

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 20, 1995

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here that says this:

That the residents in rural Saskatchewan have had to bear the brunt of unnecessary and unfair acute care funding cut-backs by the provincial government, and as a result of these cut-backs, the Prairie Health Care Centre in Cabri has been forced to eliminate acute care beds and will be left with only a 12-hour observation bed, and that the citizens of Cabri . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Is the member just reading the prayer?

Mr. Martens: — Yes.

The Speaker: — Is that all part of the prayer? The member may proceed if that's the prayer.

Mr. Martens: —

. . . that the citizens of Cabri and surrounding area feel care services are not adequate to address their needs and that a minimum of one acute care bed is essential.

Therefore we urge the provincial government to address the needs of Cabri and area and provide the funds necessary to ensure that a minimum of one acute care bed be available at the Prairie Health Care Centre.

These petitions come from Cabri, Pennant, and Lancer.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to present petitions on behalf of the people from the Shaunavon and Gull Lake area today. And I'll read the prayer:

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

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

I'd be happy to table these now.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

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

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

And these constituents are from the Assiniboia, Mossbank, Glentworth area of my constituency, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

And in duty bound, your petitioners will every pray.

These petitions come from the Lancer, Portreeve, Abbey areas of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to be able to introduce to members of the Assembly, members of the Canadian Bar Association who are in the corporate counsel section. They had a luncheon meeting in the members' lounge, and are able to join us for question period.

The people who are in the gallery — and I'll ask them to perhaps stand — Valerie MacDonald, John Comrie, both of IPSCO; Robert Cosman, who will be known to all of us; Mark Guillet of SaskEnergy; Charlene Sawatzky, also of SaskEnergy; and finally, Mike McDougall of Sask Water. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these eminent lawyers to Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Merci M. le Président. Je voudrais présenter à vous et à tous les députés dans la chambre aujourd'hui des gens ici avec nous aujourd'hui, des gens très importants dans la communauté francophone. Ils sont ici ce matin pour participer dans une fonction officielle de culture de la Semaine francophone.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly some very distinguished guests we have here. These individuals are part of the leaders in the francophone community and certainly they do a lot of work to try to preserve and promote the French culture and language. I would ask them to rise as I introduce them.

Monsieur le Président, Association canadienne-française de Regina, Mme Margaret Potié; Association culturelle franco-canadienne de la Saskatchewan, M. Denis Magnan, M. Ronald Labrecque, Mme Lois Ross; Association des juristes d'expression française de la Saskatchewan, Mme Renée Bilodeau; Association provinciale des parents fransaskois, Mme Michelle Arsenault; Commission culturelle fransaskoise, M. Jean Liboiron; Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan, M. Peter Situ; Conseil scolaire des écoles fransaskoises, M. Florent Bilodeau; Coopérative des publications fransaskoises, M. Francis Potié; Les éditions Louis Riel, M. Marc Masson; Service fransaskois d'éducation des adultes, M. Claude Shink; Société historique de la Saskatchewan, M. Albert Dubé; Colège Mathieu, M. Louis Julé.

J'demanderais à tous mes collègues de les accueillir chaleureusement ici à la chambre aujourd'hui.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all the members to cordially welcome them here to the Assembly today. Thank you very much.

Hon. members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Agriculture Week

Mr. Johnson: — Mr. Speaker, this week has been proclaimed Agriculture Week in Saskatchewan. It is a time to pay tribute to the people who make this industry such a big success: the Saskatchewan farmer.

I am sure that throughout history there is no other group like farmers who have demonstrated such an unshakeable hope in the future. As our Saskatchewan farmers prepare for spring seeding, there is a sense of optimism when they face the new challenges and changing times.

The celebration of Agriculture Week was instituted by the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association about 25 years ago to recognize the importance of this industry that accounts for about 12 per cent of the gross domestic product.

I ask all members to join me in saluting Saskatchewan farmers and farm families and farm organizations and all other agricultural and food stakeholders for their contribution and for the hope they bring for the future. Thank you.

AgriTrends Conference 1995

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the member from Turtleford has said, this being Agriculture Week, I wish to report on an important conference taking place at this very moment.

The 1995 AgriTrends conference is under way at Kinetic Park in Swift Current. Like many events in Saskatchewan, this one was developed through the cooperation of several groups: the Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, the PFRA (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration), the Swift Current Agricultural Association, and the Canada-Saskatchewan Agriculture Green Plan Agreement.

The theme of this year's conference, Mr. Speaker, is farming for a healthy environment. Topics to be discussed include watershed planning, biotechnology, conservation tillage, and the future of agriculture. Through conferences like this, farmers will gain a high-tech advantage for future practices. As well, they will develop methods to guarantee that farming is completely sustainable.

I want to acknowledge the contribution of all those involved in this conference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Impaired Driving Awareness Week

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is the first day of Impaired Driving Awareness Week. The purpose of this week is to encourage each person to respond in his or her own individual way to the problem of drinking and driving.

Last year in Saskatchewan, 54 people were killed and 1,131 were injured in traffic accidents where alcohol was involved. Real progress will come with public determination combined with personal commitment to eliminate the combination of drinking and driving.

The Saskatchewan Safety Council and Saskatchewan driving without impairment programs around the province are two Saskatchewan bodies who know what is at stake. In particular, I want to acknowledge the efforts of Students Against Drinking and Driving, or SADD, whose chapters work very hard to make the two actions of drinking and driving totally separate.

This week is the time for people to tie a red ribbon to their vehicle's antenna to signify their personal decision to separate the acts of drinking and driving. It's also a time to decide to use a designated driver when celebrating with friends.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, roads will be safer because more and more people in Saskatchewan decide to make them that way and that's what Impaired Driving Awareness Week is all about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

National Francophone Week

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a statement regarding National Francophone Week.

Merci, Monsieur le Président. J'aimerais signaler à tous les députés qu'aujourd'hui, désigné Journée internationale de la francophonie, marque le début de la Semaine nationale de la francophonie — une occasion de célébrer les réussites des communautés francophones de tous les coins du Canada.

La première Semaine nationale de la francophonie a été célébrée en 1993 à l'initiative de l'Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française (ACELF), organisme national voué à la promotion de l'usage de la langue française dans l'enseignement et les activités quotidiennes. Le but de cette semaine; insuffler aux francophones de partout au pays un sentiment d'appartenance à une communauté nationale et renouveler leur fierté à l'égard de leur langue.

Ici, en Saskatchewan, nous avons une communauté francophone fière et dynamique, les Fransaskois. Cette semaine, le drapeau fransaskois flottera avec fierté dans les villes et villages, partout dans la province — de Regina à Bellegarde jusqu'à Zenon Park. Une foule d'autres événements — expositions d'art, réceptions, et spectacles — sont prévus pour mettre en valeur la créativité et la diversité des francophones de la Saskatchewan.

La vigueur culturelle exemplaire des Fransaskois a fait d'eux des artisans importants de notre riche héritage provincial. Ils font face à l'avenir avec la même détermination de préserver et d'illustrer leur langue et leur culture. La Semaine nationale de la francophonie leur en fournit l'occasion. Merci, Monsieur le Président.

(Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to bring to the attention of all members of this Assembly that today, as International Francophone Day, marks the beginning of National Francophone Week — a time to celebrate the achievements of Francophone communities from all parts of Canada.

National Francophone Week was first celebrated in 1993. It was begun by the Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française, a national organization dedicated to promoting the use of the French language in education and day-to-day activities. The purpose of this week is to give Francophones across the country a sense of belonging to a national community and renewed pride in their language.

Here in Saskatchewan we have a proud and dynamic Francophone community, the Fransaskois. This week, the Fransaskois flag will fly with pride in cities and villages across the province, from Regina to Bellegarde to Zenon Park. A number of other events — art openings, receptions, and variety shows — are planned to showcase the creativity and diversity of Saskatchewan's Francophones.

The exemplary cultural vigour of the Fransaskois has made

them important contributors to our province's rich heritage. They face the future with equal determination to preserve and promote their culture and language. National Francophone Week provides them with such an opportunity. Thank you Mr. Speaker.)

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to comment on National Francophone Week. Today is the beginning of National Francophone Week, and it is a week during which many citizens of Canada who are of French heritage can celebrate their country and their culture and their contribution to the nation.

It is very important for us to acknowledge the many francophone citizens of our province who are equal in percentage of our provincial population as Saskatchewan is in its percentage of the national population.

I know that this week will be marked by many events such as theatre performances, gatherings, and dances. And I hope to be able to participate with members of the francophone community in some of their events.

This morning I notice that the Fransaskois's flag is flying from the front balcony of the Legislative Building to mark this very special week. And I also note that the association culturelle franco-Canadienne de la Saskatchewan has a display in this building's rotunda. At a time when our country is in the midst of a very serious national unity crisis between the English and French, I urge all citizens to use this week to further their understanding of the rich and colourful francophone culture in our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

First Day of Spring

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, today is the first day of spring. Actually spring begins in about 45 minutes. Once again in Saskatchewan we have beaten the odds, as the member from Rosthern is fond of saying. We have survived another winter and now look forward with optimism and lightened hearts to the real beginning of the year.

The signs of spring are everywhere about us. The member from Indian Head has already delivered himself of his annual report on the migratory progress of the creatures not afraid to visit Saskatchewan in March. The fountain of Regina, the mighty Wascana, is practically overflowing its banks and wafting its own announcement of spring through the air.

But the surest sign of spring, Mr. Speaker, is that the mascot of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Murray Mandryk, is shedding his thin skin, as he and other members of his species do on an annual basis. He recently delivered himself of the heretofore unheard-of proposition that politicians use the media, just as the media use politicians.

This amazing discovery caused him such discomfort that his skin was gone in a moment and the rites of spring were completed once again.

As a politician, I am glad for Murray that we continue to play our role in this symbiotic relationship. And to show my, and our, appreciation for this ongoing closeness, I offer to him this springtime quote from Shakespeare, the first political columnist: like the cuckoo in June, he was heard but not regarded.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Investigation Of Phoenix Advertising

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It must be spring fever, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice: Mr. Minister, on February 13 of this year, the former minister of Justice assured you and the members of this Assembly that the decision not to charge Phoenix Advertising in the kickback scheme to a former NDP (New Democratic Party) cabinet minister was being investigated. On March 9 the current Attorney General promised that a full report would be made available to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the public, who grow more suspicious by the moment.

On one occasion, the Minister said and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, the matter is being investigated. I do not have that report. And I will share it with you when it arrives.

On another occasion he said, and again I quote:

When I have a written report from the prosecutors, it will be made available to the House.

My question is to the Attorney General. Mr. Minister, I understand that there's a report available. Will you now make that report available to this Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The public prosecutions branch of the department of the Attorney General is not political and has never been politicized. That stands to the credit of this government, and I think it's fair to say it stands to the credit of the former government, through some trying times.

It has never been the policy . . . After making those comments in the House, I revisited the matter with the Attorney General's department, was informed that these reports have not been made public and have never been made public through various governments and indeed, I'm told, are not made public anywhere in Canada. Neither police reports nor prosecutors' reports are ever made public. There are few if any exceptions in that.

The reason — I explained this last week to the media and to the hon. member actually — the reason for this is I think relatively convincing when you hear it. If you file the reports in the House, that reports becomes the subject of controversy, and the decision then becomes inevitably politicized. If you do that very often, you wind up politicizing the public prosecutions branch, something we don't want and something I don't think members opposite want either.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is our policy not to file prosecutors' reports.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: Mr. Minister, I think it's quite evident that the evidence is very clear, and it's quite unequivocal. Mr. Minister, we asked why the Crown prosecutor would say things like, it is not always in the public interest to prosecute the giver of a kickback, and sometimes people are pressured into giving kickbacks. That was the question.

Hansard shows that you said a report was being compiled on the actions of the Crown prosecutor in relation to Phoenix Advertising kickback to one of your former colleagues in cabinet. Now, Mr. Minister, you're telling us that it wouldn't be appropriate to release that information. I think, Mr. Minister, what it basically points to is that, while on one hand the prosecution says it wouldn't be in the best public interest . . . and at one time you and your colleagues agreed that it would be appropriate to release this information; now apparently it is not.

Mr. Minister, why is it not appropriate? We can use all the arguments you want, but that, Mr. Minister, will not satisfy the public. It really doesn't satisfy this side of the House. Why will you not release that report?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — As explained to the member opposite, both a moment ago and some days ago, it is impossible to file those reports without politicizing the decision and in due course politicizing the public prosecutions branch.

One of the strong suits, one of the very desirable features, of public prosecutions in this province and in this country, is that those decisions are made free of any political interference. We want to maintain that; I'm sure members do opposite as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again to the minister. Mr. Minister, I can appreciate your F. Lee Bailey impersonation, but your own colleagues on the dream team defence counsel disagree with you.

The former attorney general agreed with our thoughts on this matter. He said if someone was found guilty of the offence of accepting a secret commission, it should also be an offence to offer the secret commission. That is what is at stake here, Mr.

Minister, whether or not the law is being applied fairly. And I believe, Mr. Minister, you'll agree with that as well.

Mr. Minister, you made a promise to this Assembly. Why will you not come clean now and indeed release the information that you promised to show the public that indeed there is fairness being applied in this situation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The member opposite is careful, I think, to avoid any suggestion that we'd want to politicize the public prosecutions branch. I think members opposite agree with that. That was your policy, that's ours.

As I've explained, if a report is filed, that decision then becomes a subject of political comment. If you do it very often you politicize the public prosecutions branch. We don't want that; we don't think you want that either.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Patronage Appointments

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, prior to the last election, the current Premier called political patronage an endemic, virulent practice. He said that party people and defeated MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) and candidates ought not serve on government boards. And then he went on to say: if we don't succeed and continue to appoint party hacks, then I've gotten nowhere. How are you doing so far, Mr. Premier?

In today's paper, there are 73 — 73 — former NDP MLAs, NDP candidates, NDP campaign managers, and NDP executive members who have been appointed to every type of board, commission, judgeship, and position in the public sector. Seventy-three, Mr. Premier, and the article notes that the list would even be higher if immediate family members of current and former MLAs, people who have lifetime NDP memberships, and those who lost NDP nominations were added to that list.

Mr. Premier, I'd like you to explain how this list squares with your promise to quit appointing party people and defeated MLAs and candidates to government positions.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me tell the members opposite that the way we appoint to boards and commissions in this province is very different than the previous administration. Competence is the main criteria. And I want to say to you that out of the 1,700 members of the general public that we have appointed to various boards and commissions, there are many people from various political backgrounds.

