

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about the 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.

And the signatures are from Melville, Estevan, and other small communities around Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The petitioners are mostly from the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to present petitions of names from Saskatchewan residents 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, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Mankota, Fir Mountain, and here in the city of Regina.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of concerned citizens throughout southern Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by many concerned citizens from the communities of Regina Beach and Buena Vista beach and actually the city of Regina.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions of names of Saskatchewan people with respect to 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 communities such as Parkbeg, Mortlach, Avonlea, Cardross, Coderre, as well as the city of Moose Jaw. I so present.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with my colleagues here today and the people of Saskatchewan in their efforts at saving the Plains Health Centre here in Regina. 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.

And, Mr. Minister, the people that have signed these petitions are all from your home community of Moose Jaw. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received. They are petitions for the double-laning of Highway No. 1, the closure of the Plains Health Centre, and parent educational support programs.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to make this introduction on behalf of my friend and colleague, the member from Regina Dewdney.

Seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, there are 21 grade 4 students from Dr. George Ferguson School. I understand today they are having a kids convention, so this is part of the activities that they are going to do.

They are attended by their teacher, Gail Digby, and their chaperon, Arlene Burwash.

I hope that they enjoy their stay in the Chamber and I understand when they have visited here for awhile they're going to have a tour, and I will look forward to visiting with them later on.

So would you please join me in extending to them a very warm welcome. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, as the session winds, we believe, to a close, I'd like to pay tribute to all of the families and spouses of the members in the legislature who keep the home fires burning while we're here.

And in particular I want to welcome and introduce to the Legislative Assembly through you, Mr. Speaker, my life partner for the last 40 years, my husband Dan, who's here to lend some support to me and perhaps drop in at the Farm Progress Show. So I'd ask members to help me welcoming him to Regina and to the legislature this morning.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Election Anniversary

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

National Aboriginal Day

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize today's designation as National Aboriginal Day. The theme of National Aboriginal Day invites everyone to share in celebration. It is important that we highlight Canada and Saskatchewan's vast range of aboriginal culture.

I know the Minister of Indian and Metis Affairs has graciously provided all of us with lists of the various powwows and celebrations taking place this summer across this great province of ours. I would encourage anyone who has not witnessed one of these spectacular celebrations to attend one.

The vibrant aboriginal traditions, customs, languages, and celebrations are part of what makes our nation so unique and so special. I hope everyone in Saskatchewan takes some time today to reflect on the roles aboriginal cultures have in our society.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, Unooch Kisteneetagan Ka geesigak. Today is a day of respect and recognition. It is the National Aboriginal Day.

It is set aside so that we can recognize and reflect on the challenges, the successes, and contributions made by Indian, Metis, and Inuit peoples. While strong challenges remain all across Canada, let's take the time to reflect on the positive achievements and the shared partnerships between the Metis and Indian people and the province of Saskatchewan.

Let's pay due respect and commitment to the only Metis-controlled educational institutions in Canada — SUNTEP (Saskatchewan urban native teacher education program), Dumont Technical Institute, and Gabriel Dumont Institute. In addition, this is the 20th anniversary of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and NORTEP, the northern teacher education program.

Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago there was less than five people in the post-secondary programs from northern Saskatchewan. Now there is about 2,000.

On the issue of land in Saskatchewan, we have the largest land settlement since the signing of the treaties with the present implementation of the Treaty Land Entitlement. We also have shared partnerships in forestry, mining, gaming, health, social services, education, and other areas.

Mr. Speaker, while much remains to be done, let's continue to build on our shared partnerships and joint successes. When opportunities are open, aboriginal people stand with other Canadians in making important contributions to themselves, their communities, their province, and their country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House an important anniversary today that not only impacted my constituency but the entire province.

It was one year ago today that the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party swept back into power with the biggest second-term majority of any government in decades.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — The headline in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* read: "NDP Landslide." And in the *Leader-Post*: "NDP Triumphs."

The popular vote of the NDP (New Democratic Party) was 47 per cent, quite an accomplishment for any government going into its second term. Although today, Mr. Speaker, day 78 of the current session, accomplishment is not the first thought that comes to mind.

The Liberals were optimistic heading into the election. Days before the ballots were cast their party president was predicting they would win 20 to 25 seats. They won 11 seats. Since then they have decided that was one too many and reduced their caucus by one.

As for the Tories, the Leader of the Third Party was quoted as saying the new PCs (Progressive Conservative) are alive and well. Alive yes, but I guess that's about the only positive thing you can say about being in third place.

Mr. Speaker, no matter how we place, no matter what the interpretations are, it is important to emphasize that we do live in the greatest democracy in the world. We did have an election, we are able to govern, we are able to oppose, and we are able to do it peacefully. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Thunder Creek Constituency

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Wascana Plains and her colleagues want to hear positive things about Thunder Creek. Well with the exception of the treatment it receives from this government, most things in Thunder Creek are positive.

Among the great positive features of Thunder Creek is the impeccable judgement of its residents. In the 20 or so years since this seat has been in existence, its voters have always shown the good judgement to never elect a New Democrat. The Thunder Creek residents know the value of good representation and the vote one year ago today only confirms this.

Mr. Speaker, the fine judgement of people now in the Thunder Creek area brought people such as Ross Thatcher, Rick Swenson, Lionel Coderre, and Alex Mitchell to serve in this House over the years.

In their good judgement, my constituents however, will soon

wonder why the member from Regina Wascana Plains is more concerned about the good news in Thunder Creek than health cuts in her own community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Victims' Services Program in Meadow Lake Opens

Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure to take part in an important announcement in Meadow Lake yesterday along with the Hon. Minister of Justice. I am talking about the official opening of the north-west regional victims' services program. What this program will do is offer much needed services to victims of crime.

As a result of the hard work of the people of Meadow Lake, Green Lake, Loon Lake, Pierceland, and St. Walburg, the north-west regional victims' services program already began phasing in operations on June 3 of this year.

This program is the 12th program of its kind to be launched under the provincial victim services program. The victims' services program was established in 1992 by Saskatchewan Justice. Its purpose is to provide victims of crime with information and support while the criminal justice process deals with the crime. By implementing the programs such as this one, the province is looking beyond seeing victims solely in terms of their role as witnesses and into the reality of what crime does to its victims and what services they need.

Under the north-west program, 25 volunteer support workers were chosen and trained to work under the direction of the program coordinator, Brian Stephenson. They also work closely with the local RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) detachment.

I would like to congratulate all the volunteers, the people involved in the program, the communities, and the RCMP. The program is an important step forward in helping victims of crime. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

50th Anniversary of St. Peter's Catholic Women's League

Ms. Murrell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to share with you and all other members of this legislature a very special anniversary celebration which I had the honour of attending Wednesday, June 19. The St. Peter's Catholic Women's League of Unity celebrated 50 years of service to their church, community, and Canada. To honour the occasion they held a very gala anniversary banquet in the town of Unity. I was privileged to be one of several people who were invited to bring greetings to this event.

The St. Peter's Catholic Women's League was formed on December 3, 1946 under the capable leadership of Mrs. Rose Miller as the first president. And Doreen Sopyc, the now president, and all others who have served in this capacity are truly community leaders.

The women in this organization are no strangers to hosting

major events such as the one I attended. Yesterday's anniversary banquet was the fourth time this organization has held a major anniversary function. They held celebration events at the time of their 25th, 30th, and 40th anniversaries as well.

The first convention was held in 1957. This one was such a success that many more people attended than was expected and the attendance at these events has increased steadily, recognizing this group's great organization skills. The recipients of 50-year pins and service pins are certainly deserving of such an award. Obviously this is one dedicated and hard-working group of women. Fifty years of serving others is an important contribution to our community and our province.

Please join me in offering a hearty congratulations to the St. Peter's Catholic Women's League on the occasion of their 50th anniversary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Canadian Red Cross Marks 100 Years of Service

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a moment this morning to recognize the work of a valuable organization in our community, certainly in our province. This year, 1996, the Canadian Red Cross marks 100 years of humanitarian service to the people of this country and this province.

The slogan of the Red Cross is Friends for Life and it reflects their commitment to helping people in need throughout Canada and abroad. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, each and every one of us at some time or other have been touched by the Red Cross, whether it's through the donation of blood or whether it's receiving blood; or even the fact that over the years the Red Cross has offered swimming lessons that many of our children have been involved in or even many of the members have taken Red Cross swimming lessons at some time or other in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, the Red Cross has certainly proven that it is a very humanitarian service. It provides humanitarian service to people not only in this nation but around the world — whenever disaster strikes, it's there.

I think it's certainly fitting, Mr. Speaker, that this Legislative Assembly recognize what the Red Cross has done through 100 years of service, and congratulations, Red Cross, as you celebrate your 100 years of service, humanitarian service, to the people of this world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Regina Folk Festival

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. The 1996 Regina Folk Festival begins today in Victoria Park and it will run for three days, promising a weekend of fun and lively entertainment for people of all ages. The festival offers a huge line-up of musical performers and entertainers from across Canada and it features local talent as well as Saskatchewan artists.

Some of the performers include Regina's own Helberg-Warner Band; The Cleavers — Saskatchewan fiddling at its finest presented by fiddle champions, Rodney Krip and Tyler Kushneryk; Jack Semple, who is considered Regina's premiere guitar wizard of rhythm and blues, and rock and soul. I'm sure everyone will remember Valdy, who has made his mark on the Canadian music scene over the last three decades.

The folk festival also includes a kids' stage providing entertainment for children. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate festival general manager, Greg Bodnarchuk, and the hundreds of volunteers who are helping to organize the festival, and I invite everyone to visit the 1996 Regina Folk Festival because it offers a weekend full of entertainment and fun. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Funding for Providence Place

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the Minister of Health is aware his government is facing another legal battle on the health front. Officials representing the geriatric unit at Providence Place have announced they are suing this NDP government because it has failed to honour a promise to fund the facility. Will the Minister of Health explain why he will not uphold this promise, and why court action appears to be the only way for Saskatchewan residents to hold his government to a commitment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we've had commentary and lectures from the member from Thunder Creek before about court cases and lawsuits and I'm sorry to say, Mr. Speaker, that it isn't always all that productive or a happy experience to listen to the commentary of the member from Thunder Creek because he rarely says anything positive or proactive in an effort to solve problems.

And I want to say to the member from Thunder Creek, who undoubtedly is unaware of this, that my experience with hundreds of lawsuits is that most lawsuits are in fact settled out of court. The fact that there's a lawsuit doesn't mean that parties don't keep talking to each other and trying to resolve their differences. And what I would say to the member, Mr. Speaker, is that what is needed here is not a good judgement, because sometimes a bad settlement is even better than a good judgement.

And I would say to the member that if we're going to long-term sustainability at Providence Place, there has to be a settlement of this matter rather than a court case. And I would ask the member to encourage the parties, as I do, to continue to discuss this matter and come to an agreement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, we've heard time and time again that the government can't afford to keep this promise. It

should be pointed out that the NDP government has collected \$260 million in VLT (video lottery terminal) revenues in the past three years — more than the uranium, potash, and natural gas royalties combined.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of running a geriatric assessment unit at Providence Place is only about \$1 million annually. Will the minister explain how he can stand in this House with a straight face and tell the people of Saskatchewan that his government cannot afford to honour this promise regarding Providence Place?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — As the member knows, Mr. Speaker . . . first of all, the member's facts in terms of VLT revenues are not correct. But as the member knows, what has happened this year in terms of health care funding is that his party, the Liberal Party, has cut health care spending in Saskatchewan by \$47 million.

And the member asks what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. What we're doing is to fund the health care system by putting 47 million extra provincial dollars from the people of the province into health care, contrary to what that member is doing, because that member refused to join with us in expressing concern over the fact that the Liberals are so drastically cutting health care spending in our country.

And so I say to the member, Mr. Speaker, that if he would join with us in talking to his Liberal cousins in Ottawa about the need to properly fund health care, things would be a lot better, not just in Saskatchewan, but I think across the country as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the minister is saying here, what we are really talking about is about making choices. This government has the opportunity and the resources to make the right choices.

They have the resources to provide the people of Saskatchewan with proper health care services that they need and they deserve. Instead they choose to shower their political friends like Don Ching with highly paid political appointments. They choose to proceed with policies such as the CCTA (Crown Construction Tendering Agreement) which discriminates against non-union labour. And they choose to close down hospitals and long-term care facilities.

How can the minister possibly justify these choices?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of what this government has done in health care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — We are funding the health care system, Mr. Speaker, without cutting one dime out of the system this year, notwithstanding Liberal cuts to the tune of \$47 million. The federal Liberal government has imposed the biggest unilateral

cut to health care in the history of our country.

So when the member from Thunder Creek gets up and asks about the priorities of this government, I say to the member from Thunder Creek that the biggest expenditure of this government this year will be health care expenditure, \$1.56 billion, \$200 per capita higher than the province of Alberta.

We are not like the Liberals in Ottawa, who are cutting funding to health care. We're not like the Conservatives in Alberta and Manitoba and elsewhere that are cutting funding to health care. For every dime the Liberals take out of health care, we're putting a dime back in and that member should support what we're doing, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

School Bus Communication Devices

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister in charge of SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation).

Mr. Speaker, a 13-year-old student from Clavet travelled to the legislature this week to meet with the ministers of Highways and SPMC. Roxanne Foster presented a 2,000-name petition composed by many rural students and parents who want the government to ensure that communication devices are installed on school buses.

This is simply a request to ensure students who are forced to ride the bus to school can contact help if their bus encounters trouble in severe weather. Mr. Speaker, thousands of Saskatchewan students are put at risk every winter when travelling the bus in the bitter cold or stormy conditions.

Will the minister in charge of SPMC commit to working towards school buses to be equipped with some type of communication equipment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the member from Saltcoats for the question. I want to first indicate to the member that we had a, in our opinion, a very successful meeting with the young person, and were very pleased with the opportunity to share with her some of the work that we're doing across government in terms of providing safety and protection for people who use our roadways.

I want to say to the member from Saltcoats that we have in Saskatchewan currently . . . and appreciate the concern that he raises about how difficult some of our Saskatchewan winters could be. And I want to say to the member from Saltcoats that there are a number of school divisions across the province already today that have in place communication devices, methods to ensure that there is good safety for the students that are involved in using the roadways and the school bussing systems.

The commitment that both the Minister of Highways and I made to the individual is that we would be talking with school

boards across the province, we would be examining our procedures in Saskatchewan Government Insurance, to see if we can be of some benefit to putting this in place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, my next question is for the minister in charge of SaskTel.

Saskatchewan school divisions are already financially strapped. While some school divisions I spoke to say they could possible raise the funds to buy the equipment, they could not afford the operating costs.

SaskTel is a Crown corporation which is meant to serve Saskatchewan people. It would not be difficult for SaskTel to provide free cellular phone service for school buses in exchange for the good corporate image it would receive for a minimal investment; keeping in mind, Madam Minister, that the phone usage would only be for emergency situations. SaskTel already spends thousands of dollars on advertising, but this could be an excellent way to advertise its services and at the same ensure the safety of Saskatchewan children.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister responsible for SaskTel consider such an option?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to answer that question because SaskTel Mobility has had in place since March of 1994 a special program for school bus safety involving SaskTel Mobility. And it was a program that was designed in conjunction with the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association). It is being taken advantage of by many school divisions.

And I want to accent this, Mr. Speaker: that we will have . . . the problem is that in some of the school divisions cellular service has not yet been extended to them, so it's not available at any price. But as of this month, cellular service will be available in nine more communities, Mr. Speaker, in this province as the network expands to cover the whole province. And we will be continuing to work with school divisions and other emergency service providers on similar programs, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crown Construction Tendering Agreement

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Economic Development.

Mr. Minister, another day has passed and still no clear direction from you as to what your plan is to resolve the serious problems with your union-preference tendering policy.

Yesterday you sent the Labour minister — soon to be former Labour minister — and the Highways minister to talk to the Saskatchewan Construction Association. Mr. Minister, are we any closer to a solution to this problem?

Why don't you simply do what the construction association is asking you — set aside the CCTA so that all parties can come back to the bargaining table on an even footing. Will you do that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to answer the question from the member opposite because this issue that he continues to raise . . . And he's right, another day and another \$35,000 for the taxpayers of the province on an issue that he is doing nothing to help solve, in fact doing everything in his power to continue on; one would ask why he's doing that?

But it becomes pretty obvious that it's trying to elevate himself politically, not trying to help the men and women who work in this province or the contractors.

But what's interesting, Mr. Speaker, again is the combination between the Liberal and Conservative caucuses to attack working men and women in the province of Saskatchewan. Not to try to solve the issue, not to try to solve the issue, but trying two things: one, to attack working men and women in this province and to try to extend the session and get some more political headlines for his own caucus.

And I say to the member opposite that that is not what the people of the province want. What the people of the province want is a working relationship between men and women in the province — discussion; coming to compromise; and consensus. And I'll tell you, Mr. Member, that that is exactly what we're doing today, is working towards an arrangement . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, yesterday you admitted to reporters, it would take legislation to scrap the CCTA. That's likely what would be required. In fact, Mr. Minister, we have a private member's Bill before the House that would do just that. So I'd ask you to consider passing it.

But if you're not willing to take that step, why don't you simply suspend all Crown tendering until a new agreement is reached? If there is no Crown tendering, no Crown construction work being tendered at all, both sides would have a great deal of incentive to get back to the bargaining table and reach an agreement as quickly as possible.

Will you do that at least, Mr. Minister? Will you put a moratorium on Crown construction tendering until a new Crown tendering policy is in place?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well that doesn't seem to make a lot of sense to me although the member opposite suggests that we shut down all Crown tendering for the foreseeable future in terms of creating jobs in the province. I don't know quite how

that fits into his job creation strategy. Because it's about \$90 million that was tendered last year as the member knows, under these contracts, and literally hundreds of jobs that were created.

The unfairness of the agreement . . . let me just explain to the member what he's saying because I don't think he quite understands. He says this is hugely unfair to the un-unionized contractors who received 75 per cent of all the tendered contracts last year — 75 per cent; 25 per cent of the tendered contracts went to unionized contractors.

I say to the member opposite, I would hate to see what his formula would be for working men and women and the fairness that he would apply if he were premier of the province. But I say that kind of fairness is the very reason that they will never have the opportunity to make the decisions as it would relate to working men and women in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Nuclear Industry in Saskatchewan

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find the Minister of Economic Development's comments interesting, that all of a sudden the number under the CCTA jumped from 30 million to 90 million.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to that Minister of Economic Development. Next week is AECL's (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) deadline on the future of the Saskatoon office and our sources tell us that unless something changes dramatically the Saskatoon office will almost certainly close. This is largely due to the fact that your NDP government has always been an unwilling partner in the nuclear industry. While Manitoba government was out aggressively pursuing private interest for the Whiteshell nuclear accelerator, your government has resisted nuclear development in this province and now that resistance may cost our province over 100 well-paid, high tech jobs.

Mr. Minister, how are discussions going with AECL, what is Saskatchewan putting on the table, and is the Premier going to bring up this opportunity to discuss this issue with the Prime Minister while he's in Ottawa?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to first of all correct some of the very inaccurate information that the member is trying to spin here today. First of all, when it comes to uranium and the nuclear industry, Saskatchewan under the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and NDP have taken a leadership throughout the world.

Obviously Uranium City, which was built during the days of Tommy Douglas, and the expansion of the mines during the 1970s, and now the expansion of more mining during the 1990s — the vast majority of mining projects in this province when it relates to uranium is unquestionably . . . has been created under CCF and NDP governments.

So the first element of your question, is that we're opposed to it, is absolutely inaccurate. I mean history will show you that you're absolutely false when you say that.

Secondly, when it comes to the AECL agreement, you will know that the only provincial government that has put money into research and development with AECL is the New Democratic Government of Saskatchewan — not Conservatives in Ontario, not Conservatives in Manitoba, but our government. So to say that we're opposed to the deal is absolutely false.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Sex Education Curriculum

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education or her designate. Madam Minister, what could you possibly have been thinking? You took taxpayers' money, went out and purchased a thousand wooden penises for schools, even though no one wants those things in the schools. Madam Minister, can you confirm that this part of the sex education curriculum has now been cancelled? Can you confirm that you have pulled the 1,000 wooden . . . thousand penises?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I want to say to the member, Mr. Speaker, that I believe these wooden demonstrators are in storage. The intent was to make them available to parties that might want to use them as part of their family life education. Apparently a thousand were purchased, only 46 were sold — three to school divisions and the remaining 43 to health agencies. And the other 900-and-some are still available for anyone who may wish to purchase one.

But I want to say to the member and the House, Mr. Speaker, that we cannot stick our heads in the sand and ignore issues like teen pregnancy, which is a problem in our province, a problem in our country, and sexually transmitted diseases. These are very serious matters that governments have responsibility, school boards have responsibility, to take seriously, and we're going to continue to take seriously.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, now what are you going to do with these 1,000 wooden penises? Maybe you could give them to the Department of Highways and they could use them to stuff the potholes. Maybe you could give them to provincial parks for firewood so the campers could have a big wieny roast.

Madam Minister, I understand each of these wooden penises cost \$4.10. That means altogether you've wasted about \$4,000 on wooden penises. That's about the same amount you're wasting on each NDP MLA's (Member of the Legislative Assembly) pay hike, although some people would argue that those members are more useful than your members.

Madam Minister, exactly what do you plan to do with 1,000 wooden penises?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well if the member was concerned about spending taxpayers' money properly, the member would not be prolonging the legislature when there's very little work left to be done at a cost of \$35,000 a day.

But I want to say to the member that school boards and the government do have a concern about issues like teen pregnancy, which is a problem in our province, and sexually transmitted diseases. And I'm glad, Mr. Speaker, that the Department of Education has taken some leadership to develop family life education programs which are age-sensitive. They vary depending on the age of the student, which was subject to the approval of the Board of Education and which also are subject to the right of the parent to remove the child from such instruction if the parent sees fit.

But I think most people in our society, Mr. Speaker, realize that these are serious issues, that we cannot avoid them, and that we must have this kind of public education and public discussion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Care Funding

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the past year since this government has been re-elected, it has done more to threaten health care in this province than in any one-year period in Saskatchewan's history.

To name a few examples, this government has forced the closure of hospitals and long-term care homes. A letter surfaced proving the NDP held a gun to the head of the Regina District Health Board to close the Plains Health Centre.

They have broken promises to properly fund facilities such as the geriatric unit at Providence Place, and they have demonstrated absolutely no commitment or regard for the sick and the elderly.

As a result, we have seen health board members resign out of frustration, rallies are taking place around the province, and communities are taking legal action to protect the health care needs of local residents. And all of this is now threatening to blow up in the face of the Minister of Health and this government.

Will the minister explain when they are going to restore some proper health care funding and have health become a priority of their government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — This question, coming from the Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker, is just the height of hypocrisy. The biggest cuts to health care in the history of our province have come from that party. And in this session, what we have seen from that party is not a proposal to maintain the public medicare system, Mr. Speaker, but statements from the member for Kelvington-Wadena that the U.S. (United States), American-style health system is more compassionate than ours; statements from the member from Arm River that we should have a pay-as-you-go style of medicine and the rich should get better medicine than the poor.

And every one of those members, Mr. Speaker, opposes The Health Facilities Licensing Act, which is designed to maintain the medicare system which that party opposes and has always

opposed, and what they are proposing, Mr. Speaker, is a two-tier style of medicine.

And I have to say to the member from Wood River, we opposed your party 30 years ago when you opposed medicare, and we oppose your opposition to medicare today, and we will continue to do so, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rural Economic Development

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. When one speaks about the past year, it's impossible not to think of this government's choices and how they have affected our rural communities.

