

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the citizens of the great city of Melville to present a petition and the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I also would like to present petitions today to do with the problem of youth crime. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

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

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are all from the town of Kamsack.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition today on behalf of concerned citizens from throughout the province concerned about the escalating problem of youth crimes. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a

police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

The petitioners are from Kamsack, Veregin, and throughout the eastern part of the province. I so present.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll read the prayer for relief:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crimes, including charges of car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of the communities of Waldron, Grayson, and Melville. I so present.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do as well have a petition on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

Mr. Speaker, the petition today is signed from concerned citizens of Balcarres.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are primarily from the Kamsack area.

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

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens petitioning the Assembly to reverse the municipal revenue-sharing reduction;

Of citizens petitioning the Assembly to establish a task force to aid the fight against youth crime; and

Petitions regarding the construction of a new hospital in La Loche.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Clerk Assistant: — Mr. Aldridge presents the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, which is hereby tabled.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a pleasure to table the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts here this afternoon.

I would at this time like to acknowledge the good work of past members, the past Chair, the member from Melfort-Tisdale, and yourself as the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood. I'd also like at this time to welcome the new members of the committee, the member from Kelvington-Wadena and the member from Redberry Lake.

The task of the committee was a large one; there was a lot of work to go through. I think all members of the committee applied themselves with diligence. Certainly the committee's work was not without disagreement at times, but all members of the committee were afforded opportunities to state their case on any given issue. And we can take a good deal of pride in the fact that we have accomplished as much as we were able to to date.

I would also like at this point to acknowledge the work of the Vice-Chair, the member from Meadow Lake, and other members of the committee: the member from Saskatoon Greystone, the member from Moosomin, the member from Lloydminster, the member from Regina South, Saskatoon Eastview, and Saskatoon Sutherland.

Also the good work of the Office of the Clerk for helping us along the way, and the Provincial Auditor's office and Provincial Comptroller's office who . . . all of their help and their opinions along the way were invaluable in our deliberations.

So I just, in closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do wish for the committee, a renewed sense of energy, optimism, and certainly look forward to working in the year ahead and towards tabling our third report. But at this time I would move, seconded by the member from Meadow Lake:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to join as well with the member from Thunder Creek in tabling this, and it's a pleasure to second the motion. I just want to just take a few moments as well.

I want to thank the member from Thunder Creek for now taking over the role of Chair. And I also want to pay tribute to the member from Melfort-Tisdale who I know did an awful lot of work in trying to get our committee back up to speed again. And we're virtually caught up now. We have several reports to deal with.

I also want to acknowledge the diligent and hard work of other committee members; and certainly I want to acknowledge the work that our Provincial Auditor did as well in aligning the different groupings and different departments for us so that we were able to get back on track. We were able to, with many of the recommendations, we were able to line them up and do them in duplication so that we didn't have to go through all the different reports.

But again, just in closing, a pleasure to second the motion in tabling the report and to thank all committee members, the Clerk's office, and all involved in getting this report together today. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm most appreciative of the opportunity to make comments on the report of the Standing Committee of Public Accounts. And let me begin by stating that I've been a member of this committee since 1991. It's been my privilege to participate and witness many of the positive changes in the accountability of government finances.

The mandate of the Public Accounts Committee is to assist the Legislative Assembly in holding the government accountable for taxpayers' money and for its stewardship over public assets. To fulfil its functions and meet its responsibilities, the committee undertakes to review, examine, and evaluate the financial and administrative activities of government departments and Crown corporations cited in the *Public Accounts* and the *Report of the Provincial Auditor*.

The comments that I would like to make stem from the mandate of the committee and the importance of protecting the work of this committee. The report tabled today is a majority report, and I am compelled to make some statements since there are some items with which I do not agree, and I have noted some developing trends that are worrisome.

The Public Accounts Committee must be able to examine all government organizations in a non-partisan way. And the very nature of having government officials rather than ministers appear before it, distinguishes it from the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Now I'm concerned about the trend to refer Crown corporation issues away from the Public Accounts Committee to the Crown Corporations Committee because the two committees, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have very different mandates and very different approaches, and I find this trend unfortunate and disturbing.

Another serious trend is the government's willingness to join one government organization with another to create a new entity which then is not required to come before the Assembly and be accountable.

Of equal concern is the fact that it is now a matter of public record that some members of the government believe that the Provincial Auditor should not continue to bring forward issues with which the government disagrees. This view is myopic at best, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and very dangerous.

There was much debate amongst the Public Accounts Committee members about whether or not the government provides a complete enough planning framework, and obviously there was a disagreement between government members and myself or I would not have felt compelled to be raising this today.

I most certainly believe that the government's current planning framework is incomplete. Without an overall plan, it is very difficult for me to represent my constituency well.

For example, the recent budget stated that interest costs are \$800 million, but in the summary financial statements, interest charges are cited as \$1.6 billion.

Furthermore, the Finance minister stands in this House and consistently refers to a rainy-day fund and that somehow the people of the province can feel more secure knowing that they can in times of emergency be able to count on transfers from this fund. But we don't even know if there's any cash in such a fund.

As well, when one examines the present plan of the government, there's absolutely no indication of whether the accumulated deficit of \$9.9 billion as of March 31, 1996 will increase or decrease. There is a plan for debt but no apparent plan for the accumulated deficit.

Now this is very confusing for the public and for legislators. And it begs the question: does the government even know?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not surprising that no one knew the full extent of the seriousness of the financial situation facing our province in the past because there was no complete plan. Even though government members of the Public Accounts Committee disagree with the Provincial Auditor and with opposition members of the committee on this issue, I am hopeful that in time the Premier, his Finance minister, and the

NDP (New Democratic Party) caucus will see its importance.

In the meantime, I would like all government officials appearing before future Public Accounts Committee meetings to know that I'm going to be asking each of them the following same set of questions based on the premiss that they must move to a broader performance planning and reporting framework: (1) what are your programs and services to achieve in clear . . . in terms of clear and measurable objectives; (2) what performance indicators are you using to measure and monitor the success of your programs; (3) what are the key issues that you need to manage well in order to ensure the success of your programs; and (4) as a legislator, where can I go to get more information on your objectives and measurability of your performance indicators?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is indeed a privilege for me to be part of this committee. We take our work very seriously and I hope that my comments will add to future decision making. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you in your gallery, a good constituent of Regina Centre, Mrs. Mugliston, who is here in anticipation of celebrating her birthday tomorrow and this seemed like an appropriate kick-off. I won't reveal her age because that's something I would never do without permission. I'll just say that she has a wealth of experience to share with us and with others.

And I would just ask everyone to welcome Mrs. Mugliston and her, I think, daughter and, I'm not sure, both daughters visiting her today here in the legislature. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I'm on my feet I'd also like to wish Mrs. Mugliston a happy birthday tomorrow, and many happy returns of the day.

But I also want to introduce, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, some guests in your gallery. Joining us today from the Psychological Society of Saskatchewan — and I would ask each to rise briefly as I read their name — we have Ian McAusland-Berg, the president; Frances Stewart, the past president; Dr. David Randall; Karen Todd; Robert Stephenson; and Marlene Harper. And also joining us today, Mr. Speaker, is Kelly Michalko, president-elect of the Saskatchewan Educational Psychologists Association.

