not to continue that way.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll attempt to refrain from doing that, but giving the political-charged atmosphere it's certainly difficult.

SaskPower's supply has been under scrutiny as you all know for some time. Figures that your union supplied us indicate that SaskPower currently has a capacity of 2,835 megawatts and a peak load capacity of about 2,830.

That's cutting it real close. The generator on my farm is probably the kind of edge we have in whether or not we have adequate supply or not. What is going to happen in this province if we have an unusually cold winter as a lot of forecasters are predicting?

The third week, generally speaking, of December is peak load time. Everybody's got their factories still running, businesses still operating full out, the Christmas rush is on, Christmas lights are on, all the Christmas spirit is there. Everybody is using the maximum amount of power generally speaking.

Throw in a little bit of 40 below weather and we are loaded right to the maximum. And we have 5 megawatts to play with — 5 megawatts. Not enough hardly to run this building.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are in a crisis situation and it is not, it is not the result of the IBEW union workers. They work . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — I will say to the people of this province, when you're sitting around your home the third week in December and it gets down to 40 below zero and the lights start flickering, who are we going to lay this at the feet of to blame?

I say to you, the people of Saskatchewan, that the people that are responsible for this are the people sitting opposite — the Premier of this province, the Deputy Premier of this province, the entire cabinet, the NDP caucus — and their NDP hacks over at SaskPower that couldn't manage.

(1445)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Now I must say again the visitors in the gallery are not allowed to participate in the debate, either clapping or whatever, and I would ask them to refrain from doing so. Order. Order.

Mr. Boyd: — Hearing some comments around the Chamber here this afternoon, it certainly indicates to me that the people of this province are owed an explanation by this administration, by the Deputy Premier, and by the Premier of this province.

As I said, when the lights of this province start to flicker, who are we going to say is responsible?

The last couple of days, the last couple of days while this government has dithered about what to do, there was a lot that could have been done in terms of managing this affair. There's a lot that the people of Saskatchewan wanted to be done. They want to see labour harmony — make no mistake about it. I think the people of this province want to see SaskPower employees working effectively, working for the betterment of this province, working to provide electricity to heat our homes, to provide light, to operate our factories, to provide power, to look after our health care, to look after the sick and aged in this province.

That's the responsibility that the IBEW is charged with. That's the responsibility that I think they've taken seriously. That's a responsibility that I think this government owes them an explanation as to why, why have you allowed things to deteriorate to the point that you have.

In Saskatchewan today we have an NDP administration, the supposed friends of the labour movement, legislating people back. How ironic is that. I never in my wildest dreams, taking my seat in this legislature, thought I would see the kind of labour advocates opposite — as many of them like to point out, some of them just recently elected to this legislature — standing in their place, as they will be shortly, and voting to impose a wage settlement and ordering people back to work. My how things have changed, my how things have changed.

The people of this province are owed an explanation by the Premier. I am hoping the Premier of this province will summon up the courage and come into the Legislative Assembly and tell the people, tell the workers, tell the IBEW, tell SaskPower why the situation has deteriorated to the point that it has, and offer up, offer up the apology that each and every one of you people are owed here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — We will be attempting, we will be attempting to hold this administration accountable. The power supply in this province is inadequate. It's a result of the mismanagement opposite. There were times when this government could have taken steps to address that — many, many times.

There's cogeneration projects that are on the table. There were a whole host of options available to this administration. And now the Deputy Premier gets up in question period and he says to the people of Saskatchewan, well, you know, golly gee, I hope that we have enough power here this winter. Maybe we won't because the water levels are a little low in Manitoba and the

Americans might not want to sell us any.

But the fact of the matter is if it wasn't for your incompetence opposite, we would never be in that situation. We would have been planning, we would have been planning accordingly for the growth that there is here in this province in terms of electrical load. You know what I think has happened, Mr. Speaker.

In the province to the west of us, in Alberta at least, at least the government has had the decency to get up — and courage — and get up before the people of the province and say to them, we may not be able to supply power because of the growth that there is in this province and because we may have not been able to plan adequately.

What has happened in Saskatchewan is exactly the opposite. Instead of planning for the growth, instead of getting up before the people of Saskatchewan and saying to them, look we may have a problem this winter because we haven't planned adequately, because our NDP appointed friends over at SaskPower haven't been able to manage this place, now we see ourselves in a position where we may be running short of power, what are they going to do?

They're going to blame everybody but themselves. And I think it'll start with the IBEW workers. Mark my words. Mark my words. You people are going to be the ones that this is laid at the feet of. They're going to say that your winter maintenance program hasn't been allowed to take place. We haven't had adequate time to do all the winter maintenance that's been necessary. We haven't had opportunity to plan accordingly as we should have been because the IBEW has been out; even though they haven't been out.

They've been locked out. They've been locked out — the government and SaskPower certainly made sure of that. They've been locked out, but now they are going to lay it at the feet of the union and blame it all on them or anybody else that dares to get in the way of the NDP roller, the steamroller, that they use when it comes to using this House in anyway they see fit. Anyway they see fit. Anyway they see fit.

The fact of the matter is I don't think the legislature has a lot of choice. It doesn't have a lot of choice in the matter. The members opposite can bring in an amendment calling for binding arbitration; the government isn't going to accept it. The government isn't going to accept it. They can do anything they want to try and subvert the will of this government but the fact of the matter is at the end of the day, the government's going to have its will because it has a massive majority.

I suspect that majority is slipping away fairly quickly these days however. I think there's some uncomfortable people over there and I suspect the member from Estevan is sweating bullets back there. I can just imagine the debate, the debate in the Estevan constituency when it comes time for the next election. What are you going to say to these people — I supported you, I worked with you all along. What a joke! As a member from one of the Regina . . . told me one time, he said you won't even get your family to vote for you. Well I predict that's what's going to happen to you. Along with a whole host of others opposite over there, you're in a lot of trouble, you're in a lot of trouble.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — We will, Mr. Speaker, we will, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately support the legislation. We will support the legislation. We will offer, we will offer each and every one of you, we will offer each and every one of you people here today the apology that you are owed.

I'm sorry it's come to this. I'm sorry it's come to the fact that we have to offer up nothing other than legislation from this legislature to deal with the matter. I'm sorry that this administration opposite hasn't planned, hasn't planned adequately to deal with the management over at SaskPower and the negotiations that should have taken place.

But we are charged with the responsibility of maintaining electrical supply to the best of our ability. Even though SaskPower hasn't planned accordingly for that, we are charged unfortunately with the responsibility of ensuring the safety of supply.

Mr. Speaker, we will be reluctantly supporting the legislation. We reluctantly support it because of the fact that this government has mismanaged this corporation. It's loaded up the NDP-appointed SaskPower management over there with the likes of Bill Hyde that have no more right to be in management over there than anyone does. He couldn't . . . I don't think the man is capable of managing the affairs over at SaskPower, and I suspect if an independent board of people looked at who is in charge of things over there he'd be the first one to be gone.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks by saying, yes we'll support the legislation. It is with a great deal, it is with a great deal of remorse that we've had to adopt this position. We offer up the apology to all the IBEW workers here. We offer up the apology to all of the managers and all of the SaskPower people that have been in charge of the responsibility of trying to manage the affairs of SaskPower even though the people opposite don't seem to care about that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is with a good deal of disappointment that we have to be here this afternoon to be debating this issue before us when we all know what the government could have chosen prior to ever having called us back in here.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a few questions for the Premier. I know he'll be in the building and be listening to this, this afternoon. I'd have to ask him: first, you lock out . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Now the member knows that he cannot refer to the presence or the absence of anyone from the House and I would get him to withdraw that and continue on.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I withdraw that. But I still have to ask why this government would lock out 652 SaskPower employees and create a self-made political crisis for the people of Saskatchewan. Then they come out and

they don their badges and guns and they come out shooting. Now is that a dignified statesperson that would do that sort of thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I think not.

The people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will not be fooled by these cheap political antics. You locked them out, Mr. Premier. You are the one who locked them out. And they're still locked out.

It's a shame for a Premier that you would lock out employees and force them to apply and go on welfare, because that, Mr. Premier, is what you forced them to do. If your offer is so fair and these workers are making so much money, why would they have to be applying for welfare after being off work for two weeks.

You know perfectly well, Mr. Premier, that the wages in this Crown corporation are not right and that's why you are denying them due process to binding arbitration. When it came time for a political purpose . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — When it came time for a political purpose for you to ensure that your wage was adequate, then you appointed a third party to decide that for yourselves. You talk about fairness, Mr. Premier. You talk about the Saskatchewan way, Mr. Premier. The Saskatchewan way is that you use your power and your heavy-handedness and your political clout to deny people their democratic right to a fair hearing. Is that your Saskatchewan way, Mr. Premier? To lift yourself out of the mire of cheap political trickery and shoot down everyone who stands in your way?

Mr. Premier, this is nothing more than being a cheap political opportunist. You've governed not by fairness; you've governed by polls. And that's unacceptable.

I say this to you, Mr. Premier. When it came to your wages, it was cream. It was cream for Jack Messer, cream for Ms. Carole Bryant, cream for Mr. Bill Hyde. When it comes to the electrical workers of Saskatchewan, it's watered down skim milk for them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the electrical workers who we depend on to keep this corporation SaskPower running smoothly, is that acceptable to you, Mr. Premier, that you would treat them in that fashion? Is that your idea of the Saskatchewan way? Is it not going against the very principles that put you in power?

It's not our idea of the Saskatchewan way. The SaskPower workers have asked for fairness. You've denied them that, Mr. Premier. You denied them fairness. The people of Saskatchewan will not soon forget your action, Mr. Premier. They'll not soon forget.

Let's continue on fairness, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Premier, is it fair that you should spend \$30 million on the Guyana affair? Well I think not, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it fair that you gave your political hack friend Jack Messer close to \$300,000 in

severance pay after he fouled up Channel Lake?

It seems to me, Mr. Premier, that you reward mistakes and dole out political patronage to party hacks. These hacks have wasted far more in millions of dollars than these workers could have had in a fair wage for the next 10 years of their livelihoods. That's how much money has been wasted by your hacks, Mr. Premier.

(1500)

And yet that's okay. That's okay, Mr. Premier. Is this what your government has come to believe in? Reward incompetence for your political friends who helped you get elected but deny the basic right of SaskPower workers to a decent living.

What are you covering up, Mr. Premier? What are you covering up with Mr. Hyde? Why are you trying to protect him? Why have you been mute on that issue? Why would you not step in or publicly tell us why Mr. Ed McQuarters was fired from SaskPower?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — What are you hiding, Mr. Premier? What are you covering up? The truth will eventually come out.

Show us your statesmanship and come clean right now, Mr. Premier. Do what's right. How can you sit here in silence and not tell us that this was a well-devised plan by yourself to try to hide the incompetence of the people running SaskPower . . . the poor planning that we all know has taken place under your direction. You know full well, Mr. Premier, that you should have built more generation. You know full well, Mr. Premier, that the system doesn't have the capacity to provide enough power for the province of Saskatchewan.

It's now time to come clean, Mr. Premier, and admit to that. You've tried to bamboozle the people of this province by making SaskPower a cash cow for your political re-election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Here are some of the facts from the SaskPower's annual report, Mr. Premier: \$132 million in profit; \$12 million in capital reconstruction fees and yet, still yet, rotten poles exist and are falling down throughout this corporation; \$145 million in profit to pay down debt; \$39 million in royalties taken away from the corporation.

I'd like you to stand and admit it now, Mr. Premier, that you are gouging the people of this province, plain and simple. This is nothing more than a misrepresentation of what this corporation was intended for, for the people of this province. This corporation was put in place to supply reasonably priced electrical power for all of the people of this province — safe and reliable power for the people of Saskatchewan.

You in turn, Mr. Premier, have placed the future of this corporation in jeopardy by running it to the bare bones and demanding profits — profits, Mr. Premier. Profits first and the people of Saskatchewan second. Shame on you for doing that. That's not what good leadership's all about — profits first and

people of the province second. Is that what your political mandate is? Is that what the *Regina Manifesto* says, Mr. Premier — profits first, people second. I think not. You know better. The people of the province know better too.

You're finally showing your true colours, Mr. Premier. I'd suggest to you very strongly that you should rethink and run for the governorship of the state of Georgia because of the actions and style of statesmanship you've displayed over this past week.

I'm sure that your political future would be a lot more secure in Georgia where they enjoy the type of heavy-handedness that you've imposed on the SaskPower workers. What's next, Mr. Premier? Right-to-work legislation by the NDP? Is this what we can expect from the governor of Georgia north?

Mr. Premier, we are the voice of reason in this dispute. And the voice of reason demands that you amend this legislation and give these workers a fair hearing in front of an arbitrator.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Order.

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's what fairness and justice in a democratic system is all about. That's what democracy is all about, Mr. Premier. What you are proposing today shakes the foundation of democracy in this province for everyone in this province, Mr. Premier.

The Liberal Party of Saskatchewan will not sit idle and allow you to impose this injustice. Mr. Premier, we'll be voting against this heavy-handed legislation. We'll be opposing it and we'll show the people of the province that this is not a good choice; it's not a fair choice. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ward: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not an easy day for this government, and in particular it's not an easy day for a member from the Estevan constituency. This morning when I woke up I had three choices. I've eliminated one of those by being here.

Mr. Speaker, I've spent more than half my life in the union environment. I know that labour disputes are not always monetary issues as depicted in the media, and the members opposite have named a few of the reasons why this dispute is on. There are usually a long series of events leading up to and including the bargaining process that are triggered by the final nail of a monetary issue. And I believe that is, in this instance, what has happened.

Mr. Speaker, the union has taken the position that the only way to settle this is for both parties to go to binding arbitration. I cannot support that position. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe this government can take the chance that an independent arbitrator would stay within the guidelines of our mandate.

Why is this so important to us, Mr. Speaker? I know that the province of Saskatchewan has an annual wage bill of \$2.5 billion. And to maintain the ability of controlling our budget

and maintaining our electoral commitment to balance budgets, reduce taxes, and lowering the debt, we cannot risk a wage settlement that would trigger a Me Too campaign throughout the public sector, throwing this province back into deficit financing and doing exactly what the Liberals are predicting.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ward: — I also know, Mr. Speaker, that many of the IBEW workers in this gallery supported me and assisted me in my campaigns. And I sincerely appreciate that assistance. I will continue to try and assist them as we bring this dispute to a conclusion in a way that I hope will help to alleviate the pain and the suffering that this dispute has caused within this corporation and within the families involved. I will work to improve these relations by trying to get some changes in the near future to help facilitate the healing process that must take place to preserve the Crown corporation for the benefit of all the people of this province.

To start that process, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has stated that all employees who were locked out will be reimbursed for the locked-out time. Also, Mr. Speaker, the non-discrimination clause will be entered into the collective agreement.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I have had many inquiries into the status of those employees who had disciplinary action taken against them before the lock-out notice was issued. I know that this issue is an integral part of the acceptance of this legislation — if there is any. And I will continue to try to bring that issue to a conclusion within the immediate future. This, along with future actions by the corporation, will help to start the healing process that I spoke of earlier and I believe to be so important to this province.

It's noticeable, Mr. Speaker, that when the member from Kindersley was speaking, that he is reluctantly, reluctantly, going to vote for this legislation. It's amazing then that his reluctance would allow him to introduce a Bill, No. 207, that's still on our order paper — The Crown Construction Tendering Agreement Revocation Act, Mr. Boyd; Bill No. 218, The Saskatchewan Right to Work Act, Mr. Boyd; Bill No. 219, The Democratic Unionism Act . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. The hon. member knows that you cannot use proper names whether they're listed on the order paper or not. And I would ask him to discontinue that.

Mr. Ward: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Bills that I've just mentioned were introduced by the member from Kindersley — reluctantly, I suspect.

And the member, the Liberal member that just spoke, Mr. Speaker, who wants binding arbitration, is he prepared for deficit financing? Is that what he's suggesting that this province go back to?

I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. I can't support that and I will be supporting this Bill. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My comments will be very brief but I do want to be on the public record because of the comments that have been made to me over the last several weeks from different citizens, not only those from my own constituency but the many faxes and phone calls that I have received as well.

It appears that a lot of people in Saskatchewan are very confused about what's going on. Most people, for example, who have called or dropped by my constituency office do not know that the IBEW workers have been locked out. They believe instead that they are on strike.

Now that's no different from what has transpired of course with this very House — that I can be going down the street and people are wondering, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why it is I'm not in Ottawa.

There's always confusion in the general public but there's one thing that they are not confused about. They are confused often about things that seem very distant from them, when it doesn't affect their own lives. They are not distanced when it does.

They are not distanced from the fact that their utility rates seem to go up and up and up in a way that's inexplicable to them. They are not confused when their tax dollars seem to be going up and up and up in a way that seems uncontrollable to them. They most certainly are disturbed by the fact that so often their incomes have either remained stable or go backwards in time and they feel that they've been living on a treadmill, if you will.

There are people who are also afraid. I've received faxes and phone calls from people who are very directly affected by this lockout. These are people who are very much concerned about their well-being, the well-being of their families, just like all the people are in the province of Saskatchewan. They want things to be better for them.

And the average person out there who doesn't understand the nuances and the dotted i's and the t's being crossed and the gamesmanship and the entrenchment — all that they know is that they want some stability. They want security in their lives. They want it not only in their power source, they want it in other ways too, with their sense of being able to have proper health care, their way of being able to know that they can afford to send their children to university education or post-secondary education training.

People are concerned about what is transpiring because of how it may affect them. And this very action of what is transpiring here today does affect people. We do have an inherent responsibility, as members of this Legislative Assembly, to make decisions that are not purely politically expedient but are in the best interests of all of the people in this province — the primary interests of the people in this province.

And as much as I have really deep feelings for what a lot of people are undergoing who are members of the IBEW and how much they want their lives to be better, there are some overriding factors that I think need to be discussed here. And we should finally put some of this political rhetoric aside and

get down to what really is transpiring.

For example, I know with people who have taken the time to send faxes to me — and I want you to know that I've read them, and I am interested in what you have to say, and I'm genuinely concerned about what has been transpiring. I have read them, and I know that you are genuinely concerned about what has happened.

(1515)

I too am genuinely concerned about what has transpired at SaskPower. And I do believe that there are some very fundamental issues that are happening at SaskPower — that have been going on for some considerable time — that are not going to be addressed and fixed by this legislation. In other words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this legislation is simply going to be a band-aid solution to a problem which is very, very broad in nature.

That problem does indeed point to the management of SaskPower. And it does indeed point to some problems which . . . It isn't just about choices of people who are there. It's the decisions that are being made, the way they're being made, and even the poor overall planning. This idea that two, two, and two over the next three-year period is going to be a good long-term plan — I think not, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That does not solve anything. But there are some fundamental problems there.