I understand a couple of them have run for the Liberal Party as candidates. There are a large number of Conservative supporters, and some of course, given the background of the province, would be from NDP backgrounds. But included in the names of some of the non-New Democrats that we have appointed, well-known names like Dale Botting; Owen Mann; Don Black; Cliff Wright; Mel Watson, the past president of the

chamber of commerce, who I'm sure no one will accuse of packing an NDP membership; Glen Penner, who many of you will know in the Liberal Party. So the fact is in Saskatchewan that in appointing members to boards and commissions, competence, regardless of their political background, is the main criteria.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, you people are pathological. You have a Health minister who says that you have . . . no hospitals have been closed. You have a gambling minister who won't admit VLTs (video lottery terminal) cause gambling addictions. You have a Labour minister who spent two years denying your government was developing a union-only tendering preference policy. You have a Social Service minister who quotes fictitious reports on welfare fraud. And now we have a Premier who won't admit to making patronage appointments, even after seeing a list of 73 such appointments in today's paper.

And, Mr. Premier, you would have had to sign all of those OCs (order in council); virtually every one of them I understand you signed yourself, sir. Why are you and your ministers so incapable of simply telling the truth? Will you start by admitting that political patronage is just as extensive under your government as it ever was, so we can get to work, so we can get to work on fixing the problem. Will you admit that?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite who, in his sanctimonious way, gets up and talks about the political appointments so-called, but I want to quote to him from March 28, 1994, *Star-Phoenix*, and the headline is: Tkachuk defends patronage. And in that story it says:

Tory MLAs were clearly unsettled by (how do you say his name?) Tkachuk's remarks.

And I quote because this is the important part:

That was the most eloquent defence of the most indefensible thing in government today, said Kindersley MLA Bill Boyd. We, the former Tory government, carried it to a point where the flag girl on the highway crew had to be identified as a party member. As politicians that's where we have the greatest problem.

And it goes on:

Dan D'Autremont, Souris-Cannington, told the meeting he was asked by the Tory officials to ensure members of the highway repair crew had correct political background. Political patronage was one of the downfalls of the Devine government, he said.

Now for you to come here today and say that, because we have appointed, for example, members who have run for the Liberal Party in the past and are running: Ken Krawetz, Linda Trytten, Dale Botting, Glen Penner, many well-known people from other political parties, is simply unbelievable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, Mr. Minister, you exactly make our case. That is the reason why, sir, we have brought forward a Bill into this legislature calling for an all-party commission to decide on political patronage appointments. That is exactly the reason we have brought that forward, sir. It happened in the last administration; it happened in administrations previous to that; and it certainly is happening under yours, sir.

Between 1982 and 1990 no fewer than 15 former or defeated PC MLAs were appointed to Crown corporation boards, commissioners, or departments. The NDP called that a most disturbing and intensified trend. Mr. Premier, the list in the paper today of your people includes 29 NDP MLAs or defeated candidates in a list of 73 party members. I guess it's not quite as bad, somehow or another, when you people are doing it and if it's different than anyone else that's doing it.

Mr. Premier, why have you and your party broken your promise to the people of this province? Why is political patronage suddenly acceptable now that the NDP is the one that's handing out the jobs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that when you have on the list, I believe that Mark Wyatt has done up for the *Leader-Post*, fewer than 3 per cent of the total number of appointments that we have made in the province and then talk about this as being rampant patronage, is ludicrous.

I say to the member opposite, the member opposite who in his own words talked about their political patronage to the point where he believed it to be the downfall of their government, I say to you that having in this province established a process whereby we have aboriginal people to a large extent on all of our boards, where we have gender parity as a very, very big goal and on most boards we are achieving it, where we have employee representation from the Crowns on almost every board, and to say that this isn't an improvement I think flies in the face of your own comments at your recent political meetings.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, Mr. Premier, it was wrong then and it is wrong now — just as wrong now. But instead of arguing about it, we're prepared, Mr. Minister, to do something about it.

Mr. Minister, the opposition has introduced a private members' Bill that would see all appointments to government boards and commissions made by an all-party committee of this legislature. The government would still retain the majority on that committee. But we believe the public appointment process would reduce blatant political patronage and ensure that the most qualified persons were appointed regardless of political stripe. Mr. Premier, your own government's polling is showing that 83 per cent of people support this idea.

Mr. Premier, will you support this initiative and start to restore some integrity into the government appointment process?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite and the Leader of the Conservative Party and the Conservative caucus, that it would be interesting to find out whether he consulted with the member from Estevan before he raised this question about how terrible appointments of a political nature are. But for them to sanctimoniously stand here today and say, if only we were back in government we would do it differently, is like slamming the barn door after the horses are 10 miles down the road. You didn't do any of it — you didn't do any of it. We have.

I say that the appointments to boards and commissions, if you want to look at it in fairness, are done on the basis of competence, that there are members from all political backgrounds and political parties. We don't, as you have readily admitted, make sure that they have political cards before we hire students to work in the Department of Highways, which the member from Souris-Cannington says was the policy of the previous administration.

So for you to say that there is the same kind of political patronage involved in our government as there was in yours, is absolute nonsense.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 1991 the Premier claimed that he would put a stop to the practice of stacking boards with party faithful. And he states in today's *Leader-Post*, and I quote:

"This is not a matter of government sitting in the back room and saying, 'I'm going to appoint an NDP'er or a token Liberal or a PC', which was done prior to 1991."

My question to the Premier: Mr. Premier, when you took office in 1991, were the people on existing agencies, boards, and commissions evaluated on their qualifications and performance or on political affiliation?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite who rises in her place to ask about political appointments, I say again that there are a number of your candidates who have been appointed to boards. And if that's who you're referring to as not being appointed, I can say to you that they are competent people and that's the reason we appointed them.

And I want to say to you as well that in your quotes recently in the North Battleford regional *Optimist*, April 17, 1994, you say, and I quote, on the issue of patronage: that doesn't mean that Liberals won't get jobs, she said. They're competent, and if you have someone who is competent and has integrity, it doesn't matter what political stripe they are. That's your opinion. You're saying that you will hire them and you will appoint them.

And so I say to you, where do you get off today saying that in fact if you were elected you wouldn't appoint Liberals. You say right here when you're at another place and at another time not so long ago in North Battleford, that in fact if you were elected, you would, and I quote again: that doesn't mean that Liberals won't get jobs, she said. They're competent, and if you have someone who is competent and has integrity, it doesn't matter what their political stripe is. And that in fact is what governing is about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in spite of this minister's and obviously the Premier's denials, it was just 22 days after their election that the NDP started doing the same old thing about patronage appointments.

I'd like to table a memo today from the Premier's long-time senior assistant, Diana Milenkovic, now a vice-president of SaskTel. This memo lists all 13 SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) board members at the time, and beside the name of each person is an X indicating that they will be dropped from the board. NDP replacements are indicated for part of this list.

And what is most disturbing is that the memo does not evaluate people at all according to their performance on the board; indeed it instead evaluates them on their political affiliation, which appears to be the only consistent criterion.

To the Premier, sir, if you will rise in your place: how could you promise the board appointments would not be tied to politics when this memo clearly proves otherwise?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say very clearly to the member opposite that when she talks about political appointments, she should be clear that she has made statements to her own party members and to the public at large that she in fact would have political appointments.

And to the member opposite as well, from Shaunavon, who clearly on many occasions came to offices of ministers when he represented the members of Shaunavon from the NDP, arguing vehemently that we weren't making enough political appointments; this was his argument: on health boards, on government boards, that there should be more political appointments. For him today to say that there are too many political appointments I think flies in the face of what he was saying when he was a member of this caucus.

Mr. Chrétien as well had some interesting points of view on political appointments. And I want to quote as well from a recent article in *The Globe and Mail*, February 4, 1995, where he says it is an issue of their competence. Or as he puts it: Guys you don't know, why you don't know; guys you know, you know. And that's competence.

Now that's Liberals. That's what it's about. And I say again, Mr. Speaker, that that's pretty clear, what Liberals talk about. I say again: Guys you don't know, you don't know; and guys you know, you know. And that's competence.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find it most interesting that they laugh and jest but this document clearly shows that these particular individuals, none of whom were appointed to the board on this list, were removed on the basis of their known or suspected political affiliation, and nothing else.

Not only does this memo offer no credible evaluation — no credible evaluation of the skills or the abilities of these individuals, Mr. Speaker — it insults the former board members with comments such as this: calling this gentleman a farmer who doesn't have a good reputation, a rabid, cranky Tory. End of quote.

My question to the Premier again: if this was the method of evaluation placed to all boards, agencies, and commissions when you took power, will you admit that you in fact have misled the people of Saskatchewan as recently as the interview in today's paper, and that politics was indeed the primary consideration for replacing people on government agencies, boards, and commissions, when you came to office?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, what we did when we made the drastic change from hiring flag people on the highways as the former Tory government did, demanding that they have a Conservative political card, is we established a process where competence was in fact based on what these people knew and did.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say again to the member opposite from Greystone, who in her sanctimonious way says something very different here in the House today from what she has been saying at party meetings, is that the difference between your former patronage and the Prime Minister's, Mr. Chrétien, is that at least he has the integrity and honesty to tell the world what he believes about appointments. And that in fact is very different than what you are doing here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rail Strike Legislation

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As much as I'd very much like to continue with this line, Mr. Speaker, there is a very urgent and critical issue facing the farmers of Saskatchewan today, and perhaps this will bring the Premier to his feet.

At this very hour in Ottawa the NDP is collaborating with the separatist Bloc Québécois to filibuster in the House of Commons to prevent the federal government from expediting legislation to end the rail strike.

Mr. Premier, knowing that we cannot afford another moment's delay, will you in fact immediately communicate the serious implications of the actions of your NDP counterparts in Ottawa that they are taking by obstructing this legislation, legislation that even you have finally conceded is necessary to avert

disastrous consequences for Saskatchewan grain shipments to overseas customers?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I must say that it gets curiouser and curiouser and curiouser. Today, Monday, March 20, 1995, the Liberal leader in Saskatchewan is supporting the federal Liberal government in Ottawa, but four days ago she was in absolute, total opposition to everything that the Liberal government in Ottawa did. So now there is another major flip-flop of position and she is in favour of this.

I am assuming that her close and fraternal relationships with the Liberal Party in Ottawa will have told them that this was something we had spotted as a problem some several weeks ago by way of correspondence to them and urging them to act. They chose not to act until this moment of crisis.

This is something which I don't know whether you support or you don't support because your position with the Liberal Party federally is somewhat ambivalent. But don't think that you're fooling the people of Saskatchewan because we know from long history that a Liberal is a Liberal is a Liberal is a Liberal. That's exactly what you are.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the two written questions, I move they be converted to motions for return (debatable).

The Speaker: — 58 and 57, motions for return debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 38

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated the other day that the Bill before us, Bill No. 38, An Act to amend Certain Health Statutes, appears to be a fairly straightforward Bill dealing with a number of amendments; amendments that are necessary because of no-fault insurance and the introduction of new population-based funding arrangements.

Prior to no-fault insurance coming into place, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Health could directly recover medical and

hospital costs caused by automobile accidents where those costs were due to negligence on the part of someone else. That is no longer possible, and that is one of the reasons for this Bill being before the Assembly today.

I understand that SGI, Mr. Speaker, has agreed to reimburse Saskatchewan Health for these costs, and costs are expected to be around 4.5 million annually.

The Bill also, Mr. Speaker, accommodates cost recovery for third-party liability, medical claims, and situations where fee for services is not applicable . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. Toth: — More specifically, for population-based funding to medical doctors.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation will provide authority under one piece of legislation for medical and hospital costs to be recovered in all situations where the cost is of the result of negligence on the part of someone else.

And so, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, this Bill certainly does bring amendments that it appears are necessary due to some of the legislation that was introduced and passed in the last session. And I also indicated that we do have a couple of amendments that we want to bring forward. We have a number of questions that we would like to raise.

However, we do not feel that it is that serious a matter that we can't allow the Bill to now proceed to committee and address these questions, and bring forward any amendments at that time. Mr. Speaker, therefore we're prepared to let this Bill go to committee.

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

Bill No. 39

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Calvert that **Bill No. 39 — An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to raise a few concerns and bring a few thoughts forward before I move adjournment of this motion that this Bill be read the second time.

Mr. Speaker, at the outset I'm pleased to see that both the Saskatchewan College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Saskatchewan Medical Association have been consulted previous to any changes made to The Medical Profession Act. And if there's anything that I'm hearing from people within the medical field and medical profession at this time, Mr. Speaker, it's the fact that many of the workers and suppliers of services feel that they haven't been properly consulted or involved in a number of the changes that we have seen take place in this province over the past three years under this administration re

health care in this province.

Bill 39, however, seems to have some welcome modifications. And it's certainly heartening to know that the very people who provide the service were at least asked for their involvement and their input in regards to this Bill. It seems, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill will ease the red tape involved, with some services being provided through community-based health providers.

Mr. Speaker, the College of Physicians and Surgeons will be able to issue special licences to psychiatrists and medical health officers who will be transferred to the district health boards on April 1.

A few other amendments make some sense. I believe it is a good idea to extend the period of time in which a person can take civil action against a physician for negligence. Bill 39 adjusts this length of time from 12 months to 14 months. And I believe this is appropriate, Mr. Speaker, because many times individuals themselves don't realize till a number of months after a certain procedure whether or not there may be a case whereby they would have the opportunity of applying an action for negligence against a physician. So I think that is certainly appropriate, especially for the well-being of the general public.

Whether it's politics or children's education or where tax dollars go, people want more information, more accountability. I believe, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is a positive trend. People are taking more interest in the things that affect them. They are demanding fair and equitable treatment from professionals and the elected officials alike. This is also positive, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, another amendment in Bill 39 allows a committee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons that investigates the patient's complaints the ability to apply to the court for subpoenas for witnesses to testify. Obviously this will help the committee get down to the bottom of complaints and exactly what happened, allowing for the truth to be told under oath.

Mr. Speaker, it is hoped that this initiative will allow injustices, however few, to be dealt with properly and efficiently. I say however few, Mr. Speaker, because I believe that the vast majority of doctors and medical professionals in our province are more than conscientious. They are to be commended for their dedication to providing quality health care for Saskatchewan families. They should be commended especially because their jobs have gotten much tougher over the past few years because of government cut-backs to health care. Mr. Speaker, in those rare cases where professionals have acted negligently, of course they should be held accountable for their actions.

