

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned with the closure of the Plains Health Centre in Regina. The prayer reads:

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are primarily from Arcola, but I note also that they are from Manor and Regina.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well on behalf of citizens concerned about the impending closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads:

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

Signatures on this petition are from Regina and the community of Midale.

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

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

The people that have signed this petition are all from Lampman, Saskatchewan.

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

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

Plains Health Centre.

And those who have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Vibank, White City, Milestone, and Regina.

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

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

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are primarily from Regina. And I so present. Thank you.

### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

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

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Wednesday next move:

An order of the Assembly do issue a return showing all correspondence between the Department of Economic Development and the Minister of Economic Development regarding the Crown construction tendering proposal, including the analysis prepared by the department prior to this policy being introduced.

I so present.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 55 ask the government the following question:

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

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of this House, 49 students from Valley Manor School in Martensville. It's a

progressive school and an exciting school to be in. They're grade 5 students. They're here visiting our community of Regina as well as the legislature as well.

The teachers that are with them are Jim Golding and Glenna Pellerin. I look forward to meeting them later on and asking some questions of them and answering some of their questions as well. Let's welcome them to the House.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce Jennifer Young who is in the Speaker's gallery. She is a grade 10 student at Bishop James Mahoney High School in Saskatoon.

I understand that Jennifer is career-shadowing various people, including yourself today, Mr. Speaker. It's part of her work to understand the Legislative Assembly. I understand that she's not only involved in career-shadowing you in the Speaker's office, but also she's in the Clerk's office, the Legislative Library, and the visitors' services.

I understand that Jennifer is accompanied by her friend, Megan Saum, and I would ask Megan and Jennifer to rise so that we can appropriately congratulate them for being in the Legislative Assembly today and welcome them.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you to the rest of the Assembly, I would like to introduce Manley McLauchlan, sitting up in your gallery, the executive director for the Saskatchewan Construction Association. And I would ask everyone to welcome him to the Assembly today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to all of the members of the Assembly, the grade 5 and 6 class from Davin School in Regina. There are 18 students, along with their teacher, Mr. Terry Vargo, and they're in the west gallery. Welcome.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much. It is a very real pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly, the High Commissioner of Bangladesh, Mufleh Osmany, who is standing up in your gallery.

I had a brief discussion — all too brief — with His Excellency this morning. We discussed our relations and lamented the fact that trade relations with the southern part of Asia are not as extensive as they should be, and we discussed ways that we might increase this.

I'm sure all members will want to join me in extending a very warm welcome to this distinguished visitor from Bangladesh.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — If other members have completed introductions, the Speaker would like to introduce some guests of mine who are visiting from my home constituency. From Ross School in Moose Jaw, in the Speaker's gallery today are seated 29 grade 7 and 8 students who are accompanied by their instructor, Diane Milton Smith, as well as chaperons, B.J. and Amy Booth.

They are here to take in the proceedings of the Assembly and at 2 o'clock they'll be breaking for a tour of the building. And with the capable assistance of the Deputy Chair of Committees, I look forward to an opportunity to join them for a photograph and then a follow-up visit back home later on next month.

Will the members of the Assembly please show a warm welcome to these visitors from Ross School in Moose Jaw.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Battered Women's Awareness Week

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week, May 12 to 18, has been proclaimed Battered Women's Awareness Week in Saskatchewan. Despite increased public awareness of the problem, violence against women continues to be widespread. Most of us know someone who has experienced violence.

Violence can take many forms. It can be psychological, sexual, emotional, or physical. An abuser may constantly criticize or belittle his partner. He may forbid her to have her own money. He may isolate her from families and friends.

Too often violence that begins with harsh words ends in physical abuse. It is impossible to truly measure the effects of violence in the lives of women and children. It is impossible to estimate the effect of the pain and suffering, the loss of self-esteem and personal security. We must eliminate violence because it robs its victims, mostly women and children, of the joy, confidence, and personal security that should be the birthright of all human beings.

The more we know about this issue and the more we deal with it, the more likely we are to prevent it. We must begin by examining our own values, choices, and behaviours; then we must speak up and let others know that violence in any form is unacceptable. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Royal Bank Cup

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As members of the Assembly are aware, I spent the last few days in my constituency enjoying the Royal Bank Cup. My congratulations to all the teams that participated, and in particular the Vernon Vipers, who defeated our home town favourite, Mustangs, in the final game last night.

Not only did I enjoy the hockey, I was proud to be one of the

more than 700 volunteers that made this event the most successful ever. Fans from coast to coast praised the Saskatchewan hospitality that they found in Melfort this week.

I want to commend the host committee Co-Chairs, Dale Frier and Randy Sorensen; the volunteers and the fans who made the entire event such a huge success. As well I ask the Assembly to recognize the achievements of the Melfort Mustang team, their head coach, Kevin Dickie, assistant coach, Blaine Fennell; you are true Saskatchewan champions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Osteoporosis Week**

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 11 through 18 is Osteoporosis Week in Canada. Their theme for that week is “Move your Bones”. The mission of the society is to educate, empower, and support individuals and communities in the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis.

Nine communities in Saskatchewan chose to participate in this week in walkathons in their community. Four of those were cities, five were communities; one was the community of Rosthern and I had the opportunity this weekend to move my bones as well. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Cooking for Literacy**

**Ms. Stanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the third year in a row I have attended the annual “Cooking for Literacy” event in Lloydminster. They must like my cooking because they keep inviting me back year after year.

I had the pleasure of participating in this event again on the weekend, but not because of my cooking skills. After serving as a teacher for 23 years in Saskatchewan, I have taken a personal interest in the campaign for literacy.

“Cooking for Literacy” is an event held each year to raise money for literacy. In Lloydminster, it is a joint effort of CKSA TV and Radio, Lakeland College, and Superior Propane. Last year, Superior Propane raised \$125,000 Canada-wide for literacy. CKSA broadcast live from this local event, helping to publicize the campaign for literacy. Lakeland College conducts a literacy program called “Learn” — an adult program to assist people in increasing their literacy.

Mr. Speaker, we should not take literacy for granted in Canada; 38 per cent of Canadians read at a very low level which makes them functionally illiterate. I would like to congratulate Superior Propane, CKSA Radio and TV, and Lakeland College for their efforts in promoting a good cause. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Battered Women’s Awareness Week**

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I too would like to recognize Battered Women’s Awareness Week. Although it is not pleasant to think about, hundreds of Saskatchewan women

are facing violence every day. This is an issue that cannot be ignored. I am sure everyone in this House personally knows a woman who is or has been abused.

This violence tears families apart. We cannot forget the thousands of children who have also been scarred by this abuse. Domestic violence is not acceptable. It cannot be tolerated. Those convicted of assault must be duly punished. Funding for transition homes and crisis centres is vital because these women and children need a safe place to heal.

Acknowledging that this terrible violence exists in some Saskatchewan homes is just the first step.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Expansion of St. Volodymyr Villa**

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday I had the pleasure of attending the expansion at St. Volodymyr Villa seniors’ complex in Saskatoon. Phases 1 and 2 are now completed, and the sod-turning ceremony was to kick off phase 3, and phase 4 is to be announced in the near future. This is independent but supportive housing, Mr. Speaker.

There was a very large crowd in attendance, and this is reflective of the fact that they saw this dream become a reality. And I say special thanks to the board who put in many hours of volunteer work; to the administrator, Mr. Lewchuk; to the former and previous bishops; to the Ukrainian community who have been behind the project; and especially to the residents, Mr. Speaker. It’s the residents who make a place a home, who make St. Volodymyr’s Villa a community. And it is a great home and a great community.

So I appreciate the opportunity to have been invited. I felt very welcome over the last eight years, and I say to the residents, the best of all the health for many years to come. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Passing of Dennis O’Brien**

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with deep sorrow that I rise in the House today to extend my condolences to the O’Brien family in Buffalo Narrows. Over the weekend their husband and father, Dennis O’Brien, tragically lost his life in a plane crash in British Columbia. Dennis loved to fly and had many years of experience. He worked for Buffalo Narrows Airways and provided a much needed service for people in northern Saskatchewan.

I would like to express my heartfelt wishes to the O’Brien family and all of Dennis’s friends for their tragic loss. Dennis will be for ever remembered. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Navy Captain from Saskatchewan**

**Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, at first this may sound like a contradiction, though I assure you it is not. A surprisingly large

number of Saskatchewan boys have had and are having very successful careers in the Canadian Navy. A distinguished case in point is a former resident of Cabana and of Meadow Lake. George Prudat — or should I say Commander George Prudat — of the Canadian Navy has just been appointed commanding officer of Her Majesty's Canadian Ship Nipigon.

One of Canada's destroyers, the Nipigon is a 2,925 ton helicopter-equipped ship with a crew of 243. It's home port is Halifax. Commander Prudat has been at sea for 16 years with appointments at . . . on several ships, I should say. He has circumnavigated the globe and has been awarded the special service medal, the Canada 125 Medal, and the Canadian Forces decoration, all for distinguished service to Canada. Commander Prudat was born in Meadow Lake and joined the Canadian Forces in 1970.

Mr. Speaker, back to my original point. It has been said that the limitless horizons of Saskatchewan are like those on the ocean; consequently, land-locked Saskatchewan boys are in fact quite at home at sea. The success of Commander Prudat would seem to bear out this theory, and I congratulate him for his deserved recognition. I know his parents, Paul and Marie, must be very, very proud. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Hospital Auxiliaries

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, on Friday I had the privilege of attending a hospital auxiliary tea in the community of Moosomin. And I realize many communities throughout this province . . . hospital auxiliaries are getting together to celebrate the work they have done through the years to provide services and in many cases to provide fund-raising efforts to put equipment in our hospitals, and specifically our small hospitals.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly important that this Assembly take a moment to recognize the work of these many volunteers for their hard work and for the efforts they have put in to providing good health care and services and equipment in our small communities. Congratulations.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Sea Buckthorn Development

**Mr. Johnson:** — Mr. Speaker, *Agriculture 2000* is this government's strategy for development of the agriculture industry into the next century. A part of this strategy is to fund for research and development activities. The University of Saskatchewan will receive \$111,000 from the Agriculture Development Fund for a project to develop and demonstrate the use of sea buckthorn as a fruit shrub for commercial cultivation and processing in Saskatchewan.

The fruit is used extensively in Europe and parts of Asia in jams, jellies, and other fruit preparations. The project will investigate improvements in production technique and in varieties that are suitable for automatic harvesting. The project . . . No, work will also be conducted on potential health benefits

of extracts from the fruit. This could result in value added marketing opportunities for producers in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, funding of research projects such as this assist in the development of emerging opportunities in the production and value added processing and help diversify our province's agriculture and food sector.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Crown Construction Tendering Agreement

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the media is reporting today that this NDP (New Democratic Party) government was warned in advance about problems associated with implementing its Crown construction tendering policy. The government's own analysis concluded that the CCTA (Crown Construction Tendering Agreement) would give preference to unionized firms and would increase the cost of some projects by as much as 30 per cent.

This substantiates what we've been saying all along; 30 per cent is not a figure we simply pulled from the air, as the Premier has stated, Mr. Speaker. Reports also indicate that Economic Development officials advised this government to scrap the policy.

Will the Minister of Labour confirm that he was forewarned about the dangers of this policy — warnings which proved to be correct.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to say first of all that there are 18 or 19 cabinet ministers sitting around a table, all of whom get briefed before they go to meetings to discuss issues such as the one that's being raised by the members of the opposition. At the end of the day we draw conclusions about what sort of future is likely, and I can say that any suggestions that the kind of future that's being quoted opposite is a reality are false.