Consider the fact that this NDP government has: broke a promise to return 10 per cent of VLT revenues to communities; announced a \$20 million reduction in revenue-sharing grants; attempted to force amalgamation on RMs (rural municipality) through The Service Districts Act; broke the promise not to collect on the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) wind-up; closed Crop Insurance offices and rural service centres; and failed to provide compensation for millions of dollars in big game crop damage; and closed 28 highway maintenance depots.

It has allowed our rural road and highway system to become a public golf course with 72 holes to the mile. And this Minister of Economic Development admitted that there is no grand strategy for rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister in charge of Municipal Government or Economic Development explain why this government has totally abandoned rural Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the biggest problem facing rural Saskatchewan, as urban Saskatchewan, when we were first elected in 1991 was obviously the debt of the province of Saskatchewan. This was said everywhere we went, that the \$15 billion of debt and the annualized \$1 billion deficit was killing the economic development.

I want to go through a short list for the member opposite on commitments we made during the campaign and what we have committed to and what we've done. First of all, we said we would balance the budget for 1996 and '97. And we've announced a four-year financial plan to show balanced budgets through to the year 1999-2000. A commitment made, a commitment kept.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — We said that we would commit to reducing Saskatchewan's total debt by \$1.2 billion between 1994 and 1999. And this projection was updated in our budget in 1996, and we now see that we are currently well on target to

meeting that commitment. And I think that's hugely important to the people of Saskatchewan.

We said that we would put more than 100 education sites on the information highway. We've done that, and 100 sites . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Next question.

Provincial Taxes

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues have pointed out, an anniversary is generally a time to celebrate. But there's little cause for the taxpayers in this province to celebrate today. This government continues to pick the pockets of Saskatchewan residents like never before.

The average family of four in this province will pay \$3,700 in provincial income tax this year and more than \$1,200 in other provincial related taxes — more than anywhere else in Canada. The NDP will also collect \$100 million more in tax revenue this year than last. Of this figure, \$62 million will come from individual income tax.

Mr. Speaker, what makes this even more astonishing is the fact that the Finance minister stated on budget day that, and I quote, "One of the best ways to create consumer confidence is to ease the tax burden."

Given this statement, would the Deputy Premier care to explain when Saskatchewan residents can expect meaningful tax relief in a tax reduction plan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well we made the commitment to the public of Saskatchewan that once the books of the province were balanced, that we would use the surplus for three strategic areas. One, debt reduction; renew and back-fill, obviously, for the federal government's cut to social programs; and reduce taxes. And we're doing that.

And I'll just read out for the member some of the areas where we have made tax reductions and we will continue to do that as we deal with the debt, and monies are available.

First of all the investment tax credit effective February 16, 1995 provides \$8 million in annual tax savings for Saskatchewan business. That should mean something.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Effective July 1, 1995 and tied to companies' business activities, the measure of reducing corporate income tax will save companies \$4 million.

We said that we would deal with the reduction of taxes for the average Saskatchewan person, and to that end we have reduced the debt reduction surtax and that will provide 55 million annual savings for the taxpayers of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — So I want to say to the member opposite, while I agree to one extent that we will work as hard as we can to reduce taxes, a lot has been done, and with your help and cooperation a lot more could be done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 122 — An Act requiring Union Certification, Decertification and Strike Action by Secret Ballot

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy this morning to introduce a Bill, An Act requiring Union Certification, Decertification and Strike Action by Secret Ballot.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Scott: — With leave, to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through to members of the Assembly, 16 grade 4 students from Montmartre, Saskatchewan. They are here with their teacher, Sandy Brown, who very diligently brings her class here every year.

The class is accompanied by chaperons Carol Baumgartner, Vida Stevenson, Julianne Walbaum, Pat Sebastian, Wanda Eberle, and Pat Thomson.

I look forward to meeting with the group later and discussing what the students are going to be doing for their summer holidays. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Agriculture and Food Vote 1

The Chair: — If the minister has any new officials, I would ask him to introduce them.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Mitch Demyen is here; but also last night, that wasn't introduced, was Dale Sigurdson, ADM (assistant deputy minister).

Item 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, there was a fair bit of philosophical debate in the Assembly yesterday when it comes to agriculture, when it comes to rail, or movement of product from the Prairies to market, whether the rail system . . . or whether it should be handled through the Canadian Wheat Board or a number of other issues. But certainly, Mr. Minister, one thing that, as I was following the debate yesterday, you talked about . . . safety nets and you talked about money being put into agriculture. And then you made a number of comparisons across the country.

You also commented about the fact that in Saskatchewan what we'll probably have left with at the end of the day is a crop insurance program and a NISA (Net Income Stabilization Account) program. As I was listening to the debate and you were making the comparisons though, Mr. Minister, it seemed to me what you were doing was basically comparing apples and oranges, not apples to apples.

I think you talked about how low Saskatchewan is. Well if you'd look at the fact of the million population . . . or how high it is basically, I think, per population versus some of the other jurisdictions — the reality, when it comes down to the actual farm acres and the fact that this province is an agricultural based province, comparing by population isn't really a positive read as to what is going into agriculture in view of what agriculture puts back into the economy and into the community.

And so, Mr. Minister, I think it's fine to give comparisons based on population but that doesn't really lay out what the reality is to the agriculture producer or to the individual, the working person, and the companies in the province that deal with agriculture. And so I just wanted to bring that to your attention.

But, Mr. Minister, you talked about crop insurance and how crop insurance has become one of the best protectionist programs, if you will, that a farmer can invest in, not only in this province but certainly in the country; that it is the be-all and the end-all.

And first of all, Mr. Minister, I would like you to try and tell me why anyone in Saskatchewan would look at crop insurance as a program that is worth investing in.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well if I understand your question correctly, I don't think the answer's very difficult, and that is that, as I said yesterday, I think crop insurance is the only program that's going to be left at the end of the day, barring some major disaster, which covers at least one province.

I say that because of the cut-backs that have . . . that we have seen the reductions we have seen from Ottawa and the fact that the dollars in budgets have to be focused. We're focusing on crop insurance. We're trying to convince the federal government that they should continue to do the same thing. So far they have.

So I think the crop sector programs, including NISA and crop insurance, will be what we have in this province. Now there were some complaints about crop insurance, and there always

are, I mean, about any program. Some people aren't satisfied; in some areas the usage was lower than others.

So when we went through the review this year . . . when we're going through the review, we're trying to construct a program that would provide coverage to everyone at a reasonable price. And I think we're doing that. We've gone through the initial stages of meeting with farmers out in the country. We're now going to be reviewing the outline of the program with the farm groups and with some Crop Insurance representatives and trying to build a program, as I said before.

And this is really easy to say and quite hard to do, but build a program that is efficient and simple — simple and efficient. The efficient part sometimes is easier than the simple part, but that's one of the keys that I want. That's why we can get away from the crop insurance agents. That's why we want to get back to a mail-in/mail-out system — a simple program. It doesn't have to be complicated. There's lots around that are very simple and one-page applications. So I think we can do that with crop insurance.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, as I look at the crop insurance program that is presently available to producers in the province of Saskatchewan, it doesn't appear to me that crop insurance is a real option at all. Can you tell me what crop insurance has to offer to myself as a producer, to any producer in this province, that would give them any incentive or any particular reason, other than government saying if you don't carry crop insurance, we will not give you any kind of support in the future if a disaster strikes . . .

What you have for crop insurance today does not meet the need. It won't even cover the costs of what it takes to even just put the crop in the ground, let alone get a return on it. It just seems to be the poorest program that we have out there. What's left of crop insurance really is nothing.

And as I said, there is no real incentive or initiative, and I'm not sure if I'm looking for the word incentive, but I think what most producers are saying, at least they should be able to look at crop insurance and if they're carrying crop insurance such as they carry property insurance . . . You carry the property insurance based on the economic loss plus the recovery and the replacement factor. Crop insurance doesn't offer that. So why would anyone in Saskatchewan look at crop insurance as an option?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well I . . . On a regular basis the Tory caucus explain why there are five of them and only five of them. Because, Mr. Member, your opinion is in the minority, very much in the minority.

I talked to a lot of people across this province and we've got reports back from the farm meetings that are around, and the overwhelming majority of people think that crop insurance is a good program. And that's why they came out to help us improve that program, because there are always things that can be improved in it. But as far as . . . You're saying that crop insurance is useless. Well I don't even know that that warrants a discussion because it's so far off base.

Crop insurance gives you coverage up to 70 per cent with spot-loss hail or 80 per cent without spot-loss hail of your 10-year average where your premiums are half paid by the government. It has the quality factor included if you hit a frost. It has, as I said, spot-loss hail. It provides a basis . . . Now I don't know where you're getting your calculations from or what you put in the value. At 70 per cent, if you have a 30-bushel crop average and you got guaranteed at 21 bushels to the acre at the market price, that pretty well covers your costs and then some.

And so . . . But the fact of the matter is, if you're saying that we should increase the coverage level . . . Because that's what I hear you implying — it's no good now because it doesn't cover enough.

So let's say we want to go to 90 per cent. I can supply you with the numbers if you wish, and I'm sure you've seen them when you were in government. That's why your government didn't go to 90 or 100 per cent as you're saying we should . . . (inaudible) . . . because the premiums are prohibitive. Once you get over the 70, 80 per cent level, the premiums escalate dramatically. So I totally disagree with your analysis of the value of crop insurance and I totally disagree that we should be increasing premiums in order to get up to a higher percentage.

(1100)

Mr. Toth: — I guess, Mr. Minister, you just proved to many producers in Saskatchewan why crop insurance isn't a viable option. And obviously the people you've been talking to are the individuals that you've coerced into believing that you are offering the best program that's available to them. Come and talk to people in my area, individuals who have just dropped their crop insurance altogether because they do not see it as being a worthwhile investment.

Number one, you talk about spot-loss hail. I'd like to know, Mr. Minister, the spot-loss hail program that's in place now, if a person is carrying crop insurance and adds a spot-loss hail factor . . . and just using your example because that's fairly close to what my area certainly represents. And if I could add this, Mr. Minister, just carrying the high level of protection, and I'm certainly not getting the market value for my product. The thing is, Mr. Minister, over the years I've been able to produce better . . . even in almost the poorest of years. I think I've had two or three claims in 20-some years of farming, carrying crop insurance. And I look back and I think boy, I could have put . . . just my premium alone could have made a nice . . . actually put a better investment . . . If I'd have invested that money I'd have a lot more to work with today than what I protected myself with crop insurance.

But, Mr. Minister, maybe you could just explain to me one thing. When it comes to the spot-loss hail program, let's say a hailstorm goes through an area. You're carrying crop insurance and you put on the additional hail rider. And Crop Insurance comes out and makes an adjustment; it pays you hail damage. And when you go to harvest, let's say you're 5 per cent or 10 per cent less than what you're . . . protection factor. Does what you've already been paid in hail override . . . and you've already been paid, or is the crop loss over and above . . . the hail

loss over and above what your crop loss factor may be?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well I understand where the member is coming from. You want double-dipping, and that was eliminated. No you can't. But if you have spot-loss hail, you get that benefit of that spot-loss hail. But then if you have a total crop loss, of course, then the 70 per cent kicks in.

Now if you want to double-dip, that's fine. We could have left double-dipping in, or you could have got your hail plus your coverage. But you know, and I know — and that's why I wonder why you ask the question — you know that that increases the premium. And there's one thing — and this is a balancing act — that farmers have told us loud and clear, the one major factor for whether you have crop insurance or not is the premium you pay for the coverage you get. Premiums are number one.

I just want to ask the member a question. If your theory is right, you said you could have put that crop insurance money into an account and you would have had a lot of money sitting there right now, well I ask you, has your house burnt down? Has your house ever burnt down? Maybe you want to figure all those premiums on your house insurance or your Quonset and yard insurance. Maybe you should just forget about insurance, period. Put it in the bank and be your own reinsurer. Is that what you're promoting?

Mr. Toth: — I find that very interesting, Mr. Minister, because I've actually got better coverage for the bit of insurance I'm carrying on my property than I'm getting out of a guarantee on crop insurance. And I've got to spend a lot of money on an annual basis to try and produce that crop.

Now you talk about double-dipping, and I guess what I appreciate about the crop insurance program now is that hail insurance is a rider that you can add to it. Because of the fact that . . . what you just said, you just confirmed the fact that if you do have hail and you have a crop loss and you've already been paid out under your hail rider, that's it. You've got one payment.

Well the fact of putting the hail insurance as a rider is where it should be. If a person wants to take that chance and put that rider on his crop insurance, he can do that. If he doesn't want to, then at least he can take that extra money and go to a line company and protect himself from some economic loss.

Because quite frankly, Mr. Minister, you're talking about the fact that . . . or I'm not exactly sure what you're talking about. I guess you're saying that all you're trying to protect farmers from is . . . at least covering the cost, but they have nothing to live with for the rest of the year. And hopefully they've got something in their pocket that they've set aside for a rainy day so they can put a crop in in the following year. Because with the input costs where they are today, what crop insurance is offering barely covers input costs.

And so therefore if a person wants to, they can carry the hail rider and just take their chances with crop insurance; so they can carry crop insurance, and then go and pick up some additional insurance which may bring, with crop insurance . . .

they may be able to offer themselves, say, almost a 100 per cent guarantee on that crop. Although it certainly hinges on the possibilities of getting hail. And nobody, quite frankly, wants to see a hailstorm move through the area because it's more than hail that is . . . or more than a crop that is damaged by a hailstorm.

But, Mr. Minister, it just . . . as we see crop insurance today in relation to the premium that is paid, it really does not offer the type of protection that a lot of people have been looking for. You probably heard a lot of producers, even a lot of your supporters, who have suggested that there should be a rider that basically covers you so at least it covers your input costs.

And I've heard so many arguments on crop insurance as to how you design a program that kind of meets the needs of the fact that if input costs rise today and you're only offering, number one, you're offering 70 per cent protection . . . number two, your levels of price guarantee are much lower than what you're able to get on the market-place; you don't have that opportunity.

The thing is, Mr. Minister, if you do have a crop loss, how are you supposed to cover your costs plus the payments that you're making, whether on your land or your equipment, as well as live for a year, try and subsist for a year, under the current crop insurance program?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well I've been here for awhile now and I've heard the member talk about how bad crop insurance is — despite the fact that since we came into government we have made some improvements to the system and despite the fact that we're going through a review this year, which is a federal-provincial agreement to review it every five years, and we're out there trying to improve the program.

Now I've sat here and listened to you criticize the crop insurance program despite the fact that you were in government for a number of years and had what I would say is a program that was very similar to now; we've added a few improvements onto it. But my question to you, Mr. Member — I was sitting here listening to you — what are your constructive ideas? What kind of program would you like to see for crop insurance in Saskatchewan? Or do you want to just see crop insurance done away with totally?

The Chair: — Order, order. Why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Murray: — With leave, to introduce guests, please, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and my thanks to the minister and the member from Moosomin for the courtesy.

It is always a pleasure to introduce a group of young people in this Assembly, and it's particularly pleasurable when that group comes from out of province. And we have seated in the west

gallery today a group of 29 grade 6 students who are here from Major Pratt School in Russell, Manitoba.

It's very nice to have you here along with your teacher, Wayne Dunham, and your chaperons, Fran Wasyliw, Elaine Kahl, Pat Bartram, and your bus driver, Dave Adams.

We're so pleased that you're visiting Regina and that you've taken the time to come and spend a half an hour or so with us in the gallery here. So welcome, enjoy the rest of your day. And will you please join me in extending to them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Agriculture and Food Vote 1

Item 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chairman, and a special welcome to the group from Russell. I'm not sure if Wayne's related to the Dunhams at Maryfield or not, but we welcome you. And my colleague, as we're discussing crop insurance, my colleague, the member from Cannington, was talking about the Manitoba model and some of the advantages that certainly Manitoba residents had in the past couple of years.

Mr. Minister, when it comes to crop insurance and where we're at today, the thing is, Mr. Minister, one of the reasons the GRIP program was brought into place was, it was trying to identify some of the inequities in the crop insurance program. And to be very candid, I'm not exactly sure that GRIP was necessary.

I think of some of the . . . The biggest concern at the time was the fact that crop insurance was only benefiting you if you had a crop loss. And you know that and I know that. There was a time period where crop insurance did offer a dollar value which ended up being higher than the market value as markets dropped off.

Mr. Minister, while you had that protection, the only way you got any of that dollar value was if you had a production loss. And the realities were when the production loss . . . if you didn't have the production loss then you ended up you were protected a little higher but you only got the market value. And many producers were saying, well if I have the opportunity of guaranteeing . . . or my crop insurance program is saying is I can choose a \$4.50 price per bushel for my wheat on 21 bushels then I should at least, if the market price happens to drop back to four and a quarter, I should be able to get a return of the 25 cents per bushel because I've guaranteed . . . or I've insured myself for that.

Unfortunately crop insurance doesn't operate that way and that's when the GRIP program came in, to try and bring in that price option. Now it would have appeared to me, Mr. Minister, that we should have looked at or taken a serious look at, at just guaranteeing the price and we may not have had to worry about the GRIP and you could have managed it under one program.

And if there's one area that is a real concern to most producers and why most producers are dropping out of crop insurance is twofold: number one, there's no real guarantee that you guarantee your price unless you have a production loss; number two, most producers are finding out that because of their farming practices they've been able to increase their production but they haven't been able to increase the guarantee. And they'd like to have the ability of going towards a specific, farm-related guarantee.

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, is that program still in place? Can a person work towards individual farm protection under crop insurance?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — I think you know that individual coverage is an option. That's what everybody chooses. But I find it very interesting — your comments, and I'm, by the way, still waiting for your recommendation. As a matter of fact, maybe you could table the representation you made to the committee that's going around, to put your valuable ideas into that. In fact if you had them handy I'd be willing to look at it right now.

The fact of the matter is I don't think you have done that. You stand in this legislature spending . . . the order paper basically empty, spending what, four or five days now, 35,000, \$40,000 a day of taxpayers' money and you're worried about . . . you're saying the crop insurance . . . we could certainly take some of that money and beef up crop insurance if you weren't willing to sit here and waste the time of . . . our taxpayers' dollars.

I've been sitting here in estimates now for eight hours in total with Ag estimates and I haven't heard one constructive idea. And I mean I can be here as long as you want me to be here; I mean that's the way the world works. But if we're going to be here, why don't we do something constructive?

Now you've spent 30 or 40 minutes here running down crop insurance, but I just implore you to tell me what you think should be done. Put it down on paper. We're going talking to everybody who wants to talk; anybody can write a letter to the Crop Insurance to make a submission as to how to improve the program.

I ask you two questions. One, have you done that? And secondly, if you have, can you explain to us what those are?

I just want to say one more thing before I take my seat. Traditionally, originally, and not very many years ago, when your Conservative government was in Ottawa and in Saskatchewan, we went from basically almost a hundred per cent funding from federal government to Ag programs . . . crop insurance was always 50/50 premium, but other programs. Then we went down to 70/30, 70 federal when your government was in, 30. And now when the Liberals are in it's 60 per cent federal funding and 40 per cent provincial funding.

And you know what that does for a province like Saskatchewan with 40 per cent of its GDP (gross domestic product) coming from agriculture? It makes it very difficult, and you were part of that problem. Give you the benefit that you want to get out of

that, change that pattern. Tell us what you want us to do with crop insurance. Provide us your submission.

Mr. Toth: — Well I find that very interesting, Mr. Minister, and I guess you want to spend some time in the Assembly. You sat over here and you thought nothing of killing day after day after day, sometimes going 20 days at a time, and you'd sit over here and had nothing positive to offer.

And you're complaining about the fact that you're collecting \$4,400 a day more, \$4,400 more this session because of changes that you wouldn't allow to happen, and you're complaining about the fact that we may be losing \$3,500 a day when we're standing up for a construction company and the fact that the taxpayers of this province would have a savings of \$30 million if you scrapped your CCTA agreement — that would offer you something to do in the area of crop insurance for agriculture producers in the province of Saskatchewan, which you just told us is one of the largest . . . agriculture is the largest economic factor and beneficiary to the province of Saskatchewan

(1115)

Now, Mr. Minister, I've made a suggestion or two. If you address the fact of if you're going to offer, if a person carries crop insurance and puts on a price option and if the price drops below that, there should be a factor that addresses that price option, that gives you . . . If you've chosen a price option, a level that crop insurance has offered, and if the price is below that, then there should be a factor in there that says fine, on that guaranteed production level that price option is guaranteed, just as your production option is guaranteed.

That's what a lot of producers have been coming to me and asking for. I'm suggesting, there's an option for you. Mr. Minister, are you willing to take a look at that option? If producers are willing to guarantee that, would you be willing to take a look at it?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well I didn't mean to rile you up, but there's an old saying that when you throw a stone in the dark and the dog yelps, you know you hit the dog. And I think maybe this is part of it.

You want to go back to a price guarantee. You want to go back to GRIP. Do you know what the premiums would be again? Do you know what you paid for GRIP premiums to what the return was? Do you know the value of the program? I think you just started up by saying that you don't think we should go back to GRIP because at the end of the day it wasn't a good program to start with.

But what you want is a price guarantee. And I said earlier that's the same thing as increasing the coverage. If you go from 70 to 80 there's a difference in premiums. If you go to 80 to 90 there's a significant difference in premiums. Same thing when you want to go to a price guarantee.

This is insurance. And what we try to do as government, as you tried to do when you were in government, is balance to make sure the premiums were kept at a reasonable level to ensure

participation in the program.

Now we sent our Farm Safety Net Review Committee down to the U.S. to study their 50/50 option, their two-tiered system. Manitoba has introduced a form of that. The interest in Saskatchewan from the groups that we talked to — there is also an interest in that type of a program. And what that does is give 50 per cent coverage for a very minimal rate to the producer and then you can buy up from there.

But don't forget this is an insurance program. The higher the risk, the higher the premium. We've got \$430 million of debt in the reinsurance program of crop insurance. What you're saying, to go to a program like you want, I think, and I haven't heard any detail but from what I understand from listening to you, is that would probably increase that — increase the debt.

And as the debt increases . . . right now the reinsurance debt of \$430 million is about what — 10, 11 per cent of premium? Runs about 10, 11 per cent of the premium. By doing what you're saying it's going to increase it higher. We increase it higher . . . when you increase it, the producers fall off.

We're trying to get to a system where we want to include people. And as I said before . . . because do you think honestly there is going to be any more ad hoc funding out of Ottawa? Not unless there's a major disaster in at least one province.

We have to build a program that farmers can rely on. I agree with you to a certain degree there are problems with the program. But I'll tell you that's what we're doing right now — going through the whole routine, looking at every aspect of crop insurance, to make sure, because we know there are no more ad hoc programs, to make sure that program fits the bill, whether in the north-east or the south-east or the south-west or the north-west corner of this province.

So I would be really happy to have you place your submission in writing to the Crop Insurance Corporation and it will be considered duly as all other submissions are. But I don't think that we can do what you want. I don't think you can . . . because the premiums would be prohibitive.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, why didn't you let farmers decide to have the choice, if you will? If the premiums are prohibitive, farmers will decide whether or not they want to guarantee the economic return, that dollar value. You're not giving them that choice. That choice isn't there right now unless maybe it's something you're looking at.

Secondly, Mr. Minister, for you to stand here and talk about how bad the GRIP program was, the reality was, Mr. Minister, is that that program would have most likely balanced itself out, but you unilaterally changed the program in the province of Saskatchewan. You unilaterally changed it, then you took away any option of any producer to challenge the provincial government or even to sue the provincial government for loss.

So while you run it down on one hand . . . number one, Mr. Minister, one of the reasons you unilaterally changed the program is because you didn't like the fact that there was a program that producers across this province had the ability to

enter into. And yes, it had a cost; it was a cost that some producers chose to get out of the program. The only producers that really lost on the program were the producers who chose to stay with the program and then had the government pull the rug out from underneath their feet and left them, as we saw this past spring, with bills coming out of your Crop Insurance office. And in some cases bills . . . you could have saved . . . the cost of the stamp would have covered the bill that you sent out. It was just totally ludicrous, some of the bills that you sent out.