Both of these organizations, I'm very happy to say, have put a lot of time and effort into the proposed Psychologists Act which is before the House, and I'd like to thank them for their efforts. And I'd like all members to join with me in warmly welcoming these psychologists here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, a group of 20 grade 7 and 8 students seated in the west gallery. They're from the Benson School. They're here with their teacher, Wayne Wilson. And I know that they will enjoy question period, and I want all members to join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to introduce a friend and an assistant to the vice-president of AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) from Beijing, China, who is seated in the Speaker's gallery — if Zewei Yu would stand and be recognized. He is very much involved with the CANDU (Canadian deuterium uranium) reactor project in China and is a good friend of Saskatchewan and a good friend of a number of people here in the Assembly, and I want all members to welcome him here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure as well to introduce in the west gallery a special group of students who have come to spend some time with us today. There are 21 students from Centennial School. They are accompanied by their teacher, Marcel Magotiaux, and I know that they will spend some time here watching and listening to question period; then they're having a tour and I look forward to meeting with them later on. I know they've prepared a lot of questions so I'm quite anxious to see what sort of questions they'll ask me. Please join me in extending a warm welcome. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, two very special people that are visiting from Toronto in my constituency for a few days. Sitting in the west gallery we have Peter and Pamela Hrycyk, and they are here for the graduation of their oldest grandson and look forward to visiting with him over the weekend, and I ask all members to join in welcoming them here to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Commutron Industries

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to talk a little bit today if I could, Mr. Speaker, about a small industry in a small town, Saskatchewan. Commutron Industries is a private company situated in the village of Elbow. The business of Commutron is the custom automated assembly of printed circuit boards both through hole and surface mount. Commutron presently employs two people full time and about 10 to 12 part time. As the business develops, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they hope to employ approximately 10 to 20 people on a full-time basis.

The reason that this business is so interesting, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that its predecessor had some financial problems and the people of the community decided they could not afford to let this business and this industry in their community die.

And I'd like to quote the president of the company, Bryan Cafferata of Elbow:

Commutron Industries is locally owned and all of the employees hold some shares in the company. We employ largely women and all training is on the job. The custom assembly of circuit board is a unique industry for a small rural village, and I believe it is a tribute to the people of rural Saskatchewan.

And indeed it is, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Calgary Company Relocates to Turtleford

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Anyone born and raised in Saskatchewan tends to appreciate the many characteristics that make this province special — the hospitality, the friendliness, the cooperation and the community spirit. Former residents do not forget those qualities. I think we should be proud of our province and the quality of life that we enjoy here.

So returning to our roots is easy. Just ask Dave Smith who has moved his management and training centre consulting business from Calgary back to his home town of Lashburn. Mr. Smith's Canada Training Group has been operating for 17 years, primarily in the oil and gas industry, offering quick and efficient training in electrical systems.

As a credit to their performance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the company has contracts with such well-known multinationals as Proctor & Gamble, Goodyear, Imperial Oil, and Dupont. Saskatchewan is the world's best place to live. Dave Smith feels he would be better off moving from Calgary to Turtleford, back to his home town. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Good Neighbour Lottery

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my encouragement today to all the volunteers and organizers who are participating in the Family Service Bureau's Good Neighbour Lottery. Unfortunately, with a wide range of groups competing for charity dollars this year, the Family Service Bureau is finding it a bit more difficult to sell tickets.

In fact the Good Neighbour Lottery still needs to sell a couple thousands tickets before tomorrow's deadline. It should be noted by members of the Assembly and all members of the province that proceeds from this lottery would allow the Family Service Bureau to continue to offer some very important services in Regina, including support groups and counselling services for victims of abuse.

So I ask all members of this House to join with me in wishing the workers with the Family Service Bureau some late success with their lottery. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Film Producer Elected to International Film Organization

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, I seem to have become both the Siskel and Ebert of the Saskatchewan legislature reporting regularly on the Saskatchewan movie industry.

I've got another hot item from Tinsel Town North — Regina's own Kevin Dewalt, CEO (chief executive officer) of Minds Eye Pictures, was recently elected vice-president, North America, to the board of governors, the International Quorum of Film and Video Producers.

This is a new one on me too, Mr. Speaker, but the International Quorum, or I.Q., is a select group of film and video producers who are invited into membership based on their high professional standards. The I.Q. has more than 75 member companies around the globe representing 37 companies on six continents.

Its purpose is to provide members with an international network of contacts and business resources, co-production partners, and international support. As an example, I.Q. president, Christian Fueter, and his firm from Zurich teamed with Kevin Dewalt to produce the two-part miniseries, *The Lost Daughter*, filmed right here in Regina and starring Richard Chamberlain.

As President Fueter said:

Minds Eye Pictures is quickly making a name for itself in the international market-place. And I welcome (he said) the opportunity to exchange my experiences with those of my I.Q. colleagues.

My congratulations to Kevin Dewalt and Minds Eye Pictures for extending their presence around the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Biggar Nationals Win Two Hockey Titles

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that it is spring and many members here may not want to talk about the wonderful Saskatchewan winter just past, but I would like to take a few minutes to do just that.

Although our winters are at times terribly cold and mixed with frequent snowstorms, many of us who are rural residents still seem to find our way to our community arenas to watch and cheer on our home hockey team.

Hockey in rural Saskatchewan communities is more than just one team against another. It is also one town against another — the winner of the game gives residents of a particular town bragging rights. This is a tradition that has gone on since hockey began.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the town of Biggar has earned this privilege from the efforts of its senior hockey team this past winter. Playing in one of the most competitive senior leagues in the province, the Biggar Nationals won the Wild Goose Hockey League title.

But the team did not stop here, Mr. Speaker. In addition to the league championship, the Nationals also won the Provincial Senior B Championship. Two championships in one Saskatchewan winter — amazing.

I would like to congratulate the Nationals on their fine performance this past season. They not only won the titles for themselves, but also for the entire community of Biggar, and the bragging rights that go along with it. Congratulations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Safety Recognition Award

Ms. Murrell: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, this coming Monday, April 28, is recognized as a day of mourning for workers who have been killed and injured while performing their duties.

Workplace tragedies are unfortunate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is why everyone, workers and management, should take all necessary precautions to prevent them. The responsibility rests with everyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the workers and management of the Sifto salt plant in Unity have taken this responsibility very seriously. Providing and maintaining a safe workplace environment requires constant monitoring and continuous awareness. The employees and management of the salt plant have made safety their top priority. And I am proud to say that they have been nationally recognized for their efforts.

The salt plant has been awarded the One Hundred Grand Safety Award for achieving 200,000 hours without losing a single workday due to injury. I want to congratulate the 74 employees of the plant for their efforts. They are the ones who are at risk, and they are the ones who have successfully avoided accidents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, no one likes to hear about accidents. That is why I ask that all members join me in congratulating all the employees and management of the Unity Sifto salt plant for their accomplishment. And I know everyone will wish them continued success for the future. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Economic Boom in the South-west

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the part of my province, the breathtakingly beautiful south-west, there are two diametrically opposed views being offered these days — black and white; yin and yang; minority, majority; correct, incorrect. Take your choice.