And in fact one individual phoned me and said I think that what had been said prior to the 1991 election where, if you recall, the NDP ended up saying let's open the books and jail the crooks, or something like that.

I think that SaskPower has so many problems within it that it's about time that SaskPower was opened up and maybe we open the books of SaskPower; open SaskPower up in a way of trying to understand how do these problems continue to rear their ugly head. Why is it that we have even come to this point is a very significant question, but other questions are equally important.

Questions like, why is it that I have in my possession an issue here regarding harassment at SaskPower; the kind of issue that has been covered up by management even after an independent individual was brought in to study this issue, came to the conclusion that in fact this individual, this gentleman's claim was absolutely correct, this complaint was indeed steeped in harassment, and it was management of SaskPower that actually covered it up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — So this goes far beyond, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the issues of Channel Lake or not Channel Lake, Guyana or not Guyana. There are fundamental problems in the way that people are being treated and that problems are not being resolved at SaskPower.

Now having said that, I'm going to stand in my place and let people know where I come from on this issue because I think that it explains how I conceptualized where I was going to vote on this issue.

I support workers. And how do I define workers, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I define anyone who tries to make a living and live a decent life as a worker. And so that includes management, it includes unionized workers, it includes non-unionized workers. And when I talk about my brothers and sisters, I'm talking about my brothers and sisters in the way in which we have been addressing that issue for 2,000 years. It's all the people who surround me and I genuinely want us to be concerned about the quality of life of all people.

Some of the people who called me are not people who have been working for SaskPower and have been locked out. Some of these people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are employees in this province who, in the private sector, have received no increases for years. These are individuals who too are very concerned about their quality of life.

Other people who have called me are employees too, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They are workers who work for businesses who will be fundamentally, inextricably harmed by any brownout or blackout in this province. And these people are worried about their jobs too. They're worried that if something happens, they will lose their jobs. And it's not unlikely.

There are so many different things that concern me. We don't even have to simply talk about those who are workers. Let's talk about those who don't have the benefit of a job. The people who too are directly affected by increases in utility rates and all of these secondary forms of taxation. These people who live in poverty and they feel completely helpless in this situation, and they too are afraid, and seniors on fixed incomes.

When we're talking about this kind of thing, we're talking about everyone, all of us — men, women, children, people who are in unions, people who are not, people who are in management, those who own businesses, those who are part of large industry. And we have to be thoughtful about the overall piece to this situation.

Now if I may I'm going to make a brief comment about binding arbitration and it will be linked with my having listened to a gentleman who is a general manager of an NHL (National Hockey League) hockey team saying why it is it is so dangerous to go to binding arbitration.

For him, he indicated that so often one of the reasons why being able to go to NHL games if you live in a city that has one becomes more and more unreachable for the average citizen to be able to afford is in direct correlation with how much people, players, are paid. And one of the reasons why these players are paid as they are — some are more than worth it, some are not. But what he pointed out was this. So often in binding arbitration, when control is . . . (inaudible) . . . of it, the very people who are the most deserving of the raises are not the ones who get them.

And I believe that when we are having to make important decisions, we most certainly want to be able to have all the facts at the table, and too often in binding arbitration there's a very narrow slice that's looked at.

As you know, I would not be sitting here if I were a proponent of all of the policies of this government, and I most certainly

would not be on this side of the House if I supported the New Democratic philosophy. I don't support the latter and I'm not over there for good reason, but I do believe that any government that is interested in good governance has to be able to review all of the pieces of the puzzle in order to be able to make good, solid, long-term decisions on behalf of the people of this province. I cannot support binding arbitration for that reason and I shan't be supporting binding arbitration for that reason.

Now I am going to, believe it or not, conclude here. Quebec's ice storm was the result of an act of God. If, in fact, Saskatchewan people and I'm talking about all of us here. I'm talking about our grandbabies and our children and everyone when they're going to school — these little people — and our teens and our seniors and people in hospitals and those who work in industry and everything. If, in fact, Saskatchewan people are placed at risk this winter, this winter, because of brownouts or blackouts, they simply will not — as one of the members stated — blame the IBEW workers.

You know who they're going to blame? They're going to blame all of the above. When people are placed at that kind of risk and they have to face that kind of fear, which is not the result of an act of nature or an act of God, but the result of people who could not use common sense and come together to resolve issues, they will blame everybody. They will blame SaskPower; they will blame the management, they will blame the workers and yes, they should blame us.

And I believe that if that occurs, it will be unforgivable because we most certainly in this province should be able to provide safety for our people on something like this in a land where we know it's going to get to 40 below.

For these reasons, I will of course be supporting this legislation and I do so with a heavy heart and I tell you why. Not because — as everyone knows here — I am a great proponent of union work and everything else. I am a proponent of employment, okay? I'm the proponent for all of workers in this province, everybody who wants to make a decent living.

I do it with a heavy heart, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I believe unequivocally that this was preventable. This situation should not have come to this. I feel badly that it has. But people who hold entrenched positions are not often very open-minded to be able to see the greater piece. And I most certainly hope that people will be able to come together and resolve the very, very important and difficult and challenging issues that are facing SaskPower. Because what we do here today, and because of this majority in the House with the government, this is going to pass anyway.

The truth of the matter is this. What transpires here is not going to solve the problems. The people who are here today in our galleries, and all those who couldn't make it, they deserve to have their major issues addressed. And if we think that that major issue is simply money, then we are very foolish indeed.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well I at one point there wanted to quickly jump up and say, not me, I didn't do it. But the reality is I guess that we all have an important task today, and that is to face this issue.

I thought that as we came into this week, Deputy Speaker, that it seems ironic that last year we came into this Assembly just a little later than now for a special session. We came into this Assembly for a full week planned ahead, with everybody agreeing that we would all tour around the province because we wanted to talk about Quebec unity and keeping them in the country because that was important. We took a week.

Now we're talking about power for Saskatchewan and the need of course to do something to make sure that we have electricity in our province, and we're supposed to get it done in about half a day, I guess. Maybe that's something to do with the priorities of our government of the day; I don't know. But it makes me wonder just exactly what we've been doing when we look at our own province and try to determine what is important to us.

People were laying blame here earlier and people are pointing fingers and they're already projecting into the future, you know, who we are going to blame if the power does go off. Well how about if we take a look for a minute who we blamed when the power was off before, and what we could have done to prevent those things.

Who stopped the rural underground power development program? Who stopped the program that would've built power lines underground so that we could've been sure that things that happened like the ones that happened up in the Richmond community this fall wouldn't have happened. In that community, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had nine power outages through harvest time — not one, but nine. Three were planned; six were from accidental occurrences, so they put it.

I have a letter here from the minister's office. I don't think I'll bother going into reading the letter because sufficient to say that if three of them were planned and six of them weren't, then a power system failure caused the rest. Some of them were man-made, some of them were machine caused. Nevertheless most of them could have been prevented if we had had the rural underground program continued and those lines hadn't been above ground so that the birds couldn't sit on the wires, so that the insulators couldn't have been shot off, and so that the posts wouldn't have been there for cars to drive into, all of those things that happened.

In the wintertime when the ice lands on all of those wires and they all come tumbling down like they did in Quebec, somebody's going to say — believe it or not — we should have buried those wires. Well maybe we should be looking at that possibility still . . . that we have cut off programs that are going to make all the power workers look bad. It's going to make all the management look bad and we're all going to sit in the dark and try to blame someone else.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have other things that spin off as ramifications of what has happened here, things that we need to look at. Today I had a call from a gentleman from northern Saskatchewan who pointed out to me that he's negotiating his insurance claims or his insurance policy, rather. He's into this

negotiation with SGI and his agent told him, beware. It is very possible that SGI will deny you any kind of a claim if the power goes out this winter. They are presently looking at a program to deny responsibility for power outage damages if you hold a policy in this province. Now that's a serious spin-off if that's true.

(1530)

And I so challenge the government to look into this matter on behalf of that person and all of the people of Saskatchewan that hold policies. He indicated to me that the private companies are also looking at some avenues to try to get out from under their responsibility for any damages caused as a result of power outages.

Now suppose the power's out for five weeks in Saskatchewan like it was in Quebec. Your freezer goes bad, your meat's lost, and you've got no insurance. Your power's out, your waterlines are froze up, and you've got no insurance.

This is a big side issue but it's very important to people and I think we'd better take a look at it. Not just because we're here today because today focuses on those kind of realities that we are coming into. Insurance companies are trying to find ways to get out of having to pay claims.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with all of those kinds of things are issues that we need to address. We have to get back to this Bill.

I looked it over today; it's the first time I've seen it. I'm sure most of them here today have seen it for the first time today. And I have to say that I've seen worse legislation passed by this government. I remember some of the labour legislation that we went through. And I have to say that if we are truly at the end of the day and it's the eleventh hour and you have to do something to force the issue, this is probably as good as you could get.

But it raises some questions. The question like, Deputy Speaker, what do we do when this piece of legislation is over and done with and we've come to 2000 on December 31 and the unions are back at the table again saying, let's bargain again. What happens when the nurses come to want their negotiations? Well what's going to happen is that we are going to be back here legislating each and every union claim in the same way unless we come up with a solution.

Now we have advocated in the past — those of us that sit on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker — we have advocated that SaskPower, SaskTel, and most corporations that are Crown corporations should have compulsory review committees to review the rates at which our gas prices go up and at which our power rates go up.

We've advocated that there should be a system in place, because we've known for a long time that if you have one person appointed to take a look at these things you put all of your eggs in one basket so to speak. And if you happen to have an old retired judge that becomes a little senile when you least expect it, you don't know what you're apt to get. And that is risky.

But if we're going to look at having to watchdog the system,

then we're going to have to look at a system where we put into place a committee of people that can work on solutions. And I'm suggesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that what we're going to end up having to do is to set up a tribunal or some kind of a committee appointed by people from SARM, SUMA, and other working groups in the province. And you're not going to be able to put it into the hands of one retired judge. You're going to have to put it into the hands of a committee of people that will sit down and negotiate with the unions.

Either that or you have the government saying, we're going to do it — which they have in the past — and they come to an impasse and they fail and we'll be back here passing pieces of legislation for each and every dispute that comes. So we're going to have to look for a solution. And that solution, Deputy Speaker, I believe, has to be one where we put it back into the hands of the people and get it out of this Assembly and away from the politics.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will support the government's legislation. It's reasonable at this point in time.

And in our corner of the province if I went home saying that I wouldn't support it, I'd be in a lot more trouble than I will be facing these union fellows outside, because my ranchers are a lot tougher than these guys are.

And I tell you they will not take no for an answer when I come home and say to them how I voted. They'll want to know how I voted and they'll want to know that I voted to guarantee that they'll have electricity for their cow herds and for their water supplies this winter, for their homes. Those people that live 30 and 40 miles away from anybody else out in the country, they're going to demand that I supported giving them electricity. And I'm here to do that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was slow to rise in my seat today because I thought there'd be a lot more New Democrats wanting to get up and explain their actions, but of course they're not going to do so. So I'm going to ask them a few questions, some of those backbenchers over there.

I wonder if they've taken the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to actually take a look at this Bill — really take a good look at it. Well I'll tell them where this Bill came from. This Bill was plagiarized, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It was plagiarized from The Dairy Workers (Maintenance of Operations) Act, 1983, brought in by Grant Devine, clause for clause, word for word. Do the backbenchers even know that you can't even come up with your own legislation? You're going to use the Devine angle?

But there is a difference. Although it was plagiarized, there are some things that have been changed. What has been changed is that, what has been changed is that, when you get to clause 7 or 8, whatever it is, where at least Devine knew at the end of the day he would have to have this brought before a binding arbitrator, this group is not of that view. They feel that it's

better to be, I guess, further to the right, further to the right of Grant Devine, if you can believe it. Maybe you can. We can't tell the difference between those Tories there and those New Democrats there.

But to plagiarize the Bill word for word, didn't you have any more imagination than that? Now all you've done is taken out the part about binding arbitration and imposed your own views. You've imposed your own contract and you're taking away the people's rights.

This is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is why later today I guess it is, we thought it most appropriate, we thought it most appropriate to bring in an amendment. And that amendment will be brought forward by my colleague, the member from Melville, and it essentially plagiarizes what was in this Bill, binding arbitration. Be fair, be fair with the people of this province.

Even Devine . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh. Well I see the members are talking about sincerity. Well I will make sure that you're in your seat today when it comes time to vote. And that former member of Shaunavon, I hope you're in your seat. Don't run away. No, don't you run away, because I'll be looking for you, boy . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh and I'll be here. I'll be here.

Well you know when it comes right down to seeing who votes and how they do, today's the day, buddy, today's the day. So let's do it.

Now you talk about surprises today. I listened to the member from Kindersley. Oh, he claims he understands the problems, you know, that these workers are faced with today. He claims he accepts that this has been a heavy-handed process by the Premier, claims all of that, you bet. But he claims he has no options but to vote with the New Democrats. He claims he has no options. I like to listen to all these people who decided to sort of walk that fence today. Because I'll tell you, at the end of the day, you're only going to have slivers. That's all you're going to get out of this.

And who are you fooling with this stuff? Who are you fooling with this stuff? Look at the orders of the day. Look at our daily orders. They've got Bills on back-to-work legislation, right-to-work legislation; I don't know how many, there's probably 10 Bills that the Tory caucus has brought forward. That's how much they understand. You bet, that's how much they care. And later today I guess it will really, really come clear.

You know question period was interesting today because it certainly wasn't answer period, was it. The questions were put, and I think it's only fair, I think it's only fair, that the Premier stand up and give a speech today in second reading and explain some of the things that were put to him today.

Now the Deputy Premier, the Deputy Premier, he choose to take over, he choose to take over today . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order.

Mr. McPherson: — The Deputy Premier choose to take him

off the hot seat. Well he shouldn't have because I think this Premier has some stuff that he should answer. Not just to these workers, but to everyone in this province today. That is, why is it fair that he has two sets of rules? Why is it fair that he has a set of rules for his buddy, Jack Messer? Why is it that he has a set of rules for all those hundreds of patronage positions that he has stuck into the Crowns? Why is it fair that he can give twelve and a half per cent pay increases to his staff over here in his office and all those ministers' offices — why is that fair? Every time it has to go to a third party, you know, it's to his benefit and his friends' benefit.

Well, Mr. Premier, you got some answering to do to these people. Why is it fair that the former member from Shaunavon — the Premier-to-be, I guess he is — can take a position in 1982, oh, he's going to cough up two thousand bucks, he wants everyone to join with him, cough up two thousand bucks and help the families of these people that were having some labour disputes of the day. Well I'm saying there isn't one of you over there that doesn't have \$4,400 more, if you want to cough it up, than the people here. Because we refused to take that pay increase that the Premier brought forward. Okay. You each got 4,400 bucks. How many are there? There must be a quarter million bucks there. Pony it up. And pony it up and give it to the families of the people that you locked out. Because let's be clear . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — I'm saying, Mr. Premier, get your people to pony it up today. A quarter million bucks. You know, there was an agreement I guess reached at one point. And what was it — 7.1 per cent that the IBEW and SaskPower management came to an agreement on? Your government, and it ends with you, Mr. Premier, chose not to take that.

What did that mean in dollar terms? It meant 1 million bucks, roughly, over three years; 300,000 bucks a year. Is that not coincidental that Jack Messer's severance was 300,000 bucks or that you've got almost 300,000 bucks from the money you kept. Where's the fairness?

You think it wasn't 300,000 bucks worth of money that went to your twelve and a half per cent pay increase to your staff, your political hacks — because that's all they are.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — One other thing that is so disappointing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is when there's a dispute, a disagreement on really what, you know, on both sides here. But we've got a Premier who everyone should be looking to for the, I guess, leadership, the direction. And surely we can accept what he's saying as fact.

Leader-Post, Saturday, October 17 . . . I read this the other day, and I could not believe it. There are some comments in here by the Premier. And I will quote right from it: "the danger that something could happen to a hospital and have its power and lights go out." If he isn't trying to escalate this crisis, get the public on board, why did he do that?

I would like him to name me one hospital that doesn't have a

backup generator that has ever been put into a position where they wouldn't have the light and power on. You can't name one. And so you shouldn't have used that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see another part in this editorial, and I'm going to quote:

That would prompt other unions that have already settled within the guidelines to re-open their contracts . . .

He's a lawyer . . . supposedly one that fought for people's rights. Could he stand up and explain how these contracts could be reopened? That can't be done, so why did you say it?

Fairness . . . just be fair with the truth. Be fair with the truth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the Premier. I should say Mr. Deputy Premier . . . don't want to include you in the debate.

That is where the problem is. We have a Premier and his group of cronies and his government that have decided to escalate this war of words — didn't have to be the truth, didn't have to be the truth — they wrestled with that.

We hear too often from him that the power is in jeopardy. Well, Mr. Premier, if you feel the power was in jeopardy, would you look at the people here today, get up and tell them why you locked them out. That's the part that the people of Saskatchewan can't accept from you.

You're saying there's this crisis and you boot them out of their jobs. Why would you do that? Now you can turn in your seat, face the other way all you want. You will have to answer to this before your next election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1545)

Mr. McPherson: — You will answer it. He's making the claims that to go beyond his own imposed wage guidelines is just not affordable. I don't know. I don't have access to the figures. I don't. That is exactly why our position has been firm all along that there should be binding arbitration; somebody who can take and look at the facts and the figures and make a decision based on fact, not on politics like you do. Well, that's what you're doing. That's what you're doing.

And is it affordable? You know what the constituents in Wood River are telling me? They think there are many things that aren't affordable. They don't think that new jet was affordable. They don't. And if you took that same amount of money, maybe you should have filled the potholes in some of the highways in the south-west. That would be affordable. Okay.

I know it's a priority thing with you, that you can't get a grasp on and you can't get a grasp on it because you're 10,000 feet above the people that are driving those roads.

You know what else they say they can't get a handle on? Why this group, why this group, that hopeful Premier and the one beside him, why would they want to spend 30 million bucks in

Guyana? You know, what good is that going to be doing for Saskatchewan? What does that help us right here, back at home.

Well you got all these problems and you're, you're fessing up to them. Well what about the moneys that you're spending in Chile and Argentina and now we hear El Salvador?

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Now the people in the gallery have been very excellent this afternoon in not taking part in the debate and I appreciate that, and I would ask them to continue it.

Mr. McPherson: — Well there's another thing when we're taking about money. You know if they've been looking for 300,000 bucks a year, whatever it was going to come to, to really give us that safe and secure power supply, and it sits with the hopeful Premier right there, does anybody in here think that he does not spend a half million or so a year on his travel around the world? Is there a country you haven't been in at our expense?