And if you wouldn't have pulled the rug out from under people's feet, Mr. Minister, after that choice they made . . . Whether you like the program or not, you had promised that you would make it better; then you pull it out from under their feet. And the only persons that really benefited were the ones who looked at your government and said, oh oh, we better bail out while we got a chance now. And they're looking back and smiling and saying, boy that was the best decision we ever made, because while the people who believed you, that you were going to at least maintain or make the program better . . . the ones who stuck with it were the ones that ended up paying dearly for it.

And so, Mr. Minister, one has to wonder what's going to be left at the end of the day. Your talk about going around consulting with people, I haven't seen anything yet through any of the consultations that have taken place with any department whereby the positions that have been put forward have actually changed what the department has already come up with as a view or an object that they would like to reach.

And so, Mr. Minister, you're talking about consulting people. I hope that indeed there are groups that will take the time to submit proposals regarding crop insurance, because certainly in our area producer after producer has just decided it isn't a program worth entering into.

Mr. Minister, I understand June 25 is the cut-off date for an acreage report. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — That's correct.

Mr. Toth: — I also understand, and I'm not sure if this is the first time that it's in place, or whether it's in place and this is just the first time it's been made known to producers, but if a producer doesn't submit an acreage report by the 25th an agent . . . or not an agent, but a crop adjuster may take the time . . . will be sent out to check and do an acreage report and charge that cost to the producer. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — We didn't bring our official in from Crop Insurance in Melville, as you know. We've had him in here three times at least now. And the reason I didn't bring him in is because the whole process we're going through here is just simply your filibustering the legislature until you get satisfaction on your CCTA. And there again, it was an added expense.

I can get that answer for you in detail, but right now I wouldn't want to . . . I don't know for sure if that is available or not. But I can get you that answer.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And again I just remind you of the fact that you thought nothing of keeping officials sitting out in the foyer there for days on end. Officials from a number of departments would be invited in because your House Leader would say that we're going to do this business and we'll probably get to this, so you better have officials available. It didn't matter where they were. They'd be sitting out there and we'd have to bring them in day after day after day.

And I guess maybe part of it comes back to the fact that the House Leader at the time . . . the Government House Leader should've just said, fine, these are the officials that's here, this is what we're on. And if you don't like it, fine. But while we made different estimates available on many occasions, your so-called opposition certainly wasn't very cooperative and thought nothing of keeping officials . . . just having them sitting around here twiddling their thumbs.

Mr. Minister, if you're looking for suggestions with regards to crop insurance or NISA (Net Income Stabilization Account), a suggestion that has been brought to my attention, something that I've offered time and time again — I'm not sure where we're at today. I'm not sure if you've even taken the time to discuss it with the federal Minister of Agriculture — but we talked about the NISA program. And very forthrightly or candidly, I would suggest to you that I think the NISA program is a good program. I believe it's a good program because it gives a producer the option to build for their future, and it gives the producer control over their future as well.

One thing that I think that would even add to and could benefit the NISA program, Mr. Minister, is to allow producers the ability to, if you will, when they move a product to market, asking the . . . before a cheque is being made up, that there be a check-off available to them where they could suggest to their, whether it's their grain buyer or whether it's to a livestock marketing agent, that they would check off say 5 per cent that would go directly into the NISA account rather than waiting until the end of the taxation year and determining at what level you could put in, what level you would get some support from the federal government.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you've given any thought to this, if this has been brought to your attention, and whether you've talked to your federal counterparts about this.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Of course the problem with that is that you won't know what your eligible net sales are until the end of the year, because your sales are your eligible sales minus costs, and at the end of the year you get your net — what you can contribute on.

I mean it would be nice to be able to do that, but I think it would be a higher administration cost because you'd have to be guessing at what your eligible net sales by the end of the year would be. And if you start hauling your grain, you know, midway through the year, how much would you deduct? I don't know how you'd know that. Maybe you can help me out there.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, as I look at the program, there are a number of options open to producers. Number one, a producer can choose to just put in a matching contribution.

You've got your — I believe it's on gross — you've got your gross sales and there is a percentage that the federal government would match. And you can contribute to that matching factor or you can contribute over and above that, Mr. Minister.

What you put in over and above is a choice that you would make. And in most cases, most producers would have a rough idea after two or three years roughly where they are with regards to the amount of dollars that they generally would put in on an annual basis and could make a choice as to whether they would make a 1 per cent or 2 per cent or up to a 5 per cent deduction. I don't think they would go very high over . . . or too much higher than what they basically would get support from governments as far as the matching contribution. Because, Mr. Minister, most of the economists would suggest that there is no economic benefit to the program over and above what the matching grant is or matching support from governments are.

So, Mr. Minister, the reason I raise it is because most producers find that once they've reached their taxation year, by the time they've paid their taxes and then start looking at NISA contribution, they find that . . . and we're already into the . . . In most cases most producers go the calendar year and then the paying tax by April 30, you're already into the heavy expense of your crop production year and they just don't have the cash available. And it seems to me that if you're able to put it up front, such as a working person has all the deductions taken off their cheque before they get . . . and they get a net cheque, so they know exactly what the bottom line is.

And I think this is something that could work, Mr. Minister. It basically gives the producer the opportunity to make a personal choice as to the level they would contribute, and therefore they don't have to try and find the funds when the NISA report comes out and this says, well you can produce up to . . . this is the matching funds available. You can contribute that amount or you can make a matching . . . or you could make a contribution over and above to a certain level.

So it's a choice that a producer would have and maybe all producers wouldn't take it. But it gives them an opportunity to make sure that they do have some funds available to put into the NISA program to help them build for their future.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well I don't disagree about the convenience to the producer. I mean the problem remains, unless you change it from eligible net sales, because there's no way of knowing what your net sales will be at the end of the year. If you change it to growth sales or something like that or a percentage, you might be able to do that.

Like, I don't disagree with the convenience to the producer. I agree with you 100 per cent. It's just the administrative challenge that's there would almost prohibit it from succeeding. But what I'll endeavour to do is we've talked about this . . . the officials have talked about this a little bit. We'll keep looking into it because we don't disagree with your concept. So that's fine.

And I think that we have agreement . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . you have one more question? Okay.

(1130)

Mr. Toth: — Yes, Mr. Minister, I understand somewhat where you're coming from, but in view of the fact that most producers now have the option of being able to establish their NISA accounts, their own individual amounts within a local lending institution, a choice could be made at that time to have it go directly to. And I'm not sure whether that becomes an administrative factor or a cost to the NISA program.

But it's certainly something I think that could be looked into that would just guarantee producers the ability to make sure that they do have some financing available to put into the NISA program rather than being . . . finding your ability to contribute is now but they don't have the finances available by the time they pay taxes and getting into the cost . . . the production, crop production year.

So that's something that I think that maybe your department could certainly look into and offer as an option or the ability for producers to do that, Mr. Minister, and I appreciate if you'd look into it.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Certainly. And there's no problem doing that. In fact, I would invite you to contact the department to get lined up with the right person to further discuss this in detail, some of your ideas, because it's . . . like I say, I don't disagree with the concept. And if there's some way we can work through the administration, then we'd really appreciate your help on that or your ideas on that.

Well I guess by agreement we've got . . . I've got to slip out to the Farm Progress Show. So I will, Mr. Chair, I move we rise and report progress.

An Hon. Member: — Rise, or just report progress?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Did I say rise? No rise. I move we report progress.

General Revenue Fund Justice Vote 3

The Chair: — I would ask the minister to introduce his officials, please.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, I'm pleased to have with me today my deputy minister, Brent Cotter, and Elizabeth Smith who is the director of administration.

Item 1

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to welcome the minister and his officials here today.

We do have a number of questions that we would like to ask the minister. There are a number of issues on the plate right now with Justice, like the Kerrobert court-house, such as the Firearms Act, such as various other items within the Justice department that need to be clarified.

So, Mr. Minister, before we get to anything in depth such as the

Kerrobert court-house and the decisions there, I have some questions that are presented to us by individuals who have run into some concerns within the justice system, not in the criminal sense but simply in matters of administration within Justice.

I have a note here from a Richard McNair from the Arcola area who is trying to get a name registered for a corporation, and he's having a great deal of difficulty with this. As he explained the circumstances of the situation to me, if you want to get a name for a corporation you fill out an application form, send in a fee, and approximately five days later you get back a letter saying yes, you were accepted; no, you weren't. No explanations, just yes, you are; no, you aren't.

If you want to put in another . . . if you are rejected, if you want to put in another application, you get another application form, send in another fee, five days later, yes or no. If it's no, you do the process over and over and over again until finally you get a name that the corporations branch of Justice will accept.

In other jurisdictions such as Manitoba where this particular businessman also operates, he phones up the Justice department who looks . . . the department that looks after the names. He says, can I have this name. They look on the computer and say no, that one's being used. Then he gives them a few alternatives and they finally say yes, this one is good. And it's all done over the telephone in a very short period of time.

He may very well have to pay a fee to get it registered after that point, but the search itself is very efficient. It's done on a very short time basis, not as in Saskatchewan where it takes you a week to get a no, and then you've got to pay another fee to get another no and pay another fee to get another no.

Perhaps this is Justice's manner of raising funds for the provincial government, I'm not sure. But it certainly doesn't help or encourage business in this province, Mr. Minister. And I'm wondering if you could explain the process for picking a company name in this province, and how the process works, the time factors involved, and the fees being charged every time someone has to fill out one of these application forms.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes. I'm a bit surprised by this question, given the undertaking made by the member from Moosomin on May 23 when he indicated that the questions that would be following for our department would be such that they would only arise out of the globals which we have provided. It's my understanding that that's what we were going to do and that, therefore, I didn't need the full departmental officials here.

I will try to respond to some of these questions, but I'm quite surprised given the undertaking that was made on the record on May 23, that the questions would all relate to the answers to the global questions which we provided.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Mr. Minister, things are fluid in government and you have to be prepared to shift gears. And we're waiting for your government to shift some gears and make some decisions which seem to be difficult in forthcoming. Therefore you, Mr. Minister, have to be able to shift gears also and meet the requirements of the day. The requirements of the

day are to answer some questions, and this is a particular question dealing with company names and how the process works, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you for that question. Basically on name searches there are obviously two systems. One for federal corporations and you work through the federal system. There's one for the provincial system.

If you have some concerns that have arisen, I would suggest that you send the information over and we will try to find the information within the department as it relates to the provincial name search. The process is quite clearly one where they check through to see if there are any similar names, and they deal with those ones.

So I'd be happy to take that information and send it to the corporations branch and they would find out what the problem is.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well the problem, Mr. Minister, is how archaic the system is operating here. They should be able to go through, look on a computer list at the names that are comparable to that, do a word search, and determine whether or not that name is being used. It doesn't seem to me like it takes a whole bunch of bureaucracy to do that. It doesn't take five days to do that. And it certainly shouldn't take an ongoing fee process to do that so that every time you have to resubmit a name, you have to pay another fee.

It seems to me it's just a means of taxation with another name to generate more income for the Minister of Finance. So surely your department can make that process somewhat more efficient. I know that you have been buying a number of computers for your department. Perhaps one of those computers can be used in that area for doing name searches.

So, Mr. Minister, perhaps you could indicate to us what the fees being charged for every one of these kinds of searches is.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I'm quite surprised by your question because all of this information is on computer. It's the information about corporations is all generated through the computer system, and so that the types of questions that you have . . . I suggest that you provide us with the information and concern that you have and we will check with the corporations branch to see if there is some particular problem.

From my own experience in many years of practice, the only time when there was a problem with corporations branch and the names is when there were some other names that were very similar which were going to cause some confusion. And often, to sort that out, it took everything up to a lawsuit to decide which name could be used. And so unless we have some more information, it's very difficult to answer your question.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Mr. Minister, it seems that in this particular case what the problem is, though, is the unwillingness or the inability of your department to give an answer over the telephone as to whether a particular name is already in use or whether it will cause a conflict, because you have to fill out the application form, send it in with the fee, wait for a written

response back from your department. So how do you make a quick adjustment?

You know maybe the ABC rental company is already being used. If you could look up in the list, maybe you could have ABE rental company, and it's acceptable. But if you have to do that every five days or every week and send a new fee in every time, that's where the problem lies, Mr. Minister. You have to be able to make the adjustments quickly, review the process quickly, so that the person making the inquiries can make a determination on it, Mr. Minister. That's where your department is falling down on this. They are using the bureaucratic process to simply slow up business in this province.

If you were to use the computers that you say you already have available, give someone who's making an application access so that they can communicate directly with the person to determine what name is already out there. Is the name I'm inquiring about already being used? If not, fine. If it is, how can I change to make that adjustment, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I would really appreciate if you would provide more information about this concern. We already have a program where you can do telephone access to get this information, and there is a fee for that, that's right, but we also have a method of whereby you can use remote access to access the name registry, and that's possible to do as well.

So if there is some problem it may be that whoever has written to you doesn't understand how they can get the remote access into the corporate records. So if you would provide the information, we'll follow it up and deal with that. But we've had that process for a while.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Obviously this person has been talking with someone in your department and they . . . if there's remote access available, that information was not passed on to them because the information this businessman received was: fill out the application, send it in, we'll review it, and we'll let you know in five days whether it's yes or no. And then you can fill out another application form, send in the fee, and in another five days we'll let you know. So somebody in your department isn't passing the information on to the business people when they phone in for a name information on what names are being used.

So I certainly will pass this information on to you, but perhaps your department needs to review the policy and how they're dealing with it. And perhaps the personnel need to be informed that they should be letting the people calling in know that there is a remote access available and how to use it. I believe that would be a proper change in procedures, Mr. Minister, and perhaps you can direct your personnel to do that.

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

Mr. Aldridge: — With leave, Mr. Chairman, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you on behalf of my colleague from Wood River who is unable to be here at this time, a group of grade 4 students from Assiniboia School. They are accompanied by their teacher Janice Erfle; and the chaperons, Mrs. Reid, Mrs. Padfield, Mrs. Swidzinski, and Mrs. Jacob.

And I would just like everybody here in the Assembly to welcome them here this morning. And I will, on behalf of my colleague from Wood River, be joining you for drinks shortly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1145)

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

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Item 1

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, I would just like to say I'll look forward to receiving that information and also your suggestions about the procedure, and we'll work with that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, since you're interested in discussing the globals, we'll move on to the globals for a little while. And I have a number of other questions as they relate to the globals. These are questions that were not answered or were not asked perhaps.

But I wonder if you could provide us with the detail of all educational leave and professional development programs within your department; state the purpose of each case; state whether this was paid for by the department or by the individuals; if paid by the department, state the cost; if paid by individual, estimate the cost to the department of the individual's absence from work.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — It's my understanding that this was not one of the global questions, so we have to take that one under advisement and see if we can put that information together. Is it your understanding that it was included in your global questions?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Minister, some of these questions may have been included and some of them may not have been. But they were not answered, nevertheless, so that's why we're asking them now.

I passed the information on last week to the House Leader. He agreed to pass them out to all the ministers for responses. I know that some of the other departments had not received these requests. Some of the other ministers that we talked to since that time hadn't received them, but they have all agreed to answer the questions.

The Minister of Finance looked them over when she was in for her estimates, took some time and looked them over carefully, and then made the determination that she was prepared to answer all the questions. I believe most of the other ministers

have agreed to answer the questions also.

I don't know if your officials know the answer to this; I don't know if you have any information on the educational leave programs at all within your department.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I can answer part of it. There's a limited educational leave program in the corrections part of the department. Other areas, there's very little of this. But we would be able to go back and review everything to see if we could find answers to this question. I'd be happy to do that for you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you very much. I wonder if you could give us the total payments to RRSPs (registered retirement savings plan) and other contract benefits provided to any employee that are outside the benefits provided by the Public Employees Benefits Agency. So this, more specifically, would be such as contract employees.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Zero.

Mr. D'Autremont: — That's the number I like. Thank you. Could you list and detail the costs of all club memberships, season tickets, etc., held by the department and detail the costs of all other entertainment expenses incurred by the department.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The cost for memberships, club memberships, zero. There's no provision for that. As far as the question of entertainment, that's not as clear. There may be some situations where we would host a luncheon for example, if the federal Minister of Justice came to Saskatchewan, and there'd be some minor costs there . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well he doesn't come here for very long usually, so I think the costs of those are usually minimal.

An Hon. Member: — Coffee.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Coffee, that's right. And I think the other question was on . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . As far as season tickets go, there are no season tickets.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, thank you, Mr. Minister. Whenever the federal Minister of Justice comes to the province, perhaps entertaining him should not be part of the considerations. Making him sit down and do a significant amount of work may have certainly some value because . . . and we will get into some of these issues here after a bit.

But we certainly do have some disagreements with him on a number of issues. And perhaps it would be well advised to take him out and allow him to meet some of Saskatchewan's people rather than having him closeted in a small meeting. Because I have attended a meeting with him where that is exactly the procedure he used, was to take a significant number of people, approximately 50 people, put them in a room for a very small period of time, allow everybody to introduce themselves and give a little short statement, and say, well thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for the consultation, and then get up and leave, where there was actually no consultation taking place. The time was all taken up by comments . . . introduction and then comments by the MP (Member of Parliament) for Souris

Moose Mountain and the MP for Saskatoon Humboldt and no time left for consultation.

Mind you, with this particular minister consultation means, listen to what I say; I'm not prepared to listen to what you have to say. So I think perhaps to take that minister and sit him down and . . . some very serious discussions with some of the real people in Saskatchewan and not just a couple of people closeted in a small room, I think would be most beneficial to that federal minister, and hopefully to the people of Saskatchewan.

One of the other areas, Mr. Minister, that I'm particularly interested in deals with CVA (Central Vehicle Agency) vehicles. I wonder if you could give some indication as to who within your department, the deputy minister, within the heads of your departments are entitled to CVA vehicles, who utilizes the CVA vehicles, and who would use personal mileage for their travel expenses.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The only CVA vehicles that are presently being used are the one that I use and the one that my deputy minister uses.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Are other people within your department entitled to CVA vehicles but are not using them?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — There are people who are entitled to use a CVA vehicle if they need to travel somewhere, but there aren't any people that are entitled to use them full time other than possibly the chief judge of the Provincial Court, but at this time he doesn't use one at all.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. Someone such as the chief judge, when he travels then would he be entitled to personal mileage claims? And the other heads of the departments, are any of them entitled to CVA vehicles but use the personal mileage claim instead?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Within the department the chief judge would get mileage when he needs to be on the road. But practically, what we try to do is encourage anybody who is going to another place to analyse whether it's best to use a CVA vehicle or their car and use whatever is most economical.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I wonder if you could give us an indication of how many miles your department is charged for personal — or kilometres I guess now since we've changed — how many kilometres your department pays for personal mileage.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Perhaps you could clarify the question. Are you saying how many miles that employees in the department might charge in mileage for the use of their own personal vehicles?

Mr. D'Autremont: — For those people who are entitled to a CVA vehicle, such as the deputy minister, if he was using his personal vehicle and charging mileage, personal mileage to the department, those are the answers I'm looking for. For those people who are entitled to have a CVA vehicle, not just

somebody who is going to drive from, say, Legal Aid in Regina is going out to Fort Qu'Appelle or something for a case on a particular circumstance, may access a CVA vehicle for that and then come back, but normally they would not have access for a CVA vehicle.

But for someone such as the deputy minister or the heads of the department, the chief judge, who normally has access to a CVA vehicle, I'm interested in how many personal mileage claims they put in and what that mileage was and if any of them would put in a claim for 25,000 kilometres or more.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think the answer is there aren't any people in that situation because it's just the deputy minister and I that have vehicles, and through the way the tax system works, well we end up having a charge for the personal miles that we use on those vehicles.

So I think, practically, it's not a problem within our department.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you, Mr. Minister. I may come back to some more questions on the globals here in a bit.

But I have some questions from Justice as it deals with no fault and no-fault insurance. How many other provinces have gone to the no-fault system where claimants for the insurance company do not have the right then to go to court under the no-fault system?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — This is really not in our department. The issue is really dealt with by the minister in charge of SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). And I'm not sure if you're finished with questions for him or not, but if you are . . . But I'll give a brief answer. But you recognize that this is not an area that we are particularly involved in.

But practically, there are no-fault regimes — they're not all exactly the same — in Ontario, Manitoba, B.C. (British Columbia), and Quebec, and they all have different provisions which I'm not fully aware of other than that they do have no-fault systems.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Mr. Minister, if a claimant was to seek a court challenge within . . . under the no-fault system as in Saskatchewan, what involvement would the Department of Justice have in those cases?

Are they strictly civil cases where SGI would provide solicitors or barristers for one side of the case and the claimant would have their barrister or solicitor there on the other side? Does Justice become involved at all in these situations?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think the simple answer is no, we wouldn't get involved at all because it's a civil lawsuit. The only possible time that we would get involved is if there's a constitutional challenge.

And any time a constitutional question is raised in any court case in Saskatchewan, we receive notice. Sometimes we will elect to get involved; most of the time we will not get involved. But that would be the only time, is if there was some kind of constitutional challenge to the legislation.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Under the no-fault insurance in the other provinces — and they may be slightly different, as you have said, to the operation in Saskatchewan — has there been a constitutional challenge on the no-fault insurance by someone who feels that they've been aggrieved by the circumstances, that they have not received proper satisfaction, or that their rights have been abridged by the fact that under no-fault insurance they are not allowed to seek remedy in the courts for any grievances they may have?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think there have been some challenges, constitutional challenges, but there have been no successful challenges to date.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Perhaps in Saskatchewan, since we seem to be having a number of problems with the no-fault insurance, someone may be able to challenge successfully, because there is a great deal of problems in there.

We see families that are not receiving proper compensation, we see individuals who suffer grievous harm and yet do not receive the compensation to which they would have . . . one would have expected them to be entitled and which they themselves had expected to be entitled under their understandings of the insurance that they had purchased.

In fact, one case that I brought up here last week, the lady had been offered a benefit social, that people would do some fund-raising for her benefit. And her response was no, no, no, you don't need to do this; I have insurance.

Unfortunately when circumstances developed and it came down to actually accessing that insurance, she found out she didn't have the insurance that she believed she had. And so I think there may very well be some challenges issued against the no-fault insurance in Saskatchewan, and the Department of Justice could become involved.

Mr. Minister, bankruptcies in this province are also a problem. And when a person declares bankruptcy, what are they able to take as possessions as exemptions to the bankruptcy?

(1200)

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The Bankruptcy Act is a federal law and what the federal Bankruptcy Act does is incorporates The Exemptions Act of Saskatchewan. The answer would be right here on the Table for you if you'd like to pull out the Act, and it would set out what the exemptions are.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. A number of items under that Exemptions Act though are fairly archaic and perhaps need to be revised. I don't think too many people today want to rescue their cream separator under The Exemptions Act. And I believe that is one of the items that is under that Act . . . or 40 bushels of potatoes and those kind of things.

But there are changes happening in the law as we go along. There has been changes made to The Credit Union Act which

allows them to take different securities in their banking processes from individuals and farmers.

So how does the Saskatchewan Exemptions Act mesh with the changes that are happening to The Credit Union Act to bring The Credit Union Act closer to what the banking Act has, particularly closer to section 178 of the banking Act? And how is this going to mesh with the current Exemptions Act?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think that part of the difficulty you have is that the only things included when you're dealing with a bankruptcy are the assets of the bankrupt. And anything that's secured, whether it's under section 178 or whether it's under securities that are registered under personal property security registry or through some other means, all those items aren't included in the bankruptcy because they don't belong to the bankrupt.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister, but under a personal bankruptcy in The Exemptions Act in Saskatchewan are there not exceptions made for a person's work? A tradesman can protect his tools from bankruptcy. I believe a person can exempt their house from the bankruptcy up to, I think it's \$30,000 of value.