We know that the only thing that the Crown Tendering Agreement was intended to do and has achieved is to establish a fair base of pay for people so that union contractors and non-union contractors are bidding on exactly the same basis as they compete for a small number of government contracts. In the first construction season that was about \$15 million worth of contracting.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, the actions of this NDP government on this issue are nothing short of arrogant and irresponsible. They proceeded with a policy that puts business at risk, discriminates against non-union firms, and robs the people of Saskatchewan of valuable tax dollars, all so that they could cater to their friends within the labour union movement.

Given these facts and the reports that Economic Development advised this government to scrap the policy, will the minister explain why he failed to listen to this advice?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite had a brief moment when one or two people from the labour movement gave them some support during the recent SaskTel strike, but I think that's about the last time they're going to get any recognition.

I want to say that in 1982, Mr. Speaker, I remember the day when I heard that one of the basic rights of workers of any country that's in the United Nations across the world was violated in Saskatchewan when the previous Tory government did away with the right of workers to be unionized in the construction industry; when they allowed companies to be double-breasted; when they allowed the companies which union members had legitimately unionized to take on another form for the purpose of bidding on contracts — an international right removed. So it's clear that in the time when we came to government, there were obviously difficult circumstances in the construction industry.

We have taken it upon ourselves to try to establish a fair and open dialogue, to try to establish some cooperation between the construction industry and the labourers of this province. And to continue in that, I'm pleased to say that Mr. McLaughlan from the construction industry and myself will be meeting on May 23.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really pleased at last that you're meeting with the people. And you don't have to worry about Alabama North; what you have to worry about is Cuba North because what you've done is create an unfair set of labour standards in this province, and it's killing jobs and it's hurting business in this province.

Will the minister agree to take the advice of Economic Development and scrap the CCTA policy?

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I will commit this government to continue to do what it has set out to do when we took office in 1991, and that is to establish a fair relationship between workers and the industry in this province for a healthy economy where our children can work in a decent economy and where our industry can flourish. And that's what we commit to continue to do.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has clearly displayed that they will do absolutely anything in order to get re-elected. I am completely appalled by the Minister of Economic Development's actions.

He knew very well that the CCTA was costing taxpayers millions of extra dollars and he said nothing. At the same time, he allowed his government to totally devastate rural Saskatchewan by cutting back funds.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has made a choice and his

choice was to favour his union friends over the rest of this province. Now when the people in my constituency ask why are hospitals being closed, why are nursing homes being closed, why are schools being closed, I can tell them — I can tell them, Mr. Speaker — the minister has chosen to favour unions over the people of Saskatchewan. And I would say that he owes the people of this province an apology.

Will the Deputy Premier please tell this Assembly and the people of the province why, when he knew what the CCTA was doing, did he sit back and say nothing and allow his government to continually gut rural Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I keep being amazed by that member and her negative approach about rural Saskatchewan. Now rural Saskatchewan is devastated, rural Saskatchewan is destroyed — all of these huge exaggerations that she makes in stark contrast to what is really happening in rural Saskatchewan.

I have here an article from her home newspaper, the Wadena times, dated May 8, and it says, the headline, and it's written by an Ann Walter: "Saskatchewan soil yields jobs". And it's a wonderful story about rural Saskatchewan and the jobs that are being created at the present time.

And I would just say to the member opposite, you should read this and get some ideas about what rural Saskatchewan is really about. I'll send you a copy. But it talks about jobs coming from berry farms, small shops making chocolates, fish farming; potato farming is yielding jobs; meat packing plants and dairy plants. It talks about poultry eviscerating plants. It talks about greenhouses, large and small; cattle ranches, flour mills. This is one of your own constituents talking about economic development in rural Saskatchewan. I don't know where . . .

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not one of those examples had anything to do with CCTA; in fact it's in spite of this. I am truly ashamed of the Deputy Premier. He had documentation confirming what we've been saying for months. He sat here and heard us plead with the Minister of Labour to tear up CCTA and he refused to do so.

I say to the Deputy Premier, it was not just the opposition pleading with you but it was the people of Saskatchewan, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Saskatchewan Construction Association. The chamber of commerce pleaded with this government to tear up the CCTA, and there was still no action.

Mr. Speaker, when this NDP government has no idea how much they have made the people of this province suffer . . . This is the second time in as many weeks that the people of this province have had to find out what the government is up to by a leak of a document. Three strikes and you're out.

Mr. Speaker, this is from the same government that calls themselves open and accountable. Will the Deputy Premier

finally confess to the people of this province that he is responsible for wasting hundreds of taxpayers' dollars and table the documents which clearly show that construction jobs are costing 30 per cent more.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to quote as well from Friday's newspaper . . . Saturday's newspaper, about the new jobs being created in Saskatchewan which that member opposite just happened to forget about Friday when the job numbers were up by 5,000 year over year. She remembers them if the numbers are down but conveniently has selective amnesia when it comes to jobs being increased.

But I want to tell you this — and maybe some day when you're in government you will know how government works — when you are being briefed and when government's being briefed, you get a myriad of ideas and concepts coming on particular issues. And at the end of the day, you make a decision based on the best intelligence and the best interest of the people of Saskatchewan. And that is what we did in this case.

We have views that said we should have gone farther in terms of making positions more available to unions. We had other people who want to get rid of unions. At the end of the day, you do what is in the best interest of the majority of people. That's what we did here, after consensus, after discussion.

And I say to the member opposite, her attitude about economic development and jobs is very, very poor and I would urge her to read the document from . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Next question.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are also to the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Economic Development, and that minister seems to have a very selective reading problem because if he checked those job numbers he would see that there was 2,000 less jobs in construction than there was the year before.

He seems to be part of a pact of a conspiracy of silence regarding the real costs and the consequences of his union tendering policy. And it now appears that he is responsible personally because his own officials recommended against this unfair policy.

Mr. Minister, your department's economic analysis says that the policy will give preference to unionized companies, that it does not represent a greater commitment to fair and open tendering, that it drives up costs by 30 per cent. And finally, your department officials said what we have been recommending all along — that you should scrap this agreement.

Mr. Minister, why did you do this against the advice of your department? Why did you allow NDP political interests to take precedence over those of Saskatchewan's workers and taxpayers?

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I will repeat for the member from that side of the opposition benches the answer I gave to this side of the opposition benches a few minutes ago. There are a number of points of view that are given to ministers that are preparing to make decisions and then we conclude from the debate what is likely in the best interests and what is likely the best information from which we work.

I want to say that the information that the member opposite is quoting has not been borne out in fact, and the fact is that we have determined that we're going to try create a fair and friendly environment between workers and the construction industry in this province, and we're going to continue to do that.

But I want to say to the member opposite that I am astounded that he's willing to rear his head in this day and age, having been the party in power when they stripped workers of their rights to unionize in this province at a time when everybody else in the world believes that this is an important right for workers. That all we want is a fair opportunity for your children and mine to have a place in the workplace from which they can get reasonable returns, and so that companies, whether they be non . . .

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Again to the Minister for Economic Development. Under the Tory regime of the '90s, at least there were jobs and the unions and non-union workers both had jobs in the construction industry.

But to the Minister for Economic Development, Mr. Speaker: you knew the facts and you chose to ignore them. You covered them up. Let's review your conspiracy of silence about the union preference agreement.

You said this agreement creates a level playing-field. Your own — your own — officials say that it favours unionized companies. You said this agreement would not drive up costs. Your own officials say that it will drive up costs by as much as 30 per cent. You said this was a good policy that needs to proceed. Your officials say that it's a flawed policy and should be scrapped.

I guess it came down to a choice between the good for the NDP and what's good for the economy. And you chose NDP politics. Mr. Minister, won't you listen to the opposition . . . if you won't listen to the opposition, you won't listen to the construction . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, order. Order, order. Now the hon. member has been quite lengthy in his preamble and I'll ask him to go directly to his question. Directly to the question.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, will you at least listen to your own officials and follow their advice and scrap this failed policy?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite well knows, that that policy has been in place now for a year and we are in the process of having consulted with the industry and are in the process of continuing discussions with the industry, and we will announce the results of that review in due time.

But I want to say to the member opposite that the act of putting workers and putting unionized contractors and non-unionized contractors in the position where they both bid on a project on exactly the same basis doesn't seem to me to be creating an un-level playing-field.

It seems to me to be giving equal opportunity — equal opportunity that the members opposite have clearly demonstrated that they did not believe in, with the devastating . . . with the devastating results in the economy that only Saskatchewan people know. These people spent billions of dollars creating . . . trying to create jobs. People fled this province in droves.

I can say that Saskatchewan people believe in fairness; Saskatchewan people believe that our children should have a right to work under decent conditions, and we're going to continue to work with the industry to achieve that. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Labour Relations Board Decision**

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour or his designate. Mr. Minister, businesses are very worried about how your government keeps intervening in their business. Your hand-picked Labour Board is now saying that a business cannot downsize even if there's not enough work to support the jobs. In a recent case involving Acme Video, your Labour Board ruled this to be a technological change and ruled against the company.

Mr. Minister, how can a business operate in a province where the government is overruling business decisions? Is this a problem with the board or is this a problem with the legislation? Which one of those two are you going to fix?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much. I believe, although the question wasn't entirely clear, I believe the member is commenting on a decision of the Labour Relations Board.

The Labour Relations Board is a semi-judicial body and the decisions which come from it are really in the nature of judicial decisions. This is a body which is interpreting the law. It really is not appropriate for members of this Assembly to comment on the decisions. You may comment on the statute if you wish, but it really is not appropriate to be trying to second-guess what is really a judicial body. They've made a pronouncement on a statute, and I'll let it stand as that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Heppner:** — The question basically I'd asked, which the government was going to fix. Apparently they don't want to fix anything.

Mr. Minister, there seems to be a bit of a double standard working here. And soon, if this keeps on, that'll be the only thing working in Saskatchewan. When the government decided to lay off hundreds of employees, that's considered sound management decision. When a video store tries to reduce its staff due to lack of business, your government steps in and says no.

You got rid of crop insurance agents because you said modern communications technology made it possible for farmers to deal with crop insurance over the phone. You laid off hundreds of highway employees because you made a technological change in repairing highways. We now have highways with holes instead of being smooth. That's a technological change.

Mr. Minister, why the double standard? How can business operate if they're not allowed to make business decisions? Will you remove the Luddites out of your Labour Board and replace them with people that understand some business?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Speaker, I will add to the comment I made previously by saying that this matter is under appeal. I believe it will be through the Court of Queen's Bench. I suggest it is advisable for all members to wait till we get the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench, then if there is a problem and if there's no further appeal, then the legislature and the government could wrestle with it. At the moment the matter is in the hands of the judiciary and all members should leave it there.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Potential Home Care Workers' Strike**

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Mr. Speaker, it's been one week since the home care workers in this province voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action. In spite of repeated requests by the opposition for you to explain what plan of action will be taken in the event of a strike, and in spite of these repeated requests, the minister has yet to give us any reply. As a result, our office has received a number of calls from those who depend on home care or family members of those who need this service. They're asking, what will happen if home care workers walk off the job?

Will the minister ease the anxiety and fears of these people and explain what contingency plan his government has in place?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, the member may or may not be aware that the workers indicated this morning, I believe, that they intended to continue bargaining with their employer, which is represented by SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations).

The parties are entering into bargaining later this week, and I would suggest to the member that rather than talk about hypothetical situations and assume that the bargaining will not be successful, we should leave the matter where it properly should be and that is in collective bargaining between the parties. And I have every confidence that these people are reasonable people, people of good faith, and that they will come to a reasonable solution.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Health District Boards Funding

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Well then, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of nurses that are picketing today in Weyburn and it's not because of a labour dispute. It's to send a message to this NDP government. The South Central Health District has had its budget slashed by \$1.4 million this year, and the number of registered nurses in the Weyburn area has been cut from 63 to 30. They want to tell this government that cut-backs and lay-offs are making it extremely difficult to provide satisfactory health care.