Yes, that's quite an answer for you, the guy that has been all around the world at taxpayers' expense. Your . . . (inaudible) . . . your travel alone would have taken care of this problem. Yes. And, sir, I hope you stay here for the vote later today. I don't want to see you do what the Premier did and take a hike.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Now I know that the member knows better than to refer to the presence or the absence of someone in the House and I would ask him to withdraw that statement and continue with his debate. I will ask you to withdraw that statement.

Mr. McPherson: — Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I withdraw that remark.

But it comes down to just a few things. And really it shows why we have taken the position that we are taking. Because really at the end of the day this is not about money. You can try and sell that to the people all you want. This isn't about money; it's about people's rights. That's what it's about . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I do know about it and, you know, you are going to learn about it. This is about people's rights, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You know, when we were deciding and Jim Melenchuk was deciding, how can we be fair to the people of this province, what position are we going to take, we met with the SaskPower management; we met with the workers of SaskPower. And we put questions to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We put questions to them.

And in fact we have letters here with us today. We have letters here today asking . . . and I will be quoting from a letter from the Liberal leader, Jim Melenchuk. He's asking two questions:

If SaskPower ends its lockout and gives you binding arbitration prior to the legislation coming into effect, will you direct your membership to cease all job action and return to work?

We have a response from the workers of SaskPower, from Mr. Gord Gunoff, the business manager . . .

An Hon. Member: — For the record, get it in there.

Mr. McPherson: — For the record, the answer is yes. Yes!

However, yesterday evening, Saturday, October 17, 1998, I called and spoke to Mr. Kelly Staudt, president and CEO of SaskPower, requesting that in light of the coming back-to-work legislation, SaskPower lift its lockout and our members would immediately begin working.

Not only did Mr. Staudt deny this request, he also turned aside my Saturday morning directive to have all IBEW line staff respond to trouble calls.

When I asked Mr. Staudt why he could not pursue these logical steps to de-escalate our dispute, he told me he had been given no direction. And we have to assume that is right from the Premier's office. There's no question that's where it's coming from.

The other question that was asked:

Will you direct your membership to cooperate with SaskPower in completing the maintenance required to prepare for Saskatchewan's electrical needs this winter?

This answer:

I will instruct our membership to work diligently to get SaskPower's generation prepared for the coming winter load as we have always done to ensure a reliable source of power for the people of Saskatchewan.

And you know, it's not just us that he gave this answer to. Mr. Gord Gunoff has been in probably almost daily contact with the Premier. And I have letters stating that. And in fact he's been telling the Premier the same thing he's been telling us. Let our members go back to work; lift the lockout; we'll be there; we'll get this work done.

The only reason that that couldn't happen — the only reason is because of politics from the Premier's office. No question about it.

One has to wonder why it is that other people can take the word of the people that work hard in this province, but the Premier can't. What is it and why is it that he doesn't trust these people?

Now I know members here today would like to . . . and I've heard this a lot here today. I know that members would like to blame everything on SaskPower management for every problem that this corporation has been in and/or has created. And I agree; there are a lot of management problems over at SaskPower. They come right back to that cabinet room because you fill the Crown corporations with your political hacks. And that's where really the problem starts and ends.

However I will end by saying this. Blame as many people as you want. You can blame us; you can blame the workers. Mr. Premier, the buck stops with you and you'd better start showing leadership as a Premier should.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this legislation is without precedent. Of course there have been many occasions in which striking workers have been legislated back to work.

I am not aware of any time in history, anywhere, where workers have been legislated back to work who have not been on strike. Of course in point of fact, they are under lockout, and they are under lockout by the same people now who would legislate them back to work.

This is without precedent and probably will qualify the Saskatchewan legislature into the Guinness book.

However having said that, we do have a serious situation. Winter is coming, the pre-winter maintenance is behind schedule, and the overriding concern of the people of Saskatchewan is that our power supply will be guaranteed this winter.

How can that be accomplished? Well my colleague from Melville will be moving binding arbitration, and I would ask all members to seriously consider that option because if that is followed, that would mean that the workers will go back into the plants with a dedicated and good frame of mind, giving their most to power service in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I think we all have some concern that disgruntled workers are not always the best workers. Binding arbitration I think can get the good spirit back into Saskatchewan Power that we desperately need.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — It has come home to me in the last few weeks that there is serious concern about generating capacity and power service to this province, a concern that has nothing to do with the current labour dispute.

It has come to my attention that we have consistently in SaskPower management underestimated the amount of power usage that we will need to plan for. That SaskPower management projected for 1.5 per cent increase a year; in fact it's been 3 per cent.

Of course, as we all know, SaskPower management called for increased generating capacity: they asked for co-gen proposals; money was put up; plans were made; applications came forward from various concerns and companies; and then Saskatchewan Power cancelled the whole thing saying that the generating capacity would not be needed.

Now we are told the generating capacity was very definitely needed and our generating capacity may be inadequate to see us through the winter, and that is an enormous concern to all Saskatchewan people.

My constituents are very concerned that Saskatchewan Power has not been well managed. There is great concern that routine maintenance has not been done, despite large profits from Saskatchewan Power going into general revenue, and despite the \$2 reconstruction fee on every power bill.

Hundred-million-dollar profits going into the provincial treasury. Much bragging that Saskatchewan Power has been an efficient cash cow for the government of Saskatchewan, but meanwhile the infrastructure has been ignored.

I am told that leaning power poles are not replaced; that instead Saskatchewan Power waits until they fall down and then need to be fixed on an emergency basis. I am told that Saskatchewan workers are phoned at home about power outages because the com-line, the hotline simply is rarely working. You can't get through to it. There's no answer or it's ringing busy. It is severely underserved.

However, my constituents say that the first priority must be safety — it must be to ensure that power will be on this winter. I congratulate my colleague for Thunder Creek for making an excellent speech on the rights of the workers, but we must also balance that on the rights of the people of this province to power supply.

Well I also . . . I listened with great interest to the member for Wood River, yes, and I'm proud of the fact that the Liberals have led the charge for respect for the workers' rights in this matter.

However I must tell you that in terms of fairness to workers, my constituents believe that 6 per cent over three years is fair, given the present financial situation of our province. We know that many people in our province will not be getting even the 6 per cent increase over the next few years.

We are told that net farm income is likely to be cut in half this year. We know that many of our oil workers are being laid off. We know that sale of oil royalties is declining and I think it is inevitable that on many fronts provincial revenues this year will decline.

So I have to say in this House that my constituents believe that 6 per cent over three years is fair given the present financial climate of our province. However the government's own position on 6 per cent of course has been undermined by the way they have treated the patronage appointments in Saskatchewan Power.

Last week in the Crown Corporations Committee I moved that political interference and patronage be removed from the Crown corporations, and incredibly, every single New Democratic member of the committee voted against that motion.

I must say in all fairness that the Saskatchewan Party did support that motion, but the NDP voted against it to a person, those selfsame patronage appointments that the NDP believe ought to be there get more than the 6 per cent. And I guess that is why the government continues to support and believe in political interference in our Crowns.

(1600)

My constituents have made it clear to me that they want me to support this legislation. However I believe that it can be improved and strengthened by accepting the amendment of my colleague from Melville. Because if we accept binding arbitration, we accomplish two things. We get the workers back

to work in a good frame of mind; and we then get the guarantee of power service this coming winter.

Well I hear a member saying that that would cost more than 6 per cent. I think that would be a question for the arbitrator. I think there is a good issue to be made in arbitration that 6 per cent would be seen as fair. As I say, my constituents tell me 6 per cent is fair. And so why would an arbitrator not consider the financial situation of the province and the fact we have zero inflation in North America today when deciding whether or not we would have 6 per cent through arbitration.

It is also clear from what Mr. Messer has told us recently that collective bargaining could have worked in this situation had not the cabinet intervened. So it is sad that we have been called back to legislate when in point of fact the collective bargaining process could have been successful.

I want to congratulate the Power workers who last weekend came out in the snowstorm and suspended all job action in order to deal with the crisis when 30,000 homes were without service. And I think we all should recognize the dedication of our Power workers for that.

And I want to say that I have also been impressed with the number of Power workers I have spoken to over the last few weeks who come across to me as having a dedication to the corporation and to the people of Saskatchewan they serve and to having a broader interest here than merely getting a large increase.

I want to say that I am proud of my leader and my colleagues for having placed the issue of workers' rights in the centre of this debate. However, workers' rights must also be balanced against the overriding public interest. Liberals have traditionally supported back-to-work legislation and have supported binding arbitration where the public interest demands.

Ironically, Premier Ross Thatcher was a proponent of arbitration for essential services to prevent strikes in essential services. At that time he was considered anti-labour for that demand, and of course today we see that that is precisely what the union wants, is binding arbitration in essential services.

And we no longer hear the NDP saying that that is anti-labour; instead we hear them saying that would be far too rich and cannot be granted to labour. So now we see the NDP endorsing, one, back-to-work legislation which they criticized, but also denying the right to binding arbitration. I'm proud that the Liberals have led the charge on workers' rights and I would remind all members that liberalism is based on the rights of the individual. But we all recognize that there simply are times when the overriding public good must come first. And I have come to the conclusion that this is such a time.

Legislating the workers back to work will not make up for the mismanagement and poor planning at Saskatchewan Power. But I cannot in conscience say that we do not need back-to-work legislation today. It is clear to me that back-to-work legislation is required, is required to make sure that the pre-winter maintenance work gets done and to make sure that within the very best efforts of the Corporation and its workers that service will be assured to the people of Saskatchewan this winter.

More important though, I think what is really needed is to get back to the purposes for which Saskatchewan Power was created in the first place. You know the phrase, power for a province. That's why we got Saskatchewan Power. We did not create Saskatchewan Power to be a cash cow for the government. We did not create Saskatchewan Power to get involved in risky foreign investments.

We created Saskatchewan Power to provide service for the people and province of Saskatchewan. I think there is great concern on the part of everyone that this has been lost sight of in recent years. And we have to get back to it; we have to get back to the Crown corporations serving the people and province of Saskatchewan.

So in conclusion, my position is simply this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would ask all members of this House to seriously consider the issue of binding arbitration as a way of resolving this dispute. However after that question is resolved, I find myself regretfully in the position that I must support back-to-work legislation in order to assure power service to Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Normally I'm very proud to be able to stand up and speak to a piece of legislation in this House; unfortunately I don't have the same enthusiasm today with this particular type of legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I could I'd kind of like to bring this down to . . . away from the big union, big government scenario that we're talking about and get it down to the people that work and live next to me in my constituency not only at Gardiner dam, but as well within the other sectors of health care, education, what have you.

As I was out this morning when some of the workers were picketing out front and walking amongst them a bit, I noticed that many of them had jackets on that said, fan or coach on the sleeve, or supporter. And we have to realize that these people that have been locked out of their jobs are members of our communities and members that may well live next door to you or to me or to any of the members across the floor as well. They're contributing members to the community in terms of they're coaches on hockey teams, they support the bingos, they're members of service clubs, you name it. They're there; they're one of us. So I think we need to bring it down to that.

And that's the reason I rise today, to give support to the workers that I have . . . certainly with IBEW in my constituency. And I want some questions answered by the members opposite and certainly the Premier.

I guess some of the questions that the workers are wondering is why would a worker from Gardiner dam be locked out? Wake up some morning, go to work, have a locked door slammed in his face and that's the end of it. No questions, no answers.

Well I guess maybe, why did they get locked out? Well is it because they did their jobs, Mr. Speaker? Was it because as one

gentleman talked to me and said, I worked 600 hours of overtime last year and I got no thanks for it. Is that why they locked him out?

We'd like some answers, and the Premier, the Deputy Premier as well, is not very forthcoming with those questions, or with those answers to those questions, and I'd like to know exactly why that is.

The perception in the public's eye, and I know that all the members in this House today and certainly the members on this side including the Saskatchewan Party, know full well that people out there are saying that they want their power on. They're concerned that the power will go off and they won't have heat and they won't have light and all those type of things. And I want the same. I know what they're saying and they want it.

A lot of the people, you've heard the member from North Battleford say that they believe that the settlement that was on the table that was very nearly settled by the union and by SaskPower was a fair one, and I believe it was as well. And I do believe that the two sides could have come to agreement and would have come to agreement that would have been much the same as what we're seeing in today's legislation.

The perception is out there as well — and it's one that the Premier has never tried to rectify — is that . . . the perception is that, by the people in my constituency and I'm sure all across the province, that the union is on strike and don't understand that they were locked out not by SaskPower, but by this government across the floor. And that's a perception that has to be rectified and one that I'm working very hard to do and I hope the Premier will be forthcoming in making that known as well.

I talked about . . . we've talked about the wage settlement. Certainly our farmers in Saskatchewan are suffering. In some areas we've had poor crops. Two dollar and fifty cent wheat doesn't pay the bills. We've got massive waiting lists in health care; we've got people suffering and dying because of this government's health care reform. But we shouldn't blame the workers for that. It's not their problem. It's the government's fault, Mr. Speaker, that we're in that position we are today.

I recall back several weeks ago when there was a new gambling minister appointed in this House, Mr. Speaker. And one of her first words of wisdom were, from the member from Wascana Plains was that when asked about VLTs (video lottery terminal) in this province, whether it should be a vote or not, she replied well no, we're not going to allow a vote because people just don't understand. The public just doesn't understand, Mr. Speaker.

Well I think some of our workers — SaskPower workers — just don't understand why they were locked out. Why were the folks at Gardiner dam locked out and couldn't go to work? Why do they have to be legislated back to work when they weren't on strike and they were locked out?

And they want to know that why, when they were very close to a settlement, that cabinet said no, we don't want a settlement; we want to have the opportunity to legislate them back to work. I think those are the things that people don't understand.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be very brief and just a couple more comments but I would like to as well ask another new member of this House and a member of the cabinet, the Associate Minister of Health, what does she think about this settlement? We haven't heard her speak today and I'm wondering why we haven't.

And I'm wondering what she would have to say to her health care workers when their name appears on the next piece of legislation legislating them back to work. Maybe the government was thinking about legislating hours that health care workers work. They should maybe be a little longer. A little less pay, a little longer hours.

Health care workers, Mr. Speaker, in this province have been knocked down, they've been kicked, they've been stomped on since . . . in the last seven years since this government took over power. And the final insult to them will be when that minister, the former SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses) president, will come forward and say, yes, we're going to legislate you back to work, you folks, because we need you to work longer hours because we don't have any nurses in this province.

The alarming thing that I see again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing today, is the trend that's been set by this government since they came to power in 1991. We go back and we can look at the retroactive legislation of the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contract. We have seen this government totally ignore the wishes of some hundred thousand people in the Plains debate and say, no, government knows best. And now today we've come to this, where the government is legislating some workers back to work who were never on strike, who were locked out by this government, and who the government has turned their backs on.

And that's one of the problems, Mr. Speaker, with this legislation, and one of the reasons why I will have a hard time supporting it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1615)

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and, by leave of the Assembly, referred to a Committee of the Whole later this day.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. With leave, to introduce a motion to substitute names on Crown Corporations Committee.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Substitution of Names on Crown Corporations Committee

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly:

That the names of Mr. Boyd and Mr. Toth be substituted for those of Mr. Bjornerud and Mr. Heppner on the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 65 — The Maintenance of Saskatchewan Power Corporation's Operations Act, 1998

The Deputy Chair: — I would like the minister to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes. I'm pleased to have with me today Darryl Bogdasavich, who's the executive director of civil law for the Department of Justice; Darcy McGovern from legislative services; and Mike Shaw who is the vice-president of Crown Investments Corporation; and Ted Boyle who's the director of communications for the Crown Investments Corporation.

Clause 1

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I guess it would be. Mr. Minister, welcome and welcome to your officials. I'm hoping, Mr. Minister, that the fact that you are the one that's answering questions on behalf of the government does not indicate that you are not going to be prepared to answer questions about SaskPower's . . . the operations of SaskPower. Can we clear that little bit up here first?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well, the plan today — if it's okay with the members and the Chair — is that questions like that will be handled by the minister for the Crown Investments Corporation, and that's why he's here with me.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, thank you. So you might as well sit back and relax because I don't think there's much we want to talk to you about.

Mr. Minister, we understand the first issue . . . there's a number of issues that we raised in question period that we want to discuss with you, about SaskPower's management ability and the direction that the company is headed in terms of the ability to manage the electrical output that is so necessary as we move into the winter months. We want to talk about that. We want to talk about management wage increases and a whole host of other things.

Mr. Minister, the importance of maintaining electrical supply to the people of Saskatchewan certainly can't be understated and is extremely important. Business has to be maintained. Our homes have to be maintained. Hospitals have to be maintained. All of those kinds of institutions that we have, schools — you name it — all have to be maintained.

We understand that the current capacity of SaskPower is about 2,835 megawatts. I would wonder, Mr. Minister, if you would care to confirm that for us. And we also understand that the peak demand is currently estimated at 2,830 — very, very tight margins, as you know.

And you alluded to that fact in question period that as a result of low water levels in Manitoba that they may not have the capacity in terms of hydroelectric generation capacity to be in a position to export much in terms of electrical supply to

Saskatchewan.

Certainly it's pretty well-known that in Alberta the situation . . . the government's already announced that they may be looking at rotating planned power outages — brownouts I guess they'd be known as. They're already looking at that. We hear that coming out of the United States, the Basin, I believe it's called, that they may have some difficulty in supplying to Saskatchewan. So in spite of all of the reciprocating agreements that your government has with other administrations, we may be in a position where SaskPower does not have the generation capacity and may not be able to bring in power from outside sources. I would wonder if you would care to comment at this point.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite to . . . I think in question period — and I understand how question period goes, but the high degree of . . . no, no, the high degree of rhetoric and the attack on the people who do the planning in Power — I really don't expect that if we search the record that the member meant some of the things that he said about the engineers and people who do the planning in SaskPower. Obviously the recommendations that come forward in the Power Corporation based on the needs and the supply side are not made by the CEO or by the chairman of the board. They are based on recommendations that come from the engineers and plant managers who see the power supply going out and therefore are required to produce the power.

When we came to government in 1991, you are right, the recommendations at that time of the Devine administration — based on their engineers, of course, not decided by Mr. Devine or George Hill, but the same engineers, many of them who are in place today as were in place in 1991 — were that the growth rate in our Power Corporation would be 1 per cent. Why is that? Because the growth of the economy in 1991 and 1990, 1989, was about 1 per cent growth in the economy and therefore the power supply was growing by about 1 per cent. And the projections in all power companies in western Canada was that that would continue on into the next millennium or to the year 2000. So the supply management people were recommending, whether it was in TransAlta or the Manitoba Hydro or Basin Electric, that based on the growth of the economy in the western part of Canada and even the western states, would be about 1 per cent.