A case has been brought forward to a colleague of mine of a woman who is facing personal bankruptcy, going through the system. She needs her car to get to work but her car is being seized on her. Is some form of transportation exempted under The Exemptions Act from seizure by bankruptcy?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I'm not operating here with all of the information about this legislation but I will try to give you a simple answer. I think that under The Exemptions Act there are some very clear rules. The best place for these kind of questions to be answered by a person like you're talking about is to go to a trustee in bankruptcy. They have very detailed explanations. Often they provide this service for free when people have inquiries. And at this stage I think that would be your best bet for something like that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well it would certainly have to be for free if a person is going through bankruptcy because they obviously haven't got the financial wherewithal to support the person as it is. So it would be very difficult to go to a lawyer and pay a large fee for advice on bankruptcy. Now perhaps if a person has a large amount of assets and are trying to protect something, they have something of value with which to work. But in this particular case, a woman who can't even protect her vehicle from bankruptcy, obviously does not have the financial wherewithal to provide that support.

Perhaps you could send us over a list of those bankruptcy trustees that she could perhaps consult with or that would be within her locale that she could deal with.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think if you just turn to the Yellow Pages that there's very detailed information there and she could call any of the people that are in the phone book.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm not

sure though if it lists them under bankruptcy trustees or not though. There is certainly a large number of lawyers and solicitors listed in there but how many of them are bankruptcy trustees I wouldn't know without at least taking a very serious look at the Yellow Pages in the book. But perhaps the department is aware of who is available in which areas of the province.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well it is listed under trustees in bankruptcy. These people are accountants, chartered accounts; they're not lawyers. And the bankruptcy office here in Regina for this part of Saskatchewan would, I'm sure, be happy to give a list of all the people who are available in whatever area of the province this person is involved.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. The Premier is currently down at the first ministers' conference. I believe that you attended a ministers of Justice meeting not that far in the past. Has the concerns raised for the past year and a half, two years, dealing with Bill C-68 . . . were they raised at the Justice ministers' conference? Will the Premier be bringing up the concerns of Saskatchewan residents in dealing with Bill C-68 at the premiers' conference, at the first ministers' conference?

Mr. Minister, as you are well aware, having toured the province with us, not together in the same vehicle, but ending up at the same meetings . . .

An Hon. Member: — Us in car; you in plane.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes. That's basically how it works. But we end up there at 40 below weather. Mr. Minister, what is happening at the federal level between your department and your colleagues in the other provinces and with the federal Minister of Justice in dealing with Bill C-68?

There were regulations presented that were extremely onerous and totally unacceptable. The federal minister pulled them — or his bureaucrats did; I'm not exactly sure who authorized that or who authorized their release initially. But I am extremely suspicious that these regulations released were to put the fear of the Lord in everyone so that when they could bring them back they could say, well look how much better we have made them, how great they are today because they're only slightly less onerous than what they were before.

So, Mr. Minister, what's happening on that front? Where is this discussion with your colleagues, the other ministers of Justice, and where is this discussion between the Premier and the Prime Minister of this country?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I'm very pleased to answer that question. When we went to the federal-provincial-territorial ministers' meeting in Ottawa in May we arranged, as ministers of Justice from Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, and the Yukon, that we would get together to specifically discuss our strategy relating to Bill C-68.

While we were in that meeting we got notice that the Minister of Justice had withdrawn the regulations. It's our speculation

that he understood that we were going to be making a fairly strong statement about all of this and that it was actually the work that we were doing that precipitated this change.

Now the official version that we got wasn't exactly that, but you'll have to go a long way to persuade me that it wasn't the work that we were doing that in fact raised the concern about these regulations.

Now since that time, as you well know, I have set up a Minister's Technical Advisory Committee and it included some very able people from within the various interested communities in Saskatchewan to review those regulations and also review the kinds of information that we are getting from the federal government. At the moment it doesn't seem to be very much, but we are reviewing very carefully with these people who . . . in the community. We have received some very good advice and some good assistance as we try to deal with this.

We still have a very strong suggestion that the only way this can be resolved is if this Bill is repealed or amended in some way to recognize the various areas within the province, and how we deal with the gun regulation and gun safety in a completely different way than they might do in Toronto or Vancouver.

I guess my own personal sense of this is that federal government's in a corner. They don't know what to do. We are continuing to put the pressure on. The whole issue of the constitutional challenge is still very much on the burner. And we're working together with our other, primarily western ministers of Justice, although we're pleased to say that the Ontario minister of justice and Solicitor General are also very much involved in the discussion now.

So we're in a difficult spot because we still don't have the regulations which would allow the challenge to be fully defined in how we might do it. But I think you can be satisfied with the work and the monitoring that we're doing right now.

I know I appreciated the member's assistance throughout all of this because he's been very able to access other information that we've haven't been able to access, and then vice versa, we have shared information with him. And it is clearly an all-party concern here that we're working with, and that's continuing.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm particularly interested in the comment that you made that British Columbia was at the table during that discussion and seems to be onside.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I didn't include British Columbia.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I wish you had've included British Columbia then. Because I certainly think it would strengthen your hand if you could bring another province, and particularly the province with the third highest population in this country — we have Ontario with the largest population now — onside. It would be I think helpful if British Columbia could come onside or would come onside.

What kind of discussions have you had with your counterpart in

British Columbia on this particular issue? What kind of influence are you trying to exert on him to come onside on this particular issue?

Obviously they have just gone through a provincial election there. They have a new Minister of Justice perhaps, and I'm not aware if that changed or if it didn't change. But there were a number of cabinet ministers who were defeated so perhaps the new Premier has made some changes there.

But have you talked to the Minister of Justice in British Columbia since their election? Is there any sense of any possible change there? I know that it was the Minister of Health prior to the election who was supportive of the position that the three prairie provinces had taken on this particular issue, although he couldn't seem to get through the cabinet the total agreement from the provincial government in that case.

But what kind of discussions have you been into with the Justice minister in British Columbia on this issue?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I have not had a chance to talk to the Minister of Justice in British Columbia. It's Mr. Dosanjh and he is the same person that was Minister of Justice prior to the election.

Basically I don't think their position has changed too much, although I know that they are carefully reviewing this whole area because of some of the very prominent incidents that have taken place in British Columbia over the last six months.

(1215)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Perhaps we'll move a little bit away from the broader policy area of gun control to some of the more specifics. And this deals with administration in Saskatchewan.

Under the current system, the police forces, the police departments in the various areas, assign an officer as the firearms officer for that area, such as an RCMP detachment in Carnduff will have one officer perhaps, or as in the case of Carnduff, all of the officers are designated as firearm officers. There are problems though when you get into the major centres of Regina and Saskatoon, that it seems that they are appointing one officer to be the firearms officer. If that officer is not available for duty on a particular day or is gone off on holidays, then everything stops in that department because nobody else is assigned to it and therefore you can't go and get your firearms application form or you can't submit your firearms application form for review. You can't go in and get a travel permit or make an application for a travel permit because the officer in charge isn't there and is going to be gone for three weeks.

We had this problem arise at Christmas time. Two people from the city of Regina wished to attend an international shoot in Dickinson, North Dakota. They couldn't get travel permits because the officer in charge in Regina was on holidays, was gone for the Christmas holidays. So they were not allowed to participate because they couldn't get travel permits.

What are you doing in this field to alleviate that problem? One

of the things that I think could be done, particularly for the Regina area — and it would be not as convenient for the rest of the province — but the chief provincial firearms office is in Regina. Why could that office not supplement the services provided by the police departments in this province when the police departments are not available to provide the service?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well the question that you raised about the person wanting to travel in December, we haven't heard about that before within those of us that are here today. And we'll follow up on that.

I think you have a good idea about setting up some other alternative people who would be available. And the police are the ones that have this function within their duties and it would seem to make sense that we would, through the Chief Firearms Officer, go to the police forces and say, well look you do need some kind of a backup system for when the people involved are not there. So that's a good suggestion and we'll follow up on that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm not sure how many other designates around the province the Chief Provincial Firearm Officer has other than the officers in each detachment.

Since this law is also a federal law, is there opportunities that the RCMP, since they have barracks out here with a large number of RCMP officers available, could they provide some of the service if the city police from Regina, the officer in charge, was not available. Or perhaps your department should contact the metropolitan police organizations — Regina, Saskatoon, Estevan, Weyburn, and those that have their own police detachments — to encourage them to have more than one officer assigned to this particular area of duty so that there is always someone available.

And I'm not saying that they should be available at midnight, but they should be available during the working hours of the day to meet the requirements of the citizenry when it comes to making applications for firearms acquisition certificates or for travel permits or any other of the forms that are going to be needed, particularly in the case where these new laws and regulations are coming down which are going to involve a lot more bookwork.

I think there's going to be a need to have people available. You simply can't wait until somebody comes back from holidays three weeks or a month later if you want to attend a gun show some place and take your equipment there to put on display and for sale.

So I think we need to do something, Mr. Minister, to provide that the service is available. That's one of the great fears that a significant number of people in the firearm community have, is that under the proposals of C-68, because of the onerous regulations in place and the need for so much paperwork, that one of the restrictions that could be put in place by the federal Liberal government would not be saying you can't do this, but rather saying, you can do this but here's the steps you have to go through, and then cutting out a part of those steps and making it so impractical or so unavailable that nobody can

move through the steps to actually come out the end with whatever it is they desire to do. I think that's a great fear, Mr. Minister.

What we have here happening already under the circumstances is something like that, where if you pull one cog out of the mechanism, the whole mechanism stops. There should be alternate routes that people can take to achieve the same end, meet the same requirements. It's not dodging some of the requirements, it's meeting the same requirements to achieve the end that they're entitled to.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think you've pointed out a concern that we all have about the present legislation and the future legislation. And it was stated very strongly by me when we were at the ministers' meeting, that the costs of this — the new program that the federal government set up — are so imprecise, we don't know what they're going to be; that to do all of the steps, it's almost going to be impossible.

A good example of what you're talking about, as far as the local police are concerned . . . One of the difficulties, frankly, is that we still do not have a financial settlement on the previous legislation and so a lot of the local police forces don't have the money back from the licensing fees over the last three or four years. And one of the big difficulties that we've had, even listening to the federal government when they talk about the fees and the sharing of fees for the new legislation is . . . we just say to them, look, we're not even going to listen to you about that until you sort out what happened with the last Bill.

And so part of the frustration, for example, with some of the city police forces is, where do they get the money to pay for some of these extra services. And it's a frustration all around and it points to some of the real difficulties with the federal legislation. It appears to be falling on deaf ears when we try to deal with this, but it's also . . . I think part of any kind of challenge we might make is exactly the argument that you are talking about, is you are attempting to set up an impossible bureaucracy — talking about the federal government — to accomplish something that you're not going to do necessarily directly, but you do it indirectly.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Perhaps you can give some indication of where that financial settlement is at today. I believe it was two years ago or so that it was in a deficit position of \$800,000, give or take some in there. Has that increased, decreased? What is happening to it at the present time, Mr. Minister? And what leverage does your department have on the federal minister to get that money flowing through the system so that the backlog of lost financial resources can be caught back up again?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well all I can say is they put some more money on the table but it's still not enough. And that one of the real frustrations is we don't want to sort this one out on a less than full compensation basis because we see that the next regulations which . . . who knows when they'll come — will then build on this base. And so if we agree to something that is less than full compensation for the police forces that are doing this work, and less than full compensation for the province, then we will be subsidizing legislation which we don't think is

appropriate for Canada.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I believe that indeed we need to get our full compensation from the federal government in this particular area, including the backlog. And in fact, is I would even suggest to you perhaps you should start tacking interest onto that to give them a little more incentive to make their payments. I know that come April 30, if I don't make my commitment to the federal government, they certainly start adding interest onto what I owe them.

Now I think in reverse, perhaps we should do the same thing. And I know that the provincial government gets their slice of that interest too, if I don't make my commitment by April 30. So perhaps a little added incentive needs to be applied to the federal government, and perhaps that's what the Premier should be doing today when he's talking with the Prime Minister. They're talking about some of the constitutional issues today. Perhaps they need to be bringing forward that all of these changes cost money, and if the federal government is going to impose changes on us, then they have a duty to provide the financial support to meet those changes. And I think perhaps the Premier needs to be reinforcing Saskatchewan's interests in this area.

During the discussions on constitution, one of the items that reoccurs over and over and over again is the idea that Quebec has a distinct cultural uniqueness in Canada. I think our Premier should be reinforcing the fact that Saskatchewan also has a unique culture, as does Alberta and Manitoba. I think all you have to do is look at the political process in all three of our prairie provinces. We often get lumped in together — the Prairies, one homogeneous mass.

Well that's not the case, Mr. Minister; we are indeed separate entities. We not only are separate entities but we have developed different cultures. Look at the politics of the system. Where is Alberta politically in comparison to Saskatchewan? One has traditionally had a right-wing government, one has traditionally had a left-wing government — of which you're a member today. We have developed from different routes. We have developed along different patterns.

And about the same time, 1944 or a little before that, two charismatic religious personalities, ministers in their churches, came to the floor politically. One went left and one went right. It reminds me of that song that the guy used to play on *Bonanza* sang . . . Lorne Greene sang about how he went one way and his buddy went the other way. And that's the way it is between Saskatchewan and Alberta. We have chosen different paths, we have different cultures, and that needs to be recognized in Canada. We look at our . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . no, I will not sing; there is a limit to what I will do in a filibuster.

Mr. Minister, we look at Manitoba and Manitoba has sort of sat on the fence between those two. They traditionally elect governments with one-person majorities. And I think that shows another example of how their culture is different than that in Saskatchewan or different from that in Alberta, Mr. Minister.

So we are all unique across Canada; we have developed our

own cultural identities you might say. And I think that needs to be recognized, and under Bill C-68 that is failed . . . that is not recognized in that area. Particularly again we look at our native brethren and their culture is not recognized under Bill C-68.

So I'd like to ask you some questions on that particular area, because under Bill C-68 there are written exams to be taken, you have to take courses, you have to write tests. What kind of provisions is Saskatchewan looking at for those areas where there is a significant number of non-English-speaking people, particularly non-English-speaking people who do not read and write, as is the circumstance in a number of the northern communities.

At the meeting in Saskatoon that I mentioned where Allan Rock was at, one of the representatives from the PA (Prince Albert) tribal council talked about Joe who was out trapping in the bush, and there was no way that you were going to be able to get Joe to come in 60 miles from the trap line to write the exam. But even if he did come in, he would never be able to read the exam because he didn't read English and he didn't write English. He could talk the Cree language, but he was not fluent enough in English to be able to take the exam and carry it out.

So what kind of provisions is Saskatchewan looking at, at putting in place, to deal with those kind of circumstances? Under the current situation there are already exams to be taken. If you've never had a hunting licence and you wish to get one, you have to take the federal firearms course. You have to take Saskatchewan's hunter safety course.

So you must have some plans in mind to deal with those already. You may already be dealing with them. So what do you have in place today; what do you propose to have in place tomorrow under Bill C-68?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think that you know that presently we have had the ability to tailor these tests and all of the arrangements around what happens in Saskatchewan. And one of the very strong arguments that I have made to the federal minister is that that's what's wrong with Bill C-68. It doesn't take into account the various regions of Canada. It doesn't take into account how we do things here.

We're in a situation where we don't have the regulations. We're obviously waiting, like everybody else is, to see what the regulations are. The Technical Advisory Committee that I have set up has looked at some of these things, raised some of the same kinds of problems that you've raised, and practically, we are strongly suggesting that if this legislation is going to be used, it needs to be amended to reflect the fact that each jurisdiction can manage and deal with the question of . . .

(1230)

The point that we make in Saskatchewan is that we have developed a very effective and safe system, including many courses that are worked together with the gun owners and with the firearms registry, firearms officer office, and we want that kind of a thing to continue, to build on what we already have.

And I think practically we're not in a position — because we

just don't know what the regulations are — to understand how it's all going to come together after here. We're strongly saying to them look, this isn't going to work here unless you give us some provincial flexibility.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And thank you, Mr. Minister. I asked you earlier — and because I asked it in amongst a number of other questions, you missed it — what is the Premier doing about this? Will he be bringing up these concerns at the first ministers' conference?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I don't think this particular item is on the official agenda of the meeting. But you previously indicated that this was a constitutional issue as we look at sort of the passing of responsibility — but not the passing of money — from the federal government to the provincial government. And I would note that one of the difficulties this issue might have in all that discussion is that the Premier of Alberta has said any time the word "constitutional" comes up, he's out of the room. And so we're in a situation where some of the issues around this kind of a problem are not going to be dealt with if they're going to be dealt with in a constitutional way.

Now I think practically, they have some very long check-lists of things when they talk about the reorganization of Confederation. And presumably if this issue comes up, then I know the Premier will be putting forward the position of this government.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. While some of the premiers may leave the room . . . and I believe that Lucien Bouchard has also announced that in all likelihood he will do the quick exit also if the word "constitution" is mentioned.

But supposedly the Premier of this province is a personal friend to the Prime Minister. And while it may not be officially on the agenda, that would allow him an avenue — while they're sitting around having coffee between meetings perhaps — to bring the issue to the fore.

I don't think the people of Saskatchewan find it acceptable though that the Premier would wait for somebody else to raise the issue before he's prepared to discuss it. I believe he should be initiating the discussion and bringing it forward to the first ministers at the conference, just as you, Mr. Minister, should be bringing it forward to the Justice ministers whenever you meet with them, and the Minister of the Environment should be doing the same thing whenever he meets with his counterparts.

I think we need to take the initiative, every chance we get, to make sure that this particular issue is brought to the fore, that's it's discussed, and that a resolution is found to this particular issue, Mr. Minister.

So perhaps if you're talking with the Premier of this province or the minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs some time before the conference ends, you can mention to them that this is an item that the people of Saskatchewan would like to have discussed.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think that what you've stated is

clearly the policy and plan of this government. I know that whenever I have met with Mr. Rock or with any of his senior staff, this is always part of the discussion, because they know how strongly we feel about dealing with this matter.

And we're also in a situation where we need to have a solution on this one because it's going to cause a great deal of confusion within many of the communities in Saskatchewan, if not all of the communities in Saskatchewan. And that has been reiterated by me in all my discussions with the federal minister and when the staff meet with these various people.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, just a follow-up. I was just in a debate with, you remember, your colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, a few minutes ago and he raised the issue of offloading by the federal government that your government has had to deal with or is continually dealing with. We've had that debate with the Minister of Health about offloading.

And coming back to Bill C-68 and the problems that could be associated with registration of firearms in the province of Saskatchewan, it seems to me that this is just another avenue following up on some of the debate that's taken place with my colleague, the member from Cannington, that the province may find itself with another cost to bear. And certainly in the province of Saskatchewan it's a cost when it comes to registration and who's going to handle it, who's going to manage it, and who's going to pay for the funding.

If it's something that ends up in the hands of . . . the responsibility of the provincial government, it just takes more money out of programs and services that we're trying to provide to the persons and the community of this province.

And so I think it certainly behoves you, Mr. Minister, and certainly to continue to pass on to your colleagues and the Premier, that it's imperative that we get a resolve to this. And that the federal government, I think, have basically crossed the line in some of their programing and what they're basically telling regions of Canada that they must . . . must and must not do.

And I think there are many people across this province who have become quite annoyed at what the federal government has unilaterally done in the area of gun control and in the area of other concerns regarding funding for health and funding for education.

And if we don't, I guess, join together and join with some of the other regions or some of the other provinces and address some of these concerns, and raise them very emphatically, we may find that a greater and greater burden is put upon an area of Canada where the population base is being basically stepped on and carrying a heavier and heavier burden.

And so I concur with my colleague that it's imperative that you, in your position, Mr. Minister, do everything that you are physically capable of. I use the word physically in conjunction to your stature in this Assembly, physically compared to some of the others. I think you have . . . may have that ability, but certainly it's imperative that, in your position as Justice minister

with the responsibilities you carry, that you indeed raise and emphasize as emphatically as you are capable of doing, that Saskatchewan . . . People in Saskatchewan are just not pleased with the way the federal government seems to continue to shoulder, offload, or push off onto Saskatchewan residents these type of costs, and which then takes away from some of the other services that we would like to provide.

And so I encourage you again, Mr. Minister, to indeed stand up for the concerns that have been raised. And I've got a number of other questions I'd like to . . . area I'd like to get into, but maybe I should just give you a chance to respond before we move into some other areas, versus complicating the issues.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well what I have found over the years is that good humour and positive discussions with people usually accomplishes a lot more than the use of physical presence, although maybe it's a combination of my own good humour and my physical presence that does that. But in this particular operation, if that was the only question . . . I don't know if you've met Mr. Rock, but he is substantially smaller than I am.

In this particular area you've actually hit on one of the major points that I made at the ministers' meeting in May, and that was that however the system is being designed by the federal government, they are pushing all the costs down to the province; but even more so, they're pushing it right down to the municipal level.

Because the real difficulty that we have is that it will be the police forces that bear the brunt of this legislation, and it's quite frustrating for us as provincial politicians to try to explain to local municipalities that legislation which is coming federally, which sets up a complicated registration system, is actually going to increase the costs of local policing.

And that is one of the reasons why we have been stubborn in our negotiations on the sharing of the policing costs, to make sure that we get full compensation from the federal government. And that's the same kind of position that we'll be taking when we deal with any of the new regulations and policing costs that are going to come from that point.

Mr. Toth: — Well I certainly concur with you, Mr. Minister, because I've talked to some of the members of the . . . even the local RCMP detachments and they really are not looking forward to the day when this Bill C-68 actually comes into play and the regulations are in place and then they have to start enforcing it, because they've worked so hard to try and build a liaison between the communities.

In some cases, they've taken a hit over circumstances that have taken place in the past and they've tried to come to a more workable . . . and an understanding between the residents of the communities that they serve, and they just feel that this is just going to create an antagonism whereby the respect they've gained is going to be destroyed. So it certainly does become an issue.

And when it comes to stature, Mr. Minister, I think that your stature versus my stature, if we were in a room together and someone had a question, you would certainly prevail, and I

appreciate that. So that's one of the reasons I raise that, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, I want to get into another area, and a couple of straightforward questions, and I'm going to raise right now, that you may or may not have an answer to, and they may not deal specifically in some cases with some of the discussion that's been taking place. But a call I made last night to a resident and a question that arose, and I'm raising it so that I can respond to it, is in regard to bankruptcies.

What I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if a person files for bankruptcy, what can a person hold onto or continue to hold to to maintain an existence or to continue to provide for themselves? I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you'd have any knowledge in that matter. It seems to me the concern that was raised with the person that had brought it to my attention all stems back to a decision that was made by the courts regarding a maintenance and this . . . this goes back to some discussion we had a while back as to what it left this individual with.

And it happens to be a lady that we've been talking about. And now in order to try and maintain what she's worked so hard to live with over the years and to build for herself, she's told, I believe, that she can keep part . . . or keep a home if the value is below a certain level. But she's been informed that she's got to take her car down to Brown's Auction Rooms and just sell it off. And if I understand correctly, there isn't much more than maybe 2,500 or \$3,000 value on the vehicle.

So I'm just wondering, and the other thing is she just found a job and it's at the other end of the city. And while this happens to be local, there are other people who have circumstances, say in rural areas, that need to commute.

So I'm wondering what is a person left with, or what do the bankruptcy laws kind of leave a person with, that I can get back and just kind of inform this person what they rightfully have the ability to hold under the bankruptcy laws if they file for bankruptcy.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well this happens to be the same question that your colleague asked about 30 minutes ago. And I think he was probably asking it on your behalf, but since that time I have grabbed the legislation from the centre table.

And what happens is the federal bankruptcy law — it's federal law — incorporates The Exemptions Act from Saskatchewan. And The Exemptions Act — and I'll give you the copy of it later so you can look at it — sets out the types of things that are protected.