If health care professionals — the very people who deal with the sick and elderly on a day-to-day basis — see a major problem, why does the Minister of Health refuse to acknowledge these problems, a direct result of his government's under-funding?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the nurses of this province. And I also respect that they are raising, for public discussion, the issue of health care funding and our health care system, and I commend them for that. I think that that's a commendable thing to do. We should have intelligent discussion in the province as to the level of funding and the level of care we have in the province. And I welcome that, Mr. Speaker.

And while we're having the discussion, since the member from Regina talks about — I'm sorry, Thunder Creek — talks about cuts to health care, the member knows, as the people of the province know, that the provincial government has not cut funding for health care this year. Rather, Mr. Speaker, it was the federal government in Ottawa, the Liberals, who have cut health care spending dramatically.

They are going to do the same thing next year. But for every dollar the Liberals take out, we put a dollar back in, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Mr. Speaker, the South Country Health District in my constituency is another that has been hit hard by recent government funding cuts. In fact this district recently had its funding slashed by \$315,000.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Lewis Draper, a member of that board and a former member of that government, says of this NDP government, and I quote

The issue really isn't one of not having enough money; it's really an issue of getting too little to do what is necessary for health care in rural communities.

Will the minister admit that what the former NDP member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg is telling us is correct? And will the minister tell this House what he intends to do to correct this under-funding of rural health care?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the province of Saskatchewan has moved to a population-based, needs-based method of funding which allocates health care funding between the districts of the province based on population and utilization, which I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is in fact a fair way of allocating health care funding. It's really the first time in our history that we have applied some empirical evidence, looked at the facts, and actually allocated funding in a fair way.

But I want to say the member that if the member is concerned about the level of health care funding, I would really suggest that he talk to his Liberal colleagues in Ottawa who are dramatically cutting back on the amount of health care funding that Saskatchewan is receiving.

I know the member doesn't like it when we say that, Mr. Speaker, but the simple fact of the matter is, that is the truth. We have not cut health care funding — the Liberals have cut health care funding. But for every dollar they take out, we put a dollar back in, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Recovery of Government Funds

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated in this House on Friday, the people of Saskatchewan felt betrayed and insulted by the actions of members of the Conservative Party before they were defeated in 1991. Now the people of Saskatchewan are being insulted again.

We learn that one of the major players in this scheme has been scheduled for release from prison today. Lorne McLaren will also be collecting four different pensions including an MLA's (Member of the Legislative Assembly) pension of \$1,200 a month. This is a slap in the face of the taxpayers of this province.

My question to the Premier is whether now his government is willing to take action in order that some of this ill-gotten money is returned to the taxpayers.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think, as I indicated to the Leader of the Opposition on Friday, we were certainly willing to look at this issue. I have spoken with his member on the Board of Internal Economy subsequent to Friday, as well as the member who sits on the board from the third party, to determine what action, if any, we may take to



resolve this issue.

I want to say to all members of the House that we regard this matter very seriously, and we will continue to work with the member of the . . . leader of the . . . or the opposition board as well as with the third party to determine a fair and reasonable way to resolve this.

#### Northern Highway Maintenance

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Highways. Frustration is setting in as many of the northern communities are tired of waiting for improvements to their roads. Constant problems and a lack of respect is wearing down on people's patience. These people are Saskatchewan people. These pay licence fees, taxes, and they pay repairs to automobiles and the cost of transportation of people and goods.

Mr. Minister, I consider myself a responsible politician and would never promote civil disobedience. However, if you continue to ignore these roads and continue to ignore northern people and continue to hold the line on repairs to northern roads, the people of the north-west will eventually rise up and demand that these trails be replaced with decent roads.

Will the minister, in light of this potentially serious problem and backlash in the North, prepare to commit to put more resources and finally repair the roads of northern Saskatchewan to an acceptable level? Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Well I want to thank the member for that question, especially today because you see, Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I had the opportunity to go to Meadow Lake and meet with the Meadow Lake Tribal Council and talk to the people of Turner Lake and Dillon and Waterhen about their road conditions and about their concerns about the road conditions.

Certainly northern Saskatchewan is a priority for this government, as I explained to the member opposite. If he takes a look at what this government has done in its four years in office, the Cumberland bridge is one example. The road to Grandmother's Bay, an area that had no access at all for the community of Grandmother's Bay now have access to the rest of the province. We're working with the federal government and INAC (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) on the Athabasca road, giving access to the people in the Athabasca region. We are committed to the North, Mr. Speaker, but funds are limited, so we can only do so much at a time and our commitment remains that way, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill No. 91 — An Act to amend The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990 be now introduced

and read the first time.

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

##### Bill No. 92 — An Act respecting Elections

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting Elections.

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

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 88 — An Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 1996. The proposed amendment removes from the Act the list of the judicial centres in the province which are required to have a resident Queen's Bench judge. The list will instead be set out in the regulations.

The Department of Justice is always monitoring the case-loads at court offices in the province. In times of fiscal restraint, we must consider how best to provide access to court, and at the same time ensure effective and efficient use of resources. Several factors must be taken into account in determining where judicial and associated resources can best be utilized throughout the province. Some of these factors are: changes in the crime rate, usage of the court for civil cases, changing demographics, technology changes, modern practices in justice, and proximity and access to other justice services.

If the list of court-houses is moved from the Act to the regulations, the government will have more flexibility in making these difficult decisions about the use of our courts in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act.

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to speak with respect to Bill 88 here this afternoon, The Queen's Bench Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, readily recognizable, what this government's *modus operandi* has become, is it comes providing necessary services to Saskatchewan residents living outside of our major urban centres. Virtually since it was sworn into power, this government has begun a strategic and continuous reduction in the vital services to our rural communities.

I believe that Bill 88 is simply another step in the course this government has so clearly decided to adopt. Under the old Bill, it was specifically spelled out where Queen's Bench judges were to reside; not coincidentally, the communities listed were

those that had a Queen's Bench court. Of course, the government in its wisdom has seen fit to begin closing court-houses in the province. Therefore those communities that will soon lose their court-houses are no longer listed in the Act. Instead this amendment simply states that wherever there is a Queen's Bench court a judge must reside in that community.

It's obvious to see what the government's intention is with this Bill. Obviously this piece of legislation makes it much easier for the government to close court-houses across the province, since the communities that have such services are no longer spelled out in the legislation. So far two of our communities in rural areas have been notified their court-houses are on this government's busy chopping block. The citizens of Melville and Kerrobert will no longer have access to a Court of Queen's Bench in their community as this government moves to limit yet another service outside of the city of Regina.

Clearly it is the government's intention with this amendment to close even more court-houses across the province. Our party has very serious concerns about this action. Our concerns are heightened ever further as we see other government offices closed in these communities.

According to our numbers the Melville court-house is not even close to being under-used when compared to other communities, yet it's gone. And residents of Kerrobert will now have to drive great distances in order to access the legal system. How many more of these court-houses are going to be given death sentences? It's anybody's guess. But I would be willing to bet this government will not stop at just these two.

Mr. Speaker, we feel these closures are wrong but it fits very nicely into this government's game plan. They don't vote for the NDP so the government abandons them. We've come to be very used to the cynical, politically motivated tactics of the NDP government.

And from the looks of this Bill it doesn't appear they're going to change their ways any time soon. Mr. Speaker, rural residents have had to suffer through the indignity of seeing their health care services gutted. More and more of our smaller communities are losing their schools.

And because of the government's lack of commitment to economic development in rural Saskatchewan our towns and villages are losing people and businesses on a greater scale every day. That of course doesn't faze this government in the least. In fact they seem to welcome the depopulation of rural Saskatchewan because it makes it easier for them politically.

But, Mr. Speaker, is that the way to govern a province? Since coming to this House as a member I've constantly been alarmed by this government's lack of compassion and understanding of anything that occurs beyond the borders of Regina or Saskatoon. And how I wish that were just political rhetoric.

But it isn't, Mr. Speaker. All the members on this side of the House are horrified by the constant drubbing rural Saskatchewan takes because of this government's policies. This latest move to make it easier for the Minister of Justice to order the closure of court-houses is just another link in this unbroken chain — a chain that hits rural residents across the face daily.

Mr. Speaker, we've tried over and over to wake this government up, to try and get this urban-centred cabinet to realize what they are doing and that they are wrong in doing it. Unfortunately Bill 88 shows quite strongly that they are not willing to listen to us or listen to the people who live in those communities most affected by the government's cynical political moves.

We'll have much more to say on the Bill after we've discussed it with various stakeholders and have received various legal opinions. But, Mr. Speaker, before I move for adjournment on Bill 88, I once again beg all members on that side of the House to take a second look at rural Saskatchewan. There's still a lot of vitality and life outside of the boundaries of this city.

Please don't give up on rural Saskatchewan and for goodness' sake don't hesitate. Don't hasten its demise through your reckless actions. Please don't let politics dictate every decision you make from here on in.

The government is a government for all of the people of the province, not only those who have voted for you. And I hope all the members on that side of the House, especially those who represent rural areas, will keep that in mind when they stand in the House and blindly and silently vote in favour of the Bills this urban-centred cabinet puts in front of them.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would move the House adjourn debate on Bill 88.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 89 — An Act to amend The Dependants' Relief Act**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Dependants' Relief Amendment Act, 1996.

Under The Dependants' Relief Act, applications may be made to challenge wills which make inadequate provision for dependants. If an application is successful, a judge may order that an allowance be paid to the dependant out of the estate. The definition of dependant in the Act includes testators, dependent adult sons or daughters who are unable to earn their livelihoods because of mental or physical disabilities.

Presently, except for a \$1,500 exemption under the Saskatchewan assistance regulations, court-ordered allowances are offset against social assistance until they are consumed. The quality of life of the dependent adult is therefore not significantly enhanced by the dependants' relief award.

Inheritance money in excess of \$1,500 is also offset against social assistance. However, to ensure that their dependent adult sons or daughters benefit from their inheritances, many parents now set up discretionary trusts in their wills. Such trusts give trustees discretion in making payments to dependent adult beneficiaries. By use of discretionary trusts, parents ensure that inheritances are used to enhance the quality of life of dependent adult sons or daughters.

Mr. Speaker, The Dependants' Relief Amendment Act, 1996

will help to level the playing-field for dependent adults whose parents have not provided for them in their wills. It will allow a court to order the establishment of a trust for a dependent adult. This trust will not be offset against social assistance.

The trust will be used to improve the adult's life. It will allow him or her to enjoy benefits similar to those enjoyed by dependent adults whose parents have set up discretionary trusts in their wills.

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, the trust will be used to help the dependant become more independent. It will be used to meet his or her special needs. It will provide occasional gifts to the dependant.

The amendment provides that the Public Trustee may be appointed as trustee. The Public Trustee will be appointed only where there is no other suitable trustee.

Mr. Speaker, the circumstances of adults with disabilities who are unable to earn their livelihoods on a long-term basis are different from those of other members of society on assistance. These individuals will never be able, on their own, to improve their quality of life. The financial needs of these members of society are often great. Providing for those needs has come to be seen as a shared community and family responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, The Dependants' Relief Amendment Act, 1996 ensures that this joint family and community responsibility is fairly balanced. The amendment authorizes the Lieutenant Governor in Council to limit the size of a trust by regulation. This will allow the use of some inheritance money to replace social assistance in some cases.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Dependants' Relief Act

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Dependants' Relief Amendment Act sets out new rules dealing with wills and estates. Now if I had a creative imagination, I could conjure up all sorts of situations not unlike a night-time soap opera. The parameters of the Bill create visions of rich kids fighting over their father's estate which he willed to his young, new girlfriend who only married him for his money. It would make for a decent movie-of-the-week, although I admit it's a bit of a cliché.