Well as the resource economy took off in the mid-1990s . . . And I'm not saying that that was because you had Conservative governments in Alberta or NDP in Saskatchewan. The fact of the matter was at the world economy resources became king and there was a great demand for resources. There was record oil drilling, therefore the need for more power than what an analyst had predicted. And we had record numbers of oil wells being drilled. Of course then you need motors on those pump jacks, and the growth wasn't 1 per cent, but power supply in Alberta and Saskatchewan grew from about 1 per cent per annum to, in 1995 and '96 and '97, a growth in the power needs of about three and a half per cent. And that has sent power corporations in western Canada scrambling to keep up with the demand.

I would argue quite vehemently with you that this isn't a private sector versus public sector issue as to why the economy is

growing fast in western Canada. It's growing because of the demand for resources in large part, therefore more jobs, more houses being built. And the supply of power in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba is growing much faster than what the analysts and the engineers were predicting based on world growth in the economy.

So we now find ourselves that whether you're TransAlta, a privately owned company, or whether you're Basin Electric, which is a combination of the two south of the border, or Manitoba Hydro or SaskPower, the growth rates in the corporation are larger than what we had expected.

Just so you know that in our corporation we have a production side of about 2,870 kilowatts, 2,870 kilowatts . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . megawatts, pardon me; of course. We have import capacity of 375 megawatts and interruptible of about 200 megawatts. We have a demand side, a peak demand side of 2,865.

So if you combined all of those options of interruptible, import, and our own production, we have a margin of about 20 per cent in the corporation. The industry standard is about 12 per cent. And so we feel, based on not my opinion or the CEO's opinion, but the people who manage the plants and produce the power and export the power around the province, that we have a margin that will allow us to maintain our operation of providing a non-interruptible power supply to our communities that will keep us in good stead this winter.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. So you can provide the people of Saskatchewan with the view and the position and the guarantee that we will not, as a result of mismanagement of SaskPower, see interruptions in power — not as a result of lines going down or anything like that, acts of God, we all understand that those kinds of things can happen — but in terms of planning capacity? You can provide the people of Saskatchewan with the complete assurance and guarantee that we will not see any kind of rotating brownouts that the Government of Alberta is talking about?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Of course there's no way of predicting disasters or ice storms and that kind of thing, and the member is I think accurate in saying that if that kind of a situation were to develop, then all bets are off. I mean there's no way of knowing in a natural disaster that you can provide power to all parts of the province. But based on what we now know as a normal winter and even a tougher than normal winter, that we will have the power supply that we need.

The other thing that I would mention to the member opposite that we also have contracted in the Meridian project 215 megawatts of power which will come on stream in the fall of 1999. And so even though the growth in the corporation this year is expected to be about 3 per cent, you do rough numbers, 3 per cent on 3,000 megawatts of power, take or give a few megawatts, the demand next year will . . . 3 per cent on that number would be about 180 megawatts that we will need. With 215 coming on we think we're going to be in good shape going out into the year 2000.

(1630)

Now if the economy continues to grow, which obviously we hope it does, at a rate of 3 or 4 per cent and the power demand at 3 or 4 per cent, other projects will have to be brought on. But as the member opposite knows, having a lot of sunk costs in capacity that are not being used simply only adds to the cost of your rate per kilowatt hour for your consumer.

So it's a neat balance to try to keep in place a situation where you have enough for the needs of the public but not so much that you have borrowed money to build plants or to build capacity that isn't being used to the proper degree. So based on what we know at the present time, we will in fact be able to ensure a proper power supply this winter.

Mr. Boyd: — Could you provide us with detail as to where the importable power that you are talking about, the 375 megawatts, is going to be coming from?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Could you ask . . . (inaudible) . . . What was the question?

Mr. Boyd: — Could you provide us with detail as to where the importable power that you mentioned is going to be coming from? The 375 megawatts of power, a breakdown between the different suppliers that we may be looking at.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — These are contracted power supplies. So when you talk about where that power is going to be coming from, the 375 megawatts, this isn't power that we're going out and looking for, for this winter; this is contracted power and it would break down in some configuration. I'll get you a closer number on this. But this would come from Alberta, Manitoba, and south of us in Basin Electric where we have interconnects.

So it would be a combination of the three. But I want to make it clear again, for you and for the public, this is not power that we need and are going out shopping for, this is power that has already been contracted for this winter.

Mr. Boyd: — So you have solid contracts with companies in terms of reciprocating agreements, other utilities to provide power to Saskatchewan. We just want the names of those companies and I think we'll substantiate them on our own, Mr. Minister.

The 200 megawatts of interruptible power, who and what is interrupted first?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Just so you know the way the plan of interruptible power works, we have special arrangements with several of our large customers to . . . in return for a lower rate that they pay for their power, they have in the portion of the contracts that they can be interrupted. And so these are known as companies that have interruptible power.

And for signing a contract which is in place for a number of years and was a practice under your administration, they buy their power based on an interruptible clause which means they pay less than you would if you had a non-interruptible agreement. And that amounts to 200 megawatts. And I don't have the list of the companies. I'm just checking with my staff to see whether it's proper and appropriate for me to release that.

Mr. Boyd: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think the people of Saskatchewan would think it is important to know that you indeed have a plan to deal with power shortages should they come into place.

I'm not quite certain we can just accept your word here in the legislature that you have those kinds of agreements without knowing some detail on them. As well as the 375 megawatts of power that you claim is available to Saskatchewan from other sources, I think we need some detail as to that.

Because we're not talking about whether or not there's enough of some sort of service that isn't important to the people of Saskatchewan; we're talking about electricity for their homes, for people's businesses, for their farms, for hospitals, for schools, all of those kinds of things. It's a very, very important question and a very important decision to make sure that we have all of those kinds of concerns covered off for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, does your projection match with the corporation's current ability . . . your projections meet with the government's current ability to provide to the people of Saskatchewan? What I'm saying is, if there is not available power from these other sources with respect to the question that we asked you in question period, if the 375 megawatts is not available from these other sources, what contingency plans do you have?

Now what I'm saying is, if there isn't power available from Alberta, if there isn't power available from Manitoba, if there isn't power available from the basin, what are we going to do then? We don't have the generation capacity here in Saskatchewan. And you know yourself, Mr. Minister, that that could easily happen, I think. We could see a . . . typically speaking, when we see a very, very extended cold period in Saskatchewan, it's the result of a large, high-pressure zone that's invaded basically all of western Canada and the northern U.S. And those can happen in Saskatchewan and regularly do happen in Saskatchewan, and we could be looking at an extended period of time where that could happen, where other utilities do not have extra power to send to Saskatchewan.

And I think those reciprocal agreements, if I'm correct . . . that's how they operate. They will sell if they have additional capacity, but if they don't have additional capacity . . . The minister is shaking his head, no. I would ask then, if you would care to explain to the people of Saskatchewan how those reciprocating agreements work if the other utilities do not have excess generation capacity.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — The fact of the matter is, as the deregulation process takes place in Canada — and you'll know the history under the Mulroney government and governments in the United States, and then the interprovincial barriers being removed — the fact of the matter is, more and more companies are going to be allowed to sell their power to whom they choose. And so the words "reciprocating agreement" are beginning to fade, and what we have now is contracted power.

And so when we talk about having 375 megawatts of power imported and contracted, this is power that we have already purchased and committed to buying and has been committed to delivering to us. This isn't a matter of them having some extra

power and finding a place to put it. We have actual contracts for this power. So it's very important. It's a very important question for all of us to try to deal with the issue because it's fundamentally different than it used to be 10 years ago where we had reciprocating agreements and that meant that if you had some extra power you would try to go out and get rid of it.

More and more, as it is with natural gas, we are much, much more dependent on imported gas as a percentage of our gas we use in our homes and factories than we are power. And so the reason we can have confidence that we're going to have gas in our furnaces and electricity in our switches when we flip them is because contracts are signed for the power and for the gas that we need.

And the member says, well what if there's a catastrophe in the area where the power is coming from, then you're into a different issue where we're talking about a natural disaster, and then we would have to have contingency plans.

But as far as options for this 375, there is no option under present situations on other than a disaster where these companies would have the option of turning off the power, because this is contracted power.

And it's much the same as what we're doing with TransAlta, with Husky in terms of buying 215 megawatts of power from them for 25 years. This is not an issue of whether that power will be available to us or to somebody else. We have a signed deal that will deliver that 215 megawatts for that period of time. And it's not an option for TransAlta or Husky to take that power even if they could get more money for it and deliver it to someone else.

And so these are contracts. And I want to make it very clear, and I know that you understand, but for those who may not be here in this legislature, people who may be paying attention although there may be few, but the fact of the matter is that these are contracted power agreements, and so that 375, unless there's some sort of a disaster, will be available to us.

Mr. Boyd: — So we understand you clearly, Mr. Minister, these are signed, guaranteed supply agreements with no caveats whatsoever. Is that correct? There are no caveats on the contracts whatsoever. They're guaranteed supply agreements, supply contracts with no caveats.

So if Alberta for some reason is experiencing some difficulties in terms of capacity there, even though they are experiencing difficulty, TransAlta would have to live up to their agreements that they may have made here in Saskatchewan. Or the same with Manitoba Hydro. If Manitoba has some difficulties with supplying to their subscribers first, they still have an obligation to meet with the supply contracts that are signed here in this province.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — My understanding of the contracted power supply is that we are one of their customers. And if we contract with them either for gas or electricity, and we have a contract with them, we have the right to receive the energy source. And as we get more and more into deregulation, and this is what we've been trying to bring home to people, the importance of . . . Just saying deregulation, we really have to

understand what that means. In a fully deregulated system, the companies will sell their gas or their power to who will pay them the most. And this is why it then becomes a fully competitive, integrated transmission system, over time, where people will contract the power from where they can get it the cheapest.

And this comes to the basis of what we're talking about in terms of power and why we have been opposed to deregulation in our caucus, because at some point in time, if the customer can buy their power cheaper from Manitoba Hydro than they can from our coal-generated power at Estevan, the customers will be able to do that. And so we have said we want to keep the regulated system as long as we can so we keep our power production going at Estevan and Coronach and our other power supplies.

But as you know, federal and other provinces want deregulation. This will change the whole face of how power is purchased, and IPSCO will be able to go into the market and if they can buy it cheaper from Manitoba or Basin Electric, they will be able to do that. And we can say all we want about how they should have to buy it from Estevan or Coronach. In a deregulated system this will change, and it will change fundamentally.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, we'll approach this from another direction because we're not getting the answer that I think the people of Saskatchewan want. You're skirting the issue here. Are we on the other utilities' interruptible list? Maybe that's a better way of putting the question to you.

In Saskatchewan we have interruptible power agreements with subscribers. Are we on an interruptible power agreement with other utilities? That is to say, if they don't have generation capacity or they've got peak load demands in their jurisdiction, are we first off, even though we have agreements with them for supply — supply agreement contracts? Are we going to be putting at risk people in Saskatchewan because those contracts are not ironclad that they are guaranteed to supply, no matter what?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I can only . . . I mean, I can't give you a guarantee that if there's a disaster that the power is not interruptible, as the member says from his seat. But nor can I guarantee that if there's a disaster at Coronach or Estevan, and I said that in my opening statement. But as far as contracted power, we have 375 megawatts of contracted power from outside of the province.

Mr. Boyd: — So it's interruptible power from out of the province. Is that what you're saying, that if there's difficulties in other jurisdictions that the power here that we have contracted is not guaranteed but it is interruptible?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — It's my understanding, and to the member opposite, that this is power that we have purchased. And I want to make it very clear to you that this is no different than any other customer, whether it's gas or whether you're buying other commodities. The fact of the matter is that if some disaster would happen in that area that stopped it from happening . . . but these are contracts that we have with these companies to deliver the power.

And I might add to the member opposite that we have production in the province that is equal to the demand. It is equal to the demand. I gave you the number . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I gave the member the numbers earlier. And we have 200 megawatts of interruptible and 375 of imported power, which means we have 20 per cent — 20 per cent — over and above what we think we will need.

Now the members are concerned about that. But if it isn't 20 per cent over, how much money, if you were running the Power Corporation, would you spend on? Would you have 25 per cent? Would you have 50 per cent? Obviously the industry standard is 12 per cent. So we're 8 per cent above the industry standard.

Now you're saying we should have more. But maybe you should tell us, if it's not 8 per cent over industry standards, what would you invest in excess power?

(1645)

I know you wanted to build a nuclear power plant when you were in government. And you know where we'd be at with that nuclear power plant today if we had followed your advice in 1991 and gone ahead with it? We would be about three years from completion. We would have overruns of about a billion dollars, going by other nuclear power plants being built in this same time frame. And we would have shortages of power for sure because we'd be waiting for 10 years to get the power plant built.

Now I know what your plan was when you came into . . . If you would have been elected in 1991, you would have gone ahead with a nuclear power plant. That was the commitment of your government at the time. But I'm saying that . . . and that was being driven from the top. That was not coming from the people within the organization.

When you talk about political involvement, we all know where that deal was coming from. It was coming from the political side, and one guy by the name of Eric Berntson, who was driving that nuclear power plant concept. You know that. And you know where we would be if you had continued to manage the Power Corporation.

But I want to ask you, if 20 per cent margin isn't enough when the industry standard is 12, could you tell us what is then that we should be shooting for . . . for the amount that we have in excess power?

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that review of history that you always like to present to the legislature. A very one-sided view of history, but nevertheless a view of history. And you are probably right that there would have been cost overruns, judging by the way you guys manage everything else and the fact that we have a Crown Construction Tendering Agreement here in Saskatchewan. Undoubtedly there would have been huge cost overruns had you been operating the development of the nuclear industry here in Saskatchewan.

I want to get back to what our point is, Mr. Minister, on the supply agreements from other provinces and other jurisdictions. And I'd ask you to try — I know it's difficult for you to do —

but try and confine your thoughts to this area for a moment, Mr. Minister. We have these supply agreements, and you say they're ironclad, but of course we haven't taken delivery of that power. We have no way of storing that stuff up. We haven't taken delivery of it.

So are you saying to the people of Saskatchewan, even though we have these agreements and they're ironclad, there is no . . . we are not on an interruptible basis with the TransAlta or the Manitoba Hydro or the Basin Power Company. We're not on any kind of interruptible, and there's no delivery problems or anything like that. You can guarantee the supply of electricity to the people of Saskatchewan because we have ironclad guarantees with the other jurisdictions and other power companies that are not interruptible in any way in terms of delivery or in generation capacity.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I can only reiterate the numbers that I've given you, that we have equal amount of capacity in the province to the demand. They're in neat balance, and I think that is the most efficient kind of power corporation you can run: where your sunk costs and investments in generation of power are used to the peak degree.

Some would argue that you should have a few extra power plants sitting around, which is the case in Ontario where under Conservative and other governments they built nuclear power plants all over the place, and they ended up with a mess that is unbelievable in terms of the amount of power that they could produce through nuclear and others, and then they find out at the end of the day they have to redo the whole scheme.

The fact of the matter is I would argue that the management team in Power in the 1980s and '90s have done an excellent job of keeping that power supply in neat context with the demand. And I would say that during the 1980s as well as during the 1990s. And what you have to know is many of the managers who run the plants and do the work and the workers who do the work are the same people. And they have done a good job of matching the amount of production with the amount of needs in the community and its match. And they supplement that with imported power and interrupted power.

Now what could be a better business plan than that, whether it was in the 1980s or in the 1990s, because the problem is, is if you build 400 or 500 megawatts of power extra, you have to borrow the money. It sits idle.

If you can get contracted power to fill in the gaps from other jurisdictions or if you can have companies that are willing to take interruptible power at a lower rate for their power . . . I think that theory worked in the 1980s, is working in the 1990s, and I think it's one of the reasons that our power company, when analyzed by many experts from all across Canada, say that in terms of the generation and supply of power it is in fact a well-run company. And those documents are available.

This is not a company that is in shoddy terms as to the work of the employees or to the work of the management. And for you to try to say that, I think only leads us to the conclusion that you're trying to implement and sway the public to sell these darn things. That's really what the agenda is.

You've said it publicly; it's in your policy. I'm not going to bore you with reading back what you gave to us in the 1996 review, but you said at that time you should privatize SaskTel and then use that information you gain from privatizing SaskTel to privatize SaskPower, SaskEnergy and SGI. So we know what your agenda is.

But don't go about it by trying to destroy the men and women who run our power corporation. Just have the bravery of heart to stand up and say, they're good people but philosophically I believe in privatization and that's what I want to do.

Don't try to rip apart the people who are doing the planning in the corporation or the people who are burning the coal in the plants when really what your strategy is to privatize the corporation and destroy its image in the process in order to achieve your philosophical goals — because that isn't fair.

The fact of the matter is SaskPower is a well-run corporation. I say again the amount of power we generate is equal to the demand, and we supplement that with 20 per cent over that with interruptible and imported power.

Now if you've got a better strategy than that, tell us how much extra power we should have on the drawing board. It's costly because you have to pay for it. Once you contract it, it's take or pay. You have to . . . you can't contract for it and by the same token if you don't need it, say well too bad, we thought we needed it and we don't. You have to take it and shut down some of your plants which is not very efficient.

So if it's not 20 per cent, tell us how much in excess we should have.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, we hope you are right — and I think the people of Saskatchewan hope you are right — about your ability to manage the affairs over at SaskPower.

But given your track record in terms of contracts, we're not so certain that the people of Saskatchewan have that confidence any longer. We have the same, largely the same geniuses over there that brought us Channel Lake and Guyana — Carole Bryant and Bill Hyde, and people like that over there — that are still making some of the decisions over there, even though they've messed up big time in terms of other areas of management. And their management expertise has certainly been called into question around the province of Saskatchewan.

We're just finished getting over the completion of hearings about Channel Lake. And you get up and say to us, oh, we got these contracts, and they're all okay, and don't worry about it. Well the last contracts that SaskPower had to handle in terms of Channel Lake, you got duped out of millions of dollars by some pretty sharp operators that took you guys deep and the taxpayers of this province — took them deep. And you seem to get up and you slough that all off by saying, oh well, we've got good people over there, and don't worry about it.

Well, I think there's lots to worry about, Mr. Minister, because the last time you said we got good contracts and don't worry about it, it cost us five million and change — the people of Saskatchewan. So why would we take any more assurance

today from the fact that you have contracts with outside utilities?