The first view, promoted by the member from Wood River and his minority band of merry, misguided mischief-makers, says that things are about as bad as they can get. Every sentence he

utters begins with a groan, with the first word usually being, oh, woe.

There is another view though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, offered by everybody else. And unfortunately for the member from Wood River, backed up by facts — facts which say the only problem we have is that too much is happening too fast.

The Shaunavon *Standard* for instance recently said that, quote:

The high activity within the petroleum sector, combined with improved profitability for agricultural enterprises, appears to be combining to create a shortage of skilled labour in our region.

It goes on to say that we have reached virtual full employment; that industry is booming; that — horrors — even wages might be forced to rise. And that, get this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a potential for a housing shortage because people from the West — and we know where that is, don't we — people from the West are moving to where the air is clean, the crime rate is low, and the prices are affordable. Every community in the south-west is reporting an influx of new residents, the report says.

Take your choice, Mr. Speaker. For myself, I think I will go with the press.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Waterhen Resident Wins Award

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to congratulate a constituent of mine who is receiving a prestigious award for excellence in education. Pauline Lasas, a young mother from the Waterhen Lake First Nation in my constituency, is one of only three people from across North America who are recipients of The Pathfinder Award of Excellence, awarded by the Pathfinder Learning Systems Corporation. The other two are from British Columbia and the state of Washington.

These people are recognized by Pathfinder because they have used its computer-managed learning system to achieve their personal educational goals.

Pauline graduated from the Waweyekisik Educational Centre of Waterhen Lake, using credits obtained entirely in the Pathfinder Learning Centre located in the high school.

I think, Deputy Speaker, to put this in a layperson's terms, Pauline took correspondence classes by computer instead of by mail — another way that the 21st century is upon us. She is the first person to graduate using the Pathfinder program, and Waterhen Lake is one of several institutions using the Pathfinder computer lab to deliver both high school and adult learner programs to remote areas.

I congratulate Pauline for her accomplishment and hope she enjoys her trip to Vancouver to receive her award. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hospitality Network Movies

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the motto "Reach Out and Touch Someone" has taken on a whole new meaning in this province. It was brought to my attention this week that *Sexual Instinct*, *Fantasy Chamber*, and *Elements of Desire* are three XXX movies available at a number of Saskatchewan hotels this week.

When I contacted a local hotel clerk to determine who supplies these features, I was shocked to hear that they're supplied by, and I quote, "the Hospitality Network through SaskTel." After some checking, we discovered that SaskTel owns 100 per cent of a numbered company which in turn owns 49 per cent of the Hospitality Network.

Will the minister in charge of SaskTel — or should I refer to her as the minister in charge of "SaskPorn" — bite the bullet and bare all the facts on this issue?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, in response to the member's question, I would say that there is some discretion that is used in the . . . through the hotel owners. I want to . . . the Hospitality Network, yes, is a strategic alliance with another company that SaskTel is involved in. I'm not aware of the particular titles that the member opposite mentions. I will certainly undertake to check into it and report.

In the meantime, I wonder if the members opposite have seen my ad in the 1 900 numbers — married, white female cabinet minister seeks opposition member who will ask an intelligent question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister can make light of this issue but never forget that this is a member of the family of Crown corporations, and I don't think the taxpayer finds this very funny.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is one point I want to drive home — the fact that the minister cannot claim ignorance on this issue. The board of directors of the Hospitality Network includes two senior SaskTel executives. This government has obviously been caught with its pants down. It is involved but has been trying to hide it behind a numbered company.

Madam Minister, you have indicated that SaskTel wants to gain 40 per cent of future income from other sources. Is peddling XXX movies the kind of other sources you've been referring to? And why has SaskTel's mandate been expanded to include pornography?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, no one is hiding from anything here. We have mentioned many times the development of the Hospitality Network, which has been successfully sold

throughout the world including a recent sale to Hong Kong. So this is not a secretive alliance, Mr. Speaker. This is a strategic alliance in hospitality . . . in hotel movies that we have been proud to be associated with the development of.

There is also, I would say, the facility of being able to block any kind of offering in a hotel room for the use of under-age minors or children, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Madam Minister, you're missing the point. Why are we as the Government of Saskatchewan promoting this filth and pornography? Mr. Deputy Speaker, when taxpayers hear about SaskTel branching out into various activities, I'm quite sure that peddling XXX movies such as *Sexual Instinct* to hotel patrons is not what they expect.

It is bad enough that this government has thrust the province head-first into gambling; now they want to cut out the XXX market as well.

Will the minister who presided over the NST \$16 million disaster explain what steps she intends to take to get SaskTel out of the XXX business?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I did say that I would undertake to make some inquiries about the content. But I wonder whether the member opposite has viewed any of the movies, or is he making his accusations based upon the name alone?

Because I would suggest that the Liberal Party take . . . calls into question their researcher — the researcher who has given you the information on which to base this question. The research is incomplete, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Madam Minister, I do not ask a question that I have not fully researched.

I would like to mention though, Madam Minister, that you're sending . . . your government is sending mixed messages to the people of Saskatchewan. The member for Humboldt has on a number of occasions brought to the attention of this House the problem of child prostitution. The Minister of Social Services has countered and somewhat ridiculed her even though he knows her sincerity on this issue.

Now we have a member of the family of Crown corporations peddling filth and pornography. Is the almighty dollar more important than our women and children in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, speaking of the almighty dollar, I just wonder . . . The researcher, Dr. Melenchuk, the Liberal Party's researcher, is on the public payroll as the Liberal Party's researcher. Is your researcher, the leader of your party,

spending his time in the back rooms watching on the Hospitality Network, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hospital Closures

Mr. Hillson: — Yesterday I rose on behalf of the people of Rabbit Lake when it became clear that their own MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) was unlikely to do so. Today I rise on behalf of Rabbit Lake. But the other communities who had their hospitals downgraded to health centres, what assurances do they have that they won't suffer the same fate as Rabbit Lake, Cudworth, Dodsland, and Eaton, and see the next step, the closure of their health facility altogether?

What assurance do we have that downgrading from a hospital to a health centre isn't simply a way station on the road to oblivion?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, it is the long-standing history of the Liberal Party to try to frighten people about health care. When medicare was introduced in this province in 1962, they said that people wouldn't be able to have a doctor. They said that the doctors would leave the country. Now the member wants to say that the people aren't going to have hospitals.

Well I want to say to the people, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan has more than twice as many hospitals per capita as the national average and it's going to stay that way. And we have back-filled every penny that the federal Liberals have taken out of health care, Mr. Speaker, which has been a hundred million dollars in the last two years.