But, Mr. Speaker, the fact is these battles aren't just for the rich and famous. There are logical reasons that children may want to challenge a will and they don't necessarily include rich fathers and young girlfriends. Sometimes children just don't have the means to survive and they need the extra income for their basic needs.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the amendments the government has proposed in this Bill will have implications on everyday people who are forced to deal with the serious issue of estate settlement. Mr. Speaker, Bill 89 defines the guidelines for dependent children who disagree with the division of their parents' estate. Although most children accept their parents'

wishes, there are some cases where the will is either not practical or unacceptable.

In some instances, there is no will to work with. According to this legislation, if there is no will, the surviving spouse gets the first \$100,000 clear, and then one-third of the rest. The remaining two-thirds is split equally among the children. If there is only one child, the spouse gets half of the rest, and the child gets the other half.

(1430)

This Bill deals with dependants who want more than the will provides. Current legislation allows dependent children to go to court to ask for a larger share and allows the courts to decide whether the child will receive more.

If this Bill is passed, the courts will have another power open to them. They will be able to order an estate to pay an allowance to a trust fund for the dependent child for specified purposes such as helping the child to achieve independence; secondly, meeting special needs of the child; thirdly, allowing for occasional gifts to him or her; or finally, any combinations of the above.

The court is also directed to consider any money the child is receiving from the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan. However it clearly states that the capital and income of the trust fund is not to be taken into consideration when determining whether a dependent child is entitled to benefits under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan. From my understanding, this means that this trust fund will not disentitle the person to a regular allowance under the assistance plan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Bill seems relatively straightforward. From my initial readings of the Bill, there seems to be little political involvement in the decisions. And that has me a little worried. Almost every piece of legislation that passes through this House is giving more authority to the NDP government. I have to wonder; am I missing something here? Where is the government control in the Bill? I'm sure it has to be there, but it is buried so deep that by the time I pick it out, it too will be too late. I certainly hope not.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would still like to gather a few opinions on the changes the government has brought forward in Bill No. 89. Still, as I just mentioned, it seems relatively straightforward. Although I do have some questions for the Minister of Justice, but I can wait until we have a chance to discuss them in committee. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

#### **Bill No. 90 — An Act to amend The Provincial Mediation Board Act**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Provincial Mediation Board Amendment Act, 1996.

The federal Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act establishes

provisions for the orderly payment of debts. These provisions enable a person facing personal debt problems to apply to the clerk of the appropriate court for a consolidation order. The court can make the order arranging for payments to each of the creditors.

In some cases, because of the types of debts they have, it is not appropriate for debtors to participate in the orderly payment of debts process outlined in the federal legislation. In these cases, the Provincial Mediation Board is available to establish debt payment options.

The debt mediation program offered by the board is completely voluntary for both debtors and creditors. In the past five years, this program has recovered more than \$500,000 per year for creditors. Creditors that participate in orderly payment of debt plans administered through federal bankruptcy legislation are required to pay a fee of 10 per cent of the monies collected.

This amendment will enable regulations to be made to establish and set fees for collection of debts through our provincial debt mediation program. The regulations will provide for a 10 per cent levy on creditors participating in payment plans administered through the program. Those creditors will pay 10 per cent of monies collected when the service is rendered and the monies are collected.

We believe the debt mediation program is viewed by both debtors and creditors as providing a useful and effective service. The 10 per cent fee will contribute to the cost of providing this service. The proposal is expected to result in additional revenue in 1996-97 of \$20,000. It is estimated that these fees will eventually generate enough revenue to cover one-third of the estimated cost of the debt mediation program.

Another amendment requires the Provincial Mediation Board to prepare and submit annual reports and financial statements to the Minister of Justice so that they can be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. As a matter of practice, this already occurs, thus this change simply makes the legislation consistent with the practice.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Provincial Mediation Board Act.

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to take some time today to discuss legislation that deals with the Provincial Mediation Board, a long-time Saskatchewan institution which has several roles in settling disputes between financial institutions and their clients.

The role that is dealt with in the Bill deals with negotiation agreements between debtors and creditors. I understand that in situations where the board has successfully mediated a dispute, the board will now have the authority to charge for the mediation services that have been used in settling the dispute in question. The amount of the fees to be collected will be set out in regulations. I would like to know why an important part of an amendment will be left to be determined through the regulations. Why doesn't the government give us some idea of the amount of the fees that will be charged?

Once again it seems that the government is trying to avoid debate on a crucial part of an amendment. This is another example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of governing through regulation. This Bill lacks clarity with regards to these fees. It is not clear if creditors will be legally bound to pay the mediation fees. This Bill merely states that the board will have the power to request that the fees be paid by creditors. What is the purpose of this amendment if creditors do not have a legal obligation to pay the fees?

The other change in the Bill concerns accountability of the Provincial Mediation Board. I am pleased to see that, through this amendment, the board will have to submit an annual report on its finances and business affairs for each fiscal year. Annual financial statements must also be submitted. Because the Mediation Board is a public office, it is in fact important that the public be allowed to scrutinize the board's finances and affairs. It is also important to know what the Provincial Mediation Board is costing taxpayers and to see how that money is being used. I wish the government would consider making similar legislative changes to other publicly funded bodies.

I'm hoping that the minister can address some of these questions, and others, concerning the regulations and the legality of the mediation fees in Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 47

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter that **Bill No. 47 — An Act to amend The Agri-Food Act** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've already raised several concerns, not only about this Bill itself but about agriculture in general. These concerns are still very valid. Agriculture is a key sector of our economy and of the culture of our province.

Mr. Speaker, we can't look at this Bill as an isolated piece of legislation. Instead, we must tie it to the overall picture of farming in our province. True, this Bill will have an impact on the thousands of grain farmers, livestock producers, and vegetable growers in this province, but it'll also have an effect on the further processing and marketing industries. In other words, this Bill has the potential to affect a major industry and we cannot pass it off without some serious discussions.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan farmers deserve respect and recognition. They are innovative risk takers who have continued to adapt their farming and livestock practices to new technology. And it's not easy. They deal with long winters, early frosts, disease, insects, and equipment failures.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's not just the acts of God that frustrate farmers. Sometimes the Acts of government are just as bad, if not worse. Then again, what can we expect from a government that has no commitment to rural Saskatchewan or to agriculture? Why would we begin to hope that their commitment goes deeper than feel-good statements printed on glossy paper, like *Agriculture 2000* and the *Partnership for Growth*? They've given farmers and livestock producers no reason to believe them in the past five years, so why start believing them now?

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite say they want to help farmers. But what they say and what they mean are not necessarily one and the same. What about the oppressive taxes they slap on farmers, making it so much harder to compete with Alberta and Manitoba?

For example, the government charges PST (provincial sales tax) on new equipment. When we're talking about machines worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, that means producers are forced to tack on an extra 9 per cent out of their own pockets to cover the provincial sales tax. What kind of incentive is that for producers to stay in Saskatchewan?

It's an easy answer, Mr. Speaker. For some unknown reason this government either doesn't understand or chooses to ignore the core relation between their poor economic planning and the economy of this province. We have gone from free-spending, self-serving policies of the Tories to the mixed-up, urban-based priorities of the NDP. Either way, the producers in this province have had to deal with bad government for many years.

Mr. Speaker, that's why I feel that we must go through the changes proposed in the agri-food amendment so carefully. We are particularly concerned about changes affecting producer-elected boards. Although we believe that boards must be held accountable for the way they spend research and development funds, we want to make sure that this Bill does not create more bureaucratic red tape. With this government, that's almost a given. So we will be posing some questions about these changes and what it means for producers.

Mr. Speaker, we have also noted that this Bill may be a way for the government to download responsibility while still holding the controlling power. What else could we think? So far it's been this NDP government strategy with funding to municipalities, to boards of education, and to health boards. Pass the buck when it comes to responsibility, but don't let go of the purse-strings. I wonder if this is what the Premier had in mind when he produced the government propaganda — it's "The Saskatchewan Way". It's certainly the NDP way.

Mr. Speaker, we have some concerns about this Bill, but we would like our answers addressed in the Committee of Whole and therefore we will not further delay the moving of this Bill.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a

Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

### Bill No. 48

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter that **Bill No. 48 — An Act to amend The Animal Identification Act** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've already had a chance to speak on The Animal Identification Amendment Act. We've listed some of the positive aspects of the Bill and brought forward some of our concerns. Whether the government is willing to listen to these concerns is quite another matter, but we will continue to question them on behalf of the people that this Bill will affect.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, after talking with livestock producers, and particularly with cattle ranchers, we believe that this Bill does address some of the concerns they have with marks and brands. For example, current legislation limits a brand's eligibility to a four-year period, and it would appear to be a more of a practical aspect of the Bill to allow for registration of brands for a longer period of time.

This Bill proposes a change which would allow for lifetime brands as well as four-year brands. And in the case of corporations, a lifetime mark will expire on the 20th anniversary of the registration or when the corporation ceases to exist.

We are happy to see that the government finally seems to be following through on at least one commitment to a family farm in the instance where many family farms do wish to continue the registration of their brands and pass these on to their next generations. And because a brand can be passed on in a family operation, it would save a bit of hassle.

That is a pleasant surprise, because typically the government's legislation creates more hassle for the people of this province. I just hope there's no hidden bureaucracies to overcome if the Bill is passed into law.

As I mentioned earlier, these changes seem to be beneficial to livestock producers. We'll raise any questions or concerns we have about this section of the Bill when it reaches the Committee of the Whole.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Bill also revamps the procedure an inspector must follow when he or she wants to make an inspection. Unlike the Bill to amend The Power Corporation Act, at least in this Act the inspector must get the permission of the occupant. Maybe it was just an oversight on the part of the NDP government and they've actually missed an opportunity to grab further control.

In fact the Bill even specifies that an inspector must now have a judge or a justice of the peace authorize the seizure of property. In the current legislation, the inspector is not bound by such guidelines. Hopefully we will be able to clarify this when the government answers our questions in committee.

Mr. Speaker, as I've just said, we approve of some of the changes brought forward in the Bill and we will continue to talk to our constituents and to others who may have some concerns. But at this time, I move that the Bill move forward to the Committee of the Whole.

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

### Bill No. 60

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Shillington that **Bill No. 60 — An Act to amend The Crop Insurance Act** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no question that Saskatchewan's crop insurance policies are in desperate need of change. The question is whether or not the amendment proposed within Bill 60 will help accomplish positive change.

For years Saskatchewan farmers have complained about Saskatchewan crop insurance programs. They say that the current programs do not meet their needs, especially in these tough fiscal times. They say the premiums are too high and the pay-outs for claims are much too small.

I don't think the government has to look any further than last year's statistics on crop insurance to see the farmers' dissatisfaction with the program. During the peak years of 1991 to 1992, Saskatchewan farmers insured about 28 million acres of crop. But during the last crop year, only about 18 million acres were insured. I think farmers were reluctant to sign up for a program that was so complicated and terribly confusing.

This government's fiasco over the administration of the gross revenue insurance plan is just one reason farmers were discouraged and continue to be. The confusion over GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) overpayments is another major reason. After all, farmers should be able to believe in their government's promises.

I am pleased to see that the government is finally taking some time to consult with farmers about the upcoming changes to the crop insurance plan. Now all I hope is that it listens to what farmers are suggesting. It's too bad the government did not consult the farmers before it cut 154 crop insurance marketing positions.

I would like to remind the government that the farmers are the clients of the crop insurance programs. If it plans to help turn around Saskatchewan Crop Insurance's dismal financial record, it must make sure the new programs are accessible to producers across the province.

Fortunately grain prices are once again on the rise. Saskatchewan farmers desperately need the income. But this also means that the premium structure of the crop insurance programs must be evaluated.