Even though you're hedging as much as you possibly can, you won't say whether they're interruptible or non-interruptible. You won't say whether they're guaranteed in terms of delivery or not guaranteed in terms of delivery. All of those kinds of things enter the picture, Mr. Minister, but yet you don't want to discuss them.

You want to go on some sort of a political tirade that the opposition will do untold things to the people of Saskatchewan if they're given the opportunity to govern. Well, Mr. Minister, we're not in a position of being in government right now. You guys are the ones that are in government. You're the ones that have to answer the questions about the future of Saskatchewan right now, and what you would have the people of Saskatchewan do. So don't get into this long-winded speech that you always want to get into about questioning other people's motives. It's your motives right now that are at question, sir. It's your motives and the motives of the Premier of this province; it's your political appointees that are the question mark in people's minds.

Are the same people that are running these supply contracts that you claim are guaranteed and ironclad, the same bright bunch that brought us Guyana and Channel Lake? The same bright bunch that just got paid off to the tune of about a million dollars roughly in terms of severance payment? Have we got the same kind of people running things?

At least, you know, at the end of the day you could always count on in terms of one thing with Jack Messer. I have to give him credit for that. At least at the end of the day you could count on him to ram things through if it was necessary. He was great at that. And in conversations that I've had with you and other members of cabinet, you acknowledge that. Jack may have had a style that you didn't agree with, but he got the job done in a lot of ways. We didn't agree with his style in a lot of ways either, but it certainly didn't result in the kinds of problems that we have currently in terms of power agreements that you claim are ironclad and guaranteed here in Saskatchewan.

So even though you claim that we have lots of power, even though you claim that we have 375 megawatts of power that can come from other provinces, 200 megawatts that is interruptible power here in Saskatchewan, you won't provide any detail as to that even though you had to, you absolutely had to have anticipated that we were going to be asking these kinds of questions when we got to the legislature about SaskPower's ability to manage.

You always come in here and slough it off by saying, well we didn't know that you'd be asking this kind of question. What kind of questions did you think we were going to be asking? Get up here and ask the Minister of Justice whether the legislation's been formulated properly? We certainly take the Minister of Justice at his word that this thing has been put together, and it's going to stand up in court if it was ever challenged. We accept that. I kind of think that he knows what he's doing with respect to that — not always but on this case probably.

When it comes to your ability and the Premier's ability and your hand-picked bunch there running things over at SaskPower, I don't share that same kind of enthusiasm, Mr. Minister. I don't think the people of Saskatchewan share that same kind of enthusiasm because we've seen too many things go wrong over there.

We've seen you getting rid of Jack Messer to the tune of a bunch of heavy cash to the people of Saskatchewan. We've seen a whole bunch of other people be run off over there recently, every one of them at the same time pick up a big, fat, severance cheque. We've seen all kinds of difficulties. We've just gone through hearings with respect to Channel Lake that has exposed NDP management, mismanagement, to a large degree that has come directly out of cabinet.

You were the ones that got up in the legislature and said, we have to become more competitive, globally competitive, and went running off halfway around the world down to Guyana, and come back and said, man, have we got a deal for you, the people of Saskatchewan. And what happened? The thing blew up in your face. The thing blew up in your face, a bunch of taxpayers' money down the drain — but oh well, so what? We wanted to be globally competitive. Well, did you get taken to the cleaners over there.

Went down to Guyana, some third-world country most people don't even know where it is, and then come back with nothing but a big, fat tab for the people of Saskatchewan. And you now want to get up and say you know what you're doing.

Well I'm not so sure that you do know what you're doing over there when it comes to managing the affairs of SaskPower, in terms of looking after supply agreements, looking after arbitrage. It's that kind of stuff that the SaskPower people were involved in . . . had no idea what they were doing in it, came to you people for big, fat OCs (order in council) to okay it, hundreds of millions of dollars put at risk and still you say, okay don't worry. We know what we're doing.

Well I'm not certain you do. And that's why I've said to the people of Saskatchewan I'm making sure my generator's hooked up out at the farm, and I'd advise everyone else . . . It would be interesting to know how many of you people are making those kinds of contingency plans in your own household . . . and SaskPower management. It would also be interesting to know how many of them are making contingency plans because we're hearing that there's a few of them over there. They're a little bit nervous themselves. That's what we're hearing. We're hearing that they've just maybe got a little Coleman sitting in the back corner ready to go just in case.

And I would ask you, Mr. Minister, you have to be able to provide the people of Saskatchewan with some degree of assurance more than what you have currently than just saying we got these agreements in place, not telling the people of Saskatchewan that the agreements are not ironclad and guaranteed for the people of this province.

I will conclude my remarks at this point, Mr. Minister, and ask for your response.

(1700)

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Chair, I'd like to introduce another official who's come.

The Deputy Chair: — The Minister of Justice has a further official to introduce. I'm not sure that leave is required but is that all right?

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes. I'm pleased to say that we have with us now, Tony Harras, who's the vice-president of system operations at SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I have now as my colleague has mentioned, Mr. Tony Harras, who has been involved in the corporation for 30 years and in large part in terms of systems operation has given me the information as to the breakdown of the 375. So I'm going to relay that to you because I think this will be helpful.

The other thing that I want to add for the member, because I think it's important to know that when we say that we need 2,865 megawatts, that's at a peak load that would be in a circumstance in the middle of January when the shortest day, longest night, coldest predictable weather. So this is not a normal day. This is peak demand. It's not sort of an average. And I wanted to make that clear.

Now you had asked where the power would come from and Tony's been good enough to jot down for me a few statistics. And he says, first of all 100 megawatts of power come from Basin Electric and this portion is based on we delivering 100 megawatts in the summertime to Basin Electric, which we have done for this year, in return for 100 megawatts in the winter. So this is money we've already delivered which is uninterruptible and will automatically come back to us because we've already delivered our share to them.

We have 150 megawatts interchange which is power contracted from Manitoba Hydro. That is a contracted deal which is in place with Manitoba Hydro. The 125 balance is generation that comes from a reserved sharing program with Alberta which we have used only on occasion, but whenever we have needed has been there in the past.

So those are the three areas and I'm thankful that Tony has come so that we can get the definitive answer on how that is broken down.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. I'd like to welcome the ministers and their officials here this evening.

I was very interested in the discussion that was going on earlier about the power supply and its availability and what we have in Saskatchewan and what we may access outside of Saskatchewan.

The minister was talking about . . . that we had an importable of 375 megawatts. I would be very interested to find out — and I listened carefully and I didn't hear the answer to this — exactly where we were going to get this importable from. How much was coming from Manitoba? How much was coming from

Alberta? How much was coming from Basin Electric or Montana Dakota Utilities?

It would be very interesting, Mr. Minister, to find out exactly how much that is from each one of those because news reports out of Manitoba are saying they have enough power this winter to supply Winnipeg. There will be no brownouts in Manitoba. But they were also indicating that they did not have an excess supply of power because of the water conditions along the rivers, particularly at the Limestone dam.

In Alberta they're saying there is a shortage in Alberta, we may very well have to interrupt power supply to some of our customers in Alberta. If that happens it's going to be difficult for them to ship power to us. So it'll be interesting, Mr. Minister, to find out from you how much are you expecting to get from Manitoba, how much are you expecting to get from Alberta.

It's also the question of how much can those lines, those ties between Alberta and Manitoba, carry in capacity? What kind of a capacity can those lines carry? I phoned North Dakota this morning and talked to both Basin Electric and Montana Dakota Utilities, and they informed me that on a regular basis every winter we get 100 megawatts from them. We supply them 100 in the summertime, they give us 100.

They also said that they had the capacity and had entered into discussions with SaskPower to supply an extra 50 megawatts this winter, but that the ties between North Dakota and Saskatchewan basically could only handle that 150. Even if they had more available there would be a great deal of difficulty getting that into Saskatchewan. If everything worked perfectly, if the temperature was nice and warm and the wind wasn't blowing and the clouds were in place, they could maybe supply through the ties a maximum of 200 megawatts — maybe. Everything would have to be perfect. If everything was perfect, I don't know why we would want the power because we wouldn't be using that much electricity here. So it's only when conditions are at their worst that we need that power.

Montana Dakota Utility said it wouldn't matter if they had 200 additional megawatts of electricity available to us; there was no way they could supply it because the ties are with Basin Electric and if Basin Electric is already supplying us with 150 megawatts, they simply could not supply any more.

So Mr. Minister, you haven't answered the question when my colleague asked it. Exactly where is this importable power coming from? How much is coming from Manitoba? How much is coming from Alberta, and through those ties?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to . . . well for the member opposite, I just gave these exact answers to your previous question, but I understand that you were possibly otherwise occupied. And I want to give them back to you because I think repetition is probably not a bad thing in this case.

But we have, as you indicated, an agreement with Basin Electric which is a seasonal diversity agreement where we provide to them 100 megawatts in the summertime, and they provide to us 100 megawatts in the winter. We have provided to them in the past summer 100 megawatts, and that power will be

coming back.

And you're right about the tie-line between Basin Electric and Saskatchewan. It's roughly 150 megawatts. So our hundred that we need will come through because we won't be approaching the 150 limit. With Manitoba Hydro, we have contracted power of 150 megawatts.

So I say to the member opposite, when we are looking at the power coming from Manitoba and the potential problems that they may have with their system, the 150 megawatts is already factored in to their business arrangement. This is power that is contracted with Saskatchewan Power, and that power comes through tie-lines where we have a capacity of 200 megawatts. So we have contracted power with Manitoba Hydro of 150, and we have tie-lines that will allow us to bring in 200, so we're okay on that side.

The Alberta situation is that we have 125 megawatts of what we know as reserve sharing . . . of reserve sharing, 125 megawatts, and we have capacity on that side of the province of 150 megawatts.

So we think we're in good shape to allow us to import up to what we believe would be . . . puts us to 20 per cent over capacity of 375 megawatts, and if you add that to the interruptible which I mentioned is 200 megawatts, for the member opposite, we have an access potential of 20 per cent capacity, industry standard is 12 per cent. So we think we are well protected and people like Mr. Harras and others who do these predictions and have during the 1980s and 1990s, these people have just done an excellent job of predicting and keeping us in good position of balancing out our requirements with our production, and topping that up using our system to 100 per cent as much as possible because that's the most efficient way of running an operation, whether it's on your farm or my farm or the Power Corporation, and then topping that up with interruptible power and imported power.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Minister, yes I was walking between the office and here when you gave that answer.

Mr. Minister, how much of that power was utilized last year? What were our imports last year for the winter season — did we import 375, did we import 200 — what was the amount of imports that we were buying last year?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — If I could for the member answer a question that . . . I was just waiting for an answer as we get the answer to the next question. But we had a question from the member from Kindersley about the interruptible agreements and I just want to say that while the interruptible agreements are 200 megawatts, these are commercially sensitive agreements and my staff are saying that it's not information that should be made public, and I'd ask the members opposite to appreciate and respect that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. While your official is looking up the last question perhaps you can indicate whether or not our power agreements with the Manitoba Hydro, Basin Electric, and the revenue sharing with Alberta, are those interruptible supplies also?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — We are dealing with clause 1 of the Bill. I am sure that all members will be interested in where we always do wide-ranging debate that these are exactly the kind of questions that the public are more than a little interested in, given the debate going on. I want to say to the member opposite that, as it would relate to Manitoba Hydro, these are signed, sealed contracts which are not interruptible under any normal definitions of interruptible as it would relate to power supply.

As it would relate to the Basin Electric, the 100 megawatts of exchange we have summer and winter, we have had this exchange in place for many years during the 1980s and '90s and it has always been there. The portion that is less guaranteed would be the interchange we have with Alberta and this has been an interchange that has occurred on a number of occasions and the power has always been there. But if you want the correct terminology, that we're being advised it is not interruptible but is an agreement of exchange, whereby it's a looser agreement than iron clad with Alberta.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. So the situation with Alberta, if it arose that they were having brownouts in their province, they may very well limit the amount of electricity that comes to Saskatchewan. I see you're conferring with your official so hopefully he can give you the answers to how much imported electricity we used last year.

(1715)

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, for the member opposite who was asking what the historic number would be as it would relate to last year. The issue with Basin Electric, we had an agreement of 100 megawatts and we used 10 per cent of that. With Manitoba Hydro we had an agreement for 100 megawatts and we used about 10 per cent of that. And with Alberta because of the agreement — we purchased and sold between Alberta many times under the agreement of 150 megawatts — but in total probably accessing about 30 per cent of what was available.

So if you can look at the whole picture, while we have these agreements in place, historically we haven't used very much of them and that's what gives our staff the confidence that while we have to be ready we think having available to us in excess of 20 per cent when the industry standard is 12, it probably will keep us in good stead this winter.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Now, Mr. Minister, your numbers indicate then roughly about 65 megawatts were purchased last year. And you have to remember that last year was a very warm winter. We didn't have the three weeks of 40 below that's normal in Saskatchewan. If you look at the year prior to that, I believe, from the SaskPower report, that we purchased, I think it was 185 megawatts in that year. Either the year before or the year previous to that it was . . . we purchased about 185 megawatts. I remember that number because that's almost what the Husky cogeneration is going to produce, is just enough to replace that purchase that we're normally doing.

So, Mr. Minister, in a normal year we're probably closer to the 200 megawatts of purchase rather than the 65 that we used last year. So if we've had roughly 3 per cent growth per year that you were talking about from three years ago — if that's when

we used that 185 megawatts, what we imported — you're looking there, Mr. Minister, at using up basically your entire 375 megawatts of capacity. If we have a generator go down some place around the province — and that happens on a fairly regular basis, Mr. Minister, with SaskPower — I would suggest to you that we're going to be in some trouble this winter in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Minister, what kind of plans do you have in place to rectify the situation that we're in a continual situation of buying power from outside of Saskatchewan? Do you have any plans in place? I know that since 1991, since the time you formed government, there was a number of people within SaskPower Corporation have been calling for plans to come forward to do some additional construction. That has always been stopped by the time it comes down to the cabinet. That's where it has ended. So, Mr. Minister, what plans do you have in place to make sure that in the long term Saskatchewan will have security of supply?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Again I say to the members opposite that we traditionally have had an excess amount of power available to us in the same range as what we have this year, that is, in the area of 20 per cent. When it comes to the arrangement made with Husky and the Meridian project, I think you will well remember the announcement where it was done jointly between SaskPower and TransAlta as well as Husky, where joint use for this power production is that the steam is being used at the plant, the upgrader, and the power is being purchased by SaskPower, 215 megawatts of power over the next 25 years. And, as my colleague was reminding me, that over the next two years our increased demand would be about a 180 megawatts. So we have in that new arrangement probably taken care of the next couple of years.

But obviously at a growth rate of our economy of three or three and a half per cent, it will be relatively soon that we will have to be, as a board, reviewing and making a decision on the next tranche or the next grouping of power that we bring into the system. And that's where you stack up all of the areas of potential power production including importation of more power, to make sure that the customers and shareholders are getting the best deal.

And obviously these are not decisions that are made without recommendations coming from the people who know the numbers and do the numbers. And I say again many of these people are the same good people both in terms of the production of power and the management of our corporation who have been there for many, many years.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Well I agree with you on one thing, that the people who are the long-time employees of SaskPower, be it within the management or at the salary level, the hourly wages, are generally good people, Mr. Minister.

The problem falls apart though when you start getting the political hacks in there. And that's where it has fallen apart in the last seven years, is the people that you appointed to that position, Mr. Minister, haven't been following the advice of the professionals in SaskPower.

There were recommendations that have gone back to 1991 that there was a need for increased generation capacity. You finally agreed to do that with the cogeneration project up at Lloydminster but that simply provides the power for what you were buying already. That doesn't mean that we have power in place to carry on this year or next year or the year after and generating it at home here in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Minister, when we import power from Manitoba, when we import it from Alberta, when we import it from North Dakota — and in the case of North Dakota and Alberta, we export some to them in response to their demands also — is that always at the same price that we bought it or is there a differential in place there and to whose credit does that differential accrue?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to say to the members opposite that I want to make really clear on this Meridian project how that affects our consumption needs. When it comes on stream next November the amount of power coming into the system will be about 215 megawatts; at a 3 per cent growth rate in demand we will need over the next 12 months about 85 megawatts, so this will up our access capacity for this time next year by about 130 megawatts. So while we see our way clearly through this winter we will actually have more of our own production or more contracted power in excess of what we have now by about 130 megawatts.

As to whether or not we make money on the power we're receiving from Meridian, obviously the portion that we would use, the 85 megawatts, goes into the system. If there's a profit in the corporation some shaving of that would obviously be attributed to the Meridian project. We expect 130 megawatts extra that . . . we have with the shortage that there is in Alberta that we would ship it into that market and obviously make as much money on it as we can.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Mr. Minister, when you talk about the 215 megawatts coming on at Lloydminster and then you talk about excess capacity, there is no excess capacity. Last year you admitted that we bought 65 megawatts in the winter, that was what we were short when we bought 65. The year previous to that we bought a lot more than that, Mr. Minister, which more than absorbs the 130 excess capacity that you were talking about. There is no real excess capacity in Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister. It just means we may have to import less but it's certainly not that we have excess capacity to sell to other people, Mr. Minister. And I believe that we need to take a serious look at what is happening in Saskatchewan to generate electricity here.

I know that there's a number of people, and including some of the people that were sitting in the galleries today, that are interested in the Shand 2 project which your government killed. A lot of that equipment is still sitting in Estevan with the preparations there to go ahead and build Shand 2 which I believe is about a 300 megawatt unit. There's no reason, Mr. Minister, why you shouldn't be looking at that. It may not be the appropriate time to go ahead with it but are you at least even looking at that, Mr. Minister, to determine whether or not that project is viable to us.

If we're going to be buying 375 megawatts, imported into

Saskatchewan from people like Manitoba and Alberta that don't have the power right now, or from North Dakota which says they can only ship us 150 maximum, we need to take a look at some of the other things around the province, Mr. Minister, that would meet Saskatchewan's needs and would meet the needs that we're going to have in the future.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — As I indicated earlier, obviously once Meridian is up and operating, within a short period of time other projects will have to be reviewed, and if the economy hopefully continues to grow at the excellent rate it is at the present time, we will need more power production.

And Shand is one of the options that will be stacked up when we look at the option of gas co-generation from other options that are in front of us or from importing power from other areas of the western electrical basin . . . obviously Shand will be one of the options that's looked at.

But what I can tell you that when the people who do our power planning looked at all of the options open to us when we chose Meridian, it was the best economic option open to the consumer and the shareholders as to the best price.

The other thing I think it's important to remember is that our federal government, who has signed on to the Kyoto agreement which talks about reducing carbon dioxide and carbon emissions into the air, obviously this is a new factor that we have to consider when we look at projects that we do when in fact 70 per cent of our power is generated from coal burning in the province of Saskatchewan. That is an issue as it would relate to new power production.