And specifically as it relates to a motor vehicle, it has set out in section 2(1)(5) that there's an exemption for:

one motor vehicle where it is necessary for the proper and efficient conduct of the execution debtor's business, trade, calling or profession; provided that the motor vehicle is not in addition to the automobile or motor truck mentioned in paragraph 4;

Paragraph 4 is repealed. So basically you're allowed to have one vehicle if you need it for your job. And so it would seem to

me that there are some possibilities that this woman could use.

I advised your colleague earlier that there are information services available, both through the bankruptcy office in Regina, but also through trustees in bankruptcy. They often will provide this kind of information free of charge because it is a marketing device for them.

(1245)

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, and I wasn't quite sure . . . Yes, I was called out to meet with another group and I didn't realize Justice was coming up, and I fired that question up in case I didn't get a chance to ask it. So I'll certainly talk with my colleague to get more information about what you shared with him.

Another question, Mr. Minister, is a while back, I think it's about two or three weeks ago, we had raised a question regarding the investigation of the Crown prosecutor in the Robert Latimer case. And I notice by the *Star-Phoenix*, June 13, this investigation was supposed to be completed by the end of the month. Now I think at that time you had responded, Mr. Minister, this investigation was still ongoing and therefore you really couldn't respond to it.

The question I would like to ask though, Mr. Minister, when this investigation was originally entered into or called for, were there no guidelines as to a time period you wanted to have this investigation completed in this case, or was this a wide open investigation that basically could go on and on?

And I think that's the concern, Mr. Minister, that we're trying to raise. And we're wondering why, if there weren't any stipulations, why there weren't some that would have basically allowed for what would have been felt to have been an adequate time period to do a proper and thorough investigation that would have said at the end of the day we're going to have, rather than an open one. So that's the question I have: was it basically an open investigation that could go on for ever or were there some guidelines that were set in place?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think it's clear that the guidelines were to do a thorough review. It also involved investigation by the police, and we can't interfere with that at all. We're in a situation where ideally we would have liked to have had the information a number of months ago, but it's quite a complicated matter and it has gone for outside legal review from outside of prosecutions within Saskatchewan. And so we have a number of different factors that are more complicated in this situation and I don't know if they totally justify how long it's taking, but everything is being pushed ahead as quickly as we can.

Mr. Toth: — In the past, Mr. Minister . . . or, Mr. Minister, maybe I could add, have we had investigations called for such as the one we're presently discussing regarding the Robert Latimer case? Have there been such investigations in the past?

And have there been time lines established as to the length — how long that investigation should go on? Would it be appropriate to set a time line? Or in the past if it had just been kind of open-ended . . . and I appreciate the fact that you

mentioned that the investigation actually has gone into, I shouldn't say more detail, but the investigators certainly have had to look at a lot of different scenarios regarding this case which has resulted in what would appear to be maybe a longer time frame than what you would have anticipated when it was originally put in motion.

And I'm not exactly sure whether you were the minister at the time, but that really doesn't matter. I'm just trying to determine whether or not these types of investigations would have a time line set down with them, whether they've been done in the past, or the fact that they may be a little more complicated than what would be originally set upfront so basically they're left open-ended hoping that there is quicker resolve sooner rather than later. Is that the case how this one would have worked?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, we're not in a position where we can set time lines. These are police investigations, and the police work to obtain all of the information that's necessary before anything further can be done. And we're not in a position where we can set a time line for the police.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, could we get a commitment from you that when a report is finally arrived at, and a report is given to you and there's information available, that that would be available to our office as well under the guidelines of the investigation as it's been put forward?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, we'll undertake to provide you with the decision as soon as we know it. And it'll be . . . well we anticipate by the end of the month that it'll be a clear decision what's going to happen here, and the information.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, another question that I talked a bit about the last time we had met. I think I've raised it and I've seen it as I think something that can be somewhat positive, is the use of sentencing circles in the aboriginal or our first nations community.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you can tell me how many sentencing circles have taken place to date, and how your department feels about these sentencing circles; whether or not they're achieving some of the goals and achieving the purposes that they have been set forward, and if they are indeed providing a positive view with regards to justice and the implementation of justice within our first nations community.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I'm very pleased that you asked that question. In Saskatchewan we've had in excess of 200 — I think it's maybe approaching 240 or 260 sentencing circles. And what we have to remember is the sentencing circles take place after a trial, and so it's at the end of the process.

We have about, I think three or four or five of this approximately 240 number that have had some concerns raised about them, and those are the ones that we hear about in the press.

So I guess what I would have to say is, from administration of Justice perspective and also from discussions with friends within the aboriginal community, that this process of a

sentencing circle has been of great value in the system, and it's something that we'll continue to look at.

I think also though, I would like to say that the concept of a healing circle, or as they talk about it in New Zealand . . . in Australia, family group conferencing, we are looking at moving the process more towards the front end of the criminal justice process before we get into the full process of the law. Because there are often situations where if you can get the people together to deal with a particular problem it may not be necessary to lay criminal charges and proceed right through the whole criminal court process.

And we are looking at that and our whole restorative justice initiative which we in government, especially in Justice and Social Services, are looking at, looks at these possibilities and the use of some alternatives instead of basically just charging somebody, convicting them, and then trying to sort out after you've ended up labelling them in some way that isn't very helpful for their long-term rehabilitation.

Mr. Toth: — I thank you, Mr. Minister. And I think, Mr. Minister, some of what you've just talked about certainly goes along with a quote I have here that comes from a Provincial Court judge who says, "Most people think you don't have justice unless you punish someone, but our punishment oriented system hasn't worked very well."

Certainly I think when we look at the results and we see what's happening and just talking to individuals, the people that I know who are even working in the correctional system that we have today, one has to wonder why we have continually in some cases used, if you will, a punishment system that basically puts people behind bars for what seemingly . . . a case that may have been able to be dealt with in another manner.

And you talked about working together with the innocent victim and bringing them face to face and maybe addressing it. Because I think if I hear you correctly, you and I may agree with the fact that it's costing us an arm and a leg just to run the correctional system as we know it, as we know it today.

Of the 200-plus cases you've talked about here, can you give us an idea of what basic monetary saving has taken place as a result of the sentencing circles, and the fact that maybe we've been able to deal with a punishment mechanism that has been more wholesome for the perpetrator and has addressed the concerns of the innocent victim, and that has possibly done it outside of just putting an individual behind bars for a period of time that is certainly costly to the system to operate and provide that service.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think it's a bit difficult to answer that question about the savings of court costs, because the way the sentencing circles are set up they're at the end, after all the court costs have been expended. And so that's one of the reasons why we're very pleased to hear you talk about the family group conferencing and some of these things that we'll do at the front end of a matter, rather than going right through the whole court process.

Where the costs could be saved — and once again, it's a bit

difficult to know exactly — is where there are community alternatives, where matters are dealt with within a community, as opposed to incarceration. Then we do save the costs of locking people up in the system and all of the attendant costs of that.

And I'm not sure if we can actually do a calculation of that, other than to say that sometimes it's hard to put a dollar value on a life that has been retrieved from some very difficult situations through the help of a community, often the community being their family, their teacher, their pastor, their neighbours who say yes, with this process we're willing to come up with a community solution.

And I think all of us in Saskatchewan would be very pleased if we could move to a system that emphasizes the offender's responsibility but also the community responsibility to help, and that the victim is part of the process and is able to come with some kind of healing out of the whole thing.

So we're pleased that we're trying to move the whole system in another direction. We're also very pleased with the response that we get all across Saskatchewan when we talk about this. And if you have suggestions and ideas — because I know you're specially concerned about some of these areas — I'd be happy to take them and see how we can add the ideas into our discussion. Thank you.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, the question I was raising — and I guess I never thought of the fact that the court system might have some savings there — I was thinking of the fact of once a sentence is arrived at and having gone through say, a sentencing circle rather than a judge just saying, well this person has been found guilty, and therefore I sentence you to an incarceration of say, three months or six months or whatever, I was thinking of the fact that based on what it cost for incarceration, if there's anything that we may show that . . . because a person may not have been incarcerated but through a sentencing circle was able to understand the severity of the crime and how they meted out justice there.

I think there possibly have been, and could have been or may have been, some actual dollar value savings as a result of the fact of not incarceration versus incarceration. And maybe you could respond to that.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — What I can say is that we estimate that it's about \$83 a day to keep a person in a correctional centre, an adult. For young offenders it's about \$140 a day because of the way that is set up. So those costs would clearly be saved if there was some alternative community sanction. And so that is a clear saving that is important for us as taxpayers. But I think it also should be emphasized that community sanctions and community solutions cost some money too, but they don't cost nearly as much as our institutional incarceration.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Minister. And I guess that's where I'm going to get to a bit of the costs, the costs that may . . . not all the savings may be there. And I raise that in view of a recent *Star-Phoenix* article where the headline was, "Government tall on talk, short on cash for native justice initiatives — judge." And it talks about the fact that . . . the first line is:

Provincial officials talk a good game when it comes to supporting aboriginal justice initiatives such as sentencing circles, but often neglect to back up the chatter with cash, says a Provincial Court judge.

And if as I gather correctly just from the article that I've quoted from and going through the article, I think the judge here is bringing out the fact that while the sentencing circles have worked — and I think this particular individual that's been involved and a number have been utilized in his jurisdiction — the feeling I get is that a number of the aboriginal community, the elders that have been asked to be involved, that there certainly isn't any cash or compensation for the time that they give towards being involved in the sentencing circles.

So I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if there is a program in place whereby there is some compensation for . . . Because I gather from this that sentencing circles don't just happen in a matter of five or ten minutes, that they are somewhat time-consuming to be effective, as in the first nations community including the elders, is something that is necessary for them to be really effective. And the feeling I get from the article I read here is that there should be some compensation, if you will, for those individuals who would be involved in the community.

And therefore, Mr. Minister, I'm wondering if you could respond based on the comments made here. Your officials may be aware or may not be aware of some of the concerns that have been raised. And I wonder if you could give a response to that, Mr. Minister.

The Chair: — It being 1 o'clock, this committee stands recessed until 2 o'clock later this same day.

The Assembly recessed until 2 p.m.

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I move we report progress.

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

Mr. Toth: — With leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we have some guests up in the Speaker's gallery who have just joined us — Garth Shoemaker, a good friend of mine from the Kennedy area who is teaching up at Guernsey, along with a family, the Cook family from . . . And I forgot to ask exactly where. But they've joined us in the gallery for a minute and I'd like to ask the members to join me in welcoming them to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**General Revenue Fund
Health
Vote 32**

Item 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, the other evening we were discussing Whitespruce and a number of concerns with regards to addiction and addiction services in the province.

It just so happened as we were discussing that . . . or had a discussion last night about addictions and the Whitespruce facility and what the changes that are taking place, the movement from . . . of the services at Whitespruce to Calder house, that the phone started ringing. And a gentleman phoned us from the Melville area and then took the time to come in this morning and raise some questions.

And what he was . . . some of the questions he was raising, Mr. Minister, was the fact of the addiction services and the services that are currently out there to address addictions with regards to people. Now I understand, Mr. Minister, that while we had Whitespruce, and we still have it today . . . that before too long it's going to be amalgamated together with Calder, that there are a number of organizations around the province, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), that are providing addiction services.

And I believe these groups have come seeking some assistance to provide services . . . for addiction services within different districts. And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister: how many of these affiliates do we have in the province providing addiction services; how many are funded; and, Mr. Minister, what is in place today to address some of the shortfalls in funding that is

available, and in some cases, if I'm correct, maybe even more economical than what we're currently providing through the department?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — The information I have is that we're spending through the district health boards \$6.1 million. And at the present time — well '95-96, the last complete fiscal year — through the non-government organizations, we're spending \$5.58 million as follows: MACSI, which is the Metis Addictions Council, \$1.8 million; Whitespruce, \$2 million; St. Louis Rehabilitation Centre, \$634,700; Calder Centre in-patient treatment, \$1.1 million.

And through the northern health services branch, \$1.2 million. They provide money in turn to a variety of NGOs including Beauval, Buffalo Narrows, Kiyenaw Centre, Creighton ADS Council, Clearwater Rehabilitation Centre, Ile-a-la-Crosse Rehabilitation Centre, Mitho Menoo Centre, Pine Island Out-Patient Centre, Robert Simard Centre, and Sandy Bay Rehabilitation Centre.

The department also funds . . . I mentioned MACSI. There's the MACSI core that would be the central agency, the MACSI Youth Centre in Regina, the MACSI Crisis Centre in Regina, the MACSI Rehabilitation Centre in Regina, the MACSI Rehabilitation Centre in Saskatoon, the MACSI Detoxification Centre in Prince Albert, the MACSI Rehabilitation Centre in Prince Albert, SABAS (Saskatchewan Association of Boards of Addictions Services), and I think that would be the major spending by the department.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, does the AIA, or Alcoholics Intervention Association, get any funding or have you looked at helping fund some of the programing that they're involved in?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — That is not a familiar name to us.

Mr. Toth: — Okay, I believe . . . and the gentleman that came in to see me, John Persson, and his wife, Carmen, are actually involved in Saul Cohen, an organization in Melville that has provided addiction services, and in fact they're in the present process right now of talking with some of the districts as far as working . . . putting together an addiction program that might be workable in a number of the districts.

Mr. Persson in fact I believe did talk with you, or talked with your caucus health committee when you were seeking some input regarding addiction services and unfortunately has felt there really has . . . some of the suggestions brought forward have fallen on deaf ears. And I think you mentioned that you're not familiar with them.

Well the service that they provide, as I understand, is a treatment service working with individuals and helping them and in some cases even acting as a referral to individuals, sending them . . . referring them to Calder Centre if the type of service that is needed is beyond what they can do.

They're basically, at the present time, a volunteer organization and they're seeking some assistance as they're involved throughout the province through small organizations, charitable

organizations, and providing services to people with addictions and helping them overcome their addictions. And, Mr. Minister, they have suggested that they could provide as good a quality service as you are providing through even Calder or Whitespruce for in the neighbourhood of \$250 per client.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if just some of this information has helped just jog your memory as to whether or not you've had the pleasure of meeting . . . I know your health committee has met with them because they indicated they had met with the health committee to put forward some suggestions as to how we develop programs to meet the needs of individuals facing addictions who are trying to overcome those addictions within our province.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well I don't know if the member is aware that as of April 1, 1995, the department transferred the funding for addiction prevention and treatment services to the districts. And groups like the one you're referring to would go to the local districts, and it would be up to the districts, in addition to the provincial programs that I've referred to, to decide whether they wish to contract with the organization you're referring to.

And I may well have met the individual you're referring to. I'm not saying I haven't. I'm simply saying I don't recall at this moment. I have certainly met with a number of people involved in alcohol and drug prevention and treatment services and this may well . . . these people may well have been at a meeting which I attended. But in any event, the funding has been transferred to the districts and that's where such an organization would go for money.

Mr. Toth: — That may explain, Mr. Minister, why they felt they got a good reception down in Weyburn at . . . and I forget the name of the health district. So that the fact that what you're telling me right now, other than Calder and Whitespruce where you fund them directly, most of the funding now for addictions is all part of that global funding. And I guess, Mr. Minister, what I would suggest to you, coming back to funding, as I've talked to different health districts and talked to them about their funding, they have lobbied and they've suggested that they would like a global package available to them versus a package that says you've got so many dollars in this area and so many dollars in this area, and this is where it's to be spent. In view of the changes that take place that they have no control over, they feel if they had access to global funding that they could certainly meet the needs that are out there.

And I think the other day or it wasn't . . . probably about a week or so ago when we discussed it last time, you gave me some indications that the reason you had it in place because of the fear that districts would move funding from community services into facilities and you didn't want that. I think . . . I would suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that many of these districts out there, many of the people that have been elected and certainly appointed to work on the districts and to meet the needs of the clientele within their district would have the ability to determine and would know, where they would get the best bang for their dollar.

(1415)

And I guess I'm quite concerned, as they are, with the fact that while you cut funding . . . on an annual basis you've indicated — although the federal government I think has also said, trying to offset some of the criticisms they're getting, that there'll be another year or two of cuts and then they're going to increase some funding into health and education.

I'm not sure if that's what you've indicated, but it seems to me, Mr. Minister, a global fund gives districts and . . . giving them the autonomy to make the decisions that are important and need to be made in those districts. If you give them the autonomy you've talked about, if you gave them the global funding, you may find that the criticisms will help . . . (inaudible) . . . the feelings of anger that some people have towards the current health system may be offset by the fact that they have, if you will, some of the control that you've been telling us that they've been getting.

And so I think, as I review it and look at the discussion we had this morning, if indeed districts do have that ability, if you're not putting some strings attached to every little piece of funding, districts may be able to work with some of these groups to provide even a more cost-efficient and possibly even a better program in the area of addictions than we've seen and, in some cases, areas, don't even have to day.

So I would certainly encourage you to give districts the ability to have the autonomy to make the decisions that are important for their district.

Mr. Minister, the other day I asked you for a breakdown of per day costs per patient in Whitespruce and Calder. Did you have a chance to put that together? I think I also indicated that the cost per patient in Whitespruce was \$110 a day. I need to correct that because the call that came in was talking about St. Joseph's facility down in Estevan. And that's where the 110 came from. I found that out when I got back to my office and the note I had, which hadn't been passed on to me. So I was given . . . the word that was used . . . or the reference to Whitespruce certainly wasn't correct.

But I would like to know . . . based on what Whitespruce has cost per day; Calder is costing per day, and to do some comparisons. As we see, St. Joseph's certainly was a program that was offered outside of what you're currently offering. And a program that, as I understand it, has been discontinued mostly because of the reduction in funding from the province of Alberta.

Would you have those numbers for me today?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Yes I do, and I'm going to ask the page to make a photocopy actually because I just have one copy. While that's being done, I'll say a few words about what the member was saying about the districts wanting to have complete freedom and flexibility to spend their money as they see fit.

Because what I did, as a result of conversations I've had with the member and the members of the Liberal Party and some other people, was to, in a very open-minded way, go to the districts through the body that I talk to to find out what they're thinking — which is the Health Districts Advisory Committee

— which is a committee elected by the districts which meets with me approximately once every six weeks.

And I said to them: okay, this suggestion has been made that there be complete freedom and flexibility in terms of spending. What do you think? And what came back to me from that committee was: no, we don't want a change; we feel that there should be defined pools of spending. And the advice I got from the health districts themselves was not to make that kind of change.

The page is bringing a document over which, first of all, breaks down the cost of renovations at the Calder Centre, which we were discussing last evening. And secondly, deals with the daily cost of treatment. As you can see, the cost per day for the current youth program at Whitespruce is \$280 per day per person. At Calder it is estimated the cost will be about \$180, as I read this. The adult program at Calder has historically been about \$170 per day.

So it does appear that the projections are that it will be cheaper, more cost-effective, to use the facility that exists at Calder.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that information. That information that you've handed me still is somewhat higher than what St. Joseph's was offering. But if districts do have the ability now to implement an addiction program within their district, they have that opportunity, they may be able to look at the programs like the AIA program and certainly implement it in their district to provide a service that may not be there. And then continue to use the fact that if a client that may come to them seeking some help is of a . . . needs a greater level service and then they could refer . . . act as a referral to the Calder centre.

Mr. Minister, another concern that was raised, and I'd like to ask you about this, is the fact that affiliate health centres are members of SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations), or . . . (inaudible) . . . to be . . . some members pay memberships to SAHO but as I understand today, are not given a vote or even allowed to be on the board of SAHO. Is that true? And if it is, why is that?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — That question is not something that is determined by myself or the government or the Department of Health. It is a question that is determined internally within SAHO.

SAHO, as the member will know, is a volunteer organization as opposed to a statutory organization. There used to be three organizations. I think the . . . Oh, there is a statutory basis for it. But there was a Saskatchewan hospitals association, a nursing home association, something else, a home care association, but they determine their own procedure in this regard. That is not determined as a result of any statute.

And so the member may have a valid point. I wouldn't comment one way or another because it's a decision internal to SAHO. But if the member's point is valid, then it should be taken up by some of the members of SAHO, within SAHO, and the rules would be changed at that level. They would not be changed as a result of anything that I would do.

Mr. Toth: — Well I appreciate that, Mr. Minister. Basically what you're saying then is for them to, because they are members, paying members, and are not allowed a voice or an ability to vote at SAHO, then what they need to do is go to SAHO.

But if they're not allowed a voice or a vote, how do they make their case to SAHO about the fact that here they're being asked as members to pay a membership fee but they don't have that ability to be elected to the board or to have representation and vote? What process would they follow to gather . . . or to gain that opportunity, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — My understanding is that the affiliates can be members of SAHO and they can vote at SAHO. What they cannot do is they cannot be members of the board of SAHO.

I further understand that at the last annual meeting of SAHO, a motion came forward to change this, perhaps in the manner in which the member is suggesting. And that motion was defeated by the members of SAHO. I believe the motion was to allow them to be on the board, to create positions that they would occupy on the board. That motion was defeated, but this is . . . the way they would raise the matter is the way they have raised the matter, by taking it to the organization of SAHO and the matter would then be determined by democratic vote at that meeting.

Mr. Toth: — Well unfortunately, Mr. Minister, it almost appears that SAHO has become another arm of government. And the fact that they would choose to not allow . . . they would certainly encourage and welcome memberships and take the money but have made a decision not to allow these affiliate members to have a voice on the board.

But you're telling me they can vote. The individuals I talked to said they don't have a vote. In fact Mr. Persson mentioned he was at SAHO, at the last annual meeting of SAHO, and really didn't get an opportunity to get involved and just felt that he was on the outside looking in. And he was talking in regards to St. Paul's and St. Peter's and their affiliation with SAHO so I guess I'll have to suggest to Mr. Persson that he certainly contact other affiliates and maybe they go there as one body to SAHO to indeed ask for and demand that if they are members, that they have equal opportunity on the board of SAHO and in regards to the input into the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations.

Mr. Minister, unless you've got a response to that, I'm going to move on to another area of discussion and debate because certainly the argument, as we've been discussing, it is between the affiliates and SAHO, and I think it's appropriate that they take that argument and as an organization and a group that they approach SAHO on that.

Coming to the health centres here in the city of Regina and certainly the Plains Health Centre is an issue that has been on the minds of people. In fact it's interesting, Mr. Minister, just before we came back into the session this afternoon, I was talking to a couple from the Moosomin area, and a gentleman who ended up in hospital with a couple of operations as a result

of a diagnosis of cancer. And I understand he's come along very well and is actually doing quite well.

His wife happens to be a nurse, and he had his operations in the Plains Health Centre and all her comment to me was: don't talk to me about that has-been health centre. Health is a touchy subject on her mind as a professional within the system.

What I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, what has been spent to date in the city of Regina on health . . . on construction to the General and Pasqua hospitals to bring them up to speed to pick up the load that is going to be left to them once the Plains Health Centre is closed? And what will be the . . . or is anticipated as being the total cost of the construction? And is the construction to date on target as far as cost? Because the total cost, what you anticipate . . . maybe you can say, well it's . . . we're down the road a few years yet and we're anticipating a certain amount of money.

But if today the amount you've spent happens to be somewhat higher than what you anticipated, it's just an indication that your project is going to come in well over budget. So I'd like to know what you've spent to date; what the anticipated cost is; whether the expenditures to date are within the expected budget or the planned budget that was laid out?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — The information I have is that the total cost to rationalize acute care services in Regina at the General and Pasqua will be \$83.2 million. The provincial contribution will be that same amount. The estimated completion date will be December of 1999, and to date approximately \$15.7 million has been paid. And I'm advised that this amount is on target in the sense that that's what they would have expected to have done and to have paid as at the present time.