Allowing the college's committee to subpoena witnesses will allow all parties involved — patients, family, doctors, and other medical professionals involved — to be treated fairly and objectively. Removing reference to specific countries' qualifications in granting temporary licences will be a positive move, especially for rural Saskatchewan.

It will open some specific questions in this . . . Mr. Speaker, I have some specific questions in this regard when Bill 39 does go to committee. But I must say at the onset, I think this change

will be helpful.

Presently, Mr. Speaker, we have doctors from England, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and South Africa, as well as the United States, that must go through overly extensive red tape in order to practise medicine in Saskatchewan. And most everyone in this Assembly is quite well aware of the fact that, if it weren't for offshore — if I can use that term — medical professionals coming to this province, a number of our rural communities would not have the medical professional help that they do have today.

And so this is an area of the Bill that I'm certainly taking an interest in and will be raising some questions to make sure that we indeed give professionals the ability that they need to come to this province and offer the services which are so greatly required.

These are individuals who have received their graduate degrees in medicine and have been approved by the general medical councils in their prospective countries. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, some of these individuals take quite some time before being allowed to practise here. And I believe this is not a problem that is isolated in our province. I know of a neurologist in the States who moved from one state to another and waited 14 months to receive his licence. These kinds of problems don't make sense. But when it comes to government rules and regulations, oftentimes it seems there is no sense.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this provision will be especially helpful since we have lost many health care specialists and physicians over the past few years.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, Bill 39 makes some changes to the use of the College of Physicians and Surgeons use of legal counsel and the assessment of fees. Including fees within by-laws and other changes are areas I would like some more detail on, and I will be posing these questions during committee.

However, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be appropriate for us to review in a little greater length this Bill before we allow it to go to committee, and therefore at this time I would move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 22

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Renaud that **Bill No. 22 — An Act to establish the Transportation Partnerships Corporation and to enact a Consequential Amendment** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated the other day, one has to question the real need for another Crown corporation in this province, especially a highways Crown, when indeed we have a Highways department already available and willing and more than capable of providing contracts and letting contracts and looking after the infrastructure, the road infrastructure in our

province.

However, driving home this past weekend, one would begin to wonder whether or not they do have as much ability as we give them credit for, in view of some of the road conditions that I was travelling on. However we're quite well aware that this time of the year we can expect to experience some deterioration of our roads, just because of the climate that we have in this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, we've seen over the past few years that there has been a real, real reduction, and indeed the professionals that are working in our Highways department today are finding it more difficult to just try and maintain the infrastructure we have, let alone adding a better road quality or roadbed, due to the cut-backs that we have seen administered by this government.

While on one hand they take away from the agriculture producers and indirectly use those funds to balance their budget, on the other hand, where they're cutting back, where people are finding that the road structure in this province is being severely hampered with and in some cases deteriorating — that, Mr. Speaker, poses a real question: why spend more money forming another Crown corporation where we're going to have people appointed to run this Crown corporation when it might be more appropriate to put that money into the structure, the infrastructure that's already there? Put it into the Department of Highways and allow them to get on with the job of creating a better highway surface and a better road maintenance throughout this province for the people of Saskatchewan to indeed utilize.

Mr. Speaker, what I find interesting . . . and I think the government has argued that they need the Crown in order to take advantage of cost sharing or funds from the federal infrastructure program that are being made available to the province of Saskatchewan. And I guess that's the point that I really wonder and really ponder, and really I'm trying to determine in my mind whether indeed that is necessary.

Is it that vital that we set up a Crown corporation just to accept and handle the infrastructure program? Would it not be possible, Mr. Speaker, for that funding to come to the province, for the province to allocate it to the Department of Highways, and to allocate it to specific projects within the province of Saskatchewan?

And I can think of a couple of areas specifically, Mr. Speaker, where that infrastructure program might be allocated to, in view of the fact that we have federal-provincial agreements dealing with national transportation and a national highways structure across this province — certainly No. 1, in my area. My colleague, the member from Maple Creek, has had petitions from his area regarding the four-laning of the No. 1 from Gull Lake through to the Alberta border, and I would have to add that even on the east side of this province, Mr. Speaker, it would be very appropriate that we take a serious look at double- or four-laning the No. 1 from Indian Head east right through to the Manitoba border.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that a young girl on her way to watch her brother curl in the Saskatchewan junior curling championships would be alive today if we'd have had a four-lane highway going east into Manitoba rather than the fact of a two-lane and the unfortunate mishap that took place just outside of Moosomin. And that is just one; it just is a recent example that I bring to mind.

And yet, on a daily basis and a weekly and monthly basis, Mr. Speaker, we have seen from residents within the area . . . not only on the east side where we just have the single two-lane highway and on the west side, Mr. Speaker. But there have been numerous occasions where there are legitimate arguments and real reasons as to why twinning of the No. 1 should take place. And it's not just the No. 1. We have noticed a significant movement of traffic into our province and through our province on the Yellowhead.

And again, Mr. Speaker . . . and I understand as I was noticing the information that the Minister of Highways made available to us regarding the building program for this year that there is a portion of highway west of Saskatoon, towards North Battleford, that's actually had been graded for — I believe — two or three years and yet still hasn't received pavement. And if I'm not mistaken, that is one of the areas . . . the fact that it's still two lane where some of the most significant accidents have taken place in the last few years. And it's very important that that highway be opened up and a four lane put in there, as we see the greater movement of traffic through the province on the northern side of the province along the Yellowhead.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would have to . . . as I've indicated before and I indicate again, it would seem to me that we have a very legitimate question here as to why the province would decide to add another Crown which will become another expense for the taxpayers which is another avenue whereby our taxpayers are then eaten up in administration versus putting the dollars to actual use of the taxpayers across this province . . . by putting that money directly into the agency that's already available, the Department of Highways and allowing them to get on with the process of upgrading these major highway structures across or ribbons of highway across our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I talk about No. 1 and I talk about Highway No. 16, the Yellowhead, we're all aware and people across this province are aware of the fact that there are other highways in this province that need some work done on them. While it's important that we look at the national infrastructure and the national highway medium, Mr. Speaker, it's also important for us in Saskatchewan to realize that there are other areas in the province that whereby people, residents of this province, transport or travel back and forth from point A to point B. And they're travelling on roads that are less than being totally safe. And it's fortunate that we have a group of drivers who have really been careful in how they drive and how they move their vehicles down the road and drive defensively. And it's because of that, Mr. Speaker, that some of the problems and some of the problem areas in our highway infrastructure . . . that we haven't had more accidents than we do have.

(1430)

And so, Mr. Speaker, it would seem to me that it would be more appropriate for this government, rather than just pushing ahead and forging ahead with the need for a Crown corporation, another Crown corporation in this province, that they take the time and that they speak with the federal government. And if they need to, Mr. Speaker, if they need to, ask the federal government for a bit of lead time, additional lead time to allow them to set up the process, the format that if there's a special format needed under the Department of Highways as it already exists . . . and place most of the money, if not all of the money, through the federal infrastructure program into meeting the needs of the drivers, not only of the province of Saskatchewan, but the many people who utilize our highways, as we trust that we will be seeing this summer. And even beginning now, people will come into the province and will spend some time in this province . . . that they will choose this province as a place to spend some of their tourist dollars.

And if we're going to enhance people looking at spending some time in this province, it's important that we create that road structure and that highway structure whereby they will be more than willing to turn off some of the major highways going across this province in order to take a look at what Saskatchewan has to offer because certainly, Mr. Speaker, this province has a lot to offer, but most people do not see it.

In fact when I talk to people, what they talk about . . . how fast they can get through Saskatchewan because it's nothing but bald, open prairie. And yet if they got off a couple of the main highways, specifically No. 1, travelled even down No. 33, they'd be amazed at the sights that they can see as they travel through the province of Saskatchewan. Or certainly if they just swung a little bit further north and just took a little bit of time, they'd be amazed at what they can see in northern Saskatchewan.

And it's also interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, where individuals or people I've run into that have come from Manitoba and have never gone anywhere but the No. 1 . . . and one couple comes to mind. At the community of Moosomin they had asked us if there were any camping sites around that community. And we had indicated to them maybe they should look at the regional park, just check it out; it's only six or eight miles from the community. It's off the No. 1, granted, and maybe the road isn't quite as nice, but . . . At the end of the day we got a call back from this couple saying, boy, we didn't realize there was such a beautiful site off the No. 1 Highway. All we saw was flat, open prairie, and we drove six miles off the No. 1, found ourselves a real nice camping spot. And they said next time we come through, that's where we're going to stop.

Another couple indicated they decided they'd swing north through the community of Rocanville, went into the Qu'Appelle Valley, and took the scenic route through the valley. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's a little slower traffic than the No. 1, but they found out that we have some beautiful scenery in this province, that there was more to this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be more appropriate if we sat down and if the government took the time to re-evaluate the

need, whether or not we really need this transportation Act . . . if they took the time to re-evaluate and took those dollars that are coming from the infrastructure program and put them to work right now, Mr. Speaker, to benefit the taxpayers of this province rather than creating another Crown corporation.

I think, Mr. Speaker, with that, I'm going to allow other members to address this issue as well. But I believe that it's important that those points be brought forward and that the public and the people of this Assembly made no . . . be brought up to speed as to the need and whether or not this piece of legislation is essential or is an essential piece of legislation to be brought forward at this time. And I thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to speak a little bit about the Bill before us today. What the Bill does is it creates a Crown corporation empowered to undertake highway works.

What that does, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, is raise a number of questions in our minds about what the responsibility of this Crown corporation is going to be. For example, when I take a look at the Department of Highways and Transportation and I do an assessment of it and evaluate . . . And I say, is this Crown corporation going to take over some part of the Department of Highways? Is it, for example, going to take over the work of cutting the grass along the highways? Is it going to take over the responsibility of grading the roads in Saskatchewan? Is it going to take over the responsibility of cleaning the snow off of the highways?

Mr. Speaker, the questions that we have about this Act as it relates to this Assembly, these questions are very significant. We don't know from the minister's observations what this Crown corporation is going to have the capacity to do. Will it have the responsibility to take over the administration of the Department of Highways? Will it take over the responsibility of the repair of Highway's equipment across this province? We don't know that, Mr. Speaker.

Will this Crown corporation be responsible for the inventory supply of the Department of Highways? We don't know that either, Mr. Speaker. And the minister has not give us an indication of what this is supposed to do or what the mandate of this Crown corporation is supposed to be.

Is this Crown corporation going to handle the administration of the Department of Highways? Is it going to handle the services provided by the Department of Highways to the people of Saskatchewan? Is this the mandate of this Crown corporation? Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Highways hasn't told us. Is this going to handle the engineering portion of the Department of Highways, this Crown corporation that is going to be empowered to undertake Highways' works in the province of Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, we don't know that.

There are a whole lot of things that we don't know about this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and we have just a whole lot of questions that we have to deal with.

Will they be taking over the facilities and the role of the province in the Highway's facilities that they have? Will they be taking over equipment, office accommodation, material storage space? Will they be taking over the Highway Traffic Board? And these are questions that we have, Mr. Speaker, of this minister on what the Crown corporation in transportation is supposed to be.

Mr. Speaker, will this Crown corporation take over the engineering component of the Department of Highways? And in all of this, Mr. Speaker, is the overall concept that the road system is not only the Department of Highways and the highway system; it is also the municipal roads in the province of Saskatchewan. Is this Crown corporation going to take over the assets of the municipal roads? Is it going to take over the responsibility of grading them?

We have a lot of questions that haven't been answered by the Minister of Highways, Mr. Speaker, in giving this Crown corporation the power to undertake the work of the Department of Highways.

Will this Crown corporation be responsible for all of the tendering in the construction for transportation in the province of Saskatchewan?

Is this Crown corporation going to be involved in pulling together the whole area of ferries in the province of Saskatchewan? We have a number of them on the South Saskatchewan River and on the North Saskatchewan River. Will this Crown corporation be responsible for the ferry services in the province? We haven't been told any of this by the Minister of Highways. He has not been available for comment on these, and we are asking these questions.

Will the responsibility for all of the stockpiling of gravel come under this Crown corporation in relation to all of the stockpiling of gravel that goes on through the winter in the province of Saskatchewan? It's done extensively now, Mr. Speaker, by private companies bidding on tenders, and we want to know from the Minister of Highways what this Crown corporation's responsibility is going to be. Will it take over the spreading of the gravel on highways and the moving of crush to locations where new construction is taking place? Will this be the responsibility of this Crown corporation? We don't know that, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing that comes to my mind is, what will this corporation be empowered to do when it is given the responsibilities of the Department of Highways? What will the responsibility be? Will it be to coordinate all of the activities of the construction in the province of Saskatchewan? We don't know that either, Mr. Speaker. Will it be the responsibility of this Crown corporation to deal with the tenders? Will they be required to hand them out or let them? And that's the questions we have, Mr. Speaker, regarding this corporation.

There are a whole lot of aspects that we need to have answers on, and we have not been able to receive them, and that's the reason why we are here speaking about this corporation. These are questions that we're going to be asking the Minister of

Highways to come forward with as it relates to this corporation.

There's other things. For example, we need to have some understanding from the minister whether this will include anything to do with the replacement of rail beds and construction of rail beds in the province of Saskatchewan. Will this be an opportunity for the minister to expand the short-line railroad system in the province of Saskatchewan? That's a question that is concerning a lot of people today.

And this Crown corporation that is to do highway work in the Department of Highways, would it be responsible for purchasing road beds in the province of Saskatchewan? Would it be responsible for owning these road beds in the province? These are questions that come to mind in a way that we should have had some answers from the Minister of Highways regarding this.

Is the Minister of Highways considering moving the services and the employees from the railroads into this Crown corporation in order to expedite the movement of grain and other freight along the branch lines in the province of Saskatchewan?

Is this his way of setting a corporation up, a Crown corporation, to do any one of the things that I have talked about to this point? And that's the question we have and the consideration that has to be made by this Legislative Assembly. To date, Mr. Speaker, we haven't had the answers to these questions, and we need to have them.