And New Democrats built the medicare system, New Democrats sustained the medicare system, and New Democrats are going to continue to put the money into health care that the Liberals take out. Liberals cut medicare, Liberals gut medicare; New Democrats protect medicare and sustain medicare, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, Machiavelli, that great father of NDP political philosophy, once wrote that gratitude is the weakest of all human emotions. Yesterday the member from Moose Jaw was thanking the federal government for saving CFB (Canadian Forces Base) Moose Jaw; today we see the Minister of Health back to his old tricks of blaming his failure to protect basic health services in this province on somebody else.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, the Health minister is also a lawyer; he knows perfectly good and well that under section 92 of our constitution, health services are a provincial responsibility. Do you want to be the Minister of Health or the minister of excuses? What are you doing to protect these health

centres that are in danger of losing further service? They've already been downgraded. Are they going to be downgraded further?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — In other words, Mr. Speaker, what that member is saying on behalf of the Liberal Party is that the federal Liberals should cut all funding for the national health care system. That's what they say, Mr. Speaker, and we reject that. And I want to say to that member that I . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order, order. The Chair is having a little problem hearing the rest of the answer. If the House would come to order.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I have issued a challenge to that member and that party about 10 times in this session of the legislature, and the challenge is this: if that member and that party say that our health system is so bad in the province of Saskatchewan, I challenge that member to get up on his feet and tell this House and tell the people of the province where they have a better, more caring, and compassionate health system than we have right here in the province of Saskatchewan — no thanks to the Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Alameda Dam Water Releases

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for the minister responsible for Sask Water, or in his absence, the Premier.

Mr. Premier, the Alameda dam is nowhere near full capacity, but because of your agreement with the Tetzlaff brothers, you are letting water out at a rate of 27 cubic metres per second. That's faster than the water's coming into the dam project. That water that is being released flows into the Souris River; that water then flows into the Assiniboine River, which flows right into downtown Winnipeg.

Mr. Minister, by releasing water from the Alameda dam, you are directly contributing to the flooding in Manitoba. Mr. Minister, what are you doing, flooding Manitoba?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, the member may or may not be aware of agreements that are formed with respect to modern management — interprovincial agreements; agreements with our southern neighbours — and that is in fact the case with the administration of the Rafferty-Alameda project.

I want to also remind the member that an agreement was struck with Sask Water and the Tetzlaffs to determine a level of operations, and that was necessary because the former administration didn't follow the proper environmental approvals before they completed the dam.

So I say to the member opposite, we are operating it under the regulations and the guidelines that we are charged with. I want

to as well tell the member that the Tetzlaff agreement will end in 1998 and he and all the people in that corner of the province will have the opportunity to have input with respect to a long-term operating level of that lake.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister says 1998. Well it's 1997 and flood conditions in Manitoba are severe, Mr. Minister.

We've been in contact with the office of Manitoba Natural Resources minister, Glen Cummings. Mr. Cummings's office tells us there's no way of diverting the water before it reaches the Red River in downtown Winnipeg. They could not, they could not believe that you were releasing water and contributing, further contributing, to their flood conditions and flood problems, especially when the Alameda dam is not full to capacity and has additional flood capacity at its disposal.

And what's worse, you're actually releasing water from the Alameda dam faster than it's coming into the dam project right now. Mr. Minister, because of your stupid agreement with the Tetzlaff brothers, you are contributing to flooding in Manitoba. Mr. Minister, the people of Manitoba have enough distress without having you dumping more water down on them right now. Will you immediately move to close the gates and immediately stop the release of water out of the Alameda dam?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, to answer the member: I can say that my office has not been contacted by any officials or any politicians from Manitoba. And I certainly would welcome some comments if in fact they have any to make. I'm not aware that Sask Water has been approached with respect to any of the operating facilities in our province, but I will undertake to check this directly after question period.

But I want to say to the member opposite that we do support the province of Manitoba. They're going through some very difficult times created by the Red River and the flooding they're in. And I want to say that we will do anything within reason to facilitate and to assist our sister provinces.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member opposite that the Tetzlaff agreement was as a result of the Conservative government of the 1980s' mismanagement of the development of that project. And that member knows full well the agreement with the Tetzlaffs was as a result of their mismanagement and their incompetence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the Tetzlaff agreement allows for flood control as well, and you know that. The reason Manitoba hasn't contacted you is because they were not aware you were releasing water; they thought you would have the good sense not to release water when they have flood conditions going on down there.

Mr. Minister, the other day North Dakota governor, Ed Schafer,

donated thousands of extra sandbags to help out in Manitoba. You're helping out too; you're donating water. That's what you are doing.

Mr. Minister, this doesn't make any sense and you know it. The Alameda dam is not even close to being full and yet you're releasing water into a flood-stricken province. And, Mr. Minister, you don't seem to even know that it's happening.

I'd like to ask the Premier. Mr. Premier, will you take the immediate steps and immediate action to close the gates at Alameda and stop the water that's flowing into Manitoba and do something to help out in this disastrous situation?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to underline the remarks made by the minister in charge of Sask Water Corporation about the gravity of the situation in Manitoba. I don't think there's a member in this House or a person in Saskatchewan — anybody who watches on television — can't help but feel very sorry and empathetic and sympathetic to the situation in Manitoba.

As a sister province, we'll try to do all that we can to assist Manitoba in this battle. I'm sure that they will persevere and they'll win out as they always have — they're prairie people and will try to do that.

With respect to the question specifically respecting the Tetzlaff agreement, I can only repeat what the minister has said. However, to look at this matter one step further, I will ask the minister and the officials to take another look at this to see what impact, if any, the release of water has. Because I have learned a long time ago not to rely on the facts that the Conservative opposition advance in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Voting Hours in Saskatchewan

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Obviously the Premier doesn't even trust his own water department.

Mr. Speaker, apparently the federal Liberal government doesn't know how to tell time. So on election day the polls will close in Saskatchewan one hour later than most of the rest of the country. And are the Liberals trying to fix this problem? No. In fact Liberal MP (Member of Parliament) Gordon Kirkby says it's up to Saskatchewan to fix Ottawa's mistake by switching to daylight savings time. Road apples.

Mr. Speaker, federal Liberals may not know what time it is in Saskatchewan, but Saskatchewan voters know what time it is. It's time to get rid of arrogant Liberals like Gordon Kirkby and Lloyd Axworthy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, have you contacted the Prime Minister to tell him to fix this mistake before he calls the election?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have not done so as of yet, but I share much of the sentiment behind the question of the hon. member. And I definitely agree that it's going to result in one big, large wake-up call for the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan as a result of this effort.

This is a problem which shouldn't be treated so cavalierly by the member from Prince Albert or by the Liberal caucus in this House as they say that all the province of Saskatchewan should change over to daylight saving time. By agreement, an amendment can be made or some interpretation of legislation can be made in order to rectify this obviously, patently stupid development coming out of Ottawa and the patently stupid answer from the member from Prince Albert.

So we're taking all of our considerations under consideration at this point, and taking the appropriate steps in the next little while.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Appropriate steps.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals also forgot that part of western Saskatchewan is on Mountain Time. This means the polls will close in some communities like Lloydminster an hour ahead of the rest of the province. Within some constituencies, including Gordon Kirkby's constituency, polls will be closing at two different times.