And just . . . this wasn't asked by the member, but just to avoid confusion, I should also indicate that there is a project at the Allan Blair cancer clinic which will eventually cost \$9.5 million, of which the province will pay \$8.5 million. That is the Cancer Foundation as distinct from the Regina Health District, but I mention that just because I believe the Allan Blair cancer clinic is attached to the Pasqua Hospital so it is also within the city of Regina.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, what happens to the Plains once it is closed?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — That is not known as of the present time. The Plains is not scheduled to close until 1998, so there is some time, probably around two years at least, to determine a use for the Plains. And I believe that the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, as with Whitespruce, will be assuming responsibility, as the owner of the facility, to find parties that may be interested in using it.

I believe also there are some problems with the structure of the Plains, among them, fire code requirements and asbestos, to name two. And so any use of the Plains will have to take into account any problems there also are with the facility.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, is there any construction currently taking place at the Plains?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I'm advised that there are no capital projects that have been undertaken at the Plains that the province would have funded, but that the Regina District Health Board may have done some renovations in the Plains in connection with consolidating some of their financial services.

That would be something that the Regina district would pay for. We do not know the amount of money they have spent. Any relatively minor renovations they have done would have been done by them, not with provincial money and not with provincial approval.

Mr. Toth: — The reason I raise that, Mr. Minister, is because I had the occasion of, about three months ago, going to visit a patient in the Plains. And I went up, I believe it was the 10th or 11th floor; I don't remember exactly now. It was on one of the floors where heart trauma cases are. And I was going down the hall and I believe it was CSU (cardiac surveillance unit) unit. Could be no. 10.

But anyway I noticed that the two wings were kind of dark, and that's the first time I'd seen that. And so I asked at the desk, what's going on? Why are these wings . . . are these wings already closed? And the nurses were somewhat indignant and they said, well take a walk down the hall and see what you think. And there was a fair bit of work being going on.

And I think I saw your deputy minister, Mr. Adams, talk about asbestos being a problem. I didn't notice any asbestos being removed from the facility, but certainly some walls have been knocked out; they had been doing construction; they were upgrading. And like you say, it may be to do with some office . . . it sounded to me like they were doing some office space.

So I think the concern by the staff there was, here we are, we're told this place isn't fit to live in, and we've got construction going on around us that's probably going to provide office space, and so it just doesn't jibe with some of the concerns that were raised.

And it seems to me that when the discussion and the debate was being undertaken as far as the workability of the Plains Health Centre, the concerns for health care and health conditions was one of the top subjects that was most important. And certainly asbestos problems was a problem that was being associated with the reasons to shut down the Plains Health Centre.

So I guess what I'm saying, Mr. Minister, is while on the one hand we talk about we need to shut this facility down because it's costing us too much, it's quite obvious, Mr. Minister — whether or not your department is involved in any of the construction or any of the work — the facts are, if it's the Regina District Health Board, they're taking provincial funds to upgrade a facility that on one hand you say should be closed, and possibly they're looking at ways of saying, well it's sitting here, it's still structurally sound, we may as well make some use of it, Mr. Minister. And those are the concerns. Those are the issues out there.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I want to revise the answer I gave you a few moments ago because it may not be completely accurate. I'm advised that what may have happened, although we don't seem to know exactly what happened, is that when you engage in the process of doing the reconstruction at the Pasqua and the General hospitals, the result of that reconstruction, which we are paying for, is that some of the people in those places have to be moved around to accommodate the construction at the Pasqua and the General.

And one of the places they may use to accomplish that objective is the Plains Health Centre. So that it's possible, contrary to what I said a few moments ago, that when we fund the general package, that is the construction project going on in Regina, the Towards 2000 project, that some of the money we use to fund that which goes to the district, may then be used to pay for renovations at the Plains and perhaps some other matters as a result of the construction going on at the Pasqua and the General.

So it's quite possible that while we would not have specifically approved, if you will, this renovation at the Plains, and while we may not have specifically funded it, it may be sort of a logical consequence of what we have approved, that is the construction project going on in Regina. And the construction we've approved and that we are funding may displace some people that are being put temporarily in the Plains, and provincial money may indirectly be going into that kind of work at the Plains.

Mr. Toth: — It would seem to me, Mr. Minister, that even if you have to move some patients around just to start knocking some walls out and rearrange or redo some rooms, one would have to ask why, especially if you're not exactly sure what's going to be done with that facility down the road . . . To spend any money in there if the rooms are adequate enough right now to house patients, maybe it would have been appropriate just to leave the rooms as they were.

In some cases, I believe they were knocking walls out between rooms and making them a little larger where they could accommodate two or three individuals for observation, or certainly they could be turned into office space. And I think what I saw was more . . . looked like it could be more for the use of office space.

So these are just some of the issues, some of the concerns that come to the forefront, as the whole debate regarding acute care beds and the closure of the Plains health care centre versus construction to the General and the Pasqua in Regina . . .

Once everything is said and done, Mr. Minister, as we go to the year 2000, all the construction is complete, the Plains Health Centre is closed down, what are the anticipated available acute care beds in the city of Regina?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — The Regina district anticipates having about 730 beds.

Mr. Toth: — What does the district have to date, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — As of right now, they are operating 735

beds.

Mr. Toth: — And what did they have in 1991?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Approximately 1,040.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, I noticed at a meeting held in . . . it was the Saskatchewan Medical Association's spring meeting. You had spoken to the doctors at that time. And a comment coming out of that meeting from the doctors was about waiting-lists being too long. The article goes — and this is the *Star-Phoenix*, but it doesn't say exactly where the meeting was held. I think it was held in Saskatoon:

While dollars for health care go down, waiting lists go up and patients' health is getting worse, doctors told Saskatchewan's minister of health Friday.

Dr. Ron Ailsby of Regina said people's health is deteriorating while they wait for surgery, particularly orthopedic surgery.

"As the funding goes down and down, the waiting-list goes up."

But Cline said the wait for surgery has improved, except in certain areas, such as orthopedic and eye surgery.

"And gynaecology", shouted one doctor.

Mr. Minister, that is one of the concerns we continually have in the province, is the waiting-lists. I think we've talked about it before. You've referred to it; you continually refer to the fact that they're supposedly going down and going down in a number of areas or the waiting-lists aren't quite as long.

I guess the concern that I have, Mr. Minister, and the concern that people have across the province, is any waiting-list whatsoever is a major problem, especially if you happen to be facing the possibility of quite a serious disease or a disease that may be spreading on you that could be addressed by an earlier surgery, and the fact that you happen to be going into a surgery where there happens to be a longer waiting-list than others, Mr. Minister.

So it appears to me that while you tried to tell the doctors that waiting-lists had gone down, they weren't quite believing you. And I think people across the province of Saskatchewan may tend to view physicians and the services they are able to provide with a little more credibility than the Minister of Health.

And also, when I talk to people in my area — and I know a couple of individuals right now who are on waiting-lists for surgery — the concern is, while they struggle with their disease or with the problem that they're facing, every day that surgery is put off it just means one more day that they have to deal with either pain or the uncertainty of what their future may be.

So, Mr. Minister, what is your government presently doing to address the waiting-lists that are in place? And if the waiting-lists are as a result of a number of individuals leaving the profession, in some cases specialists leaving the province to

go to other areas, what are you doing to try and encourage medical personnel to come to this province, to continue to practise or practise in the specialty that they have taken, or the courses and the education that they have taken to give them this specialty?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well I want to correct some inaccuracies in what the member is saying. I agree with the member that waiting-lists are always a problem. They've been a problem for decades and they're a problem in each province. We are not actually losing specialists in Saskatchewan. The number of specialists practising here has been relatively stable. We're not losing physicians. The number of physicians practising here is relatively stable.

We do have a problem in terms of the distribution of general practitioners sometimes in some areas in the province, always I think in rural Saskatchewan and smaller towns where we have pockets of problems in terms of retaining physicians. But overall the numbers are relatively constant.

The member is not correct, that when I met with the doctors in Regina, not Saskatoon, that the doctors contradicted me when I said that the waiting-lists had improved. The doctors did not contradict me except in one particular. I said to the doctors that the waiting-lists had improved in Saskatchewan except in the area of orthopedic surgery and eye surgery. The doctors corrected me by saying that also they had not improved in the area of gynecology. But when the member says that the doctors, generally speaking disagreed with me, that's not correct. The doctors did not disagree with me.

The areas where we have longer waiting-lists than we would like, the orthopedic and the eye surgery, are also areas where there have been dramatic increases in the numbers of people who are getting those procedures. For example, over the last 10 years there has been an 82 per cent increase in the number of joint replacements that are being done, so that almost twice as many people are undergoing joint replacements.

(1445)

It's true that the waiting-list has not got shorter; on the other hand, almost twice as many people are being served. In the same period there has been a 315 per cent increase in ophthalmology, in other words people getting their cataracts removed and other services.

We're doing far more of those services in Saskatchewan now than we have ever done before by far, and as a result of the demand and the number of services that are being done, which has tripled in 10 years, the waiting-lists are a little longer. And we always have to constantly work to try to improve that situation. There's no question about it.

But I would say to the member, and I think the member knows, that if you went back to the *Hansard*, the proceedings of this legislature, to the 1960s or the 1970s or the 1980s, what you would find, and I can remember this, always reading the paper as a younger person, waiting-lists have always been a political football.

In the 1970s the opposition would stand up and say that waiting-lists were a big problem. I suspect when my party was in opposition in the '80s and you were in government, the opposition would get up and say waiting-lists are a big problem. The fact is . . . And now today the opposition says waiting-lists are a big problem. As long as anybody waits any length of time at all for surgery, then it is a problem in fact. And I agree with the member in that regard and we constantly have to try to make it better and make the waiting-lists reasonable.

I would say to the member that the waiting-lists we have in Saskatchewan are comparable with the rest of the country, and in many cases better. That has been borne out by independent studies including the annual review that the Fraser Institute does.

We do have a few problem areas that we should try to work on. I know that when my wife had to get arthroscopic surgery on her knee a few years ago, which was elective surgery, she, you know, had to wait seven months to go into the hospital for her arthroscopic surgery. And that was just the way it was.

But that is not a new situation. It is not unique to Saskatchewan. There are more surgeries being done than before. We can always do better and we in the health districts will strive to do better. But nevertheless we have a pretty good health system even with some waiting-lists in our province. And in many ways, we are the envy of the world.

We complain a lot about what we have in Canada and Saskatchewan and we complain about the health care system. Everybody's interested in the health care system, and in some ways we're all experts in the health care system. But the fact is at the end of the day, when you really analyse the system reasonably and fairly, it's a pretty darn good system which we should be very grateful to have.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, your reference to what was possibly there in the '70s and certainly was there in the '80s, it's maybe a little unfortunate that I don't have the same abilities that Ms. Simard and some of the present members had when they were sitting on this side of the Assembly, to give you some of the venomous attack that we used to get. And I think some of your officials were even here at that time, had to sit and absorb some of that.

But, Mr. Minister, when we look at waiting-lists, certainly there are different fields where waiting-lists tend to be a little longer. And I agree with you. Maybe what I could ask, Mr. Minister, what is being done to provide services outside of say, the Regina, Saskatoon's? Because I do know that when it comes to some of the orthopedic surgery, there are some of the smaller centres that actually have excellent service in that area . . . of providing excellent care. And is there . . . I don't think the Health department wants to give the appearance that they're giving preference.

I know that a number of individuals I've talked to, certainly even in my communities, have suggested that to some of the individuals, while they were referred to specialists in Regina, they were on what were six- to nine-month waiting-lists. I suggested that they take a look at Yorkton with the quality

service that was available for orthopedic surgery there. And I find that as individuals have done that, certainly they found that they've been basically referred, and actually had their surgery, in some cases within four to six weeks.

So is there any movement within the department in addressing some of the waiting-lists that . . . on the basis of the fact that the waiting-list may be a little longer in one facility over another one. And maybe encouraging or letting people know that they could probably get this procedure a little quicker over here. That the service is available and they could certainly seek out the professional help at another facility such as the Yorkton's.

And I'm not sure what the, say the Moose Jaw's and the North Battleford's provide as far as elective surgeries, but is there any attempt being made to address some of the waiting-lists in that matter by having . . . I guess you'd probably have to work through some of the local clinics, letting them know that this waiting-list is quite long here, but here's an avenue that may be pursued by you and by your patient. Are you doing that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — The member raises a very good point and it's a subject that I have a great deal of interest in. And in fact we are trying to, in cooperation with the health districts, encourage the notion that to the extent surgery could be done outside the major centres, that it should be.

So that you get some of the cataract surgery done now for example in North Battleford, where they also do some orthopedic surgery. And that relieves some of the pressure in Saskatoon where the waiting-list is particularly long.

We also have itinerant surgery. We have surgeons going to places like Tisdale and Nipawin and elsewhere, performing laparoscopic surgery. And we have speciality services in places like Yorkton and other centres where a variety of surgeries are carried out.

And sometimes people think that it is the goal of the government, in changing the health care system, to centralize the surgeries in some of the larger centres. And actually that is not the goal of the government and it's not something that either the government or the larger centres desire, because the problem in the larger centres . . . what they're saying is they've got too many people coming in for their surgeries and what we would like to see is more surgery done in the smaller centres. So we want to reverse the trend.

What I have done is I have asked the department to set up a working group of departmental people and medical people to look into the issue and try to examine ways that we could have more surgery done in some of the smaller centres. And I've also been talking to some of the surgeons and the faculty of the College of Medicine about how we might achieve this. I've been receiving some suggestions from some of the medical people and I'm hoping that sometime this year I'll be receiving a report from a working group that we have which will perhaps shed some light on how we might do even more of what we've been trying to do, which is to increase the level of surgery in the smaller centres.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, another

concern that's been raised by the physicians is regarding the debate that is taking place right now or has been ongoing with regards to how physicians and medical professionals are paid, and the suggestion that there may be more of a move towards salaried positions. And SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association) has indicated that they would certainly like to be involved and they feel they should be. They have an active, a very active, role to play within the delivery of health in our health system.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister — I raised this question a couple of weeks ago — if you can kind of bring us up to date whether or not the SMA has been included as an active partner, if you will, or group of individuals involved in the ongoing discussions as to how physician services are covered in the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — There are no discussions occurring at the provincial level *per se* at the moment, in the sense that we haven't set up any kind of process to look into this issue.

The process that has been ongoing up till now has been a national process set up by the ministers of Health from across the country. And there has been a national forum meeting in Saskatoon fairly recently where certainly the SMA was represented by its executive director, Dr. Briane Scharfstein, and I believe the college of physicians and surgeons was represented by Dr. Dennis Kendel.

I have certainly discussed with the board of the SMA, the issue of physician remuneration. And they have given me, in an informal way, the benefit of their views with respect to certain subjects like capitation as opposed to salary, as opposed to service contracts. But at the provincial level we don't have any formal process going on at the present time. We've simply had informal discussions.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, have you been in contact with the Wilkie mayor regarding the future of the Wilkie Hospital?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — My understanding is that a variety of services are going to continue to be provided in Wilkie; that the hospital is being converted into a health centre.

Mr. Toth: — The question was, Mr. Minister, have you been in contact with the mayor of Wilkie regarding the future of the Wilkie Hospital?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Yes, I've spoken by telephone with the mayor of Wilkie.

Mr. Toth: — And what was discussed, Mr. Minister. And will you as well speak to the head of the health board about the decisions, or any decisions, that were reached?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — The mayor telephoned me to see if I was aware of the decisions that had been made by the Greenhead Health District. And I advised the mayor that I was, and we discussed our respective understandings of what the health district had decided.

I don't intend to intervene in terms of arguing with the health board or the mayor one way or another with respect to what the

configuration of health facilities in the district should be. I do think that is a district decision.

I know the member feels that somehow when I say that I am evading responsibility. I say to the member, as I did last night, that I'm not evading responsibility and if it makes the member feel better to say that the decision is my fault, then the member may say that.

But I do say that it is a decision taken by the district health board, admittedly as a result of the budgetary pressures that they are under. I accept the blame if the member wishes to assign it. I don't intend to interfere in the process.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's not my intentions to assess blame in this situation. There's some questions that have been raised directly and that's what I'm raising with you right now and a note that said, "Ask now." So obviously somebody's called about it.

We've been told that the districts are planning to move everything from the long-term facility in Wilkie. Is that your understanding, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — That is not my understanding.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, many of the services you listed during question period will not be available in Wilkie. Are you aware of this fact?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — My understanding is as I have been advised by the district health board, as is indicated in the press release that came out from the district health board and as I have indicated in the House.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, you talk about a press release and maybe you could forward a copy of the press release . . . or I don't remember seeing one on it. I don't know if it was in the local papers here or the dailies here in the large centres. But maybe I would appreciate a copy of that, please.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Yes, I have a copy of the press release and I will send it over to the member. As I indicated to the mayor when I spoke to him, as Minister of Health, I have to go on the basis of what the district health board has told me. And although the mayor indicated to me that he did not necessarily agree with what the district health board said in their press release, what the news release that I've been provided with says, and I'll read it to you and you've got it so you can follow along:

Services that will be provided in the health centre once conversion takes place are as follows (so I note that it says, services that will be provided in the health centre): emergency services, radiology, palliative care, observation, alcohol and drug services, public health, occupational therapy, wellness clinics for diabetes, heart health and cholesterol (among other things, I suppose), laboratory, out-patient services, dietician services, home care, mental health services, physiotherapy, and youth services.

And when I was speaking to the mayor I indicated that this had been indicated to the public by the board, also indicated to me, and that I had to, on the basis of this release, accept what the board said — that they intended to have these services in their health centre.

As I understood what the mayor of Wilkie said to me in our telephone conversation, he had difficulty believing that all of these services would be made available in the health centre. I explained to the mayor that this is what I had been told by the health district; that the health district had also publicly represented this in their news release and that I certainly had to go on the basis of what I was told.

Some concern was also expressed that long-term care services would not be provided in Wilkie. I explained to the mayor that no such decision had been communicated to me and I had to go on the basis of the decisions that were actually made by the Greenhead Health District, and those decisions, as communicated to me, are as I am stating them to you now and as I have stated them in the House before.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, have you spoken to the CEO (chief executive officer) of the health district or will you speak to the CEO of the health district in regards to your understanding of what their press release says and what will be available in the new health district . . . What do they call it here? Community services centre, I think is what it is — but I may be wrong. I just can't quite pick it out right now — to ensure that, as you understand it and as you've talked to the mayor, that these services are indeed part of what the intentions of the health district are, to continue to provide services to the community once the hospital is officially closed in Wilkie?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I don't think I can usefully add to what I have said to the member, other than no, I don't intend to talk to the CEO of the health district. I do intend to ask the Department of Health to ask the district to please clarify to the mayor of Wilkie what it is they intend to offer in Wilkie. Because there seems to be some confusion about that and I would like that to be clarified.

I do not intend to do so personally but there are other people that can work with the people in Wilkie to clarify what is, I think, a relatively simple matter, and that is simply to let everybody know and understand what services will and will not be provided.

But the information that I have received is quite clear. If there's some confusion, I will ask the department to ask the health district to please attempt to clear that confusion up with whoever may be in doubt as to what services the district intends to provide.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, last fall I was approached by an individual, and actually a couple of individuals afterwards, regarding immunization for, I believe it was measles and . . . rubella? Does that sound correct? I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, what has been done by the department? The concern that was raised was the fact that there are many individuals around this province who have only

received the single immunization for rubella. And I think what had spurred on the debate is the fact that, I believe in Ontario there was an outbreak of measles. And the feeling that just a single immunization program may not meet all the needs and hold rubella in check, and Ontario had gone into a second immunization program.

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, where we are in the province of Saskatchewan today regarding this program? Who will be able to . . . if you have implemented a program of immunization, who will be getting the immunization? And if that immunization may not cover older teens in the family, whether or not individuals can indeed apply for and purchase the drug and have immunization for their families?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Yes, in this budget the sum of \$124,000 has been allocated to this process starting in the fall of 1996, in other words, this fall. Grades 6 and 8 and school-entry students will receive a measles-rubella vaccine as a modified catch-up program. We are approaching the matter in a manner that will allow us to not only eliminate measles but also rubella and ultimately mumps as well.

So what is being done by other provinces, while the programs vary from province to province, is going to be done here as well. And as a result of the vaccination program this fall, it's thought that we will eliminate measles and rubella and mumps.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, I understood or I heard you to say Grade 6 and Grade 8. What happens to Grade 7? Or did you mean Grade 6, 7, and 8, and then it just . . . and from then on in it would be say . . . every grade 6 would get the immunization program? Is that what you meant to say?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Yes, that is what I meant to say. The way the immunization is done, it is done with selected years. In this case, the 6 and 8, and the grade 7's would get the vaccination next year when they're in grade 8. And the grade 5's next year when they're in grade 6 and so on. And also the students as they enter school are vaccinated. And the advice I have is that this is the way vaccination programs work; that you select children of certain ages and each year the children of those ages are vaccinated and eventually the children are all vaccinated as they go through school.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, what about the question of individuals who are, say, grade 9, 10, 11 right now; they've only had one immunization, the opportunity to be immunized once; is there a program to address the concern there?

If not, Mr. Minister, as this individual has indicated, they had the ability to purchase a hepatitis B vaccine for their son and they're wondering whether or not they could purchase now the vaccine that would address the concerns of mumps, measles, and rubella for their son as well so that that individual then has the double immunization program . . . has received that program. Is that available, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I'm advised that, given the number of cases of measles we have in Saskatchewan, which is seven in 1995, that the experts in epidemiology feel that it's not necessary to vaccinate the grades higher than grade 8; that the program that they're undertaking — and of course our program has been

developed on the basis of professional advice — is sufficient to eliminate measles.

Certainly if someone feels that they want vaccination for an older child, that vaccination would be available, although I think there would be a fee for it. It is not felt necessary in Saskatchewan to have vaccination at other ages.

Mr. Toth: — What about if a parent is concerned and feels that they would like to just take a preventative measure? Is it possible to purchase a vaccine, as this individual indicated they were able to purchase the vaccine for hepatitis B?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Yes, they could purchase the vaccine.

Mr. Toth: — Who would they go to, Mr. Minister? Would they just go to their local public health nurse? Is that the contact that would be made? Would they have the ability then to get the vaccine and provide it to them?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — That's correct. The district health boards, through their public health programs, would provide the vaccine, and certainly the local public health nurse, if she or he could not provide the vaccine, would be able to tell them where to obtain the vaccine.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, an ongoing question that keeps coming up: number one, how much funding goes into Planned Parenthood, if any, from your department. I'd like to know what that number is.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — We do not fund Planned Parenthood directly. They do receive indirectly, public monies. We fund the Advisory Committee on Family Planning. And in 1995-96, and actually going back to '93-94 up to the present fiscal year, the funding to the Advisory Committee on Family Planning is \$273,700. And they in turn, as I understand it, provide funding in the form of a grant to Planned Parenthood, although at the moment I don't believe I have the number that goes to Planned Parenthood.

Mr. Toth: — I guess the concern that is raised, Mr. Minister, is the fact that Planned Parenthood actually is getting some funding and yet there are other organizations out there in the past that have provided information to young people and to families about alternatives to . . . especially in the area of sex education and healthy lifestyles. And as a result of changes in the government, they aren't getting any funding.

And I can remember the debate that took place in the '80s and the fact when the Pro-Life organization finally received some funding because Planned Parenthood had always . . . continually being funded, and then the removal totally of any funding to any of these organizations and allowing them to live on their own. And now we see Planned Parenthood has found a way to access funding again.

And I guess, Mr. Minister, if we're talking about equality and talking about treating everyone equally, that it would seem fitting, if the Advisory Committee on Family Planning feels that it's appropriate to put some funding towards Planned Parenthood, why wouldn't they, at the same time, fund the

Pro-Life organizations, and if they don't see that's appropriate then why would they fund Planned Parenthood? Let Planned Parenthood make it on their own, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — As I said to the member, we do not fund Planned Parenthood. We fund the Advisory Committee on Family Planning.