Another point that needs to be raised is that this corporation is designed to encourage the participation of outside investment in highways projects. Mr. Speaker, what we have here is a suggestion that perhaps maybe we have a Coquihalla Highway in the province of Saskatchewan where the private citizens of this province are to be allowed to purchase highway right of ways and then have tolls that would reimburse the owners for the privilege of driving on those highways. Is this in the minister's mind as it relates to having outside investment in projects in Saskatchewan?

We have . . . As I suggested earlier, is this a question of allowing the ferry services to become privatized? That's a question we could raise as a way to establish what things could be done and what things may be done.

Are engineering firms interested in constructing highways in the province of Saskatchewan in order to have access to income in a general way on the movement of commodities along major corridors in Saskatchewan? Is this what the Minister of Highways is suggesting? Is this a way for outside investors to come in and purchase highway right of ways and then using these corridors for their own specific benefit? Would this include those people who use the highways extensively? Would this include things like having trucking companies finance certain portions of the highway in order to have an opportunity to have running rights on those highways? Is this what the Minister of Highways is suggesting?

We don't even begin to know what all he is including in establishing this Crown corporation.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill establishes a six-person board to run the Crown corporation. Well, Mr. Speaker, earlier today we had a pretty frank discussion about who and what kind of people this government has used to establish Crown corporation boards.

Across this province we have seen an infiltration of NDP: former NDP MLAs, former NDP candidates, former NDP stakeholders in committee rooms, and all of the things related to the work of the NDP. These people have appointed them to the boards and commissions. And the paper suggested that there was over 70 of them involved. And if he included extended family members, they would be hundreds more. That, Mr. Speaker, is what we have, and that's what would run this Crown corporation.

Mr. Speaker, these are questions that we have of the Minister of Highways, and we want to have an opportunity to ask them.

(1445)

With the member from Lloydminster speaking up, it also reminded me of some other things that could be included in this discussion. The heavy oil upgrading in the province of Saskatchewan, will it be allowed to contribute to the volume of business that could be achieved by having running rights on certain highways? Is that also an opportunity of which the minister is speaking about public participation from outside of the Department of Highways and tax dollars?

Mr. Speaker, the Crown is to be given a \$20 million fund from the general revenue — \$20 million to kick-start the Crown corporation. Well, Mr. Speaker, in today's tight money policy that the provincial government has established in this province as it relates to serious construction on the Department of Highways, I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that if this is just there to put in place so that this Crown corporation can begin or it has some substance, I would say that there are probably hundreds and thousands of people in this province who would be able to say to the people of Saskatchewan and to this government that we have a better place to put this \$20 million than just to be the place where we do change in the province of Saskatchewan.

Twenty million dollars is a fairly substantial fund. In fact there are departments in this government who operate under less than that, and here's a Crown corporation who's going to get \$20 million up front in order to get it up and running.

These are concerns that we have, Mr. Speaker, regarding this Crown corporation. This Bill was originally drafted to allow the government to participate in proposed federal-provincial highways projects that was seeing its entity run as a joint federal-provincial Crown.

Well, Mr. Speaker, last fall we heard a lot of stories about how this was going to be brought about. We heard stories that the minister of transport was negotiating with the federal Minister of Transport about how this would happen. Then along comes a statement made by the federal government and they say this is no longer going to be happening — we're not going to be involved in a way that we're going to fund Highways' projects

and we're not going to be involved in the construction of highway projects.

There's lots of highways, as I've travelled around this country, Mr. Speaker, where I see signs, where I see signs along the highway indicating X amount of dollars financed by the province of New Brunswick; X amount of dollars sponsored by the Government of Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I've travelled across this country, I have seen a difference in how these signs occur in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has a minister's name on the picture: this project sponsored by the people of Saskatchewan . . . or the Government of Saskatchewan. And that, Mr. Speaker, isn't the way it is in other parts of this country. We have major sections of transportation in this country that are solely financed by the federal government.

We have airports being built across this country that are financed by the federal government, and what major benefit does Saskatchewan get out of that? Not a whole lot. We have a small airport in Saskatoon and one in Regina, but not the same size as you have in Ontario, in Toronto, or in Montreal or Quebec or Ottawa. These are major, major facilities financed by the federal government and we have not had an opportunity to get the same benefit from the federal tax dollars. And so when I heard this the first time, I said that's a good thing to have.

I travelled last summer in the Maritimes; as I said earlier, in New Brunswick. I travelled in Prince Edward Island, and I saw signs there along the highway that said, financed by the Department of Highways in Prince Edward Island and funded by a federal government . . . and usually the federal government portion was higher than the provincial government portion. And that goes on extensively. I was in Nova Scotia as well and the same thing applies there.

And then we could easily begin to talk about the big bridge that's going to link New Brunswick with Prince Edward Island. And there, Mr. Speaker, millions and millions and hundreds of millions of dollars is going to go into that infrastructure and that structure in order to make Prince Edward Island a part of Canada. And that is going to cost a lot of money -- financed by federal tax dollars, not by provincial tax dollars. And we in the province of Saskatchewan, we need some of this money to come in here.

What have we got in addition to that? We have gotten, in addition to that, a cut in funding to the province of Saskatchewan, of about \$5 billion in relation to the transportation of grain and the subsidies on grain that we were receiving. And they've taken all of these away, Mr. Speaker. And what have we got? We have almost nothing left. We have a very, very small portion of that volume of dollars that we used to have coming into this province are now going to be spent elsewhere. And that, Mr. Speaker, has raised concerns with a lot of people.

What could a billion dollars of funding in western Canada do for transportation in highways, construction of bridges? It could do a lot of good, Mr. Speaker, because this province is

dependent on movement of commodities and goods either by rail or by the highways.

One of the things that comes to my mind in relation to the revenue received, for example the one and a half cents a litre that the federal government just received as a part of the taxes that they're going to be pulling in from all across Canada. One and a half cents a litre is seriously and significantly going to impact in Saskatchewan because we have long distances to move freight. We have long distances to get our products to market, and we have to have carbon fuels to provide energy for us to do that and deliver that.

And what does the federal government give back to us in proportion to other parts of Canada? Very, very little, Mr. Speaker. And that's what we're concerned about. And that's where I think the federal government needs to have some clear understanding and needs to have this Minister of Transport deal fairly with us.

We have seen, in December of this past year or November, removal of responsibility from the federal side. And because of that, we were considering that this was a significant benefit to the people of Saskatchewan. But as I see it today, and as I see it from the very little that the minister has provided for us in information, this Crown has absolutely no function or reason to come into existence. And that's why we have significantly debated this issue here today, and on other days.

Mr. Speaker, the government claims that private sector interests want to invest money into building roads in the province, but they haven't specified who these businesses are, and the entire premiss seems to be rather weak. I've outlined some of the reasons why I think that this is a very, very weak argument.

Mr. Speaker, traditionally in the province of Saskatchewan, the taxpayer has funded the construction of all of the transportation roadbeds in the province. And I will even include the railroads. The taxpayers of this province and the taxpayers from across Canada have invested, Mr. Speaker, hundreds of millions of dollars into infrastructure on transportation in this province as it relates to rail beds.

And if you go anywhere in the province of Saskatchewan, you will ultimately cross a railroad track, and on that railroad track you will notice, if it's been a raised one, you'll have to slow down. Well all of those, Mr. Speaker, have all been included in upgrading and all at the cost and expense of the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan.

And we believe that the federal government here has a responsibility. But as we saw earlier last year, the federal government said no, we don't want to become involved in building a highway framework for the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

The question we have is why would a taxpaying business want to donate money to the government to build roads? Mr. Speaker, these are very important questions when it comes to the point of who has contributed in this province and throughout the province in a very substantial way, an increase

in taxes. The business community and the province of Saskatchewan have not only donated, contributed — they have been taxed, Mr. Speaker, almost beyond being able to compete with the neighbouring provinces, whether it's Manitoba or Alberta.

I was speaking to some implement dealers in Swift Current on the weekend, and my discussion with them, it was very serious concern of theirs in relation to the tax problems. And the people who have donated and contributed the majority of increase in volume of taxes, Mr. Speaker, have been almost innumerable. But the taxes on gasoline in this province have raised the cost of doing business for these people.

Mr. Speaker, would they want to donate to this Crown corporation in order to have more taxes go to that? I doubt that, Mr. Speaker. The energy costs in delivering commodities to any one of those people is increased to the place where they can hardly afford to do business.

The second thing, Mr. Speaker, that was pointed out to me, why would these people want to donate money to this Crown corporation when they've been . . . had serious changes in labour laws that they have to contend with? Labour laws that will say, you can't do this and can't do that and can't do the other thing, until they can't even go to work.

Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of options that this government has given the business community in Saskatchewan. Would they be prepared to donate to this Crown corporation? I doubt it, Mr. Speaker. In fact the more I talk to them, the more they want to vote against this government and move them out of this province. That's the thing that I think people really, really are encountering.

Would the businesses in the province of Saskatchewan want to pay more taxes, Mr. Speaker, or donate to this Crown corporation? Would they want to do it when they've had increase in corporate taxes? Total corporate taxes run in the neighbourhood of \$130 million annually as an increased cost of doing business in this province. Would these people be willing to donate to this Crown corporation in order to get it done? And the answer, Mr. Speaker, is no.

And that's very, very significant because these businesses have been taxed to the last dollar and they want to know when some reprieve is going to be here and not when can we donate more money to the infrastructure on highways in the province of Saskatchewan.

Those are some of the significant reasons why we have raised questions about this Bill. Even assuming that there were reasons for the above, people willing to donate to the construction of roads, why does the government need a Crown corporation to accept or enter into such deals? Mr. Speaker, the Department of Highways have traditionally operated on the basis that they would issue a tender and people would respond to it, and traditionally the Department of Highways has provided a response to the individual who had the lowest tender.

Mr. Speaker, we are raising the question in this Assembly and across this province: is this Crown corporation another one of those union-preference-only opportunities for the construction association or the construction in highways across this province?

Mr. Speaker, the construction people in housing and building projects have raised this question very, very often on the Crown corporation preference for union-only contracting. And so, Mr. Speaker, is this the reason why this Crown corporation is being established? Is this the reason why they want to have this Bill brought forward and do it in a speedy way?

Mr. Speaker, this Crown corporation the minister said was going to be there so that you could make investments with the private sector. Well, Mr. Speaker, the government, in its own right, signs business deals all of the time with private business through the government agencies, through departments. It does it all the time, Mr. Speaker.

(1500)

When schools are being built, when hospitals are being constructed, formerly when roads were being built, all of this was done, Mr. Speaker, as a way to distribute equitably the volume of dollars collected by taxpayers and put it into a fund so that people could be paid.

The Department of Highways contracts out work as a Crown corporation today. And, Mr. Speaker, as a chairman of the audit committee in Public Accounts, we have dealt extensively . . . in fact the auditor went through the Department of Highways to find out whether value for money was being done well in the Department of Highways, and in his estimation, it was being done well. And he raised a number of criteria for that study that he did into the Department of Highways.

Now why would you want to put a Crown corporation into the Department of Highways in order to have it do the business of the Crown? So that's why we have raised the question, Mr. Speaker. Is this a way for a Crown corporation to monopolize the contractors in the province of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, construction in heavy construction in this province have had to deal with a lot of reductions in opportunities for business. Across this province people have required them to reduce their volume of being able to do business in Saskatchewan.

What has happened to the construction people? They have slowly and slowly become smaller and smaller and smaller. And so what we have today is we have very, very few major large-sized construction companies in Saskatchewan; but we have a whole lot of people who are small-businessmen who deal with construction for small sections of highway, small sections of building highways, small sections of resurfacing, small sections of oiling, putting together the sides of the roads to re-establish the pavement on these highways.

We have small-businessmen doing this, and what will this do if they put the Crown tendering policy in that they have where

union preference is given to the contractors? That, Mr. Speaker, is going to be devastating for these contractors in the province of Saskatchewan. Will they be able to compete? And the answer seriously is no.

Where do the major construction companies come from? Well I know that there's a number of them that operate out of Winnipeg, for example. They've come to build major highways in the province of Saskatchewan, and I've seen this over and over and over again. As I've driven back and forth from my constituency into Regina, I see this. And I see these major contractors from Winnipeg with major awards for bids. Are these the only people that are going to get it? And is this Crown corporation going to be the agency that this government uses to deliver union preference in its tendering? That's the question we have as it relates to this Crown corporation.

They operate today on the basis of giving to the lowest bidder. What will happen when the Crown corporation is established and it has to deal with the union preference policy that the Provincial Secretary, the minister responsible for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) has given to this Legislative Assembly?

Union preference tendering in these contracts is going to make it significantly more costly to the people and the taxpayers of the province. The thing that has been stated over and over again by the people who have already done this in British Columbia, it's indicated that the costs of construction in areas has raised the cost by 25 to 30 per cent. That's very, very serious as it relates to putting efficiencies into government when the contracts are going to have to be . . . the price of these contracts is going to have to be raised in order to offset the union preference tendering only.

The other thing that raises a serious problem with us is why put the taxpayers into more risk by having them pay the 21 cents an hour for every hour that these people are allowed to contract?

And so we have raised a lot of these questions in relation to this. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why the people of Saskatchewan have said to me over and over, as they did this past weekend, they said to me, why do we have to pay for all of these additional things?

And we say over and over again, that perhaps it's to pay for the next election for the NDP. Or perhaps it's to pay for a number of the partisan things that the NDP want to do. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we have asked these questions and why we are talking about this Crown corporation specifically.

Mr. Speaker, I have been involved in establishing Crown corporations and I understand some of the process. I was there and worked together with the minister responsible for Sask Water when Sask Water Corporation began.

Mr. Speaker, we had a single purpose for the establishment of the Water Corporation, and that was to pull together all the facets of government that dealt with water and its related uses across this province. And we did it from Urban Affairs, Municipal Affairs. We pulled in people from the Environment.

We did it from Agriculture. As I recall, there were eight departments and 57 different Bills that were somewhat related to the involvement of Sask Water Corporation in being established as a Crown corporation.

We haven't seen where this kind of an urgency is required under this Bill where we have the availability of pulling all of these different areas of government together so that the Department of Highways can have a Crown corporation. We haven't seen that, Mr. Speaker.

And yet when I recall having done this in the previous time, I recall having seen where agencies of government were sometimes running against each other and not providing an overall positive benefit to the taxpayers. And we don't see that in this kind of a Bill, Mr. Speaker. We don't see the need for it in the same context.