The amendment outlined in section 11 of this Bill will give the Minister of Agriculture more control over the amount of

funding the province will provide for the crop insurance program. The change proposed in this legislation says the minister will have to consider the premiums paid by farmers, the needs of the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, and the appropriate share of the cost of providing the program.

What does concern me a little bit about this amendment is that the amount of provincial funding allocated for the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance will not need to be published through an order in council. This government should be accountable to the people of Saskatchewan, so I am concerned about the amount of unchecked power the amendment will give the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

As I have mentioned, farmers are pushing for changes to the structure of the program. But this amendment does not provide any indication about the government's long-term plan for Saskatchewan Crop Insurance. It makes me wonder if the government does indeed have a long-term plan. Hopefully the minister and his aides will be able to answer some of the many questions we have on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers when we discuss Bill 60 in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

(1500)

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

#### Bill No. 53 — An Act to amend The Snowmobile Act

**The Chair:** — Before we get started, I'll invite the minister to introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is Mr. Dave Abbey, manager of legislation and safety, Department of Highways; and Al Popoff, project director, transport safety.

#### Clause 1

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, Mr. Minister, welcome to yourself and to your officials to this particular part of the estimates . . . or the Bill.

I was going to ask you, just in terms of some of the consultation that you did have with the various groups, could you name the groups? I noticed you had trappers' groups. You had snowmobile manufacturers. You've had aboriginal groups. What groups were all involved in the discussion on this Bill?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Thank you to the member for the question. The people that were represented on the committee were the snowmobile association, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), the Saskatchewan Safety Council, industry, the trappers' association, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, the Department of Highways, the Highway Traffic Board, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. We had an individual that was a snowmobiler that was outside of the association; the Red Cross. And that were the groups that were involved in the committee consultation.

**Mr. Belanger:** — In this committee that you spoke about, how often did this committee meet and where? I think that the key thing here I'm trying to get at is certainly, you know, the need for safety in any area is very apparent, especially when it comes to children and snowmobiles.

But really, how long did you have your meetings? And the key thing is the groups, and I'm talking about aboriginal groups and trappers' groups. You know, there's a wide-ranging, you know, list of different aboriginal groups and trappers' groups. I'm just curious as to which specific groups you discussed this with.

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Well to the member opposite, we had a member of the trappers association sit on the committee. The committee had three meetings: in Regina on March 27; Prince Albert May 4; and Melfort June 23. Most committee members were able to attend all the meetings but I can't tell you exactly which one attended which meeting.

And so the snowmobile association — very concerned about safety — played, you know, a major role in getting the group together and certainly is very interested in snowmobile safety, primarily I think because of the number of fatalities over the last couple of years.

And I think the other thing to realize is that snowmobiling is becoming quite popular, more popular every year. There's more snow toboggans now in the province. It's becoming a great family sport. But not only that, its use in northern Saskatchewan, for an example, with trapping and fishing and hunting and just a mode of transportation is also very important.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Part of the reasons I've asked for the amount of meetings and which groups that you've had, again going back to the point that safety is something that's very — well as you know — is certainly needed.

I'm just looking at a lot of these headlines here — the *Star-Phoenix* of January 30, "Snowmobile deaths sky-rocket." Again on February 9, "Snowmobiling collision kills one," and "Safety rules tightened for snowmobile riders." Now it lists . . . goes on and on and on. And certainly snowmobile safety is needed.

However, one of the problems that we have is under the *Prince Albert Herald* of January 30. The laws here do come under fire. And one of the people that's with the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association, and in fact I think is the chairperson, explained that they're not strict enough; there should be tougher rules and more enforcement. Are you aware of what tougher rules and more enforcement that she is asking you to implement with this new Act?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — My understanding, Mr. Chairman, is that the person in question is asking for enforcement of existing regulations, and certainly supportive of the new Act, that young people under the age of 16 do receive mandatory training.

This will eventually work through the system. It's a lot like, I think, firearm safety in this province where young people receive firearm training. And it sort of builds through the system to now; I would say that the majority of Saskatchewan

people that use firearms have indeed taken a firearm safety course. Well this is the hope of the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association, that at some point in time everyone has taken a snowmobile safety course, and that's the reason for mandatory training for people that are under 16 years of age.

The other thing of course is helmets. Helmets are very important, and in most cases helmets are used. But in certain instances I think, whether it's just something that's forgotten about or what the case might be . . . but certainly mandatory helmets is another area that the snowmobile association promotes and believe very strongly that in fact it will reduce injury and indeed fatalities.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Was there a particular cost to these three meetings? And again, going back to numbers, how many people were at these meetings — 10, 15, 20, 25? And was there any cost to the Saskatchewan government?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Thank you to the member opposite. First of all, the department informs me that there are about a dozen people at each of these meetings. The cost included the space that would have been needed for the meeting, the travel for the department people, and of course meals for the committee members. But there was no per diem paid to any of the members on the committee. It was all volunteer from each of the groups that I had mentioned earlier.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, and I think that, you know, they should be commended for that effort because certainly every bit of volunteer help that any government can get in designing these type of Acts is certainly appreciated.

The other question I have is when you look at the provision . . . and I'll jump again going on to the stats. When somebody operates a snowmobile . . . Suppose I own a snowmobile and I lent it to my 12-year-old daughter who hasn't got a licence, and then she runs into another snowmobiler that's fully licensed and of course following all the rules. How does the liability coverage affect me and/or the other person?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Thank you to the member opposite. Section 38 of The Snowmobile Act reads:

The owner of a snowmobile is liable for a contravention of any provision of this Act or the regulations or any order or bylaw made under this Act in connection with the operation of the snowmobile unless he proves that at the time of the offence the snowmobile was not being operated by him nor by any other person with his consent.

**Mr. Belanger:** — So again, the question . . . you know, I'm a bit confused by the answer. So if my daughter, whom I loan my ski-doo to, were to hit somebody, then the responsibility would be mine in terms of the costs or the damages incurred to the other vehicle or to the other snowmobile as well as mine. Is that how that works?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — That's right.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Again going back to the Act here, I'm a bit confused here when it talks about item no. (3), existing

provision, subsection (4) where it talks about:

... any person who has not attained the age of 16 years but is of the age of 12 years or more, if accompanied on a snowmobile by a person who is not less than 16 years of age and who holds a subsisting driver's licence by the administrator, or is accompanied or supervised by such a person, who holds a drivers licence, on another snowmobile, may, subject to subsection (5) operate a snowmobile that is required to be registered by this Act.

What that is saying to me is that a 12-year-old child can indeed drive a snowmobile if he or she has a person with him that has a driver's licence or has completed his course. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Yes, that's correct under the existing provisions, but the new provisions will make it mandatory that the 12-year-old has a training course.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Is there a specific age in which your department has kind of drawn the line by saying, no, we'll not let an 8-year-old or a 10-year-old drive or operate a snowmobile even if that 8- or 10-year-old has taken the necessary safety courses?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — On public property the age limit is 12 years old. On private property there is not a lot of control. We have no control on private property.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Again, going on this Bill, has there been any stats that would suggest that the younger people are creating most of the problem, or is it older people, or is it the poor safety rules, or is it the alcohol factor? Like what kind of stats do you have that would support this type of Bill?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — In this last year, they tended ... well actually the age where the fatalities occurred varied from 20 to 63. So they tended to be, I guess, not the 12- to 16-year-olds. And I haven't got last year's statistics with me, but I would think that they may show a younger age.

But that's why it's very important to start this training program when they're young, so that when they are 20 and 30 and 40 years old that they would have had some training on snowmobile use and hopefully that would stick with the operator of a snowmobile and indeed improve safety.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Okay, at this point in time there are sometimes ... I don't know if it's the case, but there are many people that do have ... that maybe 15 ... I think maybe even 14 years of age that are allowed to have a class 7 driver's licence, which is a learner's licence. Would that qualify them to operate a snowmobile on their own, even if they're only 15?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — No, they are not.

(1515)

**Mr. Belanger:** — Okay, this takes us to the other thing about the northern part of the province. Again I commend the effort and the consultation of the groups involved. When you look at the particular challenges of northern Saskatchewan where the

Bill doesn't really clamp down in terms of, you know, the age factor because as you're probably aware, Mr. Minister, in northern Saskatchewan there is a lot of young people, many as young as 10 years old, 11, 12 years old, that assist in their grandfather or father in trapping as well as fishing.

And obviously with this type of Act, you know, we're going to have to look at that particular problem, and I think the safety aspect — nobody's arguing with it — I think safety is a necessary rule we all have to follow. But in terms of the cost of such a program and such a course, is there any costs involved, and if there is costs, who's delivering the training and who covers these costs?

And again I go back in my provision, back home you have some as young as 10, 11 years old that are helping their grandfather out. It's just there's nobody else to help them. So could you give me your input on some of those points.?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Well at this point in time the cost, the course cost, is \$25 for non-members. And the course is given by the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association who have 78 new and 25 previous certified instructors located in Fort Qu'Appelle, West Bend, Regina, Kelliher, Weyburn, Estevan, Flin Flon, Saskatoon, Choiceland, Foam Lake, Rocanville, Lumsden, Cupar, Stoughton, Ituna, Melville, Prince Albert, Kelvington, Hudson Bay, Nipawin, Codette, Christopher Lake, Fond-du-Lac, Candle Lake, Kamsack, Weyburn, and Glen Ewen at this point in time.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Are those at the places that have certified instructors in terms of safety? Is that what you're just pointing out?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Yes, as of the end of March of 1996, that's the communities that have a certified instructor that lives within that community.

**Mr. Belanger:** — I guess over the communities in northern Saskatchewan, we're talking about Camsell Portage, we're talking about Patuanak; we're talking about Fond-du-Lac and all these communities that are way out in the middle of nowhere. They're isolated and certainly this could pose a major challenge for them.

Again we're not talking about the safety aspect but in terms of accessing the safety course and the necessary requirement. In particular the fact that many young kids help their grandparents and parents with fishing and trapping and generally just transporting them around the lakes and what not. This could pose a serious challenge for them.

Are you prepared to commit to something in terms of ensuring that these communities that are in the middle of nowhere, that are far removed and isolated from the rest of Saskatchewan, have the same opportunity to participate in a course of this nature to ensure that they have proper coverage and proper safety?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — The snowmobile association is certainly aware of the unique needs of the North and they have trained in Fond-du-Lac and Stony Rapids area and certainly are looking at the situation in all of the North — north-west, north-central,



and north-east — and we'll have to plan that. But their intentions certainly are to get up there, to have trained instructors in order to be able to complete this program.

**Mr. Belanger:** — What plans are you planning on using to advise the people, because many of them of course . . . some of them only speak Cree, many of them speak Dene, and some of the young kids still aren't fully aware of the law and all the requirements of law. I'm just trying to see how convenient it is for somebody say in Camsell Portage who has never had a licence, who's driven a ski-doo for four or five years, and the person's 15 years old. All of a sudden how will he become aware of the need to have his safety ticket and where would he go for training and how would all the costs be covered on this? These are some of the things that have to be particularly addressed pretty quick.

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — To the member opposite, it's my understanding that the snowmobile association will be looking after that. They will be letting the communities know when courses are available in their particular community and certainly are taking the major responsibility in this Act in promoting safety and, for certain, looking after the training program.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Can I perhaps further suggest that you use the local radio stations in northern Saskatchewan and also the regional broadcasting corporation, which is the Missinipe Broadcasting Corporation, and they of course broadcast to most northern communities, both in Cree and in Dene, to explain to them the need for the changes; to explain to them the processes involved with being certified and also who will be responsible for making sure these young people do have licences and do have training and where they could contact or where they can phone if they do run into any particular problems.