So all of these things will be considered and the needs and interests of our industries and homes and hospitals will be considered as number one in terms of keeping us economical and keeping power rates reasonable — power rates that are presently frozen until the Year 2000.

And so I'm sure the member opposite is not asking us to do projects that aren't economically the best ones to do but I can guarantee you that Shand 2 is one of the options that obviously quite naturally is considered when you look at future generation.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. When you mention CO₂ and the generation of CO₂ in the Kyoto agreement, we also have a project in Midale that will inject CO₂ into the ground for oil extraction which is a good program, Mr. Minister, and one that should be pursued.

The fact is, if Shand 2 was in place and if scrubbers were put onto Boundary, that CO₂ could be disposed of and we could still meet the federal commitments for CO₂ emissions, Mr. Minister.

(1730)

So I think this is an area where some other economic generation capacity in the system that should be part of the Shand process. There's no reason why we can't extract that CO₂ from those scrubbers. Yes it may cost them money to put the scrubbers in place. But if we're going to meet those federal commitments that were put in place by the federal Liberals, then we have to

be prepared to spend the money to make it happen. And we need the electricity, we need the jobs, and we can also use the oil generation.

Talking about jobs though, Mr. Minister, I find it interesting when I look over your benches, and your backbenches, when we talk about back-to-work legislation for unions, and I find it very interesting that your membership is supporting this.

Now I look at the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy who belonged to the teachers' union and she is going to stand in her place and vote for back-to-work legislation. I look at the new Minister for Social Services, the member from Regina Victoria who I believe was a member of the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union), and very outspoken. And he's going to stand in his place and vote for back-to-work legislation.

I look at the member from Cut Knife-Battleford who was a school teacher, a member of their union; the member from Swift Current who was a principal and a school teacher at the Swift Current Comprehensive High School, and is going to stand in his place and vote for back-to-work legislation. I look at the member for Saskatoon Nutana, the Minister of Health, the A team Minister of Health, who is also a school teacher and a member of the teachers' union.

Look at the member from Saskatoon Fairview, past minister of Labour. He was in the Allan Blakeney government as a deputy minister of Labour, served as the minister of Labour in this House, has been a Labour lawyer, and he is going to stand in his place, he says, and vote for back-to-work legislation.

The member from Lloydminster has been very outspoken about union issues — not on the floor of the House — not on the floor of the House but certainly in private she has been very outspoken, member of the teachers' union, and she is going to stand in her place and vote.

The new member from Saskatoon Eastview, president of SUN, Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, the B team in Health, the B team — you know she's a new person in the House, I certainly understand why the Premier would only put her on the B team — but you know you got to get a little seasoning down in the minors and so today when there was a health question, she couldn't even get up and answer it. But she's going to stand in her place and answer — well hopefully she'll answer the questions — but she's going to stand in her place and vote for back-to-work legislation.

The member from Regina Lumsden, a school teacher, is sitting in the back there and she's going to vote for back-to-work legislation.

The member from Cumberland, the Minister of Northern Affairs, was also a school teacher, a member of the teachers' union, and will be voting for back-to-work legislation.

The member for Regina Dewdney, who was the past Deputy Premier, has held numerous portfolios in the Premier's government, a member of the teachers' union, and he'll be voting for back-to-work legislation.

The member for Regina Sherwood I believe in the past has been a member of the SGEU. And he'll be voting for back-to-work legislation.

The member for Regina Albert South, he of fame of going to Holland to do various investigations, was a member of SGEU and he'll be voting for back-to-work legislation.

The Minister of Economic Development, the Government House Leader, who was a professor in university . . . I believe they have some sort of a labour association. And she'll be voting for back-to-work legislation.

The member for Regina Albert North was employed by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and was involved with their employee associations and will be voting for back-to-work legislation.

The member for Regina Wascana Plains, the current minister I believe of SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) was also a school teacher. And she'll be voting for back-to-work legislation.

The member from Estevan, who was a member of the SaskTel union, and he stood in his place already today and spoke out. And I was glad to see that. I don't know why the other members that I've mentioned haven't spoke up and stated their positions. Are they ashamed of the fact that they are, or were, union members and are voting for back-to-work legislation? That's certainly not the way they talked in the past, that they were ashamed of their union affiliations. But it seems when it comes time to vote on this particular Bill, none of them want to admit that they were ever a union member.

And I would hate to forget the member from Regina Centre, who was a member of the SGEU, current minister of Gaming — gambling — and she's going to be voting for back-to-work legislation.

The member for P.A. (Prince Albert) Carlton was a school teacher, a member of their union, and will be voting for back-to-work legislation.

I find it very ironic that all of these members are sitting in the Saskatchewan legislature . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well if the Deputy Premier was a member of a union, I missed it. Public Service Alliance. Okay, we have another one.

Well perhaps the Premier, were you a member of a union . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, we've got two more on the list. Anybody else that I missed . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I got you, I got you. Well we got more than half of the caucus then were members of unions and they're voting for back-to-work legislation.

Now when you listen and look back to 1983 when there was a similar situation in the province, every one of those people that were in the House at that time vilified the government for back-to-work legislation. My how the worm turns; how the worm turns. And now they're the ones doing back-to-work legislation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, and you did it in 1982 and it cost you an election.

And I thought perhaps that this time we wouldn't see that happen. But I'm pleased to see that when it came to the crunch that this government recognized that it had a responsibility to the people of Saskatchewan and not just to their union affiliations.

Mr. Boyd: — Well if the minister isn't going to respond we will continue with some questions.

Mr. Minister, we have a number of further questions that we wanted to ask you about, emergency-type situations. And we're not talking about, you know, things that wouldn't be considered an emergency, but very dire strait, emergency type of situations. In the event of a worst-case scenario this winter, and planned outages must take place, power plants going down, that sort of thing, can you tell us what the priorities of SaskPower and the government would be? What customers definitely would not lose their power services? Can you provide the people of Saskatchewan as to what the emergency situations are in terms of those kinds of events?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — As I said to the member opposite, the sequence is if we get to the coldest day of the year, or the longest day of the year, and we outstrip our capacity to generate power which right now is balanced — let me remind you that the policy of the SaskPower Corporation for as long as I've been around and for as long as you've been around, no matter who's in government, has been to keep a fairly close balance between our production and our usage.

And so you see today that it's virtually in lockstep. And the reason for that is, is that our power production here is expensive power because most of it comes from burning coal. So the idea of having a lot of generation sitting idle does not make sense when you can import relatively inexpensive power from Manitoba. This is why the people who manage the corporation, whether it's under your administration or ours or under the Liberals in the 1960s . . . that was the policy, and that is the policy of the Power Corporation, is to keep it relatively balanced.

Now if there is a shortage of that, first of all we go to the market to get more power, and I've explained the 375 megawatts of power. The next would be, if that's not available and the 375 megawatts isn't enough to keep it going, then we go to our customers to look at the 200 megawatts of interruptible power. So that would be the order that it would come on.

Mr. Boyd: — The saying, Mr. Minister, though is . . . sometimes I wonder whether you are deliberately obtuse or whether you just don't understand the question.

Mr. Minister, in the event that we have grid problems or generation capacity problems . . . Supposing one of the power plants goes down, and even though we are bringing in power from other jurisdictions and that sort of thing we still do not have the ability to meet all the requirements in the province. What is SaskPower's contingency plan in event of those situations? Who's off first? What proceeds after that? I assume that SaskPower has some contingency plans in those events.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Let's say that a power corporation

. . . for example in Quebec, there's an ice storm, and I think this is what you're getting around to in a very convoluted way because you're not talking about generally normal circumstances because we've never had to do this in the history of the province. So let me make it clear we're now talking in a hypothetical circumstance that has never occurred before in the province's history.

You're talking about something that's never happened since 1929 when the power Act came into this House and was long before even you or I were here. It's never happened before so I just want . . . I know what you're trying to do. It's called scaremongering, and you're very good at it. It's never happened before, but you want us to speculate how we would handle it, right?

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Okay. Now just so we know this has never happened before, but what would you do if you imported as much power as you could — that's 375 megawatts — and then you interrupt your interruptible 200 megawatts. Then you would ask your corporation structure — because there will be major TV reports about an ice storm or some catastrophe — then you would phone up your business people who obviously would be good enough at that point because it's a catastrophe worse than anything that's ever happened before; it would be worse than ever before, we would then . . . What would we do then? We would ask our corporate friends to . . .

The Deputy Chair: — Order. Order. Why is the member for Wood River on his feet?

Mr. McPherson: — I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Deputy Chair: — What is your point of order?

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Chair, we have listened for an extremely lengthy period of time to questions and answers that are in no way relevant to the Bill before the House here. And I would ask you, Mr. Chair, to direct these individuals to get back on topic.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you for the point of order, and we'll just pause for a moment of reflection before I make a ruling.

Order. The hon. member for Wood River has raised a question of relevance of the line of questioning. I listened carefully to your point of order and appreciate the manner in which it was put. I've been listening to this debate very carefully and I believe that the questions have been dealing with the necessity of this particular piece of legislation. Having stated the relevancy of the line of questioning, I do urge all hon. members to, as far as possible, keep the questioning tied into this particular piece of legislation.

I recognize the hon. minister to continue your answer. The minister has indicated that the answer is complete for now.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chair and Mr. Minister. I think the questions are indeed relevant to SaskPower's ability . . .

The Deputy Chair: — Order, order. We . . . Order, order, order. Now, there was a point of order raised and the Chair just made a ruling on it and hon. members will know that comments are not in order on rulings.

(1745)

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Chair, part of the discussions that surround this whole issue of a labour dispute that have been brought forward to us by the IBEW surround the issue of certainly the back-to-work legislation, certainly the issues about 2 per cent increases on a yearly basis, the cost of those kinds of things. The management of the IBEW and certainly folks within the union have expressed concerns to us about, while on one hand SaskPower is asking the union to accept 2 per cent increases, they've been accepting considerably higher increases than the union is being asked to accept.

Mr. Minister, can you provide us with details as to all management contracts that have exceeded 2 per cent in the last, we'll say, 18 months, and if you are contemplating providing any management with increases in the next 18 months.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well first I want to say to the member opposite that when we look at the whole budget of the province, obviously the payment that we make to our employees, whether it's in Crown corporations or whether it's in the public service, whether they're managers or hourly wage earners — all of which are hugely important — it's a big component of our budget. In fact, I'm just . . . not the exact number but I think close to 50 per cent of all of the taxes that we collect, a little less than half would go towards salary. In fact, I think our total salary that we pay in the province is about \$2.5 billion — 2.5 billion.

So when you talk about the potential of a 10 per cent increase for the public service or the civil service or our workers who are hugely important to the management of government — you can't possibly work without it — you're talking about an increase of about \$250 million. To relate that to the sales tax at \$90 million a point on the sales tax, you're talking about 2.5 to 3 per cent sales tax increase to sustain a 10 per cent increase in salary.

Now having said that, I think the members opposite and the member who's asking the question is quite legitimate. And I think in many ways when he talks about his position, that if he were the leader in 1995, said he would roll back salary. He's making a choice to cut salaries of employees in order to give more tax cuts. Our position is that a fair position is to try to treat all employees fairly at 2, 2, and 2 over the next three years. And we have a list of people who have already settled: teachers, SGEU, CUPE 600, SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), SGEU, SGI and OPEIU (Office and Professional Employees International Union), SPMC and their CUPE affiliate. And we believe that's fair.

I think the more despicable position in my mind is the argument that the Liberals make that say, just take the lid off. Let the chips fall where they may. Roll the dice, and we'll see what happens. And if an arbitrator rules 10 per cent . . . 250 million.

But let me tell you this. The question that needs to be asked of

Mr. Melenchuk and those who would say arbitration with no concern is: tell us, if it is 10 per cent, that you would be willing to increase the taxes to keep the books balanced. You have to do that. You have to do that in today's day and age, in the year 1998. The old style of politics, the Grant Devine style of politics that got him elected in '82, that you can say whatever you want to get elected — removal of the sales tax. You remember in 1982 he promised to get rid of the sales tax. He said that. He said that and then he ran up the deficit to \$15 billion today which is costing us, this year, in the budget, in the blue book — I have it here — \$750 million, 750.

Now I just said that a 10 per cent increase is 250 million. If we had not wasted and squandered money in the 1980s and could take one-third of that interest, one-third, and give it to our employees today, they would all be able to get a 10 per cent increase and we'd still have \$500 million to cut the sales tax 5 per cent.

Now look this game that you're playing here tonight is a sham. It's unfair for you to come here and say increase everybody's salary but not explain — but not explain — where the money's going to come from. You can't complain about power rates on one hand and say, but just give a 10 per cent increase . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well then tell us where you would get the money from. You're saying pay more salary to people . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, you're saying that across the piece.

I heard the member from Melfort, the member from Melfort — and I'll get the information if he wants me to embarrass him, to quote him to what he said on day one — he said, pay them more money than what is allowed under the mandate. That's what he said. You said it.

And the Liberals say, just open the bank book. You're trying the Grant Devine trick and I know who that's coming from. I know where it's coming from. It's coming from the member who's vocalizing from his seat to play cheap, old politics to try to save his political skin. It's not going to work. It won't work.

And if I could afford it, if we could afford it, if the Premier could afford it, to pay a 10 per cent increase for our employees and balance the books, we would love to do it. If we had the 750 million in interest that's in this year's budget, I would gladly take a third of it, 250 million, and give a 10 per cent increase across the board. We'd love to be able to do that. That option isn't here. It's not here.

And I want to say to members opposite, consider what you're doing here. It's great to have a political debate but the fact of the matter is at the end of the day, somebody's got to run the government and has to look at the wide vision and view. And I'll tell you that I am the most proud person in the world to have worked with two premiers from this legislature: Allan Blakeney who balanced the books of this province for 11 years running up to Grant Devine; and the Premier today who has balanced the books after Grant Devine, and it's a privilege to work here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. What gets into you every once in a while that makes you want to go on these tirades? We try and

ask you some legitimate questions about the contract negotiations and then you launch into this litany of whatever happens to be under your saddle at the moment.

Mr. Minister, the question that I asked you was the cost of the two, two, and two package as we have heard is about \$6 million. Can you confirm that that is the figure? And can you also provide us with the detail of the raises that SaskPower management has been receiving in the last say 18 months? What was the total cost to the corporation of those raises that you doled out over the last 18 months, and let's compare them against what the people, the IBEW workers, are being asked to accept now?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I say to the member opposite, as we look at our . . . and did our Crown review in 1996, and they were involved in that because I have a document there, the paper they presented at the time, which states their position pretty clearly about how they would manage the Crowns, and it's to privatize the Crowns, and they would do them in this order. It says right here, in their document on page 8, "the government should take steps immediately to privatize SaskTel through a public share offering."

And then it goes on to say the experience gained from the privatization of SaskTel would enable the province to undertake successful privatization of SaskPower — that's the corporation we're debating today — SaskEnergy, and SGI.

Well it's important. It's important because you're talking about and making us believe that you are in favour of crunching the gap between hourly wage earners and management. That's what you're trying to relay to us . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well we'll get to that. We'll get to that.

Well the gap between the CEO of SaskPower and the average wage earner in IBEW is two and a half times. If you take the average of 58,000 for the average wage earner and multiply it by three, you get Mr. Staudt's approximate salary. So it's about two and a half times.

Now you're saying that's too much. You're saying that's too much. Well tell me what it was when Mr. George Hill was there. Tell me what it was when Mr. George Hill was there, your guy. Yes, your guy. Oh yes, they deny, deny, deny, but we know that was your guy.

The spread wasn't two and a half times; the spread was between three and a half and four times. So don't play games about what you would do if you were in government.

Now that was in a publicly owned corporation where the spread was four times when you were in government. But you want to privatize, so let's use one of your privatized corporations, the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. At the time of privatization, the spread between the average hourly worker and the CEO of the publicly-owned company was about three and a half times. Well tell me what it is between Chuck Childers at 10 or 15 million and the hourly wage earner in the Potash Corporation today. Tell me what that spread is.

So I want the member opposite — and I'll get you the numbers — but tell me do you believe that the spread between hourly

wage earners in SaskPower and the CEO is too great. Is that the point you're trying to make?

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, the question that we asked you was, what was the cost . . . what is the anticipated cost of two, two, and two. Is it \$6 million? And what was the cost of the raises, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 12 per cent, that you doled out to SaskPower management over the course of last year? That was the question, Mr. Minister, and we expect that you would answer.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I just say, I just had one of our staff go to get the actual numbers. You asked for the overall amount that it would be for the Crown for the increase. I don't have that with me but I'll get it to you as quickly as I can.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, we also . . . the IBEW raised with us a concern that you mentioned about . . . the number that you mentioned, \$58,000 being the average. I wonder if you can provide detail to support that claim. Many of the IBEW workers that we spoke to dispute that. It's only . . . I'm not sure but I believe it's only after working very, very substantial number of overtime hours that they could reach those levels. And if you have information that supports your position and the management of SaskPower's position, I wonder if you could detail it and provide it to the legislature.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Here I'm depending on my staff who we depended on during this whole process is to relay the average annual salary of IBEW workers, and this is arrived at by including all of the overtime they work. So let's be clear about that. It includes all the overtime they work, their annual salary — adding it all up and dividing it by the number of employees — and does not include benefits which amounts to something in the area of 20 per cent.

So let me be clear about this. It includes their salary, all of their overtime, and is the average median of what it would be if you included all the regular salary overtime and divided that total amount by the number of employees, and does not include benefits which amount to about 20 per cent, roughly, of what their salary would be.

Mr. Boyd: — We expect, Mr. Minister, that you would be prepared to commit to the legislature to provide the information to support that claim; because the IBEW workers tell us that they don't believe that to be the case and if that is, we want that information. I think that certainly the taxpayers of Saskatchewan are owed that in terms of information to support your government's position.

Before the raises were granted to anybody from management in SaskPower over the last year and as a result of management receiving substantial increases, did anyone on the SaskPower board or management make it known or express an opinion to you and to the government that that might make it difficult in the negotiations that were upcoming?

(1800)

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — What I would like to say to the members opposite as it would relate to the general increase of managers, the guidelines were set consistent with the IBEW or

... our hourly workers and the members of the IBEW. And I just give you by comparison: 1992 to '94, it was zero, zero, and two and a half; 1995 to '97, zero for 18 months, then one and one; and '98 to the year 2000, two, two, and two.