I have seen Crown corporations established. For example, when Expo or the fair was in Vancouver, we set up a specific Crown corporation to do a specific job. And when the job was done, it was done away with. We haven't seen that kind of reference in this Crown corporation either, Mr. Speaker. So what do we have here? We haven't been told the things that this Crown corporation should do or could do.

Just before I forget, I want to point out one other thing about the Crown corporation, that this points to us as a serious flaw in setting it up. Its union-preference labour component in Crown corporations has us seriously worried about whether this Crown corporation is going to react positively to give benefits to the people of Saskatchewan.

We saw in a construction project that Sask Water did at Melfort how the Sask Water Corporation . . . when they initiated the construction of the pipeline into Melfort, half of it was done by the private sector, and half was done by union preference and the Water Corporation handling all the details of that construction.

And what happened, Mr. Speaker, is the private sector came in on budget, on time, and very, very few leaks in the system. What have we got on the other side where the union started to build? We have . . . well it's called the sprinkler system up at Melfort, Mr. Speaker. It's the longest pipeline, sprinkler system pipeline, and probably golf courses could be set up all the way along and water the greens all the way from Melfort to the river.

And that's the kind of thing that we are concerned about in this. And it costs more, Mr. Speaker, to provide that sprinkler system. I'm not sure whether they have a special engineering firm to handle that sort of thing over there, but that's the kind of thing that we're concerned about. And we don't want to have the private sector contractors being required to come back in and fix the roads that somebody else has virtually destroyed.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is a concern of ours; and probably increasing the cost, as I said earlier, between 25 and 30 per cent. It's very, very problematic to the taxpayer, I believe.

The largest concern we've heard from construction companies is

that this is another ploy to bring in union preference. And this comes from the contractors. That's what they're concerned about. And we don't want to have that happen in this province where, as I've said earlier, the small contractors will just literally be pushed right out of the province, and we'll have these major out-of-province companies coming in and doing the building.

The Department of Highways has traditionally handled bids on contracts, bids on tenders, on the basis of the lowest bidder. And a Crown corporation would not be restricted to that, Mr. Speaker. And the union-preference tendering in the Crown corporations, the minister responsible for CIC has stated that the individuals who apply would also have to pay the union level of costs in relation to the wage component — very, very counter-productive to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

The other thing that concerns us, as I've pointed out earlier, in dealing with the establishment of the board of a Crown corporation, this new Crown corporation's going to have six new board members and what it's also going to have to have is staff. Now we want to have . . . we want to just measure this out. They're going to have six board of directors. You're going to have to have a president of this Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker. This president will be responsible for most of the executive decisions made in that Crown corporation. And if I take a look at other Crown corporations, I will say, would the equivalent of Jack Messer be the head of this Crown corporation; would the president of . . . David Dombowsky be the president of this corporation — all long-time supporters of the NDP party? And there are a lot of others, Mr. Speaker.

Would this be a part of establishing a long line of patronage for the people of the province of Saskatchewan? Would this be an extensive benefit for a person like Dennis Banda who was a former MLA in the province of Saskatchewan? Could he be a chief executive officer of this Crown corporation? And that, Mr. Speaker, is the question we're asking.

Now Mr. Allan Blakeney, he probably is too busy doing other things across this province, and probably his pension is too big, so he'd hardly have time for this. But he could even be . . . he maybe even could donate some of his time to be the president of this Crown corporation. Wouldn't that be unique in the province?

Mr. Speaker, then we have a former member from Estevan by the name of Jack Chapman. Would he be a part . . . or could he be the president of this Crown corporation? Well no, he might have to give up some of the other things that he's been doing. Would Don Cody perhaps be a good candidate? Well he's too busy. He's too busy in SGI and SPMC (Saskatchewan Property and Management Corporation). He's too busy. But maybe, Mr. Speaker, we'd have some way to encourage these people to donate their time to this Crown corporation. Wouldn't it be in the province's best interests, maybe, just to donate some of their time?

I just noticed, you know, where major league athletes, like the CFL (Canadian Football League) or the NHL (National Hockey League), where these major people have done a lot of different

things, and they contribute to the charitable organizations in a way that is rather unique. Because they do things like Telemiracle. They come in at no cost to the Kinsmen. These people are said to contribute their time. Now maybe Don Cody would be interested in it, or maybe Mike Feschuk would have to give up some work in the Crop Insurance in order to become the president and chief executive officer of this Crown corporation, or maybe Terry Hanson.

Now here's a good one — Bob Long. He's already working in the Highway Traffic office. He's on the board of directors of the Highway Traffic Board, a long-time minister of Highways in the province of Saskatchewan. Now he would be a good . . . he would be a good NDP. He would be a good NDP maybe for this job to donate his time. Of course he's had a long, extensive career in this Assembly and he has a pretty good pension, so then he should be able to do this pretty well for nothing, being a chief executive officer in this Crown corporation.

An Hon. Member: — Didn't the public fire him in 1982?

Mr. Martens: — Well the public did lay him off, and then other people from . . .

(1515)

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. I'd like to get the member back on the principle of Bill No. 22, if he — order — if he wouldn't mind, principle of Bill No. 22.

Mr. Martens: — The principle, Mr. Speaker, to the discussion here today is that we believe that this Crown corporation is seriously flawed in its mandate. Its mandate is to provide, as we heard from the Minister of Highways, is to provide an opportunity to deal with the federal government. And that was gone out the window in 1994 — November and December 1994, it was gone. The federal Minister of Transport said no, we're not going to become involved.

Political patronage has been significant in this government and in other NDP governments through time, where they have said to the people of Saskatchewan: NDP people can probably run these Crown corporations better than anybody else. And this is no exception, Mr. Speaker. And these six board members that this Crown corporation have is an opportunity for any one of . . . even the members of the government today, who are not running in this next election, is an opportunity for them to become candidates for this position in . . . as a Crown corporation of the Department of Highways.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we're talking about, we're giving examples to this Assembly of, the conduct and conditions that exist in relation to this government.

Today's headlines were: "NDP Patronage Appointments", and they dealt with various aspects of appointments to Crown corporations.

And this is a brand-new one we're starting here today, and so we're saying to the people of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan: take heed, listen. There is going to be some serious implications if you establish another Crown corporation

because it's tradition in the NDP that patronage is as abused as it has ever been and probably even more extensively. And this Crown corporation is not going to do any less. I predict that, Mr. Speaker.

In fact people have probably been contacted by the NDP executives across this province already to establish what their involvement will be. And that is the reason why we're raising this with the people here today and across this province.

Patronage is the way this government goes. And this Crown corporation is the way that these people will put the responsibilities in place. They'll do it with the board of directors of six; they'll do it with the chief executive officer; they'll do it with the president; they'll do it with staff in the president's office; they'll do it all the way through the system. And that will be the reason that these people are putting this into place.

There are people in this Assembly who, when they retire from politics, would have an opportunity to be a part of that. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we are asking the people of Saskatchewan to review this Bill and see what it really does. Does it only put jobs into place for the people who voted NDP, who have worked for the NDP? Or does it give an opportunity for a broad cross-section of people in the province of Saskatchewan who have the ability to do it?

An Hon. Member: — That's not true.

Mr. Martens: — Well the member from P.A. (Prince Albert) just said, well that's not really true. But I will say that the truth of the matter is that I have 73 names on a list that was put together by the *Leader-Post*, and they believe it's true enough. And if they took the whole list, there would be even more; if they took it to the extended families of these related NDP.

We even have considered talking about the extensive involvement that the Koskie family had in this government over the years — nine brothers and sisters . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member is a veteran member of this House and he knows that on second reading he must dwell on the principle of the Bill. And he's so far from the principle of the Bill that I find it very difficult to relate it to Bill No. 22. And I ask the member for Morse to please get back to Bill No. 22, the principle of the Bill.

Mr. Martens: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the time. This Bill provides an opportunity for patronage. This Bill provides an opportunity for patronage in the Crown corporations, its board of directors. It provides an opportunity for patronage in its chief executive officer. It provides an opportunity for patronage in the office of the chief executive officer. And it will do that, Mr. Speaker. I am predicting that.

And that is one of the reasons why we're not in favour of doing this Crown corporation, because the mandate hasn't been described to us in any detail at all. And so we have a whole lot of problems in allowing this Bill to go forward.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things that need to be

pointed out that I want to just close off my remarks by saying these. This Bill is obsolete because the federal government said they were no longer interested in putting money into building highways in Saskatchewan. The federal government said that in November and December. They said they were no longer interested in becoming involved in the province of Saskatchewan, in its highway construction; they said that.

This Crown corporation was supposed to be the Crown corporation that would involve them, and so that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we are objecting because this is obsolete. It doesn't have a purpose today. And if it's only purpose is to provide patronage benefits to people in the province of Saskatchewan, then just add it on to the ones that you've got there already, and we don't have to pay so much for them, and the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan will benefit that way. Just add a few more to your ministers' offices and then we don't have to pay the exorbitant salaries of chief executive officers or their staffs or the presidents or the board of directors. Just allow that to happen, and we, as taxpayers, won't have to pay so much.

The federal government pulled out of the deal, so why do you want to have it in? I outlined at the beginning of my remarks some of the questions that we have in relation to this Bill — very, very serious and important questions to answer because we don't know what the mandate of this Bill will be. We don't understand its total implication, and we need to have some of that in order to understand that. And the Minister of Highways hasn't provided that.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, for all of these reasons and the need to discuss this further, I move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32

The Chair: — Before we proceed to item 1, perhaps the minister could reintroduce us to the officials who have joined us here today.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Be happy to do that. With us today is Mr. Duane Adams, deputy minister of Health; Kathy Langlois, executive director, finance and management services branch; Mr. Rus Duncombe, director, district support branch; Lawrence Krahn, executive director, medical care insurance branch; Jahzi Van Iderstine, assistant to the deputy minister; and when he finds a suit jacket, Al Walker, director of program development.

Item 1

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, and staff, I want to welcome you here today. We want to start off with a few questions regarding some of the long-term care problems that we have in the province. And I want to find out

firstly, how it is that the ratio of long-term care beds . . . I guess it used to be something like 16 or 18 per thousand over 75. And now what people find confusing is that the ratio is being lowered to, I guess 14 or 16, in some cases I hear as low as 12 per thousand for those people over the age of 75. Can you tell me firstly what the rules are today, what they were in the past few years, and why the change in the policy.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I will try and answer the member's question very specifically. Prior to establishing guidelines and targets for our overall supply of long-term care beds — and here we're talking about beds for levels 3 and 4 as the heaviest of care — prior to any change we had quite a variety of figures around the province, and in this regard we defined these numbers in terms of beds per thousand of people 75 and older, beds per thousand of people 75 and older.

And so we've had within the province quite a wide variety in terms of availability of long-term care beds. In some areas of our province the number would have been about 120 beds per thousand, 75 and over; in other areas of our province up to, I think the highest was 280 beds per thousand, 75 and over.

What we have done is established a province-wide target — and I underline the word target — as the target to which we move towards over a period of years, of somewhere between 120 and 140 long-term care beds per thousand, over the age of 75. And this is accepted as a national standard across Canada.

(1530)

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well can you tell us . . . give me a few examples of how it would get up to whatever it was — 280 per thousand — versus, you know, perhaps in the area of the province where I'm from where it was a much lower number.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — To the member's question, Mr. Chair, where we have had the examples of the high numbers, these will likely be in communities where there have been what have been described as the regional care centres.

If you take, for example, the community of Weyburn where the old Souris Valley hospital or centre used to serve as primarily for the care of those mentally handicapped, those regional care centres drew individuals and people from a wide catchment area into one large centre. And so there were many beds put in one large centre and drew people from a large area.

Our goal is to provide that care closer to home — so the concept not of moving to one large centre, but providing the care as close to home as possible. So in essence, where the numbers were very large is where there have been the large regional centres.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, are you then mixing this up with people with special needs or are you still talking about just long term? You're now telling us that around the province you're allowing all those people with special needs into the equation of 120 to 140 per thousand for 75 and over?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, no; no, that's not the case. Those facilities have maintained many of those beds even though, for instance, in Souris Valley the population now is much smaller, of those who are there because of some mental handicap. Some of those individuals have been there from their very youth. But that is not the definition we're using for long-term care.

Now some of our long-term care clients within health care today will have dementia and Alzheimer's disease and that sort of thing, but we're not in these numbers mixing the two.

Mr. McPherson: — All right, Mr. Minister, but in your numbers of 120 to 140 per thousand, now it's been lowered to that amount from something higher in the last few years. Now in that amount there's always been some lengthy waiting-lists for people to get into the heavier level of care facilities, level 3, level 4 facilities. Now I'm just wondering what's happened to those waiting-lists now that in fact the numbers or the ratio has come down.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, on the subject of waiting-lists, this is a rather complex subject, as the member will know. In many of our communities even prior to initiation of broader health renewal and reform across the province, in many of our communities, communities had evolved a system of a single point of contact for placement in long-term care facilities.

What had happened in some communities was there would be a waiting-list for each and every institution, and when the waiting-lists of all the institutions were reviewed, one would find the same name on many waiting-lists. Many communities have gone, even prior to health restructuring, to a single point of contact which then can present a more accurate description.

But even so, even today we will find on waiting-lists, duplicated names in various communities and various institutions. In fact we very recently did a very careful review of a certain waiting-list in a community and found that still being accounted on that list were two people who in fact had died and some people who have left the province.

What are we doing about the waiting-list? From my point of view, what is absolutely key is that we do have accurate lists of who in fact is needing the service. This is going on I think now in each of our districts where this kind of single-point assessment is happening.

Number two, when we look at the waiting-lists, we want to be sure that any services that we can provide to those individuals in their homes or in their communities and their current accommodation, that we can provide and perhaps prevent the need for institutionalization.

And to share with the member a bit of very good news on this front, the Saskatoon district, both the city of Saskatoon and the rural district around Saskatoon, have now developed a comprehensive network of home-based and community-based services. And so in speaking to the Chair of the district board on Saturday evening, he tells me on Saturday evening now there

is no one — zero — on the waiting-list.

That's not to say we haven't got some ways to go in other communities to build some of these services. But this is illustrative of the fact that when the services are available, we can bring those waiting-lists down to a very low number. In Saskatoon's case, as late as Saturday there is nobody on the waiting-list.

Mr. McPherson: — All right, Mr. Minister. Can you explain . . . Now you had mentioned that there is a single point of contact. Tell me just how that would work say in a community of Shaunavon and surrounding area. Explain exactly how that would come about.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, if the member wishes, we can check very precisely into Shaunavon and the circumstance there, or within the larger district.