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — I thank the member for that comment because certainly that's very, very important. I know local and regional radio in the North is very, very important. And we will make recommendations and work with the snowmobile association to make sure that that happens.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Going back to the North versus the South — not versus, but in comparison to — has there been many significant accidents as a result of the poor rules and the lax safety regulations in northern Saskatchewan versus southern Saskatchewan? I imagine the proportion in the South is a heck of a lot more.

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — The fatalities this year have been two in the North and five in the South; of the seven.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you for that recognition, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Minister, a couple of questions and concerns around the section 15 that you have proposed in the amended Bill. You refer to that: “. . . a snowmobile that is required by this Act to be registered . . .” and I note that the Act itself does not involve any changes to registration. Could you review what are the exemptions for being able to drive a non-registered snowmobile?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — A non-registered snowmobile can be

driven on private property.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Is it an offence then, Mr. Minister, for a non-registered snowmobile to be travelling along the side of the highway, in the right of ways?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Yes it is.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Why type of education is your department looking at in terms of providing to owners of snowmobiles? Because I know, in having been in the insurance industry before, many people will come in and say that they are not required to license their snowmobiles because they're operating it on the farm. Yet I know that the people were involved in snowmobile rallies and raising funds by driving snowmobile trails where they have crossed public highways, where they have travelled for a distance along the right of ways.

Is there a program that the snowmobile association, in conjunction with your department, is working in terms of trying to educate not only the potential snowmobile owner but maybe even the insurance agencies that are out there?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Thank you to the member opposite. There's certainly some pamphlets out. SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) have a pamphlet in regards to The Snowmobile Act. The snowmobile safety course, the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association have a pamphlet out with a toll-free number that's included in that. The snowmobile association also has the Saskatchewan snowmobile safety training program that's available.

And if the member opposite would like any of that information, I would be more than happy to send some information to him.

**The Chair:** — Order. Before I recognize the hon. member, I just want to remind the minister in particular about the use of exhibits in the legislature. You were reasonably close to using that as . . . and I just remind all members not to use exhibits.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My concern about that, Mr. Minister, is not necessarily for my benefit do I want the information. I'm wondering about whether that information is being provided by the snowmobile association to insurance agencies, not necessarily SGI, but any insurance agency out there who might be passing on information. And that's the point that I was trying to make.

Mr. Minister, last week the minister responsible for SGI released statistical information regarding traffic accidents and alcohol, use of alcohol, and the number of accidents that were involved. It didn't break down concerns through the snowmobile industry. I wonder if you have any information as to how many accidents involve alcohol, whether this is a concern of the snowmobile industry.

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — In last year's fatalities alcohol was likely involved in over half of the fatalities.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — That, Mr. Minister, I guess is appalling, in my categorization. I'm wondering, when we look at accidents involving vehicles, you know, non-snowmobile, we look at the

statistic of the number of accidents, and the figures that were released last week showed that the incidence of course was much higher in that category of 16 to 24 years of age. Is that the same kind of thing that you're seeing within those snowmobile accidents that you have reported?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — As I mentioned earlier, the fatalities last year varied between the age of 20 and 63.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — So there were no injuries in anyone under the age of 20?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — This is fatalities and I don't know how many injuries there were and whether alcohol were related in any of those injuries.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Okay, thank you. You talk about the . . . sort of the wishes . . . The broad goals of the snowmobile association would be of course that everyone takes a safety course. And you identified regions or communities where there are qualified instructors.

When we look at gun safety courses across the province, and I think the leaders of ensuring that that course has been offered have been wildlife federations' presidents.

Do you see a similar plan being put into place across the province to ensure that those people not identified in any of the communities that you have identified would be able to take a course through some local association? What is the long-term plan of the snowmobile association?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Yes, certainly I do and the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association have been very active. I know in my community where there is no instructor, certainly the snowmobile association has still gone into that community and provided a training course. So they're very willing to do that.

(1530)

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I think one of my final questions, if I could refer you to the second page of the Bill under regulations, section 41, specifically, clause (f), 41(1)(f) when regulations may exempt any snowmobile or any category of snowmobiles. Could you give me an example or more than one example as to what would fall into this category of actually being exempted?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — We have no example of where it may be and we believe that it's never been used. It was in the existing Act and just carried forward. But we have no idea of maybe an example where it might be used.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Minister, if a person wants to purchase a snowmobile in Alberta, before they can licence it, is it a requirement that the provincial sales tax be paid on that machine?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Yes, it would have to be paid.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Minister, one of the comments that I've had in regard to the snowmobile issue is that many individuals are purchasing quad-runners and using them in very similar ways as snowmobiles in the wintertime for recreation, for some utilitarian work on the farm. But because of the design of these things now, they're actually using them on snowmobile trails and in many ways as substitutes for snowmobiles.

Would the same regulations apply, or is there any thought of putting these quad-runners under the same general legislation as snowmobiles?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — ATVs (all-terrain vehicle) are covered under a separate Act, and I believe that Act was brought in in 1988. It's very similar to this Act and includes training, includes helmets, and in fact is maybe even a bit stricter in that it deals with immediate family only.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Minister. What about the whole question of licensing? And I guess it's tied together with the fact that dealers in Saskatchewan are finding themselves pretty disadvantaged. They say, can you quote on a vehicle, and they say yes, you can, and then of course right away the 9 per cent comes in.

It seems in The Snowmobile Act, the real hook that you have on that is the requirement of PST being paid before licensing can occur. Is there consideration of that similar kind of thing happening with these ATVs?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — That would . . . You would have to ask that question of the Finance minister and with the Department of Finance.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for the . . . Again, we're heading back north here again, past P.A. (Prince Albert) and past Meadow Lake; we're going way up north to the northern communities.

And of course in your interpretation of the Act, what do you mean by public property versus private property, just for clarity's sake?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Under section 2:

(k) "privately owned land" and "private land" mean land other than land vested in the Crown in the right of the Province.

So if it's Crown land, it would be public land.

**Mr. Belanger:** — So all Saskatchewan Crown land is considered public land. Would all the reserves and all the land that the Indian . . . or the treaty land entitlement process be under the same rule?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — I am not sure of that but I would find out that answer and certainly bring it to the member's attention. Because I'm just not aware what happens on reserve land, on treaty land. I don't know.

**Mr. Belanger:** — The other question here is, in northern

Saskatchewan — I'm thinking about the small communities again — this particular law is going to provide many challenges to the people there, I guess. For many, many years children of all ages and older people, and people that didn't finish school and had some trouble with reading and writing and the language barrier and so on and so forth, they've been using ski-doo's on a constant basis. And you go to any small northern town, you'll see a ski-doo zip by you on a regular basis, except the summer months.

I guess the question we have is: what you don't want to see happen as a result of this Bill is a whole pile of charges being laid against people that do not understand the law; a whole pile of charges being laid against people that really aren't there . . . the intent isn't to break the law. So I think simply putting it off to the snowmobile association and hopefully that they'll do a good job, I think the department, in particular your department, should make sure there is really a concentrated effort in northern Saskatchewan to not only educate these people in the intent of this new law in their own language and their own ways, but to also make sure that they have access to the training and to the courses.

And again the other factor of course is the financial cost to them. Many of these people are living on very low incomes. So again you go to all the particular factors, those three points — I think it's a challenge to you to make sure that these issues are recognized and that they're dealt with. How do you feel about all those points?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Well thank you to the member opposite for the question. I'm not sure if we're going to get any summer months any more anyway, to the member opposite, so they may be able to use ski-doo's all the time.

But I want to say that safety is the major concern here not only of people that live in the south part of the province, but certainly people that live in the North. And we want a common sense Act, something that is easily understood and people can comply with and in fact enforcement can be done.

I guess we have to make sure — and I agree with you — we have to make sure that the North gets appropriate attention and that's why the regulations are not drawn yet and in consultation will be drawn because there may be . . . we may have to look at some exemptions, for helmets for instance, in regards to fishing and trapping and those activities.

Hunting, for an example, where you have to go in and retrieve game. You have to have a certain colour of uniform on to be able to do that. So it may be appropriate there to exempt helmet use.

The other thing is that the Act will not be proclaimed until we're absolutely sure that the North has appropriate attention in regards to the mandatory training.

**Mr. Belanger:** — That leads to my next question, is what day do you envision this Act to become law? Obviously you have the summer months to design this process. Is it September 1 or is it October 1? These are some of the things that I think we have to be aware of.

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — My hope, to the member opposite, is that the regulations . . . and that we are in a position to proclaim the Act prior to this coming winter. However, that could even be delayed till the spring of 1997. But our hope is that it's ready for this fall.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Just to clarify your hope to have it proclaimed by this fall and enacted by next spring. Is that correct, where it officially becomes law by spring?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Whenever the Bill would be proclaimed that's when it would become law. So if we were able to proclaim it this fall, if in fact we're satisfied that the regulations are appropriate and that the training program is appropriate to northern communities and we are able to proclaim it, we would like to do it as soon as possible, because we do believe that the Act will reduce fatalities. So we would like to do it for this coming winter, but we want to make sure that all the regulations are in place and that the training program in northern communities is adequate.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Just a couple of more questions. It says on one of the things, driving a snowmobile on the road except to cross it at a 90 degree angle is illegal. What is meant by that particular rule?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — First of all, in the case of an unregistered snowmobile, it is permissible to go from one private piece of land to another private piece of land where it crosses the road, but you have to do it at the most direct and shortest route. And that's why it says 90 degrees, so that if you're going from this private piece of property over to this private piece of property — there's a road in the middle — you have to do it at a 90 degree, straight, sort of cross the road like that.

(1545)

**Mr. Belanger:** — Okay. The second point that the Canadian . . . or the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Safety Committee had asked for, actually was three things. They asked for mandatory helmet use; mandatory training courses for anyone under 16; and the last one was a 5-year phase-in of mandatory training courses for all ages.

Is that part of the recommendation that you'll be proceeding with and implementing as a result of this Bill?

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — That's the one part of the recommendation that we felt was unnecessary. We want common sense legislation. We believe that the people between 12 and 16 will take the opportunity, and there is a lot of opportunity to train that age group. To do it on the more senior people that drive snowmobiles, like I mentioned fatalities age 20 to 63, it's very difficult.

So we believe that by training the young people, that training will go through the system over a period of time, and in fact will probably be more beneficial than to try and have everyone that drives a snowmobile take a snowmobile safety course prior to be licensed.

**Mr. Belanger:** — In the event that the snowmobile groups aren't able to provide a training program and a safety program to licence people under 16 and above 12, as you mentioned, have you had any discussions with the RCMP? Because many of these northern isolated settlements do have RCMP posts and the RCMP do things like bike safety. They do gun safety and they're there; they're immediate.

Have you had any consultation to suggest that perhaps the RCMP could deliver such a course for the local residents? Because they in essence will be enforcing the Bill as well once it becomes law.

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Well I can't answer that specifically, but I do know that the RCMP were very involved in developing the Act. Certainly some of the RCMP are involved in the training program now with the snowmobile association. And my hope is that the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association is here for a long time — and I believe it is; the use of snowmobiles is increasing; the interest in snowmobiles is increasing; it's becoming a great family sport — that they will be here for a long time and certainly be responsible for the training course.

If at such a time in the future that they're not interested any longer, we'll certainly have to take a look at it at that time.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you. And just a few points before I take my place here. I just want to point out that in this particular Bill the issues that I want to raise and make certain that you are aware of — certainly when it comes to the use of snowmobiles in northern Saskatchewan — is that you must, I think, warn the RCMP that this law will take time. In particular, meeting the challenge of northern people, because snowmobiling, you know, is used for sport in the South but in the North it's used for basically hunting and fishing and trapping, and so on and so forth.

It's a vehicle that's needed and used by many people of all ages. So if you warned the RCMP not to charge every person that drives across the road for two seconds or two feet, to charge them, I think you'd have a case-load of charges every week if you're not to have some kind of discretion in warning period.