I'm not sure whether the Advisory Committee on Family Planning actually gives money to Planned Parenthood or not. I'm not going to say that they do not, because I'm saying I'm just not sure. We have not been advised of that, according to the departmental officials.

The officials tell me that Planned Parenthood receives its money through fund-raising. I know the United Way in Saskatoon gives money to Planned Parenthood in Saskatoon. And perhaps there is a federal grant that they receive.

I don't want to say to the member that none of the money that the Advisory Committee on Family Planning gets, goes to Planned Parenthood because I'm not absolutely sure of that. But the advice I have is that we're . . . at the same time, we're not sure that any of that money ends up in the hands of Planned Parenthood. I'll certainly look into this further and provide the member with a more definitive answer, but we don't believe that we're funding Planned Parenthood.

(1515)

Mr. Toth: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I would be pleased if you would undertake to just check and see how the \$273,000 to the Advisory Committee on Family Planning is spent.

And if indeed, Mr. Minister, as you've indicated, because you're not sure today that Planned Parenthood doesn't receive any public funds, then I would certainly concur with the fact that that, I believe, is appropriate. Because if . . . but however if they are then it's a . . . We're going to have groups like Pro-Life saying, well if Planned Parenthood gets on one side indirectly from government, then why don't we have that opportunity?

So I'd be pleased to see where the Advisory Committee on Family Planning puts their money — what it does with its money; who gets the funds. And I just, as I indicated earlier, Mr. Minister, would just suggest to you that most people have a strong feeling that if one organization should get any funds, whether directly or indirectly from government, then another organization that provides an alternate form of advice to individuals should have the same access to at least the same amount of funds.

If there aren't any funds going to one or the other, and they're living off their ability to raise funds on their own, then people certainly agree with that and I can concur with that. So I'd be pleased, Mr. Minister, if you could get us that information.

Mr. Minister, another concern that is being raised a fair bit lately, and I'm just . . . I don't know how much funding goes into research in the province of Saskatchewan or from the Department of Health, whether there is any amounts of money goes into specific areas of research.

And the reason I raise that, I was reading a couple of articles, and I think the concern and the suggestion is being made that we hear about the number of dollars going into AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) research and AIDS funding. And yet I read an article in the . . . out of a medicine magazine that talks about . . . and the headline says, "The AIDS funding disparity." And it talks about government spending in millions.

And in this case I'm going to be talking about federal dollars. The information I have here is federal dollars. And they talk about in 1993, the federal government, in spending, spent 3.8 million in cardiovascular disease research, while at the same time there were 78,894 deaths. On breast cancer, \$4 million was spent in research, while at that time there were 4,779 deaths as a result of breast cancer. And the staggering amount here is the amount spent by the federal government on AIDS research is \$43.4 million, and there are 1,245 individuals who had died of the disease in 1993. And I'm sure those numbers have changed quite dramatically.

I think what it shows, Mr. Minister, is that it certainly appears that the individuals or the groups that can lobby the hardest tend to get the largest sums of dollars. And when you look at the numbers of people that are affected by some of the other diseases, it certainly creates a question as to why.

You would think that there would be at least some equality because heart disease is something that each and every one of us faces. Not everyone is going to face the problem of AIDS if they live appropriately, or provided they don't happen to have to come and have a blood transfusion. If we've got all that cleared up with regards to the Red Cross and the way we collect blood, we may be protected in that way as well.

But I think it's important, Mr. Minister, that we look at . . . and dollars not be allocated simply because you've got a major lobby group on your hands lobbying and saying, well this is such a dreadful disease. Yes, it is. AIDS is a dreadful disease. No one wants to come in contact with or even have . . . contact AIDS. Just having observed and having talked to people who are living with it and observed what . . . read articles about what the AIDS does to a person, I wouldn't wish it on anyone, even . . . I would say even my worst enemy, I guess. But it's not something that you think . . . talk lightly of.

But the thing is, Mr. Minister, in this province there are women . . . we've got a study going on right now trying to address how we can maybe combat breast cancer for women. And the majority of that is for women. And it's a problem that people run into on a day-to-day basis versus say the AIDS problem or heart disease.

Now, Mr. Minister, I don't know if there's any funding on the provincial level into any of this research but it would seem to me that we should certainly be getting to our federal counterparts and indicating that as we're putting funding into research, the funding should at least be in association with the number of deaths or the percentage of cases or problems that we face in the country. And maybe this is something that you could pass on to your counterpart in Ottawa that would take a serious look at how we're funding some of this research.

And I guess one would argue that we've had research into cardiovascular disease for so many years, AIDS is such a new disease that that's why it's getting the majority of funding, but I think there's certainly some disparities here that need to be corrected. And I would encourage you and your department at least to address some of the disparities with regards to the funding in relation to the number of cases that we have and certainly the deaths associated with the different diseases as I've listed them here.

And I know there are many other diseases out there, like multiple sclerosis and some of these others, that are tragic diseases as well. But I think we need to take a look at how we fund these and I'll give you an opportunity to respond.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Yes, first let me say that I'm advised that the Advisory Committee on Family Planning does not actually fund Planned Parenthood and I think what I have to get to the member in terms of more information is where the money from the Advisory Committee on Family Planning actually is spent. And so I'll ask the officials to prepare something in that regard.

In answer to the member's question about provincial research spending from the Department of Health, it is a total of \$4.056 million. And it goes 2.1 million to the Health Services Utilization and Research Commission; \$1.2 million to the Department of Psychiatry, College of Medicine; \$563,000 to the Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation; and \$200,000 to the Centre for Agricultural Medicine, College of Medicine.

I should also say that there is some \$13 million I think that goes to the faculty of the College of Medicine as clinical earnings. And while that is not research money it is . . . I mention it simply to say that those clinical earnings funds help us to have specialists at the College of Medicine, which is certainly an important component of research. But the research that we fund is \$4.056 million in the areas that I've indicated.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your response. I would just like to reiterate one more time however, that when it comes to discussions with your counterparts across the country and certainly with the federal minister that some of the disparities with regards to funding be as well laid out so that there's appropriate funding going into research based on the need in the different areas, as individuals more and more . . . more individuals face the problems of heart disease and cancer and some of these other problems than we do have to date with regards to AIDS, although I do know it is becoming a problem in some sectors and some areas and a major problem.

Mr. Minister, we've had ongoing battles in the province of Saskatchewan regarding health care. I just talked about the Wilkie facility. I see by headlines, and we're going back a little bit just . . . well actually only about a month and a half ago. The Eaglestone Lodge in Kamsack was going to lose their home and we were raising some questions at that time as to exactly what the community could do, what were some of the alternatives. I believe at that time as well we had also brought up the fact as to where the regulations were regarding private care homes.

Because I know even looking at the Wilkie situation, I notice by

the letter that it talked about 10 special care patients in Wilkie that are currently in the hospital. And while they may not have the number of spots available in the current care home that's there, certainly a private care home may be something that the community may look at to address some of the special-needs patients that they're dealing with. I don't know.

But I understand in the town of Kamsack, the town of Kamsack was certainly looking at a lot of alternatives and possibilities as to how they would address the closure of Eaglestone Lodge. And I'm wondering today, Mr. Minister, what your department has been doing as a result of the concerns that have been raised, whether it's in the Kamsack area or whether it's in Swift Current as we see with the Swift Current care centre, or even the Martin Luther housing corporation of Regina I think was making an offer to buy the 25-bed, light-care facility with 20 seats . . . or suites, pardon me.

These things that . . . the concerns that we have out there, Mr. Minister, and how is your department dealing with the issues, as I'm sure the department and you as minister on an ongoing basis receive phone calls, receive letters from the different communities, and even from families themselves with regard to the health care that they are losing, and the concerns that if they lose a facility . . .

Like I can see what happens in Kamsack. I can see where people in Kamsack become very angry. If their facility is closed and there's no alternative and there's a number of heavy-care people in that facility who happen to be close to home — Kamsack is home — and the only alternative is to move them out of the community, it puts them further away from family and friends, and as a result, can be a detriment in the healthy lifestyle, or even maintaining a healthier lifestyle.

And so, Mr. Minister, I guess I'd like to know what your department is doing to address the concerns as they're coming in. And I'm also wondering, Mr. Minister, if there have been a number of requests from different communities for some information regarding private care homes and what they do to implement or provide a private care home, in view of the fact that they may be losing their heavy care home, or the facility that's currently in the community.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — There are several questions in there, of course. And I want to say to the member, first of all, that changes occur in the long-term care or nursing home care sector that sometimes don't have all that much to do with funding. Sometimes they have to do just with the fact that the facilities are not what the district health board may want.

And Kamsack, for example, is in the Assiniboine Valley Health District. And that district is actually under-resourced in terms of long-term care. In other words, they need to increase the number of long-term care beds that they have, not decrease. So they're not making a change at Kamsack because they're trying to decrease the number of their nursing home beds. They're making a change because they think a different mix of facilities would make more sense for them, and that the facility in Kamsack, in the long term, isn't what they consider to be the best nursing home facility as they would like to have it.

And sometimes you get into these situations. I know that criticism has been raised in the legislature about the closure of the lodge at Leroy. But as I've explained in the legislature, that lodge was closed because it is basically an old World War II military building that is no longer suitable for use as a nursing home facility.

And the situation is, whether we like it or not, that it's very expensive to keep people in nursing homes. It costs about . . . well, over \$30,000 per person for each bed in a nursing home. And when you have a smaller home, as opposed to a larger one, the costs sometimes rise to 40 and \$50,000 per person. And so you have to recognize that sometimes the health district boards will make a decision to consolidate some of their services while even providing the same number of nursing home beds because it is simply more cost-effective for them to do so.

And I realize that people get very upset when changes occur. And sometimes people say, and they've said in this House, well when you have more seniors why would you be reducing the number of nursing home beds?

The answer is that when you have more seniors, you've got to look after your seniors in the most effective way you can, and if you don't do that, if you don't pay attention to doing things in a sensible way, then eventually you're not going to take care of the seniors at all because the system will not sustain itself.

And I want to say, as the member knows, that it is not the intent to completely phase out nursing home care. It's the intent to have a certain number of nursing home beds per senior population consistent with national standards that have been established, but to enhance seniors care by promoting certain programs like day programs we have for seniors now that we didn't have before, respite care, and home care.

And we believe that if we offer a broader range of services to seniors, we will indeed take care of seniors we think in a better way in the long run, because we'll keep more people healthy and independent and living in their homes, which is in fact what many seniors want.

At the same time, when people are already living in a nursing home, we know that they're not very likely to go back to their own homes, which they've given up, and they're not candidates for home care; they have to be cared for. It's an unfortunate fact of political life that the opposition parties will occasionally say something like, you're throwing seniors out onto the street. As I've said many, many times, nothing could be further from the truth — that has not happened and it will not happen.

(1530)

I want to say to the member that in so far as personal care homes go, they are not designed to deal with people with heavy care needs because they're not financed to take care of people who are level 3 or level 4. Therefore a private care home would not be suitable for the 10 individuals the member refers to in Wilkie. Those individuals are people with multiple handicaps. Those individuals have to be provided with heavy care, which means they either have to stay in the hospital in Wilkie where they are presently institutionalized and have been for some

time, or they would have to be cared for in the community.

If they were cared for in the community, they would receive enhanced care. They would receive better care, not lesser care. And until such time as a plan can be brought about which would provide them with enhanced care, they will have to remain in the institution where they are.

But I want to assure the member that there is certainly no plan that those individuals will be left with lesser care nor will they be put into some private facility. Those individuals have to be provided with a very heavy level of care.

The question becomes sometimes whether a person should be institutionalized for their whole life, or whether sometimes there are people in the community who will care for individuals with multiple handicaps in their own homes or in a group home.

And the trend of many, many people and organizations over the last number of years has been to promote the concept of community living. That isn't necessarily to save money; it may in fact be a more expensive option than leaving those individuals in an institution. But I want to say, to remove any doubt, that those individuals are going to be provided with proper and compassionate care.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I certainly can concur with you that the fact that home care has been available for a fairly long time. I've been involved on a home care board and one of the concerns I always felt, that there was a time when we may have looked at institutionalizing people versus maintaining or keeping them in their home as long as is physically possible. And I think we need to continue to work that and encourage that because I do know many of our pioneers who worked so hard to build our communities and build our province would love to be as close to home as is possible.

Mr. Minister, I'm wondering if you could kind of inform me where the . . . There's a cancer study that was implemented last year, and if you can inform me as to where that study is to date, whether it actually got off the ground. I remember receiving some information just in the last two weeks or so regarding this and I'm wondering if you can just fill the Assembly in as to what is taking place regarding this study — I think it may be a study that's even taking place outside of the department — but a breast cancer study that is ongoing in the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I'm just awaiting some information about that last question, but in the meantime I'll tell the member that the Family Planning Advisory Committee spends the money it receives in this fashion: \$77,000 to the Facts of Life Line; \$82,000, administrative staff; and \$114,000, teen wellness centres.

I'm advised that there's a national breast cancer study going on but we don't have any specific information about it at the moment and we'll check into it and forward some information to the member.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, you received a report . . . the Midwifery Advisory Committee report was received in your

office I believe just in this past May. I'm just wondering, Mr. Minister, what have you done so far or are you just in the process of reviewing or what's your intent . . . what do you intend to do with the report that's been presented to you, and how does it apply to the health system and the health services that we will see in the future?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I'm doing what the authors of the report asked me to do, namely they suggested that I take the report and send it out to all the groups and people in the province that are interested in midwifery. Of course I read the report myself. I sent it out to the various stakeholders and I've asked them to respond. When I get the responses then I intend to respond myself to the report by saying which of the recommendations we intend to implement. So at the present time I'm awaiting responses from the stakeholders which we hope to have by some time in August.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, you said you hoped to have. I take it then you really didn't give an outline as to a specific time period you were hoping to have those reports back in your possession so you could respond to them. Or if you did, can you give us some time period that you were kind of hoping or that you're looking forward to these reports being available?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Actually I asked the stakeholders to respond by the end of June and hopefully they will, but experience is that people often do not respond on time. And so we hope that . . . we still want them to respond by the end of June but we hope to be in a position by the end of August to assess their responses and come up with our response to the report.

Mr. Toth: — I think, just having reviewed the report . . . some of my personal views, and unfortunately I realize that my personal views may not really mean a lot, I think it's . . . the group that's more interested are the individuals who do give birth in this province and I think I have had a fair bit of a positive feedback regarding midwifery and the fact that it certainly may have a place in our province within our health system.

So I think the committee, from what I've seen, has done a commendable job in the discussions and in the paper they brought forward and I'm sure you're going to receive a fair number of positive comments, and no doubt there'll be some questions that will be raised as well that you can certainly bring forward, Mr. Minister.

So as I did when the former minister of Health brought forward this plan, I suggested that it would be a good way and a good alternative and something worth looking into. I thank you, Mr. Minister.

I'd like to get on in the area of some other questions, but maybe I should give you an opportunity to respond.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Yes, well I appreciate the comments that the member has made about the report and I am in basic agreement with what he says. I'm not going to respond myself until I review what the stakeholders have to say. But it'll be a very interesting process and I thank the member for his interest

in the matter.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I move the committee report progress.

**General Revenue Fund
Economic Development
Vote 45**

The Chair: — I'll invite the minister to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, before we open the working of the committee on Economic Development, I wonder if I would have leave to make a short statement.

Leave granted.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

**Renewed Discussion on
Crown Construction Tendering Agreement**

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, it's a little unusual to use this forum of committee to make this kind of a statement, but I thought it easier than bringing the Speaker back in. I think, at any rate, it has the same impact.

Mr. Chairman, what I'm pleased to announce to the Assembly today and to the public of the province, that as a result of some negotiations that have gone on between the stakeholders to the CCTA (Crown Construction Tendering Agreement) agreement, that with the assistance of a mediator, there will be new rounds of discussions that will begin in the very near future. I want to report that to the House because I know there has been concern and legitimate concern from members of the opposition on this issue. They brought it to the House.

And so in trying to make sure that we keep the House up to date, I had wanted to make that statement and hope that this helps bring about a situation in Saskatchewan that will improve the working condition of men and women in the province, and also work in the best interest of the contractors, both unionized and non-union.

And so I just want to make that short, brief statement before we get on with the working of the committee.

The Chair: — I presume the Leader of the Third Party wants to respond?

Mr. Boyd: — Yes, with leave, to briefly respond.

Leave granted.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, we certainly appreciate what has taken place here. We are operating under the understanding that indeed a mediator has been appointed to resolve this situation between the various parties, the Saskatchewan Construction Association, the trade unions, as well as the government. And we believe that that is the right course of action to take place.

We believe that this issue has been forced essentially by the filibuster that we have been putting forward. And we are pleased, very pleased, to hear that there has been a resolution to this long-standing problem that we see with the Crown construction tendering policy, Mr. Chairman.

(1545)

In light of those developments, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, we feel that we are prepared now to end our filibuster and work to wrap up the legislative session, essentially as soon as possible. We believe that this has been a long session and we are prepared to see that the end come along very quickly.

I think the parties involved in this should be congratulated — the Saskatchewan Construction Association. We also thank the independent MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from Greystone for her support during it. We regret that the Liberal caucus did not support the filibuster — and the Liberal House Leader referred to it as pointless, the filibuster surrounding it — because I don't think this agreement would have been put together had it not been for the developments of the filibuster.

So with that brief statement, we now believe that the session can wrap up as quickly as possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Economic Development Vote 45

Item 1

The Chair: — It's been pointed out to me that the Economic Development has been here now four times.

Mr. Toth: — Certainly, Mr. Minister, in compliance with an understanding that I have that you have arrived at, your government has worked at, and my colleague, the member from Kindersley has certainly spoken to, we have a few questions I'd like to raise. But really, in view of the proceedings, I don't have a lot.

But I just wanted to point out a couple of things, a couple of disparities that may have come forward the other evening when the Premier had spoken in the Assembly. And just a couple of comments regarding some of the observations that have been made regarding contracts in the province of Saskatchewan. And I raise this on the basis of the economic development of this province and how we need to work together to certainly build the province.

And just a clarification of the fact that some information may not have been totally correct regarding the contracts. I note from the minister's comments and certainly the Premier's comments that the question we had raised with regards to the Department of Labour was the number of contracts that were approved under the CCTA and the number of contracts outside of the CCTA, how many were union and non-union. And while the minister stood up and suggested that 25 per cent of these contracts were union, and had suggested that 75 per cent

were't, the unfortunate part was we didn't have a breakdown of the 75 per cent, whether they were union or non-union.

And I'm not expecting, Mr. Minister, that you're going to have those figures available to you. But I think, as we've just seen in this Assembly, that the need to work together is certainly important. And therefore, I would be more than welcome to . . . or feel that it's more than appropriate . . . I think we've raised a number of questions, we've got a number of answers, and it's certainly important that we allow for the economy of this province to continue to grow. And therefore I don't have any more questions to add to the committee at this time.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would just say to the members opposite that I appreciate the questioning that has come both from the members of the third party and the official opposition. I just urge that, at any time, if you have other questions — estimates is a good time to ask questions — but know that at any time you can approach our department officials or myself in writing or verbally, and we'll try to answer questions. I understand that this is the official time to ask questions, but just realize that if from your constituency, or a concern you've raised with business or otherwise, feel free to contact us.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 10 inclusive agreed to.

General Revenue Fund Loans, Advances and Investments Economic Development Vote 167

Vote 167 agreed to.

General Revenue Fund Loans, Advances and Investments Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation Vote 154

Item 1 — authorized by law.

General Revenue Fund Economic Development Vote 45

Vote 45 agreed to.

Supplementary Estimates 1995-96 General Revenue Fund Budgetary Expense Economic Development Vote 45

Items 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 45 agreed to.

General Revenue Fund Justice Vote 3

Items 1 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 3 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1995-96
General Revenue Fund
Budgetary Expense
Justice
Vote 3**

Items 1 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 3 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Agriculture and Food
Vote 1**

Items 1 to 12 inclusive agreed to.

(1600)

**General Revenue Fund
Loans, Advances and Investments
Agriculture and Food
Vote 146**

Vote 146 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Loans, Advances and Investments
Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan
Vote 147**

Item 1 — authorized by law.

**General Revenue Fund
Loans, Advances and Investments
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Vote 161**

Items 1 and 2 — authorized by law.

**General Revenue Fund
Agriculture and Food
Vote 1**

Vote 1 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1995-96
General Revenue Fund
Loans, Advances and Investments
Agriculture and Food
Vote 146**

Vote 146 agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — I would like to thank the members opposite for the questions and really appreciate the time the staff has spent with us answering . . . helping us answer questions this estimate.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to, as well, thank the Minister of Agriculture and Food and his officials for participation and dialogue over the last number of months, and respect his abilities and his thoughts on some of the issues that

we discussed. And I appreciate the time that him and his officials took to address those concerns.

**General Revenue Fund
Labour
Vote 20**

Items 1 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 20 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1995-96
General Revenue Fund
Budgetary Expense
Labour
Vote 20**

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 20 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Executive Council
Vote 10**

Items 1 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

Item 8 — authorized by law.

Vote 10 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Executive Council
Electoral Expenses
Vote 34**

Item 1 — authorized by law.

Mr. Toth: — Just one quick word before we report progress, and that is to say a special thank-you. I saved it all to the last for the different committees we've had the privilege of meeting with this afternoon — the ministers for Social Services, Labour, Health, Ag and Food, Justice, and Executive Council. We certainly want to thank them for their input. And a special thank-you to all of the different members of these organizations that have been with us, to all the assistants that have joined us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**General Revenue Fund
Loans, Advances and Investments
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
Vote 153**

Item 1 — authorized by law.

**General Revenue Fund
Loans, Advances and Investments
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation
Vote 143**

Item 1 — authorized by law.

**General Revenue Fund
Loans, Advances and Investments
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Vote 140**

Item 1 — authorized by law.

**General Revenue Fund
Loans, Advances and Investments
SaskEnergy Incorporated
Vote 150**

Item 1 — authorized by law.

**General Revenue Fund
Loans, Advances and Investments
Saskatchewan Power Corporation**

Item 1 — authorized by law.

The committee reported progress.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That this Assembly do not adjourn at 5 p.m. today but continue sitting until such time as a motion for adjournment is agreed to.

Seconded by the member for Regina Centre.

Leave not granted.

(1615)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 76

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 76 — An Act to amend The Health Districts Act, to repeal The Union Hospital Act and The Lloydminster Hospital Act, 1948 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts** be now read a second time.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the reasons that the official opposition delayed the sitting of this House last week was because of some of the health legislation that was being brought forward, and particular the Bill No. 76 was one of the reasons that we had some concern on it.

The concern is of course with the way that things in the province have gone regarding health, and certainly Bill 76 we don't see as addressing or solving many of the problems that we have in the health reform process that was started some number of years ago.

Mr. Speaker, if I can go back, I guess a number of years, to when the health reform started in this province, one of the basic premisses of the health reform itself was that it would provide for a number of health districts throughout this province, and certainly that is what has happened at this point in time to a number of 30 health districts which we have.

The discussion that centred around the health districts at the time of their formation was certainly a controversial one and certainly one that many people were involved in, including myself in my role with the local health board in my own community of Imperial, and in particular with the health agency and the health facility that we have in that community, the Long Lake Valley Integrated Facility as it was called when it was built. And certainly we were concerned in that community as to what role that agency and that facility would play in the community and in the whole scheme of things, and where it would fit into within the health district somewhere in the province.

Many discussions took place with neighbouring communities in the neighbourhood of Imperial, Liberty, Holdfast, and it spread to the communities of Watrous, and certainly across the line to the communities of Kenaston, and Hanley, Bladworth, and Davidson, Craik, Aylesbury, and Girvin, down to Chamberlain, and certainly across with the communities of Bethune, and Dilke, and Holdfast, and all those.