Mr. Speaker, how are you supposed to run an election when the polls are closing at different times within the same constituency? It may be possible to find out the results of some of those polls before the rest of them close.

Mr. Premier, will you contact Jean Chrétien and explain how serious these flaws are and to the rest of the boneheads who wrote this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Well, Mr. Speaker, again there is very little that I can disagree about the assumption behind the question. Perhaps the hon. member from Prince Albert needs an extra hour. I think he may need an extra 24 hours — it still isn't going to save his bacon out there in Prince Albert constituency. There's no doubt about that.

But I do, but I do say something to the hon. member's very good question on this very important issue. And the Liberals who are catcalling the Conservatives and us in this regard, I think will be put to the test here.

I'm going to ask leave of the . . . I'm going to ask leave of the House right after question period, before orders of the day, that an Assembly resolution be passed by this House urging the federal government to make the appropriate . . . If you want to do it you can do it. I don't care. I don't care as long as everybody in this House — Liberal, NDP, and Conservative — passes unanimously a motion to rectify this absolutely stupid Ottawa law that's taking place here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Taxes on Fire-fighting Equipment

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do have a question that this government could answer because it is their concern. Not only are the towns and cities reeling from cuts in their provincial grants, they also have to cope with paying provincial sales tax on all their purchases. Yet this government does not pay taxes to municipal governments and Saskatchewan is one of only two provinces in Canada who refuses to do that.

The current arrangement means that local governments have to pay PST (provincial sales tax) on all their essential purchases such as fire-fighting equipment. This is just one other burden municipalities must carry. And more importantly, it hinders their ability to ensure adequate fire protection.

Mr. Speaker, a new fire truck can cost anywhere from 250,000 to \$500,000, and that translates into a PST charge of between 17,000 and \$35,000. This is an incredible tax burden for municipalities. However, the fire-fighting equipment tax exemption Act which I will introduce today will help ease the strain on municipalities.

If the minister won't do anything about the 42 per cent decrease in revenue-sharing grants to urban municipalities, will she at least agree to cancel the PST on the purchase of fire equipment?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to answer the question on behalf of the government because I want this House to clearly understand and the people of Saskatchewan clearly to understand exactly what the Liberal Party is doing here.

I have in front of me here, Mr. Speaker, a March 26 *Melville Advance*. I think the hon. member from Melville will know about that publication. The headline, which says as follows, "NDP stole budget ideas from Liberals." Quote:

There's no question the province has taken some quite modest steps towards fiscal health for the province. I'm pleased to see the sales tax reduction by 2 per cent. That's the former leader, the current member from Melville, who said that on March 26.

Then in Langenburg on April 16, three weeks later, headline, Langenburg *Four-Town Journal*, "Liberal leader sceptical about PST (tax)." He says we don't need the 2 per cent sales tax. He thinks the money should be directed to other areas. We do not need to reduce it at all.

Now this member gets up and says something entirely different. They move from harmonization, which would expand the tax base, to saying they welcome the 2 per cent, to saying they want the 2 per cent back on, to her saying that the fire equipment should be exempted.

I say the Liberal Party doesn't know anything about this issue, any more than they know about the time issue in the Elections Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier obviously doesn't care about what's happening in small town Saskatchewan. We're talking about volunteer fire-fighters who are trying to raise some money for protecting their communities.

As I mentioned earlier, Saskatchewan is one of only two provinces that does not pay municipal property tax on government buildings. Ottawa pays grants in lieu of property taxes, as does every other province except Newfoundland.

Why is it this province continues to gouge every cent it can out of municipalities by way of taxes, such as sales tax on fire equipment, while it refuses to pay its obligations to municipalities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I repeat again, will the hon. member please tell us — would anybody over there in the Liberal caucus please tell us, would the Liberal leader please tell us — do they favour 9 to 7 or not? They did by saying no to the budget. They'll be having legislation introduced to this House to tell us once again whether yes or no for the lowering of the sales tax.

Please tell us whether they're for harmonization of the sales tax with the GST (goods and services tax). That's what your Liberal leader says he's for. Harmonization is in direct contrast with what you are urging us to accept.

I am saying that you are so confused on this issue, you are so misleading on this issue, that nobody can take the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan, or for that matter, the Liberal Party of Canada, seriously on any issue whatsoever. You've absolutely deceived the people of Saskatchewan provincially. And federally — and federally you've broken every promise that you made to the people of Canada in 1993.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Changes to Family Income Plan

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you so much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to inform the House about changes that were announced this morning to the Family Income Plan — changes, Mr. Speaker, which will work to reduce barriers to employment, which will increase benefits to children of low income families, and which will prevent children, families and their children, from falling into social assistance, and provide a transition to the national child benefit.

Mr. Speaker, effective next month benefits available to low income families under the Family Income Plan will be enhanced and expanded. Mr. Speaker, the maximum monthly benefits will rise to \$120 from \$105 per child; and the income eligibility cut-off level will rise as well.

Families now receive full benefits when their income is less than \$725 per month. In May this income level will increase to \$850 per month and the rate at which the benefits are reduced

above this level will drop from 50 per cent to 40 per cent.

So for example, Mr. Speaker, a family with two children and a thousand-dollar-a-month income would today, prior to the changes, receive \$110 a month from the Family Income Plan. As of May that same family will receive \$240 a month.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, children's supplementary health coverage under the Family Income Plan will be enhanced. Presently children of families receiving the Family Income Plan are only partially covered for supplementary health costs such as drug, dental, and optometric services. That will be expanded, Mr. Speaker, so that these children's supplementary health costs will be fully covered.

Presently there are approximately 1,300 families and 2,900 children receiving benefits under the Family Income Plan. We are anticipating that the changes announced today will triple, Mr. Speaker, will triple the number of children and families receiving benefits. In all, this means more low income families will be eligible for more benefits.

Mr. Speaker, to increase awareness of the program among eligible families, we're initiating today a public information campaign. Posters and brochures identifying and explaining the program are being sent to approximately 8,000 organizations and offices across our province, including each of our MLA offices. As well, there will be some very limited newspaper advertising.

Mr. Speaker, child and family poverty is not an easy issue to address, but it is very important that we do. It is an issue that could have tremendous impact on both individual families and communities as a whole. It is significant that Saskatchewan is taking a leadership role in the development of the national child benefit, which will have a direct and positive impact on poor and low income children and families across Canada. In fact, Mr. Speaker, as you know, Saskatchewan people have always been leaders in the development of important provincial and national programs and services.

(1430)

Mr. Speaker, some countries would like to be known for their expertise in space technology, putting man on the moon; some countries might like to be known for their financial expertise and their military prowess; I think it would be wonderful if we in Saskatchewan, we Canadians together, could be known for the way we treat our children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am extremely pleased that all levels of government, both federal and provincial, are taking steps to correct some of the flaws in the current social assistance program and so we welcome this new announcement.

We do need to do all we can to help because statistics show that Saskatchewan does have the fourth-worst rate of child poverty in Canada. There are 57,000 Saskatchewan children who are living in poverty and so there has to be, of course, more

incentive for the working poor to hopefully benefit from this. And hopefully these income supplement changes will help dismantle the welfare trap that so many people are in. And so we are pleased that the federal government has provided the money necessary to assist our province during this transition period.