Now within that range as it would apply to our IBEW members and to our managers, there are different levels within their structures. For IBEW workers, it's called incremental increases, each year moving up, in addition to your 2 per cent. Or if you're promoted you obviously would move to a higher salary. In management as you move through what are not known as incremental increases, in addition to your zero or 2 per cent or whatever it would be, we have what are called performance bonuses. And so what I want to make clear is that the guidelines in principle we believe to be fair and equitable.

Mr. Boyd: — Am I understanding you correct, Mr. Minister, when you're saying that SaskPower management people did not receive raises in excess of 2 per cent in the last year or 18 months? Because we've been certainly led to believe different.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I want to make it clear that what we're talking about is the overall general increases that apply both to our union members and to our managers.

And then of course many of you have worked in hourly positions. There are also incremental salaries. You get ... if you have secretaries in your office you may hire them at one level and then each year they would get their increase. But there are also incremental levels that they would go through. And I think you understand what I'm talking about.

A teacher, for example, who works in the system ... And I know some members who are in the teaching profession will know you get your increase, but you also get an incremental increase until you get to the top of your range. And then of course you bump up against that — some will know that better than others — and then you get only your annual increase. That's how it works in the IBEW. And then there would be some who would get promotions. And of course they would go up quicker than that.

But there is an incremental level within the hourly wage as well as the regular wage that we're talking about, so people will move up by increments as well as the 2, 2, and 2 over the next three years, until they get to the top of their range.

In management it's similar. They would automatically get their 2 per cent and then if they're not at the top of their range they would get, or be eligible to get, a performance bonus that would — based on their performance — which I'm sure that many of you, in terms of managers, if you were running a corporation, would agree with. And at the end of the day, if the manager may have four or five different levels to get to the top of his salary, once they get to the top of their range then performance bonuses cut out.

So in my mind it's a very fair system. Others say look, when you look at your managers, you're not paying them nearly enough. And the argument is made in the press and by many other people that our managers, the reason we are in need of increasing the levels of salary for upper management is because also they don't have share options that they might have in the

private sector.

But having said that, I think if you look at the spread ... the thing that I keep in mind is the spread between the hourly wage earner average and the CEO. I would challenge anyone to compare that spread, where our CEO is making about \$150,000 a year and the average hourly salary is 58, they have a factor of about 2.5 difference between the top paid person in the corporation and the average, and tell me which private sector corporation would have that narrow a band between the most highly paid individual in the corporation and the average hourly wage, and I think it's a very, very fair regime.

That's not to say that I don't believe that working people should earn more. I mean that's what we spend our whole lives in — trying to balance out the needs of people on minimum wage, the people on welfare, to try to inject social programs to help out people who are the working poor. But at the end of the day you need a policy and we believe a policy that has a discrepancy of ... a factor of 2.5 between the hourly wage of the average employee and the CEO is fair.

Now others will say differently. Others will say it should only be 2. If your wage earners are earning an average of 58, then your CEO should earn 100,000. That's fair comment, but on the other hand I think there are many people and probably more who say if your average hourly salary is 58 plus overtime, your CEO should be earning 300,000. So this is a system that we try to balance out but it's not an easy one because you will hear both arguments being put.

But all that I can say at the end of the day when we balance the budget and look at all the things that we need in front of us, our teachers, the people who work in SGI, I think 2, 2, and 2 and 1 point discretionary for our employees of SaskPower is a deal that is fair.

Is it as much as people want? No it isn't and I readily agree that they have the right to put that point. But in my mind, is it fair in light of what we are doing for low-income people, people on welfare, people on minimum wage, for teachers and everyone else? I think it's fair.

Now is it as much as somebody's earning in downtown Toronto or Vancouver? Compare people who work in the press or other places. I mean this is a matter of trying to balance and meet the needs and aspirations of our employees and managers in the circumstance that we live.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, we have been told and there are some media reports to this effect that the union had been, the IBEW union had been asking for 12 per cent in the negotiations. Union people I've talked to say that that's complete nonsense. Can you tell us what was the negotiating position of the IBEW going into these discussions.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the issue of 12.4 that was reported, I think, rather widely in the press, it's my understanding, came from a press conference where Mr. Gunoff was explaining about the inadequacy, which is his prerogative obviously, of the inadequacy of the mandated position of the government — I might say which all of us dealt with as part of the budgeting process around here because the budget was very

much based on having a mandate. And when we balanced the books, that's what we based it on, and I think it was pretty clear that we said publicly to everyone that in order to keep the books of the province balanced that the mandate was needed. We made no secret about that. And if we're breaking mandate, we'd better realize that then the budget position we have in this province isn't on either.

Having said that, at the press conference, and where this number came from and where it got reported in the press, Mr. Gunoff was asked what he needed in order to make the system work. And he said he needed parity with other similar corporations — I'm paraphrasing — but other similar corporations. And when pushed on that to ask what would that mean in terms of percentage, somebody in the crowd of members who were there said 12.4 per cent. And Mr. Gunoff said it would be about 12.4 per cent.

This got reported in the press and across the piece. I don't know whether or not officially refuted by Mr. Gunoff after that press conference, but it certainly was carried in the press in a very vocal way, based on a press conference that he did.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, in our meeting that we had with the SaskPower management, we were told that there was actually an agreement reached between the negotiating teams of the IBEW and SaskPower, and it was contingent, however. SaskPower's management offer was contingent upon a affirmative vote from the board of directors of SaskPower.

Is that correct, and could you provide details of what that agreement was that was rejected by SaskPower, the board of directors of SaskPower but was advanced as a agreeable position to the IBEW.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — There was a position put at one point where an offer was made to IBEW which was outside of the mandate. The position was put to IBEW, it was later withdrawn by the board of directors of SaskPower. This offer that was put to the leadership of IBEW was said by the leadership not to be good enough. But it was said that they would take it out but recommend against it. In that interim period before it was taken out with a recommendation not to support, the board of directors of SaskPower withdrew the offer.

So this was the situation as it relates to the position being put. It was outside of mandate. The leadership of IBEW didn't like the offer, even though it was outside of mandate — not much outside of mandate, but outside of mandate — said they would take it out but recommend against it. Before it went to a vote of members it was withdrawn by the board of SaskPower.

Mr. Boyd: — What were the details of that offer that was extended and then later withdrawn?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I can say only to you because I don't have the details here and it's complicated, but it was determined to be outside of mandate and therefore it was withdrawn by the board.

Mr. Boyd: — I'm sorry, Mr. Minister, can you repeat that?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I just wanted to say to the member opposite that the determination by the board was that it was outside of mandate. I don't know all of the details or how much it was outside, but it was determined to be outside of mandate and was withdrawn by the board.

I want to make it clear that it was not rejected by the membership. It was said to be not good enough by the management of the IBEW and recommended against, but never got to the point of being actually voted on by the members.

Mr. Boyd: — Will you commit, Mr. Minister, to providing detail of that offer that was extended and then withdrawn?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — It's being said that the board of directors, because they withdrew and didn't approve of it, that it's an offer that they never approved so the intent here is not to make it available at this point in time.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, at the . . . we have said our position would be to support the back-to-work legislation and we will be doing that when we reach the stage in this debate and stage in the legislation when we have the votes.

We believe that this situation is one that we have very little choice about. We believe that this is a situation that has resulted in severe problems between management and the IBEW workers. We believe that there has been a tremendous amount of damage to the relations between the two parties. We believe that this is certainly a very, very untenable position that you people and the management of SaskPower have put the people of Saskatchewan in.

We believe that as a result of your mismanagement, your patronage to the SaskPower management structure has resulted in a management structure over there that is incapable of making decisions. We see a management structure over there that are all acting in an acting capacity right now. Nobody seems to want to make any decisions. Everybody seems to be sitting on pins and needles over there hoping that this is going to go away and that the legislation is going to address their problems that are a result of your severe mismanagement in appointing people into the positions that simply are incapable of managing a company of that size.

(1815)

Mr. Minister, I think the IBEW had a lot of very, very good points that were raised in the discussions leading up to the dispute that we have currently before us. They have very, very good points in terms of management raises; very, very good points in terms of the overall management of the company; blowing money in places like Guyana, blowing money in things like Channel Lake that they had no part whatsoever in. It's you and your appointees that decided to adventure . . . to take upon themselves those kinds of adventures and using the taxpayers' dollars to do it with.

Mr. Deputy Premier, and Mr. Premier, this has been a result directly of your mismanagement. The people of this province believe it, the people of the IBEW believe it. We will certainly await, I guess, the people's decision about how they view this situation when it comes time to ask the people for what I expect

you will be doing in terms of asking for a mandate again. I think you've done irreparable harm to the collective bargaining process in this province that you trumpet so loudly on every occasion you get, except when it comes time to get down to the negotiations.

Mr. Minister, I'll conclude by saying that we will be supporting the legislation although we are very, very disappointed to be put in the position of having to intervene into something that we believe we have no business intervening — the collective bargaining process.

So, Mr. Minister, I think you will have to, and your government will have to, bear responsibility for what's taken place here, and the IBEW workers I'm sure won't forget. I'm sure the other union members in this province won't forget, and I'm sure the people of Saskatchewan won't forget that you put at risk the collective good of this province in terms of electrical supply.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Minister, ministers, your officials, I've been listening with a great deal of interest to comments and dissertations with respect to the sad, sad reason that we had to be called back into this legislature to talk about a dictatorial move to force people back to work.

People can't understand what has happened to a government that was said to be caring not only for workers of this province but to people in this province who helped build this province and who are suffering now all the ill effects of the downturns in services, health, highways. The province just seems to be going to shambles and everybody keeps pointing blame, pointing fingers. It's their fault or it's their fault.

Well what are we talking about here? I heard one of the members, one of the independent members earlier say that part of the problem here, part of the confusion is that people really don't know what is going on because folks that are responsible spin things out so they can deflect the blame from the proper place.

People are asking questions about how can we trust a government who cancels contracts, does things only to serve their own purposes. I guess part of the problem, and we keep hearing that . . . I've heard earlier in some of the dissertations that we have to be careful, we have to be fiscally responsible. Hey, that's supported 100 per cent. Nobody's asking for the lid to be blown off of anything.

So what's brought us to this stage? Once again there's finger-pointing about whose fault it is that we're in the situation we're in. We forget what happened in the '80s? Boy are we still living that down and how long will we be continuing to live that down, the mess that was created. We can't forgive those people that mismanaged. I've heard mismanagement used so many, many times . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Those are the people that are talking mismanagement and yet that crew is the one that mismanaged this whole province in 19 . . . during the '80s that we will be paying for forever.

And the reason that we're here, to talk about employees who are asking for consideration of salaries. I won't make this lengthy. This is an important piece of legislation that needs to be dealt with. It won't be lengthy but I do have just a few questions

relating to the legislation, and I also want to point out that I will be proposing an amendment to this legislation at the appropriate time, and I'd like to send it over to the minister at this point, and a copy for the . . . for our chairperson.

It's not just a matter of money. It's people who are . . . and I come from an area where people in agriculture are experiencing a serious, serious downturn. These very same people that are trying to eke out a living in their farming communities are also people who are looking to other sectors — other work sectors for employment or for some assurances for some comfort in their employment — to now find themselves in situations where it doesn't matter where they go. They had the GRIP contracts cancelled. Now they can look to perhaps working in an organization where the government's going to dictate. They're going to take away all the collective bargaining rights and it'll be government that dictates.

I guess when I said that nobody really knows what this is all about or what might be entailed, I don't have the facts to determine what would be fair in this case. So what is so wrong about opening up? I mean we talked about opening the books and letting people see. And I do believe and have confidence in responsible people, either he or she, who may determine under the circumstances and given the fiscal situation of this province that there are responsible, reasonable people that could sit down and take a look at and say, you know, maybe this is . . . How do we know they might just come along and say, after looking at both sides, after looking at and taking into consideration our situation — we have determined with, let's see, very little or no increase in inflation over recent years and perhaps the outlook for recent years to come that the inflation rate will not exceed a great deal — maybe the offer is good. Maybe it will be a percentage point or two. Somebody keeps throwing this 12 per cent around as well, and I'm not sure where that has come from either. I think there was some difficulty in determining here in the House today where that 12.7 per cent or whatever came. I believe at one point there was a graph that showed that the workers in the province here were 12.7 below somewhere else. But does that necessarily mean that an arbitrator would sit down and say, oh yes? I like not to believe that.

So all we're asking for, what our amendment is going to ask for, is that something similar that took place in 1983 — and I know the members opposite were probably vehemently opposed to it. However, it was passed, as this legislation will be passed. There was back-to-work legislation however, with the inclusion of an arbitration clause. So I don't know whether that's totally out of the question. I would hope that you closely look at that amendment and deal with it accordingly. That's all the people are asking for, is fairness.

And there's a great deal of anxiety out there, no question. There's a great deal of anxiety by the public at large about what's going to happen to our power. Right now when you look outside and it's nice, nobody's as concerned about it until something drastic happens. And let me just then ask this question. Why has the equipment deteriorated to the extent that apparently, or it seems to have, that it needs some urgent repair work? Is this something just routine or did it deteriorate to the extent that now we're going to have a shortage of power?

I can't forget in 1992 when SaskPower said that there was

ample power for this province, and despite the fact that the government asked for submissions for some investigation for proposals for cogeneration operations, and the government took deposits and kept them, and then turned down any project and just scrapped the whole thing because there was ample power at that time. Well I guess in retrospect I would hope that the government's thinking maybe we should have gone that route. It was only for a bit of power at the time but that might have grown to something that would now not have the people of this province faced with a potential disaster as far as power needs are concerned.

Having said all that, my first question, Mr. Minister, is how can you amiably now force people back to work after you locked them out, after you kicked them out? How do you amiably sit down with these people and determine that they should go back to work and everything would just be great?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I want to say to the member opposite that when he . . . first of all when he talks about the repair to the boilers which is a big part of what we're talking about in terms of winter maintenance, it's fair to say that this is routine maintenance that happens sometimes annually.

Some of the projects on one of the main boilers is something that's done on several-year rotation. And literally, not being an engineer or even having a great concept of how this works, I understand they cut the boiler open and go in and replace tonnes of tubing in order to make it work.

And my understanding is that some of the product actually comes from your plant up in Melville. And so these are very integrated economies that would indicate, you know, that this work is not only needed to be done, but obviously the parts and pieces that go into parts of the boiler would come from your constituency. And I'm not saying all of it or even the lion's share, but there are pieces that would be included.

Having said that, when you talk about this piece of legislation, what we're talking about the maintenance and operation of SaskPower Corporation, I don't think one needs to look very far to see that the withdrawal of overtime, once the strike notice was given, led to problems of getting to the point where the ongoing maintenance could be done. The lockout is obviously a problem standing in the way.

And so it's a combination of things that at the end of the day you and I and I think members, why we're here today, said because the system isn't working between management and labour. Negotiations were at a loggerhead. They were deadlocked. Nobody was moving. Days were ticking by.

And it finally came to the conclusion, based on the best advice we could from the engineers and people who run the power plants, that we were in growing desperate straits as it would come to the number of days that we would need in order to get this work order done before those coldest days in peak load that we were talking about earlier with the member from Kindersley and the member from Souris-Cannington.

The fact of the matter is that there has to be and is great disappointment whenever the system of collective bargaining that we have come to know in this country and this province

doesn't work. And whether that's federal Liberals legislating back post office workers at less than what was on the table last year or the year before . . . You can ask those workers what they thought of the Liberal government while they were being legislated back — as you say, against their will — at a rate in the legislation that was lower than what was on the table. It created huge difficulties.

And obviously life goes on, but there is disappointment at every level. Are we disappointed that management . . . our management and our workers couldn't come to a negotiated settlement? Obviously we are extremely disappointed. Do we take some responsibility? Obviously we do. Do you take some responsibility? Obviously you should because you're part of the governance of the province.

(1830)

This is an issue that is hugely important, and the fact of using a legislated settlement remedy is something that no one, no one wants to do. I think even when the Devine government was doing it . . . although sometimes I wondered about the way they handled it. It almost seemed like they were enjoying treating workers like that and ripping apart labour legislation. One would argue whether this wasn't being done out of spite or some philosophical reason.

But I say to you, there are very, very few governments, whether it was Allan Blakeney or whether it was other governments across Canada . . . even the federal Liberals, I'd mention the member from Wood River, when they legislated the post office workers back . . . this is something should only be used when all other remedies fail.

Nobody wants to do it, but the fact of the matter is with the oncoming winter, predictions of one of the coldest winters we've had, the fact of the matter is options had run out, and we had to come to the point where, if we were to keep the budget of the province intact, where if we were going to keep the plants in running order, it became obvious that we would need to do this.

Now the member from Wood River hollers from his seat, but we'll see how he votes on this Bill. The question is, the question is, if he is true to his sentiments, then he will be in his seat when the vote comes, not like many times, when he runs out the back door.

So I say to the member opposite that this is a challenge for all of us, and one we don't take lightly, and one that we don't enjoy doing. But the fact of the matter is, under the circumstance, we believe it to be necessary.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you for that response. I guess it still distresses me that these types of heavy-handed tactics just poison the climate with collective bargaining situations, and that's something that people are not very happy about.

Do you think that perhaps now that it might have been a knee-jerk reaction to lock those people out at the time that you did, that SaskPower did? In retrospect was that a knee-jerk reaction? Might there have been some solution arrived at without going to that extent to lock people out of their work?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I say to the member opposite first of all know that personally I didn't make the decision to lockout. The way it works is the managers at the plant who said in the best interest of the maintenance of power decided to do the lockout. And so, just so you know, I suppose you might argue — although it would be a false argument because you've told us many times to stay out of the management of the plans — but you might say, and maybe that's what you expected me to do as minister, to say when the managers were saying this is what we need to do to maintain power, you're making the argument that I should have said to the managers, look I know more about the management of the plant than you do; don't lock them out.

But you would understand knowing your history how difficult that would be. If your managers and people on the site recommend that they lock out to maintain power and the politician says to them look, look, you know more than the people running the plants . . . can't do that.

Now would I wish that there had been no withdrawal of services, no strike notice, no lockout. Absolutely as deep as I can feel, I wish this would have went a different direction. I wish it would have gone differently. I wish overtime hadn't been withdrawn. I wished there had been a settlement within mandate, and life had marched on the way it did with many of our unions, but the fact of the matter is it didn't.

And when your managers say that this is what we need to do in order to maintain power, I don't think in your heart of hearts you really believe the politician should have said in a meeting, no you keep the doors open. And where would we be if something would have happened to the plant under those circumstances with overtime withdrawn where there would have been million dollars of damage, and I had made a political decision not to follow the managers. What would you have said then? Would you have said well you did the right thing because you injected yourself politically into your management team? Of course you wouldn't have.