But in essence, it is a single point of contact for individuals and their families, and individuals then can be assessed on a common assessment. And this single point of contact will then have available and knowledge of all of the resources that can be offered to that individual. So it's that sort of system. Rather than a family or an individual having to run around to institution after institution, or service after service, to develop that single point where someone can approach, where all of the answers are available, it seems to us to be a much more client-friendly and consumer-friendly sort of way.

Mr. McPherson: — So I understand that what happens in Shaunavon may be different than other parts of the province, by your answer? You're going to have to check into that?

What I want to know then, Mr. Minister, you sent a letter to me yourself some . . . dated on November 10, 1994. And I'll quote right from the letter that you sent to myself:

At the current time it is my understanding that there is no waiting-list for long-term care in Shaunavon, Climax, or Eastend area, and there are very few long-term care pressures in the district as a whole.

And yet, from the people that I talk to down there, they say there is; in fact many people I talk to say well yes, my mother or my father or someone, one of the relatives, is on a waiting-list. And when this was raised at a meeting in the community of Shaunavon not too many months ago, the director of care, I guess it was, answered the question that came up by saying there are no waiting-lists today; in fact they don't use that system.

So now I'm trying to find out, what system do they use? If what they're saying is there are no waiting-lists, and in fact you refer to the fact that there isn't, I'm just wondering how it's done. I mean you must know or you couldn't have sent the letter to me.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, when I wrote to the member, in preparation of that letter, I would have had my officials be in touch with the district and people in Shaunavon, and my letter will have been based on information that will

have been provided.

Now my assumption is . . . and again I say to the member, if we need to get more specific information about offices and who occupies the offices and who actually does the work, we can do that. But it will be a process where a family or an individual will approach the district at a central point, requesting appropriate care. The district will know all of the resources that will be available that can be provided to that individual or to that family, and recommend those resources and be sure that those resources are put in place.

At the time of my writing, I am more than confident that we made contact with the Shaunavon district and will have been provided that information. If you want us to make that contact again, we certainly can.

Mr. McPherson: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Actually if you would make that contact again just so that we can have it very clear whether there are waiting-lists or there aren't waiting-lists, because the people say there are, or at least they believe there are. They have family members that believe they're on waiting-lists. And yet people in the health district board say, well they're not, and you say the same.

In fact in your letter it talks about some of the proposed closures of the facilities in the Southwest Health District, and you also mention that current residents — now this would be at the level 1, level 2 facility that you're closing — would be given priority for placement in other facilities throughout the district. And that to me tells me, well if you're not funding level 1 and level 2, you don't intend on having these levels of care provided by institutions. So you then are admitting that the people in these level 1, level 2 care facilities aren't level 1, level 2 and they're in fact level 3, level 4, and are going to have to be taken care of some . . . well by some community somewhere.

So can you give us some idea how many people we're talking about moving out of the community of Shaunavon?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, if I understand the member's question correctly, and perhaps he can . . . if I don't, he can correct me. I think the question is how many people do we anticipate moving from out of their communities to other communities. Mr. Chair, I don't have that number, if there is such a number.

What we have assured people across the province is if they are receiving level 1 and 2 care and having moved into level 1 or 2 facilities, they will, for the most part, have given up their former homes, their apartments, and so it's inappropriate to suggest that they should return back to a more home-like situation where they could be supported through home care and community care. We have assured everyone in the province that they would not be left without accommodation.

Now many of our level 1 and 2 facilities, to continue to provide service, continue to house and to care for people — while new admissions may not be happening — what is happening in many of our level 1 and 2 facilities is an alternate use of some of the space and some of the beds within that facility,

particularly in the area of respite. We know over the course of this year we'll see even more of that service being offered in some of our level 1 and level 2 facilities.

Now I would also agree with the member or point out to the member that in fact there may well be some who now have occupied a bed or a place in a level 1 and 2 facility who, over the course of the years, may now require heavier care than when they first went in. We may in fact have some who might be better described as level 3's and 4's.

What I want to assure the member and to assure the people of our province is that anyone who today is receiving level 1 and 2 care will be accommodated through our health care system. No one, to put it bluntly, will be put on the street.

Mr. McPherson: — Thanks, Mr. Minister, but now can you give me some idea what perhaps the ratio was of level 3 and level 4 clients in the lighter care homes? Because in a lot of communities, and I've been to some of those communities in the very . . . not too distant past, and in fact we've got people who are well up in their 90's that are still in light care homes and they're afraid that in fact the policies of your government are going to move them out onto the street. And they've got to have some strong assurance that that isn't going to happen.

And yet the facilities are getting closed down around the province. The funding is ending in a matter of a couple of weeks. So what can you tell these people to alleviate their fears?

(1545)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The member asks, Mr. Chair, about the numbers of those who may be in level 1 and 2 facilities who may now in fact through the course of time require heavier care, maybe level 3 and 4. We don't know that, Mr. Chair, we don't know that. That kind of assessment was done when they were placed, and assessments are not regularly done, so we don't have a firm understanding of what that number would be.

Then the member says that there are people in the level 1 and 2 facilities who are afraid that they're going to be put on the street. Well they'll only be afraid that they're going to be put on the street if somebody is suggesting that to them, and I hope he's not going around suggesting that to people, because that is simply not the case. We have said that from day one. That is not the case. That those who are now being housed and accommodated in level 1 and 2 facilities will continue to be cared for and accommodated. No one is being put on the street, and I hope the member wouldn't be going around the community suggesting the same.

In fact very few, in fact very few of the level 1 and 2 facilities are actually closing their doors. There are some, but at this point very few are, because we are in a transition period. And within this budget, as I have announced publicly, we have included funding to assist in this transition over a course . . . a period of time.

Now as the member also well knows, we no longer fund

specific institutions. We now fund to the district based on need and population, and each district will have some different level of need in this regard and will tailor their funding and their programming to meet that specific need. And so in this year there is a very specific \$1.5 million within the budget to assist in this transition period. So no one should be concerned or frightened that as of April 1 anyone is going to lose their place or their accommodation in a level 1 and 2 facility.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, so you're saying that \$1.5 million for the province as a whole is going to alleviate some of these fears when in fact . . . I'll just look at my own community. I'm going to use it as the example here today.

The heavy-level care facility, the nursing home, according to the past chairman of the board, he told me that there was always about a 10 per cent waiting period, or waiting-list I should say, to get in and have a bed. Since then you've actually closed down a level 1, level 2 facility, or proposed to, and you've got a number of people there that need that heavier care for themselves.

So now there's a waiting-list already on the nursing home side of this, so I'm not sure what you intend to do with all the people. Now at some meetings that were held by the seniors in the last few months, there were health district people saying, well we're going to be moving people out into the community. Now does this mean level 3, level 4 people are going to be moved into the community? How many people in each community, or what percentage do you actually think can be moved out into people's basements or wherever you intend to house them in?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the member knows that the facility to which he refers did not shut down, and continues to accommodate individuals — not shut down. In fact rare is the circumstance that the member could point to where facilities have actually shut down. Rare is that circumstance.

Now we are in, Mr. Speaker, a transition period. Mr. Speaker, if you visit with seniors as I do on a regular basis, if you visit with seniors they will tell you and in fact have been telling governments, not for 5 years, not for 10 years, but for 20 and 25 years, that it is their desire, as I'm sure it's understood by all of us in this House, that it is their desire to live independently, to live in their own homes and apartments as long as is possible in life. I don't think there's anyone who wants to be in a heavy-level care facility. I don't think anybody wants that.

Now it is recognized that many of us will reach a point in our lives when we need that heavy level of care. Although I might say, Mr. Chair, it's not simply those who reach the senior age. I mean it could happen to any one of us any day of our lives that we will require heavy-level care. But none of us desire that; none of us want that.

In fact seniors have been saying to governments for years, and I could quote to the member a variety of articles recently written by seniors commenting on this very issue, how they have been lobbying governments for years to provide more services in the community, in their homes, that they might maintain their

independence for a longer period of time.

That's the direction we're going, Mr. Chair. That's the direction we're going. And it is a direction not welcomed by the Liberal member, but welcomed by seniors across the province.

Now we are in a period of transition. We have those who have been described as level 1's and level 2's. Many of them have gone into a more institutional setting. Having done so they will have given up usually their homes or their farms or their apartments. We assure each and every one of those residents of our province they will not be left without accommodation.

However, those today who approach the system and are assessed as level 1 or level 2, in the vast, vast majority of those cases, their needs can very adequately, and happily I might say, be met in the context of their own home. When we reach the stage of requiring heavier care, then this government, and I hope every future government, will be there to provide that care.

So the member knows that in this year's budget we are spending \$250 million to provide long-term care for those heaviest care needs of our seniors and our population — \$250 million, a quarter of a billion dollars. This is no small commitment and it is no . . . because it reflects the need and the concern. But where we can make lives happier, and in some ways healthier for individuals and their families, that's our goal.

And so in this budget, again I repeat, Mr. Chair, we are putting in new and substantial resources to build community- and home-based services; \$7 million to expand home care services — \$7 million, which will add significantly the number of home care services available in every community in Saskatchewan. That will also mean, Mr. Chair, that with that \$7 million we will have at our disposal the ability to provide 24-hour, in emergency circumstance, home care services. That's not been true in many of our communities up until now.

Part of this money, part of this \$20 million, will go to in fact lower the cost of home care services to make them again more accessible and so that seniors across the province will see on average across the province a 17 per cent decrease in their home care services. Our goal is to make the services accessible, both financially and accessible in those services that can be available in every one of our communities.

Mr. McPherson: — You see, Mr. Minister, my questions aren't concerning so much whether people are level 2 and level 1, but in fact a heavier level of care that was in the level 1, level 2 facilities that you're closing down. And in fact in some of the 52 communities where you closed hospitals . . . and at the time, the reason for closing the hospitals was that they weren't providing acute care services. I mean you yourself were going around the province saying that. In fact many of the people in these smaller hospitals were actually long-term care people and they should be in the appropriate facilities.

So that also, if you look at those 52 communities, that also adds pressure to the long-term care needs of the province, as far as level 3 and level 4 care goes. And now of course with this change in the single point of contact, it gives you a lot of

control as far as determining what the waiting-lists are; who's on the waiting-lists.

And what I keep hearing from the people is that in fact there aren't enough of those beds. You say there are. So I don't know, unless you can provide me with the amount . . . or with the waiting-lists for each area of the province for heavy care, I guess I'm forced to take your word for it. But that's not what the people believe out there.

And the fact that you're budgeting \$1.5 million for some transitional care while you're closing facilities, that's about the same amount of money as you're spending on Saskatchewan's 90th birthday party. I mean that in itself, your government should be ashamed of yourselves.

But the question still remains, just what the waiting-lists are like in some of these communities for the heavy level of care. And in fact I don't think that you've alleviated anyone's concerns in this area. You're going to have to soon.

But it will lead us into another area, and that's one of the amount of level 1 and level 2 facilities that are now being turned into private hands. And, Mr. Minister, would you be able to provide me with a full list of which communities and which facilities that have been, and in fact are in the process of being, turned into private care homes and what the bed numbers of them are?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, to our knowledge, in specific answer to the member's question: how many current level 1 and 2 facilities are being considered for conversion into private care homes — that's his question? — to our knowledge, Mr. Chair, there are two. And I believe Ponteix has been looking at this prospect, and Ina Grafton Gage Home in Moose Jaw have been looking at this prospect. Now there may be others that we're not aware of, but I'm only aware of those two.

Mr. McPherson: — Do you have what the bed numbers that they're being allowed or allotted are?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, the member I think will have been listening to some of the discussion and debate in earlier estimates, and we've been talking about the whole concept of personal care homes, privately operated facilities, that offer some level of care to individuals. And as I've assured members of the official opposition, that we expect a policy statement in this regard very soon.

Currently in the structure of care in Saskatchewan, we have quite a large number of small personal care homes. These will be homes that have less than 10 occupants, and we've continued to license and approve. Given that those homes meet the very stringent regulations that exist, we've continued to license and they continue to provide service and care, and in many ways an important level of care in our system.

We have said in this period of transition that existing facilities who may want to convert to a personal care home, that they would be grandfathered or grandmothers into the

circumstance. Later this week it's my hope to make some further policy announcement regarding a personal care home and private involvement in providing care across our province.

Mr. McPherson: — Well this announcement that you're going to be making, and I guess when I take a look at this letter that you sent to me November 10, '94 — it states, Saskatchewan Health is currently reviewing long-term care in the province and will be presenting a strategy shortly — is that the strategy you're talking about? And is it fairly comprehensive, or is this going to dribble out?

You're talking about some strategy to deal with private care homes. Or is this strategy that you're going to lay on us very soon which is already, it appears to me, months overdue, and in fact only a couple weeks before the funding ceases for these very people that we're talking about, can you tell us if this strategy you're going to be announcing is going to cover all aspects of long-term care?

(1600)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to have to correct the member and help him to understand, because apparently he can't understand. He says that the funding is going to cease at the end of this month. I tell you what happens at the end of this month — the budget year ends, that's true; and we move into a new budget period.

But as I've already explained to the member once this afternoon in the House — and I guess I'll do it again and again and again and again until he understands it — funding now is not based on . . . it is not institutionally based; we do not fund institutions. We fund the population and their need within a district. I have said again in this House this afternoon, Mr. Chair — and the member can't seem to understand — that as of the end of this month, facilities are not closing. We are involved in a transition period, Mr. Chair. Now further to that, we will be describing, in a comprehensive way, where we believe the role for the personal care home and for long-term care facilities will be in our system.

I hope the member has received . . . if he has not received it, I'll certainly provide a copy to him of an important paper that was released in February around this whole issue, a paper that we worked on and people within the department and people within communities across the province have worked on for many months, described as supporting wellness — Supportive Services in Saskatchewan. And here we're talking about the full range of services to meet the needs of those who will have some need for support in their daily lives. For some of us that will be a small amount of support; for others it will be a large amount of support.

I'd be happy to provide this paper with the member, if he hasn't seen it, and invite him to read it and consider it. And we could certainly have, I'm sure, a good discussion about it.

But again, to repeat to the member, at the end of this month what changes is it's a new budget year. And financing and funding will go to the district based upon the district's needs

and the district's population.