While a more complete child benefit program is worked on by all provinces, I have some concerns, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the provincial government establishing some accountability measures that we need in order to ensure that this additional money is in fact reaching the children and families that need it the most. I also am concerned about some measures being taken to ensure that proper communication to recipients, not only organizations, is there so that they are aware of the new health benefits. And I would be very pleased to see if the Minister of Social Services would be offering that; so that the communications can be effectively carried out to the recipients.

Perhaps the province could also ensure some more frequent detailed reports on this particular facet of the assistance plan because, as with all programs, it is incumbent upon the provincial government to monitor programs to ensure that short- and long-term objectives are met. That means performance indicators and evaluations and reports come back to the legislature.

And while the member . . . rather the Minister of Social Services, has commented on the delay that the federal government is putting up, looking at July of 1998 as almost too far away for the child tax benefit to come into full effect, I want to say that I believe that we must take adequate time to ensure that any program — federal, across the whole country — be complete and adequate and efficient before any measures are taken. We don't want to have to look at programs two years down the road and say, well we hurried this and so in fact people are suffering from it.

So I think it is necessary to take the time that we need, and I believe that the NDP government has stated a number of times that they are taking the leadership role in assuring a proper child benefit program. So I encourage them to continue talks with every province and with the federal government to have that happen as expediently as possible. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A few comments regarding the announcement made by the minister this morning. While I believe that the government is certainly moving in the right direction when it comes to recognizing — and I think that's what this piece of legislation will do and this announcement will do is recognizes that individuals — there are many individuals in our society who are certainly intent and desire to find gainful employment. Unfortunately when they are looking for employment, sometimes what you're left with is maybe a low income job which may not give you the same level of support that you would get under social assistance. Therefore there's no incentive to take employment.

I believe, if I hear the minister correctly, that this does give some incentive to look for employment and to find that while

you've found employment, while it may not meet all the needs that your family has, that there is a program out there that certainly assists you to provide adequately for your family and to make sure that their needs are met. The fact that full health benefits or supplementary health benefits are included in this program, I think is certainly positive, and we appreciate seeing that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well, I think it's also incumbent that the minister take a close look as to how the program is going to be implemented so that the program is not abused. I think we need to have . . . make sure that there are some checks and balances so that indeed the funds that are made available are going to individuals and to families that are certainly in need of the support and rather than maybe into the hands of individuals who find ways to get around the program.

The other concern we do have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to raise and raise with the minister — and I'm not sure what his department is doing about it — but when you talk about families applying for and receiving supplemental benefits, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reason that this piece of legislation and this announcement has come forward today is to address the concern of poverty and hungry children in our province. This announcement today doesn't necessarily show us how that money indeed will reach the hands, if you will, or be put into use to meet the needs, of children.

I would understand that the funds would indeed be sent to the parents and how the parents choose to disburse those funds will be their choice. And even though a plan is put in place, will those funds indeed make sure that children are not going to bed hungry and not properly clothed?

And I think there are a few questions here that need to be raised, that need to be addressed; so that we don't have, at the end of the day we're back into the same situation where we do have taxpayers' funds being extended but still we have hungry children — hungry boys and girls going to school and having a hard time learning because they don't have . . . they're hungry and they don't have the ability to really apply themselves — are some of the concerns that we have and we have had for . . . on an ongoing basis.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can say there . . . I can see some positive points to this piece of legislation, to this announcement. And I just want the minister to recognize some of the concerns and we look forward to hearing further debate as the minister makes . . . releases more information regarding this special announcement, to see to it and to recognize that indeed these funds are put in the place that they are fully intended for. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 58 — The Saskatchewan Assistance Amendment Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill, No. 58, The Saskatchewan Assistance Amendment Act, 1997.

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

Bill No. 226 — The Fire-fighting Equipment Tax Exemption Act

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 226, entitled The Fire-fighting Equipment Tax Exemption Act be read the first time.

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

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Deputy Speaker: — Before orders of the day I would like to, in accordance with the provisions of section 14 of the Provincial Auditor Act, table the *Report of the Provincial Auditor to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan on the 1996 Financial statements of CIC Subsidiary Crown corporations*. I so table.

MOTIONS UNDER RULE 46

Alameda Dam Water Releases

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I move, under rule 46, an emergency motion of urgent and pressing necessity, and it is with regard to the situation in the Alameda dam project with the probable waters flowing down to flood into Manitoba. The motion is as follows:

That this Assembly, in recognizing the extreme conditions faced by our neighbours in the province in Manitoba through fast-rising flood waters as well as the additional hardship produced by Saskatchewan through the releasing of water from the Alameda dam, immediately undertake to utilize Alameda dam's flood storage capabilities and stop the flow of any water from Saskatchewan's Alameda dam until there is no longer a danger of flooding in Manitoba.

So moved.

Leave is not granted.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I would rise pursuant to rule 46 on a matter of pressing urgency and necessity, and ask leave of the Assembly to introduce a motion with respect to that matter. I'll read the motion, which I think describes the issue:

That this Assembly request the federal government to change the current Elections Act rules regarding staggered voting hours to enable Saskatchewan people to cast their ballots in line with other Canadian voters.

Perhaps I should amend this to say to immediately change, so there's no implication it can wait for a four-year period or some other period, the Elections Act, with respect to the forthcoming election. That's the leave that I request of the Assembly.

Leave granted.

Voting Hours in Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I shall be very brief in my remarks on this. First of all I want to thank all hon. members for granting leave on this issue. I must also thank the Leader of the Third Party, the Leader of the Conservative Party, for agreeing to second this motion which I've presented.

In a nutshell, I think the publicity tells the story that we've heard over the hours. And that publicity is that subsection 105.5 of the Canada Elections Act was amended recently to allow for so-called staggered voting across the country. However, the amendment apparently neglected to differentiate between central standard time and central daylight time; so that Saskatchewan voters go to the polls from 8:30 to 8:30 while B.C. (British Columbia) closes its polls at 7 p.m. And in the consequence there's a half-hour delay in the province of Saskatchewan.

This does require either an amendment to the Act or, as subsequent news seems to indicate, the possibility of a Canada Elections Act interpretations of this particular provision. It may be possible that central standard time is interpreted in a fashion which would not necessitate an amendment, and that of course would be a very happy result. But in any event there's an urgency to this issue given the fact that widespread rumour has it that a federal election is imminent.

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, what I think we need to have is a unanimous vote of this Assembly indicating to the federal authorities the will of the province of Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan, the Assembly of Saskatchewan, to rectify this situation. And this motion, I think, will so do.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Leader of the Third Party, the member from Kindersley:

That this Assembly request the federal government to immediately change the current election Act rules regarding staggered voting hours to enable Saskatchewan people to cast their ballots in line with other Canadian voters.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to speak to this motion with regard to the changes in the time. I think initially, I think the legislation was probably good in terms of wanting to change it so that people could see the election results coming in all across Canada on an equal footing. Unfortunately in drafting the legislation, the federal government forgot Saskatchewan.