As well, it went further than that, Mr. Minister, it went to the next line, to the communities of Central Butte, where in Riverhurst . . . where they've been served by a hospital and a special care home for many years in the community of Central Butte.

So the discussions of the health reform and the districtification process were very wide and certainly, and certainly controversial, as I mentioned earlier. The problem and the fears that many people had were as to where the health district process would fit in with the communities of Imperial and the surrounding area. And those concerns were certainly justified, Mr. Speaker, and it did happen and did continue.

As you will recall, back in the days before SAHO was formed . . . SAHO of course being the birth of a new organization with the amalgamation of the three major provincial associations before that, the long term care association, and the home care association, and the SHA (Saskatchewan Health-Care Association) to form SAHO. But the SHA had put together a brief and presented it to the Murray Commission of the day, where it suggested such things as pilot projects and the formation of some large districts, actually regions, Mr. Speaker.

In those regions, they talked about having many communities coming together and much larger than what the districts have turned out in size. So we made a brief, SHA made a brief, to the Murray Commission presenting some of our ideas because we were representative of some close to 500 health agencies within the province. And we made representation on their behalf to the Murray Commission and came up with some solutions that we thought were very fitting and would help the reformation process within health care throughout Saskatchewan.

Of course we all know the discussions that centred around the Murray Commission and then what happened with that report as we moved into the new wellness model or the new health reform process. However we talked about where communities would fit into and where they would get their services from, Mr. Speaker.

The whole discussion centring around health care, Mr. Speaker, in this province has been an ongoing one. And I think that even though some of our present-day politicians would rather not talk about health care these days, it's something that we must continue to address and look after and ensure that the needs of the people of the province are met.

So we talk about the districtification process, Mr. Speaker, back in 1993 and it was really a process that tore many communities apart, Mr. Speaker. It caused communities to argue and to fight amongst each other and caused agencies to do the same and the people in those communities as well. The unfortunate part of it was, is that amongst all this fighting and arguing and discussions that took place, that not necessarily the best for health care took place because of that process being forced.

The people of course in the communities, the individual communities, had a concern about where health care was headed and how they would have their needs met for within their communities. And certainly expressed and explained that to their representatives, whether it was the local municipalities or whether it was the health agencies or their health boards and their representatives on it.

And so the fight raged away. Communities arguing, trying to fit in, recognizing that a major change or a major loss of a health agency or health facility would certainly have serious economic effects upon their communities.

And that is indeed a fact. We all know that the economic situation in the late '80s in Saskatchewan was extremely hard on the farmers in rural Saskatchewan and the people that lived there, and the small businesses included. Therefore they recognize the fact that if they were to lose a health agency, which meant jobs in the community and surrounding area, it would have a serious effect on their small towns and villages.

And we're not willing to let that happen. We all know that if you let one business die in the community, if you lost your health agency, your health facility, which meant jobs, you're likely going to lose other things that domino on down through the . . . possibly the drugstore. If you lose your hospital or your health centre, what need do you have for a drugstore, Mr. Speaker?

So people recognize that. Most often in the small towns a drugstore is more than just a drugstore. It's a liquor vendor. It might also be part of the grocery store. It provides many services and carries many goods that the communities need. So we lose the drugstore if they lost their health agency.

The next thing to go . . . and many towns have a number of other businesses, including general merchandising stores that carry groceries and some dry goods; and a lot of towns, larger towns, have a couple of these stores. And of course a loss of jobs means a loss of people and therefore the most likely to lose

one of their businesses.

That's not all that's affected. If you don't have the people to look after a storekeeper and keep his business viable, he's going to move. And that means another loss of family, which would then in turn affects other businesses, whether they be the garages or whether they be confectioneries, whether it means the cafés or restaurants or whether it means a hotel. And certainly we know that the hotel industry in the province has been suffering over the last number of years from lack of business and struggling to keep open and keep viable.

So all the discussions around the loss of a health service in a community is . . . had a major factor on the discussions that were taking place regarding the districtification process and the loss of a health facility.

In a lot of communities, people were willing to go and lobby their representatives on their health boards, and rightfully so. Many of the communities had already come together in a system of a regional board with representation from all the communities affected and were coming together to discuss how they could provide the services in a region, in a large community, to ensure that the services were being met.

These agencies, having been called — in our region in particular — a district coordinating committee, did come together, did bring communities together prior to 1991 in order to discuss the needs of a larger region. Of course some of the communities that were coming together in our area certainly range from the communities of Central Butte, which had a representation by a surrounding area of a great number of people in small towns and small villages.

And of course as we moved across towards the centre of that district, which is located between the two large bodies of water, Last Mountain Lake and Lake Diefenbaker, we crossed the paths of Craik and Davidson, who both at that time had hospitals and health agencies involved and were willing to sit down to negotiate to see who would best provide what service in a larger area and meet those needs.

As we came across of course to the No. 11 roadway, the highway, and that group of communities, of course Craik represented a great number of small communities that have served for its health needs, including places like Girvin and Aylesbury and Chamberlain. And as you moved up the highway to Davidson it also served a great number of people in the surrounding area and smaller communities such as Bladworth and Kenaston and overlapped to Girvin, and probably even to some extent across to the west to Loreburn and Elbow and in through that area.

As you moved up of course, it included Kenaston, and then we're coming across to the east side of that region. Now you would come to Watrous, and certainly they were involved in the discussions, and being a major trading centre also fit into the scheme of things from our area where the traffic flow did follow that pattern up No. 2 Highway.

So of course Watrous then did serve a great area in health needs down to the Amazon country and Simpson. And then we come

to Imperial where there was an integrated facility and formerly a hospital as well.

The area continued south, and Imperial did cover a large area too overlapping with Watrous in the Simpson area and heading south to the communities of Stalwart and Liberty and Penzance and Holdfast. There was also services provided to the communities of Dilke, and certainly Bethune and Findlater, and then overlapping again across to Chamberlain.

(1630)

So we felt that there was a need to have a group come together to recognize the individual areas and the needs that they had, and we tried to do that. I was a member of that group from the RM (rural municipality) of Big Arm, No. 251, in the Imperial-Liberty area and represented on that group.

There was representation from all the health care areas, including acute care, long-term care, home care. Mr. Speaker, the home care district was called the Watrous and Davidson home care region and it did represent the community-based needs to the people in that area that needed them. It also went farther than that, Mr. Speaker, and overlapped down South, of where I'm from, with Wascana Home Care district as well as across from the Moose Jaw area.

So there was a great area represented, and of course with the intricacies of the boundaries overlapping each other and what have you it proved to be a challenge to try and bring these people together, but I think we were. I think we did develop a sense of common goal, and we were trying to move toward that end result where we would ensure that people's health needs were met and that we quit providing services and building health facilities for political reasons.

So we were moving through that process, Mr. Speaker, prior to the election in 1991 and were making some great strides. We continued to lobby the government at that time to put some funding aside to fund these coordinating groups so that they could offset some of the costs that were involved with home care.

In that region, Mr. Speaker, the home care . . . Watrous-Davidson home care group, through its coordinators, that was located in Watrous with a satellite office in Davidson did the assessing for that whole area for the needs of the people. That was a major job, and it was costly, and it was not fair that the home care district should have to fund the complete cost of the assessment for everyone involved whether it overlapped the Wascana district or the Moose Jaw district or the Central Butte area.

So we recognized there was a problem and through the different agencies we provided some funding to the home care district to offset the cost of the assessments and the coordination. Of course there's mileage and salaries involved, and that can, as you well know, can add up to a serious amount of economic problems for an agency that hadn't budgeted for that.

So we lobbied the provincial government to provide some of that funding to us, and it seemed to be . . . at that time have

some, I guess, some sympathy from the department and we were lobbying quite heavily to try and get that done. However, that didn't happen because after the election we moved into the wellness model and the district coordinating committees unfortunately were set aside and ignored and basically dropped.

Now everyone realized that we had a problem in health care. And nobody recognized that any more than myself, being involved with the provincial association and representing some 500 agencies, health agencies, across the province, Mr. Speaker. And so we knew that things had to change and we had to do things differently. We had to economize. And people in the health system, including the trustees and the workers, recognized that.

Now the trustees had not a lot at stake other than a lot of volunteer time that they contributed to the health system in forms of attending health care meetings and ensuring that health care needs of the province were being met, whether it was through their own communities, through their own people that they represented. So these health trustees spent hours and hours, travelled miles and miles for very little more than some mileage — and in some cases not even that — and most often only to be criticized by many people because they felt they wanted them to do more.

And that's understandable. We all know that when you have a volunteer board that people sometimes fail to recognize the value that you have committed to doing that job and ask you to do more and more and more and more to the point of many people getting disgusted and quitting. But most trustees at that time recognized there needed to be change in health care and were prepared to do it.

Now when the districtification process started to be discussed, everyone was unsure exactly how many districts that the government had in mind to begin with, and also how many districts we would actually end up with.

Now having said that, I don't expect that the people that were involved in it in many local communities had any idea how many districts there'd be. All they were concerned about, Mr. Speaker, was that what would happen to our health agencies, our health facilities, and to the people that needed the service.

So we started about the reform process. And we heard the former minister, as I've stated in this House many times, going around the province. And I actually did some travelling with the minister and her deputy, myself, on behalf of our provincial health association, and a number of other people to start to talk to people throughout the province as to what health reform really meant.

And as I travelled around and as the minister appeared at actually district meetings that the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association had set up and sponsored in regions, as we did every year, sometimes twice a year, we would get people of course — many people — out to listen to the discussions here.

And because there was talk of reform and change in Health, there was a good turnout at a lot of the meetings. And many people came to hear what the minister had to say and what we

as a provincial association had to say and where health reform was heading. And that was fair.

The minister of the day talked about, you know, people working together and the government being prepared to work together with the communities. And people did buy into that to some extent.

However, our association was pressured to be ensured that there was representation through us to the government on behalf of the health agencies and the people involved — whether it was the workers or the volunteers, the trustees, or what have you — that their concerns were raised and brought forward and addressed. And that's the way it should work.

Now as we travelled around the province we heard the minister of the day saying things like: we'll work together, this will not divide communities, we'll ensure that communities come together, and we will also take into account all aspects of a community and of reform.

Now reform means different things to different people, and so that was a pretty broadly used term. But all things taken into consideration, they thought well, yes, we can work with the government, and we will, through the association and individual lobbying and what have you, we will get what's best for our communities. And that was good. Because when you educate people and convince them that there's change to be made and they're for the best and for the right reasons, people are most apt to get onside and help you make those changes.

However, as the discussions went and we finished our tour and the minister talked about the different health sectors in the different areas of the province and how people's needs were going to be met, whether it was acute care or whether it was long-term care or whether it was home care, community-based service, you can use whatever terms you want. And that they were listening and thinking, yes, we need to make some changes and we're willing to do that considering that all aspects of reform as it relates to a community and to the people would be taken into consideration. So on the process went.

And I recall one day over at our office on Park Street, the government had a change in Finance ministers about then, and the present Finance minister showed up for a meeting with our board. And we discussed many things and talked about health reform. We talked about of course, with the Finance minister, how health reform relates to economics.

And at that point in time is when I think the wellness model and health reform took a turn for the worse, when the minister announced to us that we're sorry but economics for a community do not come into this picture; we will be changing the way we do health in this province, and if it detrimentally affects the community economically, then that's the problem of the community.

Basically what the Minister of Finance said that day was that if a community dies as a result of the loss of a health agency or health facility, so be it — it doesn't matter. And I think that's when health reform took a major turn for the worse.

Now as you know in a community if you lose your health facility, you lose a number of employees. And that can have a detrimental effect to a small community because what you have is many people are employed by a health agency that are married to people in a community most likely, and given that in rural Saskatchewan, we don't have a great huge number of young people any more.

You've got people that are established there, whether they're the local businessman, whether it's the local grocery store, whether it's the café, whether it's the hotel, whether it's the garage, and most often it's farmers, and the spouse is a farmer. Whether it's the mother that does the farming and the husband works off, or whether vice versa, and most often it's the husband that does the farming and it's also . . . it's the ladies, the wives that go to town to work in these health agencies as we're talking about.

So you can pretty much destroy a community by taking away a major employer of people, and that did happen to many of the communities. So you can see the anxiety that a community might have in relationship to losing a health centre which is the major employer in a community, which provided of course, as we all know, well paying jobs for the health sector for these people that were there, whether it be a nurse or whether it had been a support worker or whether it be a cook or whether it was the maintenance man, the maintenance lady — all those that supplied the services. So it can be a major hardship for a community and for a group of people that are involved there.

So we had some problems when the Minister of Finance announced that the economics did not play a role in it as it relates to a local community. It did however have a major . . . economics did have a major role to play in health reform and that enabled the government of the day to balance its budget and to at this point in time, get to where we're at with the problems that the districts have got. It was a downloading exercise and we've proven that to date, and continues to happen.

However the people, the people across the province certainly didn't realize that some of these factors were now off the table and weren't going to play a role in the health reform process and therefore continue to go about trying to decide where they would fit in as individuals, as communities, as health agencies, as health facilities. And so the process continued. Negotiations, discussions, the arguing, the lobbying continued both between the communities, between the people in those communities, between the health agency boards, the volunteer boards, as well as with the government of the day.

And many communities, and probably a number of the members in the Assembly today had communities that tried to lobby the Minister of Health for whatever reasons, whether it was to retain their services, whether it was the Eston hospital, or whether it was one of the other 51 at the time that were trying to keep from being closed or from being converted.

And part of the problem was, Mr. Speaker, that people didn't understand. They didn't understand what losing acute services meant, even though many of them hadn't provided what the department recognized as acute services for a number of years.

And so when you're trying to change a system, a major overhaul of the system, people don't understand. It's pretty hard for you to expect them to voluntarily come onside and make a change that they don't know, that they're unfamiliar with, that they don't know where it's heading, and they don't know what to expect.

And so the battles actually raged on for a great deal of time. And in our area we're certainly in the whole midst of things, right in the middle, as our community, in the region I described earlier, was kind of central. So our municipalities that were made up of our union hospital district were telling our board that, hey, you have to ensure that our health facility agency will survive and that the services in these municipalities that you were appointed to represent are looked after.

(1645)

And of course we all know how volunteer health boards were formed and certainly were appointed and certainly were accountable not only to the municipalities, whether it was urban or rural municipality that appointed them, responsible to them, but more appropriately were responsible to the people within those municipalities.

The certain . . . the small hamlet, if I can, of Liberty is how I became to be a trustee on the local board and did represent them for a great number of years on that board and did at this time as well. However there is a surrounding municipality who, because of assessment, was able to have a couple of trustees appointed to the board, and they didn't do that, but much larger RMs to the south that had representation again because of their larger assessment and sat on our board.

There were also many small villages and hamlets and communities that centred around that also had representatives. And I know that there was a large number of resort villages on the south end of Last Mountain Lake that had representation on our board. And a number of them came together because of their small assessment and were entitled to have one representative and they did, and they did have one representative and the villages, resort villages, Wee-Too and Alice Beach and Sarnia, had one representative.

And they faithfully came to the meetings. They travelled . . . most of the meetings were held in the community of Imperial in the health agency, the integrated facility. And they travelled there faithfully to board meetings, to health meetings on a volunteer basis and really only many times received some mileage and most often a very small per diem, if any.

So we came together as a group and tried to decide the fate of the health agency facility in Imperial and also how it would be affected by health reform. The biggest concern that they had for the health facility was much the same as any community had that had a hospital or a special care home or what have you. And they realized that it was a valued service and, more importantly, a need of those communities to have that agency there.

The agency itself provided many services. Of course it originally provided acute care services. And under the old scheme of things in the health care system, the acute care

services have changed to mean different things. Now of course in the old Imperial hospital we didn't provide what now is known as acute service for many years, but we did provide the services that were needed by those communities that surrounded the Imperial Union Hospital and then later the Long Lake Valley Integrated Facility.

The Long Lake Valley did provide acute services and long-term care. Of course when it was built, it had a long-term care facility in it, and provided that service for the . . . basically for the seniors in the province and . . . or in the community that were involved. I think when it was built there was about 10 beds built, designated long-term care for levels 3 and levels 4. And certainly the waiting-list for them at that time was extensive and it is to this day.

As well in that institution they were able to provide lab and X-ray services to the people in the community, and that worked well as there's been a resident doctor in Imperial for as long as I can remember and at most times there was a couple of them. To this day there is only one. At the time of the districtification process there was only one doctor, so it provided a service that we needed.

So the wellness model caused a great hardship and a lot of anxiety for many people. And I guess being part of that process I recognize a lot of that anxiety and it was taken out on many board members and many meetings that we had and long hours, whether it was through the dead of winter or when it was.

But anyway this agency did provide the service that the community recognized was needed, and so they wanted to protect it. So the discussion raged on as did in many communities as to how would we best be able to ensure that Long Lake Valley did survive and continue to provide that service to the communities.

The discussions, as did most community's, centred around what district would we belong to. Who would make up this district. And certainly we had the discussions with many of the communities and through our representatives and through the people that we talk to day in and day out. And certainly the health workers were involved and certainly the doctor played a major role in this process.

The questions that arose, as did in many communities, were simply where can we fit in? Where will be best be able to survive and continue to provide this service that our communities and residents of our communities so desperately need?

So you start looking around and you say, well should we fit in? Are we better to be a small district? Are we better to be a large district? Should we be part of the large district or should we not?

And all these decisions are pretty hard to decide as to where they would best fit in. And so the best that the trustees and the representatives of the municipalities could do would be to discuss and try and make deals and what have you.

And as we all know that when you have local boards trying to make a deal with neighbouring communities, that's fine and

dandy. But the government and the Minister of Health in the final analysis had the final decision.

So the discussions went on, and we talked about how would we decide where we should fit into. And as I mentioned earlier, we were involved in a region with Watrous and Central Butte and Davidson and Imperial and the surrounding area, a great many miles between the two large lakes, as to could that be a feasible region to set up a health district.

And it appeared initially that we could meet the magic numbers that the government said — I think if I recall, somewhere around 12,000 population — to have a sustainable district, and maybe that was a good number to pick. There are many districts that lobby that could only come up with maybe 8 or 9,000. Some of those had substantially more but how do you know how many people it takes to sustain a district when you don't know how many people it takes to sustain a district.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a tough decision. It's one that I couldn't get a handle on as to how many people it would take. And we tried to use all the reasoning and logic we could to try and decide how many people it takes to make up a district, a viable district.

Well, before you can decide what a viable district is, is you have to decide what services you're going to provide. And so we have to kind of wonder, what did the government have in mind for the districts? Where were they going to let certain services be provided? Would every district be able to do surgery, or would every district have to do surgery?

Well certainly that would not be an option if you weren't a member of a regional centre or a large city where the tertiary centres are. And certainly it became quite clear that that would be a major problem in determining what services. Certainly everyone recognized that you can't just provide a service in an agency because a few people think you need it, and therefore you have to kind of think rationally and reasonably what services you might provide.

Well most rural areas recognize that we do need acute services; and we do need long-term care; and we do need housing; and we do need home care — community-based services; some diabetic services; chiropody; you name it — what we need. Chiropractic services; it's great to have an eye specialist come into a community and provide a service to keep the people from having to drive miles and miles and miles to get that service, in particular the elderly service.

And so I think that the people recognize that they would not be able to provide all the services that they can . . . that they thought they might need, because if you surveyed 200 people in a community, you'd probably get 200 different answers as to the extent of services that you would need for that community.

Well as I've stated, many people recognize what services you need, and certainly some of the basic ones that I mentioned would probably suffice. However, the government would have an idea as well as to what services a district might want to provide and that's certainly part of the districts Act, and part of the amendment that we're speaking about today.

So you had to try and balance off, knowing what the people of the community felt they wanted or the communities involved, as well as maybe what the government Department of Health had in mind for the districts. So the discussions went on and went on and went on.

And finally as the process was winding down and the government had placed some deadlines, as probably would be appropriate, that you have to do in order to bring this thing to a conclusion, the communities that were involved in the districtification process finally decided that, well we'll have to make a decision. So with some last-round discussions with surrounding communities, in particular our own area with the neighbouring areas, the communities continue discussing and we're trying to come up with a final decision as to what we would do.

So if I recall rightly in our community, with the communities that were involved, had one last meeting to try and come up to a consensus that yes, we could form this district and it would be a viable one.

However, at the same time a number of the communities on the outlying corners, as I mentioned, particular Watrous and Central Butte on the other end, and certainly Nokomis, who I didn't mention earlier, played a part in our role, health role. We're having discussions with other districts. And so you've got us involved with the group. And certainly we were entertaining discussions with the Regina Health District at that time, which was already formed up.

And certainly these folks were having discussions with people in the other areas. I know Nokomis was certainly entertaining discussions with Watrous and that ended up into being Living Sky. And certainly Central Butte was having discussions with Thunder Creek, and that grew to Moose Jaw, and they ended up being involved with Thunder Creek, as did Craik, whom we were also discussing.

So we knew the pulling from all corners was taking place and we were feeling it as well. But it was awful hard to make a decision because we had those long, long ties with those other communities that we'd had, and it's hard to break that.

Trading patterns, as I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, we had trading patterns certainly with the community of Watrous and certainly with Davidson because of the machinery dealers being only centred any more in the larger centres. And so we had ties there, back and forth.

With the travel of today, we have many . . . any travelling that you do, you make friends, there's marriages, people from different communities are getting married. And so there's lots of ties. So it's hard to break those ties, Mr. Speaker.

And certainly it involves, even more so . . . is involved with health because, as you make those ties, you've got relatives and loved ones that are in special care homes in neighbouring towns. And it's awful tough. And so it's hard to break those ties.

Now when you're entertaining . . . with a larger district that would extend some 85 miles from the community of Imperial to Regina, and that district extends farther south and to the east and to the north-east, it's hard for many people in the community to understand or fathom what you're trying to do. So it's a very tough decision and it was hard on many of the local taxpayers in these communities, and certainly was even harder on volunteer health executives that were on some of these boards.

The problem being is that, unless you can go and talk to every one of the people, and individually, you can never get them to understand why you need to make a change. And so that compounded the problem that we had as a health board, as a health group in the region, to explain to these people what was going on. Maybe it would be better to look at a larger district to provide the services, their local agency could be . . . their local agency could be one that might provide those services that could help out a larger centre, even a tertiary centre such as Regina.

And so that's what our board did. Our board went and talked to some members of the Regina Health District Board that was at the time, and so those discussions took place and we did our best to explain to the people, local communities and the residents, that indeed that might be the best alternative.

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

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, this is unusual, but I would ask for leave to allow the Liberal member to check with his House Leader, because we have an understanding between the Liberal House Leader and myself that we could return to do Health estimates, and I wondered if we could take a short recess so he could check that and allow us to move back to Health estimates.

I understand he's here by himself, which makes it very, very difficult for him to be able to even check with his own staff. And I wonder if we could take a short recess to allow that, by leave of the Assembly?

The Speaker: — I'm sorry but the hon. member is not in order to request leave because he doesn't have the floor and can't do it, and can't raise it, having requested a point of order. If the hon. member wishes to put a point of order, he may do so. Would the hon. member like to put a point of order?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Point of order then, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Well the point of order that the hon. member raises is whether he can request leave without having the floor. And the procedures of the House do not allow for him to request leave without having the floor. It has to . . . Order, order. In order to request leave to change the proceedings, an hon. member has to have the floor. And so the point of order is not well taken.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — In order to facilitate this and with

the approval of the member, I wondered if he would entertain a question?

The Speaker: — The hon. member, the Deputy Premier, has asked the hon. member for Arm River if he would entertain a question. That is in order. Will the hon. member for Arm River entertain a question?

Mr. McLane: — No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, given the hour, it is adjournment time.

The Speaker: — It now being past the hour of 5 o'clock, it is adjournment time. And before the House stands adjourned, this being the first weekend of summer in Saskatchewan, I wish for all members an enjoyable weekend with your families and constituents.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:04 p.m.