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I know you'd like to take credit that you're actually not closing facilities, but in fact in my own community of Shaunavon, there was going to be a closure. In fact if it wasn't for the seniors holding several meetings and embarrassing you and your government and the district board into leaving that facility open for the time being, it would have been closed.

Mr. Minister, can you give us the current care-giver to patient ratio of level 3 and level 4 facilities? And I ask it for this reason, is that the level of heavy care, I think, is probably getting more acute, more heavy, I guess as time goes on. Is that right or wrong? And I'm just wondering if the care-giver to patient ratio has increased or has it stayed the same, or is it less than before?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, there are established standards of care that apply for level 3 and level 4 care. There are established standards of care for acute care and so on, and these will establish the staff/client or the staff/patient ratio. We're trying to find those standards and we'll provide them to you. I'm not sure if we have them here this afternoon, but if we don't, we'll get them to you.

Now I agree with the member that when we reach level 3 and 4, the need for care will grow, and the level of acuity will grow. And in fact as late as last week the department officials have been in conversation and in discussion with the SRNA (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association) I believe, the registered nurses' association, around this very issue in seeking to describe what is appropriate standards of care in all of our institutions — level 3, 4, and acute.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, whatever ratios you have or whatever criteria that you're placing on the facilities that you're in control of, is the same criteria going to apply for the private care homes that you have or are going to license?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, two points here. Number one, our private care homes, personal care homes, will generally be caring for people of a less level of care with lighter care needs. Our private care homes, our personal care homes across the province are not generally equipped to care for the heavier level of care, level 3 and 4. I'm not sure if . . . there may be some example where that's happening but it would certainly be the exception and not the rule. Most of our personal care homes are meeting the needs of those who have a lower level of care.

Now there has been some discussion, indeed some lobby, saying that government or the Department of Health should not concern itself with the level of care in a personal care home. I don't share that view. I believe there is a role for the public through its government, through its Department of Health, to provide regulation of the personal care home circumstance.

But just to go back to the member's first point, most of those, the vast majority of those who will be accommodated in the personal care home, will not be of a level 3 or a level 4 need level.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, but you're saying most of, won't be at that level but some will. Am I right there, before I go on?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I think it's fair to say that some will. Simply my experience is, Mr. Chair, and I've seen this and known people in this circumstance, at some point in their life they may, and their families may wish with them, to receive care outside of their own home. They may move to a personal care home.

Now if they are a resident of that personal care home over the course of a number of years, with the onslaught of age or other issues, the level of care may increase. Now it very often will reach a point where the operator of the personal care home, in conjunction with family and the individual, will decide their care cannot be accommodated there and then they will seek a placement in a special care home where the more appropriate care can be given.

And so there may be a time and there may be some in our personal care homes who are reaching the stage of needing heavier level care who are yet there and have not made the transition into a heavier level care circumstance.

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, that then . . . we'll focus in real quick here. For those special care homes or private care homes that you're licensing with heavy levels of care, do they have to abide by the same criteria and regulations as the levels 3 and 4 care homes had to before you were going to privatize them?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the personal care homes are very closely regulated but under The Personal Care Homes Act, and not under the same set of legislation and Act which governs special care homes, because the concept of personal care is in essence a residential option as much as it is a care option or a heavy level care option. And again I say that most of those in personal care are a much lighter level of care than exists in special care.

Now I'm not sure if the member is arguing that the same standards which apply to a heavy level care home should be applied to the personal care home. That is not the current circumstance, but I can assure the member that there is a significant body of regulation which does govern the personal care homes, particularly in regard to building and fire codes and so on.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, I'm not really asking if the criteria is going to be the same for those people that are being taken care of in the residence. I'm referring perhaps more to, like the community of Ponteix, where they have an 18- or 20-bed . . . I'm not sure what you've agreed to at that point or if you've come up with an agreement on that care home. But I want to know, are the regulations and criteria for care-giver/patient ratios from the Shaunavon nursing home going to be the same as what applies to the care home, the privatized care home in Ponteix, where you have level 3 and level 4 clients?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, currently, I think the specific answer to the member's question would be no. If in fact there is in a personal care home someone who now through assessment process is described as needing, requiring, much heavier level care, then it would be our view that the recommended procedure would be to have that person then move into a special care circumstance where the heavier level of care exists.

But in very specific answer to the member's question, if someone today is in a personal care home but who has in fact reached level 3, we do not impose the same standards on the personal care home as are imposed on special care homes.

I just want to also share with the member, Mr. Chair, since we began our discussion this afternoon . . . earlier this afternoon we had a discussion about waiting-lists in Shaunavon. And we've made a contact in Shaunavon, and the report that I have is that there is one level 3 patient currently waiting to get into the nursing home. That's the report that's provided to us from Shaunavon.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, so then what you're saying is that there aren't any level 3, level 4 clients in the former level 1, level 2 facility in Ponteix that is now I think owned and operated by Carol Krieger? And you're saying they're all level 1, level 2?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I want to say to the member, I'm not sure. I know that Carol Krieger has been working with the community of Ponteix. I know that there have been discussions but I am not precisely sure of where that arrangement stands today. So I'm not sure if in fact Ms. Krieger is, as the member suggests, operating that home.

And we don't have here, we don't bring that kind of detail into the House for every institution in the province, so I can't give him a clear definition of the residents of that particular facility. We can be in touch with them and get that very specific information for him.

Mr. McPherson: — Well then, Mr. Minister, let me put the question to you this way then. If and when this level 1, this former level 1 and level 2 facility, becomes . . . well is being operated by a private . . . under the private home care legislation, or whatever you said it was, are you telling us that they will not be allowed to have level 3's and level 4's?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I think, Mr. Chair, whenever we're talking about personal care homes — and to broaden the discussion, maybe a little from Ponteix — but whenever we're talking about personal care homes, I think one of the crucial issues is the concern about fire safety. And I'm sure the member shares that concern, as would, I think, all members and all citizens, the concern about fire safety. And one of the real concerns about having people who occupy personal care homes, who may require heavy levels of care, is that will there be the staffing and the ability to move people in case of a fire.

Now what will apply in the context of every personal care home or in any conversion circumstance will be the building and fire

codes. So it's my understanding in Ponteix that the facility must have some renovation and be in fact brought up to some National Building Code standards before we're able to license that facility.

(1615)

But again I repeat, if in fact there is a circumstance where we have an individual or individuals in personal care who may have reached a level 3 — and the Ponteix facility, remember, is a light care facility; I can't report exactly on the status of every resident, as I said earlier — but if in fact there are those who have approached heavier levels of care, then it is our recommendation that their needs should be met in the most appropriate circumstances, which is a special care home designed and staffed to meet the needs of level 3.

So again the Act — to the member's specific question — the current set of regulations and Act do not apply to personal care homes as they do to the special care homes. Now perhaps the member would want to advance a position suggesting it should or it shouldn't, but in the current circumstance that's the way it is.

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I just wanted to make sure that . . . because earlier and on different occasions, you've accused myself of fearmongering. So I want to know exactly what it is that we're supposed to be telling the people out there. And I know that the people in the community of Ponteix are of the understanding that once this level 1, level 2 care facility is turned over to a private individual that they will then have a home within their own community.

And you're telling us now that no, that's not the case. For definite level 1, level 2 care patients, that can be the case, but for people requiring heavier care, I hear you telling me that they're going to be moved out of their community, Lord knows where, throughout the district. Now is that fair to say, or are you going to change your answer?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, no, the member is not accurate in what he says. Well he waves his hands around . . .

An Hon. Member: — Well make it accurate then.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I will make it accurate if you listen and commit that you would repeat this accurately in the public — which you're not prone to do, I notice.

Now, Mr. Chair, I said it is my view that when we reach the stage in life where we require level 3 or level 4 care, a heavier level of care, that the most appropriate place to receive that care is in a special care home which is designed and which is staffed to meet that care.

Now in the community of Ponteix, as the member should know, there is that kind of care available. There is level 3 and 4 care available.

Now if there is today, in the lighter care facility, someone who has reached that level of care, it may not be possible for that

person to move tomorrow or immediately. But I think working with the district, working with the family, working with the individual, the appropriate thing would be to seek that heavier level of care in the most appropriate circumstance.

I have not said this afternoon, or have I ever said, that anyone would be taken from their accommodation and moved out.

Now does the member understand that? Is it clear to the member?

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, your games are not doing well for you here today, because now you're on both sides of the issue. The fact of the matter is the level 3, level 4 care home which you're referring to in the community of Ponteix, which was a lighter care home itself, I believe there's a waiting-list; or at least there used to be a waiting-list until you changed the rules on waiting-lists.

But the fact of the matter is it's always full. And it has to be, because I get so many people that are calling me up, seeing what they can do. It just seems like they can never get in.

And not only that, but that care home was initially built to take care of people of that religious denomination. Now they would have first chance at any beds coming available, I understand.

So what the people of Ponteix have to know, Mr. Minister, is exactly what I hope I hear you saying, is that they won't be moved out of the level 1 and level 2 care facility when they become level 3 and level 4 care. Now I've also heard you say that no one of that heavier care will be moved into this privatized facility.

And where all this leads us is people moving out of the community. I don't know what other options you have. Because you're cutting back on beds. I don't think there's as many beds available in that level 1 and level 2 facility as there were before. And now if you're not allowing a little bit heavier care into that facility and the heavier care facility is full, what do you intend to do with them? And that's where you've been on both sides of this issue.

So now make it really clear to the people. I'll allow you time to stand up and make it real clear what you're going to do.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well I think the first thing we will do, Mr. Chair, is we'll make a contact with Ponteix and see what the waiting-list is on the level 3 and 4 facility.

Earlier this afternoon the member suggested there was a huge waiting-list in Shaunavon — huge waiting-list, that's what he suggested to the House, implied. When we make the contact, we find there is one person waiting, one level 3 person waiting.

Now we'll check, we'll check, we'll check the situation at Ponteix. Now maybe I can go through it again and see if the member can understand, and not wilfully confuse.

As we go through life, at any point in our life but more typically as we grow older, we will need a level of support for daily

living. Now in some circumstances that day may come as we are quite young; in many circumstances it will come as we grow older. The key is to provide for individuals the . . . as we assess our needs for care, it should be done individually.

Now I think most of us will want to go through this life to our death if possible with as much independence and as close to our homes as we can do it. However for some that will not be possible, and we will need some level of institutional care.

Now in looking at the options for institutional care, there is quite a range. We have had, and publicly subsidized, what we describe as level 1 and 2 facilities. Now we know if we follow the definition of level 1 and 2 that the vast majority people who will be assessed as level 1 and 2 can have those care needs, those supportive care needs, met in their home or in their community.

Into this mix has grown a network across our province of personal care homes. These are privately owned, they do not receive government subsidy, and they've offered a basic level of care — not heavy care in most cases, but a basic level of residential care.

Now in the community of Ponteix there has been a level 1 and 2 facility, and there is and remains a level 3, 4 facility. There is some discussion in the community of Ponteix of a conversion of the former level 1 and 2 facility, the existing level 1 and 2 facility, to a personal care home. That home will accept, if licensed and operational, people with a lighter care need — again, more residential support. The heavy level care home will accept and care for those with heavier-level care needs.

Now there may be someone who is occupant of the current level 1 and 2, or the proposed personal care home, whose needs will change over the years. What I'm saying, from my point of view that person's needs will probably best be met in the level 3 and 4 facility where the staffing is appropriate and the design of the facility is appropriate and so on.

No one is going to be lifted out of their personal care home or their current level 1 and 2 facilities unless there is appropriate care, and they desire it. Now I'm saying and just simply recommending — and I hope the member would share the view — that we would want people to be accommodated where the care is most appropriate to the need.

Now some people — I know — their needs will never exceed what is available to them in the personal care home situation, and they will spend their final days there. And when that can happen, we're happy about that. But if the need grows beyond what the facility or the institution or the personal care home can provide, then it seems to be most appropriate if that individual and that family would consider looking to other care options. And in Ponteix, there is the other care option.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I guess we will leave the long-term care questions until you get some of your facts that you had said you would have to bring forward, or you'll perhaps forward them on to my office. But regardless, we'll raise them at another session of Health estimates.

In the area of home care, you had talked about home care replacing the needs of people in, I guess, especially rural Saskatchewan. I hear that isn't always the case. But I guess we'll start with asking the question of funding. Can you tell me what the total funding and how much additional funding there has been added to the budget — say — in the last three years and where you see this going in the upcoming year?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, since 1991-92, budget year 1991-92 until . . . if you compare that year against this year, spending on home-based services has increased by 91 per cent. It's a 91 per cent increase, almost a doubling now over that period of time.

In this current budget year — last year the budgeted figure was 50.083 million — this year the budgeted amount for home-based services is 60.794 million representing a 21.4 per cent increase over last year.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well then in that \$60 million amount, can you tell me what the breakdown of that is? Is it salaries, or can you tell me how much of this money went to buy some specialized equipment for these people to carry out their duties, or vehicles, or . . . give us a complete breakdown of how that amount is arrived at.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we don't have it broken down precisely. In the former circumstance, when the grants were given to home care district boards, and in the current circumstance where the monies are provided to the district boards, they will do their local specific accounting. But our best estimate is that about 85 per cent of the money will be paid to staff costs and 15 per cent to other costs; so it's about 85/15

Mr. McPherson: — What would be the percentage that would go into administering home care? And in fact, in this amount, is that where all of the administration would show up or may it show up in other areas of the budget?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, again we don't . . . that breakdown is not available to us, would not have been available to us when we were funding the home care boards individually; now we fund globally to the health district boards. This becomes a matter of local budgeting and local decision making.

However I can say this, province-wide, by moving to the global delivery of services under the district umbrella, we are seeing administrative savings across the province.

Now the member will disagree and shakes his head and I'm sure we could have a good discussion about that, but I know that we can provide solid documentation that I know will convince the member that there are now administrative savings being achieved throughout the system, both in terms of board operations and in terms of actual administration of programing.

(1630)

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, if you can't give me a better answer as far as how much goes into administration or

what is actually the breakdown of these monies, then how are you able to, say, evaluate the home care program as a whole? How can you sit back and say this is working or it isn't working or there's people falling through the cracks? Of course you don't know, do you?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, now I take objection to the member's last comment. In fact we do evaluate, and I think we have some very good indications of the value of home-based services.