You have to wonder where the Saskatchewan members were at that particular time. Where the member from Regina Wascana, the cabinet minister, Mr. Goodale . . . what was he doing when this was being drafted and debated in the House of Commons? Where was Georgette Sheridan or where was Bernie Collins or where was Bodnar, Morris Bodnar, or where were all of those people when all of this was being drafted? You have to wonder about what they were thinking about when they were going

through their legislative review process in formulating this piece of legislation.

So we certainly concur with the motion that the Premier has put forward. And when you look at it, there's places within Saskatchewan, as the Premier knows and all members of the Assembly know, where there's actually different time zones. In the Lloydminster constituency, provincial constituency, for example, they have two different time situations up there. It's as a result of the Lloydminster School Division, I understand, and people that are within the Lloydminster School Division actually operate on Alberta time, shall we say; different than our times at different times of the year.

So we'll see situations where there's potential, if this isn't changed by the federal government, we'll see situations where in the constituency, the federal constituency of — what is it? — Lloydminster, North Battleford, I think it's called now, where there will actually be two different time zones that people will be operating under. The polls will be open for a longer period of time in one part of the constituency, closed at an earlier time within the constituency — an absolutely ridiculous situation that the people of that constituency are going to have to be faced with.

So we certainly agree that the federal government has to move as quickly as possible to rectify this situation. I would suspect that they would get an all-party agreement within the House of Commons — you would hope anyway — to change and amend this legislation as quickly as possible to make sure that this doesn't transpire in the federal election that is upcoming.

I think the federal Liberals have an obligation to Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan's people to make sure that this doesn't come forward — make sure that this doesn't come forward . . .

An Hon. Member: — How many senators have you got down there, Bill?

Mr. Boyd: — And the members over to my right — although generally speaking they're to our left, generally speaking they are to our left, Mr. Speaker — but anyway they're saying, where are the Tory senators on this? Well I'm sure the Tory senators, when it reaches the Senate, will be objecting to it.

The fact of the matter is, is the Liberal government drafts the legislation — you people draft the legislation — it goes to the House of Commons, and from there it gets into legislation.

So the fact . . . I think all parties have to come forward and show their willingness to make some changes in this legislation to ensure that Saskatchewan isn't forgotten in the process leading into this election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments, I think, to you to clarify some position that has taken place in the last couple of days.

First of all as the Premier has indicated, there was a need to

change section 105 of the Elections Act in that the closure of the polls, as far as a western provincial idea, has not been met with much favour in western Canada. We've had a problem with the times that polls have closed, and in fact people have been very critical of the fact that the election is over before the polls have closed in western Canada; so there was a need to address that.

I find it very, very interesting, that indeed the Bill that has been amended, the federal Act that has been amended, it has received three readings in the federal House of Commons, it has been through the Senate; and in fact it is now law. All parties have had a chance to agree to that. And I guess I can't blame the Conservative MPs from Saskatchewan because there are none. But I guess the two Conservative MPs that we have in Canada must have been very busy and unable to raise the point. But there were NDP MPs that also had the time and had the ability to raise the concern.

I also want to indicate that yesterday, when I as the Leader of the Official Opposition became aware of this concern, there was an immediate contact with the federal party, the Liberal Party of Canada, and I raised the concern on behalf of not only the opposition, I raised the issue on behalf of Saskatchewan taxpayers to say this is not correct; this is not fair to the province of Saskatchewan; somebody has goofed and there needs to be a repair job done to this amendment.

I raised that concern yesterday and there is no question that we will support the amendment . . . or the motion raised by the Premier that says that this is an error that has to be corrected immediately, and we will support that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — I'd like to close the debate, if you want to warn the members.

The Deputy Speaker: — It is my duty pursuant to rule 34(3) to warn the Assembly that the hon. member is about to exercise his right to close the debate and afterwards all members will be precluded from speaking to this question. Therefore any members wishing to speak, let the member do so now.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to close the debate by welcoming the fact that all political parties — even the provincial Liberal Party — will be endorsing this particular emergency resolution. And I want to make, I guess, two or three points in closing this debate before we take the vote on this issue.

First, I can understand how it is that legislation can pass — although it's perhaps somewhat unfathomable for the average voter to understand — legislation can pass any legislative deliberative body and see an error contained in it. However it's not that easily answered by the Liberals in this particular case. In this particular case there was extreme pressure by the government in Ottawa to pass this Bill hurriedly in preparation for the forthcoming election, which we expect this weekend.

The federal New Democratic Party voted against this Bill on third reading on the professed and stated grounds that they were rushed — the members of parliament did not have enough time to consider the adequate aspects, the full considerations, of this particular Bill.

In second reading they voted for it in principle because the notion of principle is one that, I said at the beginning, is one that we support, as your leader says should be supported too. But what we do not support is ramming and jamming the legislation through, which permitted this kind of an indignity to Saskatchewan to be in fact put into the legislation.

And on third reading, the NDP members voted against it. Let's be absolutely clear about that. That's exactly what the situation was.

Second point that I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is the question of the Liberal Party's position in Saskatchewan. The member from Prince Albert, Mr. Gordon Kirkby, when advised about this mistake, took some considerable time to check into it. And I understand that. I don't blame him for it.

He was, I suspect, like most of us, caught up in a surprise. Quote:

I'll check into it right now.

After some time he comes back and he says the following:

If Saskatchewan has a problem closing last, it should fix it. If they want to put the legislation in line, put Saskatchewan on daylight saving time. Every other province does it.

That is the position of the federal Liberal MP from Prince Albert. No other federal Liberal MP spoke to this issue or declared any intention of repair, with the one possible exception being the member from Saskatoon-Dundurn, Mr. Morris Bodnar, who indicated that there might be an interpretation open to the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada which would obviate the necessity to amend the Bill.

But for 24 hours the position of the Liberal Party was, if you can believe it, incredibly: but what the province of Saskatchewan should do is open up The Time Act, a matter of divisiveness and complexity as the Hon. Leader of the Third Party has indicated, a Time Act amendment which has been in office now, in legislation, in statutory books for 35 years approximately, if not longer.

And that somehow this whole thing was put in there by way of a means of forcing Saskatchewan to go onto daylight savings time was the implication by an elected Member of Parliament. And no Liberal contradicted that position — no Liberal contradicted that position.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is incredible. It's incredible that that should be the position taken by the responsible Liberal Party apparatus. Now that is water under the bridge. We are all prone to making some statements which perhaps we regret to make at times. And I'm prepared to take the same position with respect to Liberal MPs.