So my only logical hope in these kind of circumstances is to do the best you can based on the information you have. The decision was made. I wish that overtime hadn't been withdrawn, and lockouts hadn't occurred. They have. We're at this point, and I think it's fair to say that none of us are very happy about being here having to bring this Bill through the House.

Mr. Osika: — Well you've just indicated to me that confidence in people is a one-way street, that you lack the confidence in those people to continue meeting their responsibilities. They proved to us, they proved to us during the winter storm here just the recent past that they were there when needed. It's you, sir. It's SaskPower and perhaps you yourself that indicate to me now that you would not have had the confidence in those people that if something went haywire and you said there was a million dollar fiasco that you would get the blame because you stepped in.

I guess if we're talking about hypothetical situations and had something, had there been a disaster, who would you have blamed for that disaster having happened? Can you answer me that?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I think the question here is not who is to blame or who isn't to blame. You just said when you started your comments, it's a lot of blame floating around here, and now you say well who would you blame? I mean how can you ask a question of who I would blame? I don't blame anyone. The fact of the matter is we're in a situation where there was deadlock between our managers and our employees. Power has to continue on, even during that process. We still have to rely on our plant managers and people who do the work.

You can't go down there and manage the plants. I mean it's just absurd to go down that street where you're saying you should go.

And the member from — I keep thinking from Shaunavon but — Wood River keeps hollering from his seat. And I wonder, sir, with your coaching, you could keep him quiet so you and I who are having a reasonable discussion could shut out that babbling that . . . I don't know how you guys stand it. I don't know how you stand it in your caucus because if he carries on like this constantly in your caucus, I don't know how you can possibly tolerate it.

But the fact of the matter is this, that the management at SaskPower and workers were at a deadlock to the point where the power supply for this winter was in jeopardy, and that's why we're here today. And I think you should think about what you said in your opening comments that there's no sense blaming one side or the other or you blaming me or I blaming you about the circumstance.

And is there need for healing and repair once we get this done? You're darn right. And that's got to be the highest priority of management, of the government, of the opposition: to heal the wounds that there will be after this kind of a circumstance. And I say again that's true whether it's the post office workers being legislated back by a Liberal government federally or the situation here. It's unfortunate, but we're going to do our very best to repair any damage that is done within management or in the union as a result of this conflict.

Mr. Osika: — If the potential problems that we might still anticipate were as serious and severe as some folks here in this House have talked about today, the potential . . . and we all know in Saskatchewan there is potential for some horrendous weather and some terrible problems in the winter time. Those people offered an opportunity to resolve the whole issue, said hey listen, just make a commitment; we'll take your word. You make a commitment to send this to arbitration. We're right back on the job as if nothing happened. And that would have happened some time ago. We wouldn't be going through all this.

So I guess what I'm saying is that what people can't quite understand that . . . and let's not get back to this business of blowing the lid off. We have responsible people. We have to believe in some responsible people that may have been selected, okay, with agreement on both sides to sit down and open the books. You . . . great for opening the books to take a look at really where it's at, where the province is at fiscally, and select responsible people to do the responsible thing in these kind of situations.

Well you know I'm asked, what are you elected to do? Well certainly not to run roughshod over the people of this province and use heavy-handed tactics to cancel contracts and close hospitals and to create all kinds of problems for people. You are elected to look after the people of this province.

So I guess we have a dilemma really, and we've got a solution to that, and that's the amendment that I'll be proposing when we get to later on in the legislation. Thank you.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I haven't heard here this afternoon and into the evening just where we're at in terms of workers that may have actions against them at this time. I don't see any protection for them in the legislation that's before us here today.

I can think of a few individuals, a couple of electricians, Rob Labensky, Scott Sears; an instrument technician, Wayne Hoste; some storekeepers, a couple of storekeepers, Pat Olheiser and Kevin Gellner. Are we, Mr. Chair, to take the government's word opposite that there's not going to be any actions on the part of SaskPower against these workers when this legislation goes through?

We all know what the Premier's word is worth on a lot of other issues in the past. I certainly am not comfortable with taking his word if he was sitting in that chair right now and giving me that commitment. So I certainly won't take the word of some of his cabinet colleagues on it either.

I'd like to know what sort of input did your Labour minister have into such a piece of legislation as we've got before us. Let's see a memo from your Labour minister to cabinet on this issue. Let's see that.

What about the workers on social services, on welfare as a result of them being locked out? What does the Social Services minister have to say about that? Where is the memo to his cabinet colleagues about the impact on workers when they were locked out?

Now the Premier doesn't like hearing about this, but we've sat and listened to a lot of nonsense from the members next to us here all afternoon when they chose to avoid the real issues here. And that's how unfair this particular legislation is to workers in this province, not just IBEW workers. We're talking about workers in this province.

And what are you going to do about that? Are you going to guarantee that these people have their jobs back when this legislation goes through? I'd like to hear what the minister has to say about that.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, the member talks about the workers who were in a position of not going into the plants to work, and I think we've made it very clear and the Premier has been more than clear in saying that these workers would be paid. And while that may be an unusual position to take, I think it's extremely fair because under the law and the Act, there really is no requirement to pay people who have been locked out. That's management's prerogative to do that, and the fact of the matter is they will be paid.

So your argument that they need to go on welfare and make it sound like they didn't have money during that period, first of all is inaccurate, and I think the other thing is inflammatory. But that doesn't surprise me coming from the member opposite.

As it would relate to non-discriminatory clause, we've also said that we would be dealing with that in the legislation. And I think the Minister of Justice made that clear in his comments although I had to step out for a moment. He gives me his speech, and I want to repeat because maybe the member didn't hear it. But the government will ask SaskPower to agree to a non-discrimination clause in the collective agreement and the government will ask SaskPower to recall all workers affected by the dispute.

So I'm saying to you when it comes to fairness on that issue, I think you're way off base to try to fan flames that these people will be hard done by in terms of their ongoing salary while they were out of the plants. We've already said that they would be paid for that period of time. The non-discriminatory clause will be included. And we are also going to work with other issues where there are disputes with other members of the union during this period. And management has said that yes, they will sit down at the first opportunity to clear up those matters.

(1845)

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Chair, I ask the minister here tonight if we could have assurances . . . and I've named some specific individuals. Can we have the assurances of your government that you will instruct SaskPower management to let these workers come back to work, or are you simply going to feed them to the lions? Are you going to turn them back over to SaskPower management?

You touch the issue of back pay. We've heard the Premier, Mr. Chair, say that it's a subject that, again, his government is prepared to turn over, I believe, to the SaskPower management to talk about. Again, you're feeding the workers to the lions. We want your assurances if this legislation goes through that these certain things are going to happen. Your assurances that you will instruct SaskPower to pay the back-pay that the Premier has indicated he thinks is fair. And what about assurances for these workers that they have a job to go back to as well?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I say to the members opposite that we have made every attempt to work with this situation to be fair to the workers, to be fair to the taxpayers and the shareholders of the company, and obviously we will be. I mean, I understand your concern about all the workers, as are we. And I think to accuse other motives simply isn't accurate and is unfair.

But as it would relate to giving your best effort to deal with these in a very fair way, that I can do.

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Chair, I've heard the minister talk earlier about . . . I think he suggested that the Liberals were irresponsible in some of our demands. He challenged us to find out or to show where the monies could come from to compensate these workers. He talks about having to keep the power on. He talks about getting the routine maintenance done.

I'd just like to ask the minister, with respect to that . . . and I've heard a lot too of course before I go on about their so-called mandate that you've arrived at that everybody has to be living with. But I've got a little bit of information concerning a project. I think SaskPower calls it the Delta Project. And I think right now, and my understanding is you might have about two floors of the TD (Toronto Dominion) Bank Building on Hamilton Street devoted to a project called the Delta Project.

And my understanding is that that might be just nothing more than a bunch of glorified computer software, and it might be a hundred million dollars plus that might already be devoted to the project. I'd like to know what sort of consultants you have hired to come in and work on this project. You're flying people in from the United States on a fairly regular basis . . . is my understanding. Are you paying those consultants as much as this increase to your workers?

And tell me, the Delta Project and the hundreds of millions that may eventually be expended on that project, how much power is that going to generate for the people of this province? And how is that fair to everybody in this province, workers of any group?

You asked where we could find some money. I think a hundred million dollars is a fairly significant amount, even to yourselves.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Deputy Chair, I want to say to the members opposite who take a bit of an unusual position when they say that first of all there should be no politics involved in the Crowns.

Then the member from Thunder Creek stands in his place . . . stands in his place and says he has a novel idea of where to get some extra money. He's got some novel ideas. He said he went in and he saw some computers and they're just glorified — I wrote down here — glorified computers.

Now just think of this as a modern-day party. Their idea to get some extra money is to go into all of the corporations — maybe tell Husky this in the big upgrader. I just went into their panel room the other day, and do you know what it's full of? Do you know what it's full of? A whole bunch of glorified computers that run this huge upgrading plant. Do you know what? If they got rid of those computers out of the upgrader, they could give their workers some extra money.

Now surely the member from Melville could turn to his colleague and say, look, lay off of that because you're just in the wrong century to be arguing that . . . to get rid of the computers to pay some extra salary to workers. Surely you're not serious. Surely you're not serious. That you could analyse the situation well enough — you who have some expertise in farming as I do — but that you have the audacity to say how much power are those computers making. Look! What are you talking about that the computers produce power? Surely you know more than that. Surely you know more than that. You're going to get rid of the computers in the Power Corporation as a remedy to the situation.

Let's get serious about this debate. I mean we've been having a good debate, part philosophically. Your colleague from

Melville raised some excellent points. And I'll tell you the tag team, the tag team from Wood River, from Wood River and Thunder Creek, that tag team is the whiz kids of the Liberal Party.

It's no wonder that people are leaving your party in scads when the solution to an important issue of our Power Corporation is to sell the computers. Sell the computers he says. You could get some extra money there. But what about the trucks? Maybe we could sell the trucks and get some money. That's even lower technology. What about the skid loaders? We could get rid of those, or the carriers that carry the coal to the plant. What about getting rid of those and getting some money? Look! Be serious. Getting rid of computers is not an option. It's not an option.

And I say if this is your opinion as a leading member of the Liberal Party, it's going to be a long, long time before you ever form government because the people of the province will say to you and even my — not even, especially my 13-year-old — I'm going to take this clip home to him and show him. Because you know what will happen in his class tomorrow, they'll debate this: that the power company should sell their computers because they don't make any power you said.

Look, computers don't make power, we know that. But to try to run a power corporation without computers or an upgrader or a steel plant, look, give your head a shake. Let's be serious about what we're talking about.

Mr. Aldridge: — Well Mr. Chair, the minister said a lot about nothing there, didn't he? Mr. Minister, you can talk like that all you want. This isn't a nonsensical argument here. We're talking about significant monies being invested in computer software and there's not a bit of that that's going towards generating the power that you claim you can't keep on in the province unless you legislate these workers back to work.

You're talking that we're not going to have enough power to go around. You're talking about we can't get the routine maintenance done. How many hundreds of workers have you pulled off their jobs to go work on this project? How many hundreds of workers have you pulled off of their regular jobs to work on this project?

If routine maintenance is a key; if we're needing all of our resources put towards the task at hand which is making sure that the power system in the province is safe, then why are you expending these kinds of monies at this point in time? And how much more is going to end up going into this before it's done? And isn't that the real reason why you can't afford to go to what was the fair approach, to the arbitrator, because you couldn't have afforded to have done it in light of these sorts of projects that you have on the go right now?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I just want to say one thing in closing. If you're saying that the maintenance workers from our Boundary dam are working on the computer project, I'm going to say, no they are not. So if you're talking about maintenance and how these people have been pulled of maintenance in to work on this project, there are no maintenance workers pulled off the job to work on computers.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 7

Mr. Osika: — I move an amendment to:

Amend Clause 7 of the printed Bill by deleting the entire clause including the title and replacing it with the following:

And I could read that into the record.

Extension of last collective agreement, appointment of arbitrator, and binding arbitration

“7(1) Notwithstanding any other Act or law or any provision of the last collective bargaining agreement to the contrary,

- a) the terms of that agreement are extended to include the period commencing on January 1, 1998 and ending on the day on which a new or amended collective bargaining agreement is concluded in accordance with this Act; and
- (b) subject to subsection (2), the terms of that agreement shall be as agreed upon between the parties;

(2) Where, 15 days after the coming into force of this Act, a new or amended collective bargaining agreement has not been concluded between the corporation and the union, the corporation and the union shall submit to final and binding arbitration in accordance with this Act.

(3) Where the corporation and the union are required to submit to arbitration pursuant to sub-section (2), An independent arbitrator shall be appointed, who shall be, either:

- (a) A Judge of the Court of Queen’s Bench agreed upon by the corporation and the union, or
- (b) in the event the corporation and the union cannot agree on the appointment of the arbitrator, a Judge of the Court of Queen’s Bench appointed by the Minister of Labour.

(4) The arbitrator appointed in accordance with sub-section (3) shall examine into and decide:

- (a) the matters for decision submitted to him in accordance with this Act; and
- (b) any other matters that appear to him to be necessary to be decided in order to render a decision.

(5) In the event that the person appointed pursuant to subsection (3) is for any reason unable to act as arbitrator, the Minister of Labour may appoint another person to act as arbitrator pursuant to this Act in his (or her) place.

(6) the Minister of Labour shall pay to the arbitrator any remuneration for services and allowances for travelling and other expenses incurred by him for the purposes of the arbitration in the amount that may be specified by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

(7) Within five days after the appointment of the arbitrator pursuant to subsection (3), the corporation and the union

shall each submit to the arbitrator a notice in writing setting forth the matters to be examined and decided by the arbitrator.

(8) The arbitrator shall give full opportunity to the corporation and the union to present evidence, to make submissions and to be represented by counsel.

(9) The arbitrator may, in his (or her) discretion, accept evidence of, or give consideration to:

- a) submissions respecting any proposal made by the corporation or the union to the other in bargaining collectively prior to the coming into force of this Act;
- (b) other collective bargaining agreements entered into in the electric power transmission and generation industries in Canada.

(10) For the purposes of the arbitration, the arbitrator has all the powers of the commissioners pursuant to The Public Inquiries Act.

(11) Where the corporation and the union have settled all matters set out in the notices received by the arbitrator pursuant to subsection (7) and have entered into a new or amended collective bargaining agreement, the arbitrator, on being so notified in writing by both the corporation and the union, shall discontinue the arbitration and shall notify the Minister of Labour of the agreement, and the arbitration is thereupon terminated.

(12) Where the corporation and the union agree upon some of the matters set out in the notices received by the arbitrator pursuant to subsection (7) and the arbitrator is notified in writing by both the corporation and the union of the matters agreed upon, the arbitrator shall confine his decision to:

- (a) the matters set out in the notices that are not agreed upon; and
- (b) any other matters that appear to him to be necessary to be decided in order to render a decision.

(13) The arbitrator shall, in respect of the matters set out in the notices received by him pursuant to subsection (7) upon which the corporation and the union have not agreed, render his decision in writing within one month after the hearing of the arbitration, or within any further period that the Minister of Labour may specify.

(14) The decision of the arbitrator, in respect of any matter in dispute between the corporation and the union, may be made retroactive, in whole or in part, to January 1, 1998.

(15) When the arbitrator has rendered his decision, he shall provide the Minister of Labour, the corporation and the union with a copy of his decision.

(16) The corporation and the union shall each bear its own costs of the arbitration.

(17) The Arbitration Act does not apply to an arbitration pursuant to this Act.

(18) When the arbitrator has rendered his decision pursuant

to this Act, the corporation and the union shall immediately conclude a new or amended collective bargaining agreement incorporating any terms and conditions that may be necessary to give full effect to the decision.

The Deputy Chair: — I thank the hon. member for Melville for sharing this amendment to clause (7) with the table previously.

I wish to draw to the hon. member's attention that the amendment as proposed in clause 7, subsection (6), which begins with "The Minister of Labour shall pay . . ." contains a charge upon the public.

Rule 36 states in part:

Any vote, resolution, address or bill introduced in the Assembly for the appropriation of any part of the public revenue . . . shall be recommended to the Assembly by Message of the Lieutenant Governor before it is considered by the Assembly.

Since the hon. member for Melville is not a member of Executive Council, and is incapable of securing a royal recommendation for this amendment, I must rule the amendment out of order.

Why is the hon. member for Melville on his feet?

(1900)

Mr. Osika: — I then move, Mr. Chair:

That that subsection be stricken from the amendment and the amendment be renumbered as read.

The Deputy Chair: — The amendment has been ruled out of order and the debate will now continue on clause 7.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move the amended amendment and rather than read through the entire motion I would just like to point out that it would delete sub-paragraph 6 on page 2 and replace that with:

that person shall serve without remuneration.

I so move.

The division bells rang from 7:08 p.m. until 7:10 p.m.

Amendment negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Osika	Hillson	McPherson
Aldridge	McLane	

Nay — 34

Romanow	Calvert	MacKinnon
Lingenfelter	Shillington	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Upshall	Kowalsky
Crofford	Van Mulligen	Teichrob

Bradley	Koenker	Sonntag
Nilson	Cline	Serby
Hamilton	Junor	Stanger
Jess	Wall	Kasperski
Ward	Murray	Thomson
Krawetz	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
Boyd	Draude	Gantefoer
Heppner		

The Deputy Chair: — Clause seven, is that . . . Sorry, we have to bring back the officials. We'll have to delay the procedures for a couple of moments.

Order. Committee members I've just been informed that in the vote there's a correction. It was 5 in favour as opposed to 7 in favour. Let the record be 5 in favour, 34 opposed.

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 10 inclusive agreed to.

The division bells rang from 7:12 p.m. until 7:15 p.m.

Clause 10 agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 36

Romanow	Calvert	MacKinnon
Lingenfelter	Shillington	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Upshall	Kowalsky
Crofford	Van Mulligen	Teichrob
Bradley	Koenker	Sonntag
Nilson	Cline	Serby
Hamilton	Junor	Stanger
Jess	Wall	Kasperski
Ward	Murray	Murrell
Thomson	Krawetz	Bjornerud
D'Autremont	Boyd	Draude
Gantefoer	Heppner	Hillson

Nays — 4

Osika	McPherson	Aldridge
McLane		

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

(1915)

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 65 — The Maintenance of Saskatchewan Power Corporation's Operations Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

ROYAL ASSENT

At 7:29 p.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bill:

Bill No. 65 - The Maintenance of Saskatchewan Power Corporation's Operations Act, 1998

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to this Bill.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 7:31 p.m.

MOTIONS**House Adjournment**

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to move:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, it shall stand adjourned to a date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven clear days' notice if possible of such date and time.

Leave not granted.

The Assembly adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

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