And the other issue, of course, is to increase awareness of this law to northern communities and to provide the programs for them. Because you must look at the isolation factor; not only the isolation factor but also, you know, the language barriers, you know, the illiterate older people that might have problems understanding the laws and the wording and the whole bloody bit. So increasing awareness and providing training programs is the key thing.

The third thing is the cost factor. I think that's got to be looked at. There's no question about it. Many people can't continue to afford to take training programs for everything that they operate. And really if we recognize the special challenges of the North, then we should also recognize the cost factor.

So in stating that, I'll continue to provide you with problems that this law may . . . or this Bill may pose, even after it becomes law, over the next few months to make sure that you're aware of the northern peoples' concerns. And I want to

thank you and your officials for taking the time.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

### **Bill No. 8 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation Act**

#### **Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — I'll start by inviting the minister to introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I want to introduce the staff from Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation who are with me here today. Zach Douglas, who is the president and CEO (chief executive officer), seated to my right; and to my left is Jan Carter, who is the director of corporate affairs; and in the back of the Assembly, Ladette Fuchs, the assistant to the president.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, and welcome to your officials, Mr. Minister. I have a number of questions for you, and the first one, I'm just clarifying that the \$100 million additional that you're requesting through this Act is for the actual Innovation Place purchase, as well as about \$63 million for an additional park somewhere either in Regina or any other locations.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes, the member is right. In large part the \$100 million is for innovation parks, both present existing innovation park — basically Innovation Place in Saskatoon — and any future parks that might be developed.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Has any decision been made as to where the next park or parks is going to be constructed and when?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — No, at this time we only have one park and that is in Saskatoon and no decisions have been made on location or other parks that we might do.

**Ms. Draude:** — I think then in conversations we had previous from now, we talked about the original \$100 million that was set out within the Act, and it hadn't all been spent yet. Could you tell me how much of that original \$100 million has been spent?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Now in the interim before this new fund was applied for, of course, monies have been used of the first \$100 million in part for Innovation Place in the interim; 41 million, in fact, has been used for Innovation Place of that \$100 million. And about 13.5 million on actual investment of loans or equity. But when the new 100 million is in place of course, that 41 million will actually apply over on the innovation park side.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. SOCO (Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation) has been established now for a couple of years, and if you've really only spent about 13.5 million, is there any reason that this amendment has been put forward at this time?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Because if we hadn't set the next . . . if we hadn't made amendments to this, we would be bumping up against the limit before . . . likely before the next session of the legislature, given the investment portfolio that we're looking at extending into and the expansion at Innovation Place in Saskatoon.

**Ms. Draude:** — When we read through the original Act and look at the mandate that was actually given to SOCO, I wonder if the purchase of Innovation Place under the original Act was actually legal under the definition of the Act. Has that been a concern?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — All of the advice that we're getting — and it's considerable — is that it is within the purview of the legislation.

**Ms. Draude:** — What do you consider . . . or what do you think the interest rate is that the people of Saskatchewan are getting on the money that we have invested in Innovation Place?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — At the present time, the monies that we get from Finance, we pay a 6 per cent interest rate.

**Ms. Draude:** — So the \$41 million that we have invested in Innovation Place, the people of Saskatchewan are getting about 6 per cent interest on their money?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes, this is averaged over the year, 6 per cent. And this is basically what it cost Finance to borrow the money. So we pay the actual cost of the borrowing of the money by government.

**Ms. Draude:** — And the 6 per cent interest that we basically are getting, we actually needed to borrow, or through an order in council we actually . . . There was more money requested for Innovation Place for last year, so even on top of the interest we had to subsidize Innovation Place. What was the exact figure that was required to keep Innovation Place going last year?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes, the subsidy was about 499,000.

**Ms. Draude:** — Could you explain to me what the 499,000 was used for? Was that actually the operation of the building?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes, that was everything in interest, operating, the whole ball of wax, to manage the Innovation Place, plus depreciation.

(1600)

**Ms. Draude:** — Since your government took over in 1991, how much money has been put in to subsidize Innovation Place?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — In terms of the historic subsidy in Innovation Place, I don't have that number here, but I can try to get that for you. Like it goes back really to the mid-'70s, I guess, so we've got about 20 years, and I just don't have the record of it.

But I do have sort of the direct impact on net payroll, and provincial purchases is about \$92 million. Total impact direct and the multiplier effect that we use would bring it up to about \$152 million. And the employment of course directly at Innovation Place is around 1,400.

So if one were to look at the number of jobs that are being created . . . and not only that but because it's such an interesting R&D (research and development) park, and I think most people would urge us to spend even more on research and development because it's really where a lot of projects start from.

And I think it's fair to say that my opinion is very strong that governments and companies have to do more in terms of research and development, even than what we are doing at the present time, if we're going to be positioned well for the next century. So I think this is a very, very small investment when you look at the kind of research and development that is being created at the centre.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could you explain to me what you mean by the multiplier effect?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well let's say if there are 1,400 jobs at Innovation Place. All of these people would spend money in the community. Some of them would have children that would go to school, so therefore there would be more jobs created in teaching positions. There'd be more retail folks employed somewhere because these people have jobs.

And so there's a multiplier when we look at this kind of a position that may be subsidized, but if not subsidized, those jobs would disappear. There's a multiplier effect that you would put in place. This multiplier effect that we use is relatively low at 1.65 times. Some industries, you would use a different multiplier as high as three times the number. So that's what the multiplier effect in this case would be.

**Ms. Draude:** — How many tenants are there that occupy premises in Innovation Place?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Right now at the present time, it's about 85.

**Ms. Draude:** — If it is fully occupied, what is the total revenue received by the government on a yearly basis as a result of the lease payments?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — I'll answer this, but really we're getting into a lot of estimates questions. And I don't mind answering these in estimates, but they don't have . . . I mean we can do it here; it doesn't matter. But the revenue impact is about \$8 million a year.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. The reason I ask that

is because I realize that from the proposal there's actually going to be expansions that have been requested by various companies there. So I guess I was getting to the next question. What will be the increase in the lease payments then, once you've actually completed the construction and the expansion?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — I just have to do . . . The member may have another question. I've got to do a little bit of calculating on the expansion because this is not an easy formula, because of course the space that we are constructing there includes greenhouses and lab space as well as office space. The office space is pretty easy to do the calculation on, but some of this other . . . It'll just take us a minute to get the number you asked for.

It looks like about 1.6 million increase, which will bring the total income revenue to 9.6 million from 8 million.

**Ms. Draude:** — I guess I forgot to ask you, what will be the cost of the expansion then?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes, the expansion that is under way or announced at the present time is about \$18 million worth.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could you tell me how Innovation Place works with the university? Is there certain departments in the university that works hand in hand with Innovation Place?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — There's a number of ways that . . . where there is close linkage. But first of all, the property on which Innovation constructs is leased from the university, so there is a very direct linkage dealing with the property issue.

And then there's a management advisory committee which actually approves or disapproves of tenants, new tenants, to the park. And of course Dr. Dennis Johnson from the university also sits on the board of directors of Sask Opportunities Corporation.

So there's any number of ways that linkages occur between the university, but that's three of the technical ones. But on a day-to-day basis there is overlap and communication on a very constant basis.

**Ms. Draude:** — Is all the expansion that's going to be undertaken, it'll be done on university soil?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes, all of Innovation Place is on university property in what we call a head lease agreement with the university. In fact at the present time Innovation Place has pretty well taken up the allocation of what property is available and we're looking at negotiating with the university for further possible places for further expansion of Innovation Place.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you. Well is the expansion of Innovation Place, is that going to be covered under Crown tendering?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes, Sask Opportunities Corporation and Innovation Place are not in the list of, you

know, the agreement. Crown Tendering Agreement lists the corporations to which it applies. Sask Opportunities is not one of those corporations.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm wondering if you have any documentation or studies to prove that another R&D building or location will actually bring another type of research to this province, and I guess I'm taking for granted that a new type of Innovation Place probably wouldn't be biotech. It probably would be another type.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — No, if another centre were to be built it would not be duplicating work that is presently being done at Saskatoon. One might imagine something like information technology as being an area of expertise that Regina may have that they may want to build that kind of a centre of excellence around.

**Ms. Draude:** — The minister and I have had a number of discussions about this — the whole concept of an R&D park — and I guess I want to state clearly that I feel that building an R&D park is giving a type of special treatment to a company that can locate under a roof like Innovation Place and it's leaving out a very important part of the economy and that is small businesses that are out there working under their own roof.

Do you have any comments on that and do you have any ideas that would actually give everybody a more level playing-field?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Let me use Innovation Place as the example of where you may perceive there to be unfairness, for example, there between the farming community and the companies that do research at Innovation Place. But if you look at the kind of work that is being done at Innovation Place, whether it's on the biotechnology that would apply to new chemicals for crops or whether it would be genetic engineering of canola plants to make them more suitable to certain areas of the province, I would argue that one of the most direct beneficiaries of the research that's being done in Saskatoon happened right on our farms across the province of Saskatchewan.

And that as a result of that, our farmers are more competitive. And your desk-mate, I know, who's involved in farming and specifically in the area of diversified farming, I understand grows a lot of the more diversified crops whether it's field peas or special lentils. Hopefully at the end of the day, much of the research that's being done in Saskatoon comes right back to the farm gate. So this small, small subsidy that you're talking about that creates 1,400 jobs in Saskatoon, I feel very directly, as a farmer, that that subsidy comes back to me as a farmer many, many times over.

(1615)

And so I think part of the key to this is explaining how this whole concept works, and we try to do that over and over again. But when I meet with companies in the United States, which we have when we have gone to St. Louis and met with Monsanto or met with AgrEvo in Berlin or the companies in France, they say the reason they want to come to Saskatchewan, want to come to Canada, is because first of all there's a regulatory

structure in Canada and in Saskatchewan that allows for them to develop their products quicker and more efficiently, even though the regulations are strict by comparison with other parts of the world. They know what the rules are, and they can do their research quickly.

Secondly, they have Innovation Place where they don't have to invest huge amounts of money. They can lease their space at commercial rates which gets back for the taxpayer all the money they put into the deal.

But they say the most important thing is that they have innovative farmers who will pick up the products that they do the research on, and so there's a full circle right here in the province where everybody benefits. The company benefits. The university benefits. The people working on site benefit, and certainly the farmers who use the product benefit as well. So I believe it's a system that . . . while there may be a small subsidy, it's very, very minuscule when you compare the huge benefits that flow to the different layers in our society.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I guess I'm not disagreeing that there are some benefits to it. Where I'm disagreeing is that we're again picking and choosing which company we're going to be helping and which ones we're not. I guess that's another question. How do you decide which one of these businesses you're going to help and which one you're not?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well as I said, there's an advisory committee made up of professionals from the university and Innovation Place, a joint committee that review and decide who would be eligible to come into Innovation Place.

And what you should know too is that the cost of building a greenhouse and these new projects that we're bringing into place, they will all be paid for by the people who in fact use them, because the rates that are set for use of labs in Innovation Place or greenhouses or office space are now at a commercial rate. The new leases that are being set up, there's no discount, there's no special treatment being given. And so we shouldn't assume that there's subsidy going into the new construction. Therefore there's no advantage in terms of cost of the building.

So that's not the reason people come to the innovation centre. The reason they come is to be in a cluster of scientific community, not unlike the reason why the oil industry wants to be located in Calgary. The reason the oil industry wants to locate in Calgary, in large part, is because there's a cluster of industry that likes to be associated with one another. In Saskatoon the reason that they want to come from around the world is not because of the subsidy, because there is no subsidy in the new office or greenhouse. It's because they want to be part of a large scientific community.