Now to first of all share this with the member, we've asked the Health Utilization Research Commission to look very carefully at the effectiveness of home-based and home care services — the Utilization Commission, being of course separate and apart from the Department of Health, separate and apart from government, to have an independent and professional review of these issues.

But I mean all I have to do is meet with individuals and people who speak with deep appreciation of the home care services that are available there.

An Hon. Member: — I'm sure you do.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now the member rolls around and says, I'm sure I do. Well I can tell you, I do. And if you want to get some indication here, if you'd care to note these numbers down, if you want to write these numbers down: in 1991-92, 1,391,747 volumes of service were offered through home care across our province. By '92-93, that had risen to 1.5. By '93-94, that had risen to 1.7 — in fact, 1,756,524 — a 15 per cent increase over the year before that; a 9 per cent increase year before that.

Now, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Chair, that tells me that services are being made available. They are being utilized. And I can tell you, having moved from a client list in '91-92 of 19,000 people to a client list in '93-94 of 22,000 people, these services are being utilized and they are appreciated.

Mr. McPherson: — All right then, Mr. Minister. You're telling us that the services provided are increasing, I think you said 15 per cent and 6 per cent, or whatever the figures were, but that falls far short of what you said your funding is over that same period of having risen 91 per cent.

So what I'm trying to find out from you is: how do you correctly assess whether you're getting a bang for the buck or in fact perhaps you've raced into yet another program without fully exploring, you know, all the alternatives? Or maybe you shouldn't have left these communities in the lurch to begin with.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, the member says we've raced into something here. We've raced into something. I believe it was our government in 1974 and 1975 that pioneered home care in this province. This is not exactly, Mr. Chair, a new concept. It's a concept that has been widely received and is widely appreciated across our province.

Throughout the course of the 1980s there was not a lot of movement in this field, but we have in fact put new and

significant emphasis into home-based services. And so I disagree entirely with the member that this is some kind of a new and novel idea. What it is, it's a good idea and we're building on it.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, obviously you didn't hear the question because you avoided it entirely. You had said that services you were providing, or the clients that you were serving, raised some 15 per cent one year; I think 6 or 9 per cent another year. And only minutes ago, you said that the funding in home care over these same years had risen 91 per cent.

Now you can give all the accolades you want to the government of what you did in 1975. I'm telling you, your government is going to pay for what you did in 1992-3 and 4 and 5. Can you answer that question: how do you evaluate then if your funding is almost doubled and yet you're serving only 9 per cent or 6 per cent or 15 per cent more over that same time frame?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will explain it to the member in, I hope, a way that he can understand. The services being offered today, Mr. Chair, are significantly different and improved services than have been offered in past. Primarily home care in past represented meals-on-wheels, perhaps some basic housekeeping, and in some cases some nursing care. All of those services continue and all of those services are being enhanced.

But we are also now talking, Mr. Chair, about programs like home-based intravenous therapy — intravenous therapy at home. We're talking about home-based palliative care. For those individuals and families who would want to spend their very last days at home, we're prepared and willing now to provide the resources to make that possible for people. We're talking about in some cases in some districts of our province now, home-based renal dialysis, Mr. Chair. We're talking about programs that can offer care to mothers and their new babies, at home.

And so, Mr. Speaker, yes, there's a cost increase to do that. There's a cost increase to provide that higher level of service at home. But I think it's an entirely appropriate expenditure of our limited health dollars, Mr. Speaker, because not only does it improve the quality of life, it provides that quality of care we desire outside of the institutional setting and therefore at a lesser cost to the taxpayer and to the system. A higher level of care, a higher quality of care, at lower cost. That's how come it costs a little more money in home care. Yes, we've doubled, almost doubled the spending, but the range of services have broadened.

I also want to remind the member that we've now adopted policies in terms of, for instance, palliative care. So that if you require drug therapies to do with your home-based care in a palliative situation, we're not charging people for that. We're providing those drugs and supplies just as if you were in a hospital bed for palliative care. If you're palliative, if you're defined and assessed as palliative and are receiving that care at home, it will not cost you any more for your drugs or supplies at home as it does in a hospital.

And I know, I know for a fact, having visited with families, this is much appreciated by Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Well thank you for the speech, Mr. Minister. However now that you've got into the area of the added services that are providing, can you tell me then how much extra money your government has provided for skills upgrading and training to provide these enhanced services that home care is providing?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I'm appreciative of the member when he describes what I'm providing him by way of answers as speeches. Will he admit though, will he now stand on his feet and admit he was . . . He had a line of reasoning going here in the House. He says, well there now you see they've doubled the budget — they've doubled the budget, he noted that — but the number of clients, or the units being served, are only up 15 per cent. So he was going to make a case in the House here that the rest of it must be going into some administration service.

Will he stand up now and say he's wrong? Will he stand up and say he's wrong? Or will he proceed to go out with the public and say, well look at that, look at that, they've raised the home care budget by almost double, almost a hundred per cent increase, but they've only increased service, so it must all be in administration.

I hope you will go out and explain that these new monies are providing a whole broad range of services that people request. Now I'm glad he's going to stand up and agree on that point.

Now he asks about retraining for health care workers to provide these services. Number one, in some circumstances our former home care districts and now the broader regional districts, had in their employ well-trained and qualified people who have been through courses of preparation. In terms of some of the nursing care, they have been RNs (registered nurse) that work in home care.

Because there has been shifting from institutional-based services to home-based services and because we were fully aware that that would have impact on employment in institutional-based services, we have put in place over the course of the past two years — and I have recently extended it for another year — a pool and a source of funding for individuals who may want to access some retraining to equip themselves to serve in new capacities within health care.

To that fund we have committed \$5.4 million. The monies are being administered, not by the department or not by government, but by a joint union-management committee who make the decision on the applications to that fund and have awarded, to date, about \$800,000 in support to workers who may be using that money for retraining possibilities. Or in some cases to move into some other field of endeavour, or in some cases to enhance their severance if they were towards the end of their working life. It's something that I think our province can

be proud of in this transition time in health. It's not an easy time for health workers through the process of restructuring.

We know, in our province, there have been, in the acute sector, some job loss. We know that through in fact the monies in this budget year that are being directed into community- and home-based services, we predict approximately 450 new positions will be created throughout the province. And we do want people to have access to those positions, to utilize some of their experience, and if it takes some retraining then there is funding available.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, actually, thinking back to some of your comments here of what you can do with limited dollars, and you are wondering what I tell people when I travel around rural Saskatchewan, I make it quite clear to them that you're spending millions of dollars more in your health care budget today than before health care reform, and that's before you devastated rural Saskatchewan. That's what they're very aware of.

And I think you probably can provide more services in the rural areas through home care, because Lord knows, there has got to be a lot of nurses out there that you have fired through the process that your government has put them through.

But can you tell me, Mr. Minister, as far as the palliative care that home care is providing, now are the people that you're upgrading the skills of, or should be, are they able to . . . or are they trained to administer morphine and other kinds of medication such as that, that would be perhaps used in palliative care?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well I'm very pleased that the member, Mr. Chair, has stood in the House and admitted today, admitted to the Legislative Assembly, to anybody that cares to listen, that in fact he does go around the province not telling the truth.

He says, a few moments ago, that he is going all over rural Saskatchewan telling people — and I believe I'm quoting here — that they are spending millions more than they did before health reform started.

Well has he read, Mr. Chair, the budgets of the Department of Health over the past . . . I wonder if he's bothered to read the budget or the *Public Accounts*, the accounting of every dollar that we spend.

Now I will share with the House the exact numbers, Mr. Chair. And I will do it for the member on the assurance that he will quit going around the province saying that because he admits he says it.

(1645)

In 1991-92, Mr. Chair, the budget for the Department of Health was \$1.594 billion. Write it down, member from Shaunavon: \$1.594 billion, \$1.594 billion. I ask him to compare that with this year's budget. What is this year's budget? It is \$1.561 billion — 33 million less, \$33 million less than was being spent in 1991-92.

Now, Mr. Chair, I want to explain to the member, because perhaps he doesn't understand this either, that if we had left the funding on the same projected track that had been leading up to '91-92, if all of the programs had remained intact, if no change had been made in health care delivery across our province, the budget today would not be \$1.561 billion. It would in fact be \$1.9 billion — 1.9 — or \$400 million more than we were spending in '91-92, \$400 million more.

Now I, Mr. Chair, in fact regret in some ways that we do not have more resources to dedicate to health programming. I regret that our province got itself into such a deficit and debt circumstance that we had to take these kinds of measures. But I tell you, had we let this thing go, Mr. Chair, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that we were putting at certain risk the very fundamental principles of medicare that many of us in this province fought so hard to achieve, and many of us have continued to believe in. Had we not made the change, Mr. Chair, we would be spending \$1.9 billion a year, 400 million more than we're spending currently. That's \$400 for every man, woman, and child in the province or \$1,600 for a family of four. Mr. Chair, that is simply not sustainable in our province.

So I hope the member will now stand on his feet and say, I was wrong; you are not spending millions more than you were spending before the reform process started. In fact you are spending considerably less.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, you see the problem is that I know you feel that you are perhaps correcting me, but it was only a few days ago that you were in hot water with the people of Saskatchewan because it's become known that you've run up or actually deferred so much of your debt into the district boards.

Well of course that's what you've done. We have only received I think it's 18 out of 30 statements from district boards, and of 16 of those you have \$27 million of debt rung up. And for that, Mr. Minister, you should be ashamed of yourself even thinking that you were going to make a good point there. But in fact it's one that you should stay away from because you haven't done well in that area.

Mr. Minister, just to change a bit of the flavour here today, I want to ask a few questions on some of your past record regarding the court cases that people throughout the province have had you involved in, you and the former Health minister who . . . well I won't get into that.

There are a few. I would like to know what the costs to date were for the court cases that you were involved in, say, in the community of Climax, for one, where that union hospital district had to threaten legal action. In the end, I guess you've negotiated a way out but there had to have been some legal costs there involved and cost, just general costs involved.

But then again in the community of Ponteix where in fact there was some court proceedings at the Swift Current court-house. So can you tell us what the costs were that your department had to incur in fighting the good people of rural Saskatchewan who

are only trying to defend their communities and their right for health care as the people in these larger centres enjoy?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, in reference to the member's question about legal costs that may arise by lawsuits launched against the department or against the government, the Department of Health has not engaged any legal assistance. We receive our legal resources from the Department of Justice, and they're budgeted and paid for through Justice. This is not new to the function of operation of government.

We can endeavour to find out some time sheets and so on from Justice, but it's not something that we . . . we don't go out and hire lawyers in the Department of Health. I don't believe that's ever been the case. Now it may have been the case under the former government; I don't know that. But I don't believe that's ever been the case where the Department of Health ever goes out and hires its own lawyers. We rely on the Department of Justice.

Now I want to go back because the member was . . . Interestingly he raises the issue of his news release, his communication to the people of Saskatchewan on deficit . . . And now he laughs and shakes his head. Well we'll laugh when the member communicates publicly . . . Mr. Chair, I sincerely wish that this member would communicate accurately, communicate fact, because if he would only know the disruption that his mischief and his antics are causing to people across our province, I don't think I'd want to go out of this building. Now it is a shame what this member and some of his antics is doing across our province.

Now I'm going to illustrate, Mr. Chair, I'm going to illustrate here for the record. This member sends out a news release, or his leader . . . I'm not sure under whose name it went; I guess it doesn't matter; both. For instance, he sends out a news release which says that the operating deficit in 1993-94 for the Moose Mountain Health District, he said was \$305,575. That's what he said, and he said it publicly. Mailed it all over the province.

Do you know what it was, Mr. Chair? Do you know what the actual figure is when you take a look at the audited financial statements? Sixteen thousand, three hundred and ninety-five. He sends out material saying they've got a \$305,000 debt, operational, when the audited statement says 16,395.

Mr. Chair, he sends out a sheet of paper, a news release across the province, or his leader — I'm not sure which — which says that the North Valley Health District has an operating deficit, and I'm quoting right from his news release, the North Valley District has an operating deficit of 373,985. That's what he told the people of Saskatchewan and he told the people of that district.

An Hon. Member: — Now give us the truth.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — A member asks for the truth. In 1993-94 the North Valley Health District had a surplus of \$1,538.

Now I could go through this whole list. I've had the officials of the Department of Health spend hours reviewing all of the

audited statements of the district health boards for '93-94, and of his list of 16 which he mailed all over the province, we found seven that were accurate — seven.

Now I think if the member wants to gain a little credibility in the public eye or garner a modicum of credibility for his leader and for his party, then he should correct this information that he's mailing all over the province because it causes absolute undue concern, because he wants to try and make politics out of health care. He wants to try and politicize health care for his and his party's advantage.

Look at this headline, Mr. Chair: Health district puzzled by Liberal Party claim. Well you bet they were puzzled when they get misinformation mailed all over the province, then they have to acquaint all of their staff with what is the fact.

Now I'm going to share with the member the facts of the matter. And I hope then he would cease and desist this spreading of misinformation and half-truths for his own political benefit.

We have reviewed the audited financial statements from 1993-94; the total deficit picture is for '93-94 a total of \$15 million — \$15 million. That represents about 2 per cent, Mr. Chair, that represents about 2 per cent.

Mr. Chair, the member hoots and hollers from his seat. The other day, Mr. Chair, and members who are present, that member was in the House here quoting John Diefenbaker. You remember what he said about John Diefenbaker?

The Chair: — Order, order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, thank you. Sit down. The member comes into the House and he quotes John Diefenbaker. He quoted John Diefenbaker when John Diefenbaker said if you throw a stone and the dog starts to yelp, you know you hit the dog.

Well the member, I must say, Mr. Chair, is just yelping from his seat now. He hollers and he hoots from his seat. I'm going to give him the exact . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the member can just keep his seat — I know it's nearly supper time, he seems to want to be anxious to get out of the House, he keeps jumping up and down. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair, the member continues to holler from his seat.

In the current year, our best estimate for the deficits that will be held by the district health boards this year, Mr. Chair, is \$7 million . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, Mr. Chair, the member is hollering . . .

The Chair: — Order, order, order, order. Order, order. I just want to remind the member for Shaunavon that he'll have the opportunity to ask questions when I recognize him. When the minister is speaking, he should not interrupt.

March 20, 1995

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.

CORRIGENDUM

On page 951 of *Hansard* No. 30A, March 17, 1995, 10 a.m., left-hand column, 12th paragraph, "Hon. Ms. Carson" should read "Hon. Ms. Crofford."

We apologize for this error.