Now 85 companies located in one centre and there's interchange and partnerships that go on on a daily basis. And so I just . . . I want to make it clear that when the decision is made by the joint committee of the university and Innovation Place to bring people in, it's a question of whether they strengthen the overall group that are in existence at the centre in Saskatoon.

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Minister, I'm having difficulty not seeing a new building as some sort of edifice to the government, because that's what it's going to be seen as, I believe.

I'll just go off this topic for a second and ask you if you . . . I imagine you're familiar with investment tax credit from the federal government. And I'm wondering if you know how much of that money, federal R&D tax credit, comes into Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Chairman, I don't have that number here. I could get the Minister of Finance to bring it up for us, but we don't have that number.

**Ms. Draude:** — Actually, Mr. Minister, I do have some of these, this information, although it's not up to date. The latest I could get was 1993. And it was significant, the different sectors of the economy that applied for R&D tax credit, and that's one of the reasons why this bothers me, is because we are again choosing.

I'm wondering if the companies that are housed in Innovation Place actually receive this tax credit from the federal government.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes, some do and some don't. But they obviously wouldn't be treated any different because they were in Innovation Place or not in Innovation Place. Each one would make some application to the federal government or the Department of National Revenue and then a decision would be made.

But it would not . . . I don't think there would be any linkage to whether they were in Innovation Place or not.

**Ms. Draude:** — Will you be advising the various towns and communities that money will be available for another Innovation Place-type structure across the province and allowing them to put forward a proposal that would allow their communities to bid on this type of building?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Obviously the fact that we're debating it openly today and the legislation is a very public piece of information, one would assume that the public will know about it.

**Ms. Draude:** — When I looked at the SOCO Act and I looked at the board of directors, I'm wondering how many directors there are and who is on the board.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — For the member opposite, I mentioned Dr. Dennis Johnson who has recently been added from the university. And in addition, and I'm quoting here, Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Keith Goulet is the vice chairperson, Sherri Cybulski is a member, Mel Watson, Naomi Ceib, Gord Steininger, and Trent Beatty.

Those are the board members. And Don Axtell is the secretary to the board. And as well, Dianne Olchowski.

**Ms. Draude:** — Can you tell me how often they meet and if they are actually political appointments?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Chairperson, the member's question was how often they meet and whether they're political?

The board tends to meet once a month, I understand, and I quote here because his name is here and I've used it — Keith Goulet is political.

And I think Mel Watson was political but I don't think he is any more.

**Ms. Draude:** — How did the owners of the office buildings downtown feel about the government giving a type of subsidy to businesses to get them into Innovation Place when their own office space is vacant?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — I know the economic development authority in Saskatoon, which is chaired by Jim Yuel and staffed with people like John Hyshka, are very, very supportive of Innovation Place and the developments that are going on. One of my Saskatoon colleagues mentions that members he knows in the chamber are supportive as well.

And really if you think about it, what most people know in Saskatoon — and it's harder for us who are not from Saskatoon to understand the concept — but these people know if it weren't for the innovation research park, these are not people who would come to downtown Saskatoon. If you're talking about the move of Monsanto from St. Louis of their canola research, they would not have moved to a downtown location in Saskatoon. And the same is true of Plant Genetic from Belgium, AgrEvo from Berlin, Germany; the Groupe Limagrain from France. These companies have come here because there's a research park associated with the university. And most of the people at Innovation Place would tell you that the reason they're in Saskatoon is because of a research park associated with the university, not unlike other large research parks at other universities in other parts of Canada.

These are sought-after institutions of the highest order, and oftentimes subsidized with millions and millions of taxpayers' dollars. This is a very, very low level of subsidy that we pay here in Saskatchewan, and yet it's a world-class institution that wouldn't exist . . . these companies wouldn't be in Saskatoon if it weren't for the research park.

And I think it has the potential to grow to be dramatically larger than it is already with other companies coming from around the world to do their biotechnology.

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Minister, are you considering trying to involve some of the REDAs (regional economic development authority) in the board of SOCO or in the directors, to get a true representation from across the province?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Just so you know the representation that we have . . . Naomi Ceib of course is a person with northern connections. I think she has two of her own small businesses in northern Saskatchewan. Mel Watson of course needs no introduction. He is owner, with his family, of Watson Tractor here in Regina, with roots in Weyburn in the John

Deere equipment business all over the province for many, many years, and past president of the chamber of commerce, so understands business, particularly small business, very well.

Gord Steininger of course is a union leader so has lots of understanding of working people. And of course in an institution like this, understanding working people and knowing about what brings about good labour relations and understanding between management and workers is important. And of course Trent Beatty is very much involved in investments of all sorts, and Diane Olchowski is involved in one of the rural economic development committees in her area of the province.

So I think if you look at it fairly, this is a well-balanced group of people. And I failed to mention Dennis Johnson who is . . . Dr. Dennis Johnson who is very much involved in the area that would be looked at within the Innovation Park.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. One of the other questions I have about SOCO is . . . if it's considered a Crown corporation, why do we as taxpayers have to pay for the administration part of it through Economic Development?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well I think that it would . . . it's fair to say that in a perfect world Innovation Place would pay its own way and would make money. Hopefully down the road, the park will break even and make money for the taxpayers. But that would be assuming that it isn't already making large amounts of money for the taxpayers in general with the job creation and benefits that flow from the park. And I would make a strong argument that it already does because the subsidy is so low.

But on the other hand, it's not the only research park in the world. And I would challenge the member to look at other research parks associated with other universities. And you will find that if you went the other step over to the university and said, is there any subsidy in the university? . . . of course the taxpayers put tens of millions of dollars into the university. But you would have to then draw the line and say, one is a subsidy, and one isn't because of course the university has a large component of . . . and you may be arguing that we shouldn't put any subsidy in the university either, that people should just pay their own way.

But I don't think that's what you're saying. This is an extension and a continuation of commercializing work that is done on the university, and I think pays its way over and over again.

But on the other hand, there are other Crowns that don't make money: STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company). There are those who would argue because we put \$5 million into subsidizing transportation, particularly in rural Saskatchewan . . . because none of that subsidy comes to urban centres. And it may be that you would argue we should shut STC down because there is subsidies going into it to supply transportation service to rural Saskatchewan. But I don't think you're making that argument.

So the idea here is, is that Crowns are set up historically in Saskatchewan where they're needed to offer a service that wouldn't happen if they weren't there. And this is certainly the



case as it would apply to Innovation Place.

(1630)

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you. If we add the \$4.6 million subsidy for the administration plus the subsidy we had to put in to keep Innovation Place going last year, to keep it operational, then it gets to be a larger amount that's again just affecting not that many people. And that's what I have a difficulty with . . . is the number of people we are dealing with.

I'm wondering if SOCO put money into the T-Rex film?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — I just want to go back to your comment of \$4.6 million into operating of Innovation Place. There's no \$4.6 million subsidy going to Innovation Place from anyone. As I mentioned earlier, last year it was 499,000. You may be talking about loan-loss provisions and a lot of other things that go into Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation, but let's not confuse and put all that allocation towards Innovation Place because the number of subsidy going to Innovation Place last year was 499,000.

At this point in time, there's been no money put towards a T-Rex film although there is a proposal around that that could happen.

**Ms. Draude:** — I guess I said it wrong. It's four point two point nine six million and that was through the . . . it was a grant to Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation to deliver the financial services. So I guess that's what I meant to say. And I understand the minister said that there was no money put into the T-Rex film.

How many projects have been transferred from SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) to SOCO?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — The transition was when SEDCO was shut down. The assets were transferred to CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan), a division of CIC. And after that point in time, nine projects were transferred from CIC to Sask Opportunities Corporation.

**Ms. Draude:** — Are these projects still in good standing?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes. Of the nine that came over, eight are in good standing, and one has actually paid out the total amount of their loan.

**Ms. Draude:** — Was the interest rate that was being charged by SEDCO the same amount that's now being charged by SOCO?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — I just want to mention to the member that interest rates on loans to individuals or companies . . . I'm not at liberty to give out. But I can tell you that the interest rate has not changed as a result of coming over to Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation. So they've been consistent as they have moved.

**Ms. Draude:** — Are any of the facilities that are available to be used as R&D parks, are there any that are still owned by SEDCO that would be available?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — No. We're not looking at any vacant SEDCO property as research park buildings.

**Ms. Draude:** — Are there a certain designated length of time for SOCO agreements, or do they vary?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes. They vary depending on negotiated contracts and agreements.

**Ms. Draude:** — Under section 32 (1), it says that the corporation can invest any or part of the capital or operating money. Does SOCO have any of its money invested?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — I wonder if the member would be a little bit more specific; I'm just not sure what the question is.

**Ms. Draude:** — It says:

The corporation may, from time to time:

(a) invest any part of the capital or operating moneys of the corporation in any security or class of securities that is authorized for the investment of moneys in the general revenue fund pursuant to *The Financial Administration Act, 1993*.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes. None of the short-term cash position is invested.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

### Clause 3

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Deputy Chair, I don't believe that SOCO is . . . allowing SOCO to have access to another hundred million dollars, in a time when the government is gutting our health care and education dollars, is appropriate. And I don't believe that they are capable of handling this amount of money.

If they can't handle these cuts, I find it very confusing to think that they have money to further fund R&D parks. And I want to make it clear that I'm not opposed to R&D parks but it comes down to a matter of priorities. I know the people of Saskatchewan value their health care and their education and the safety net — their social safety net — above all things.

We continually hear this NDP government claim to be cash strapped, and then on the other hand they have millions of dollars to build R&D parks. Where is the money coming from?

If we have the money for R&D parks why have we heard the government crying poor and consequently gutting the essential services to Saskatchewan residents?

They spend a hundred million dollars on a union-preference tendering policy, but they can't afford to appropriately fund our health and education system.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the Act as it currently reads and therefore I'd like to move an amendment to the Act, clause 3 of the printed Bill:

Amend clause 3 of the Printed Bill by striking out the words “, including the development and operation of research and development parks,” where they occur in section 16 as being enacted therein.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Chairperson, I won't speak long to the amendment, only to say that of course we are opposed to it because it really is the essence of the amendment — that is, to finance and fund research parks. And in this case particularly, as we know, Innovation Place in Saskatoon.

And why the members would want to go on record voting for a moratorium on construction at Innovation Place at this point in time . . . because that's what would happen once this tranche of expansion is completed. It would mean that the government could no longer support any more expansion at Innovation Place.

But the vote will clearly set us apart — the official opposition being opposed to any further expansion of Innovation Place in Saskatoon, and the government supporting expansion.

And I can't quite fathom why any political party would want to be on that record, with that record then going to city council in Saskatoon, to the university in Saskatoon, to the regional economic development in Saskatoon, the chamber of commerce.

It seems very, very short-sighted because this money, as I say, is all paid back. This money is put in as an investment and we collect back a commercial rate of return on this investment and create literally hundreds of jobs — high-paid Saskatchewan jobs — from companies that come there from around the world.

And I need not say more. I mean nothing could be more obvious than where the two caucuses stand on this issue. And, Mr. Chairman, I therefore look forward to the vote.

The division bells rang from 4:41 p.m. until 4:50 p.m.

Amendment negated on the following recorded division.

**Yeas — 6**

Osika	Aldridge	Draude
Belanger	Krawetz	Gantefoer

**Nays — 24**

Van Mulligen	Mitchell	Wiens
Lingenfelter	Shillington	Atkinson
Tchorzewski	Johnson	Goulet
Kowalsky	Renaud	Calvert
Koenker	Bradley	Cline
Serby	Stanger	Hamilton
Murray	Wall	Kasperski
Ward	Sonntag	Thomson

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5 agreed to on division.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**THIRD READINGS**

**Bill No. 53 — An Act to amend The Snowmobile Act**

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I move the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

**Bill No. 8 — An Act to amend  
The Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation Act**

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I move the Bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to on division, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.