I think what is important is that there be a unanimous vote, which vote we will communicate, I will communicate, by letter this afternoon to the Prime Minister and to the Chief Electoral Officer, unanimously being the will of this Legislative Assembly to solve this problem, which can be easily solved either by legislation or by interpretation and get on with the business of what this Bill really was intended to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge everybody, Liberals especially, to vote in favour of this motion. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 2:58 p.m. until 3 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 44

Romanow	Van Mulligen	Wiens
Mitchell	Atkinson	Johnson
Lautermilch	Upshall	Kowalsky
Crofford	Calvert	Pringle
Koenker	Trew	Bradley
Lorje	Scott	Teichrob
Nilson	Cline	Serby
Stanger	Murray	Wall
Kasperski	Ward	Sonntag
Jess	Murrell	Thomson
Krawetz	McPherson	McLane
Gantefoer	Draude	Osika
Bjornrud	Belanger	Hillson
Julé	Aldridge	Boyd
D'Autremont	Toth	

Nays — nil

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I request that question 48 be converted, and by leave, I hereby table the response to question 49.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 47

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Upshall that **Bill No. 47 — The Psychologists Act, 1997** be now read a second time.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into this debate on the new Bill respecting the psychological professionals in our province, which I understand has not been amended for some 37 years.

Bill 47 is certainly required in order to update the profession and the rules governing the profession, but I must say there are some points in it which are of concern to the Liberal opposition.

The major issue, as I see it, is the question of what exactly qualifies as a professionally trained psychologist; what is the definition of a psychologist. And I think we have been somewhat taken aback to find that there is not universal agreement within the psychological profession as to the issue of the definition of a psychologist, which is of course the most basic of all issues facing any self-governing profession.

And as I say, this came as somewhat of a surprise to myself, as there is certainly in my own profession of law a basic agreement by all parties as to what constitutes a lawyer, what are the basic qualifications for one to call oneself a lawyer. And the same is true for, I think, all of the other professions.

However it is obvious from the input we have received from the stakeholders that there is a considerable debate going on within the psychological community in our province as to whether the term psychologist ought to be restricted to Ph.D.-level practitioners or whether it can properly be applied to those whose training is at the master's level.

I understand too that in addition there is no standardization throughout Canada on this issue. I understand that in the province of Ontario the designation of psychologist would be restricted to someone at the doctoral level. In the province of Alberta, master's level practitioners are entitled to the designation of psychologist.

While we must as an Assembly show respect for the profession, and we are attempting to do this, I'm sure, in this Bill, the primary question and issue facing us is of course the service to the people of Saskatchewan and how their needs can best be met and how this Act addresses their needs.

Of course there is a distinction between someone who has a Ph.D. and someone who does not. I must say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, though it does occur to me that that distinction is perhaps already adequately enough covered by the designation of doctor. Those who have a Ph.D. obviously can use the title of doctor, are entitled to that title. Those who are practising at the master's level of course are not entitled to the title of doctor. So I think if there is the issue of a distinction, that distinction is already there by virtue of the title that a Ph.D. may use.

It also strikes me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we may be in a somewhat different position than, say Ontario; that it may well be that in Ontario, especially urban areas such as Toronto, that obtaining the services of Ph.D.-level psychologists may not be a challenge, may not be a problem. Clearly in Saskatchewan, especially as we get outside the two cities, that is difficult if not perhaps impossible.

I am aware that there is a posting available right now for a Ph.D. psychologist and my understanding is that that position with our provincial government has been vacant for two and a half years, and my understanding is the reason for the vacancy is that we simply have been unable to attract a Ph.D.-level

psychologist into the service of the province of Saskatchewan.

So I think that underlines the issue that we do not have the doctoral-level psychologists in sufficient numbers, I say, especially as we get outside of the . . . outside the two cities of Regina and Saskatoon.

In my own case, Mr. Speaker — you are of course aware I come from the Battlefords — we have in the Battlefords a number of psychologists working both to serve the general needs of our population but also as a result of North Battleford being the location of the North Battleford Youth Centre and we require psychologists attached to that.

Mr. Speaker, in our case, none of these psychologists are in fact at Ph.D. level, but I don't think there has ever been any question that their work is of high quality and of high professional standards.

There are different pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker, that refer to psychologists and one is, as I mentioned, the Young Offenders Act, and the work required with young offenders in our North Battleford Youth Centre. We need risk assessments, and these have to be prepared by psychologists.

Quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think that we are very likely to get Ph.D.-level psychologists in the Battlefords. We need these risk assessment reports done by psychologists, and we need other work done with the residents of North Battleford Youth Centre by psychologists. I think experience tells us that we're simply not likely to get Ph.D.-level people there, and I think our experience also tells us that we have been well served by the master's level professionals who have come to North Battleford.

May I also say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that again, coming back to my own profession of law, while one can become a lawyer with the basic bachelor's-level degree, the LL.B. of course, there are lawyers who do have their master's degree, their LL.M., and there are even I believe, two doctoral-level lawyers practising in this province. They are all, however, all lawyers. The basic qualification is set as being the LL. B. and anyone who meets that basic qualification is entitled to call himself a lawyer and to be registered with the Law Society of Saskatchewan.

And that's not a great deal different than the college of physicians and surgeons, or for that matter, registration in this province as a teacher, as we all know. To be registered as a teacher in this province one requires some basic qualifications, but it may go anywhere on up from there through to almost any number of degrees in the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral level. And that no one has ever suggested that in order to call oneself a teacher that a doctoral-level degree would be required.

Of course that's also even, for that matter, true in the case of even university professors. Not all university professors of course, are in fact required to hold doctorates.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, both members of the psychological society and the educational psychologists association have, however, been debating the pros and cons of this with us, and I assume with members opposite, quite

strenuously. They say that if master's-level people are primarily the people out in the field giving the service, then they should have the right to the designation of psychologist, and that it is not a requirement of being a doctoral level.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they have been proven capable of offering good service to our people, I do not think they have to be designated as some lower professional level similar to the example was given to me of a paralegal. I think that to designate them lower than psychologists is not, I think, in the best interests of our people.

There are other concerns that we have however, besides what appears to be a lack of consensus in the profession itself as to what ought to constitute a psychologist. As I said, with all due respect to members of the psychological profession, our emphasis in this House has to be on service to the people of Saskatchewan rather than on the internal needs of the profession.

I am concerned however, with some of the proposals that we see regarding internal discipline. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems to me self-evident that the self-governing professions ought to have parallel rights of discipline and self-regulation. And I am both puzzled and disturbed that in this case, as in The Dental Profession Act, that the minister has seen fit to grant himself the right to make bylaws on behalf of the association.

(1515)

I know that there would be a tremendous outcry, tremendous uproar, if the Minister of Justice tried to take for himself that power for the Law Society of Saskatchewan. I assume the same would be true if the Minister of Health tried to grab that power in the case of the college of physicians and surgeons.

So I have to ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why the government feels that they need this power over the dentists or over the psychologists; that dentists and psychologists may not make their own bylaws — the bylaws can be made for them by the minister — when other self-governing professions are not under those same restrictions.

I have to ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we are setting up a hierarchy of professions, I have to ask why discipline proceedings are different in one profession from another. It seems to me so much simpler, so much easier to understand, so much easier to implement, if the provisions governing self-regulating professions would run parallel and be similar in all respects except where circumstances demand that they be different.

Mr. Speaker, we are moving towards a different, a fuller definition of health. And we no longer think of health simply in physical terms. Today there is a growing trend to look at the individual as a whole, and this has taken us into areas which have not traditionally been thought of as part of the concept of health. This is a trend not only in our own province but in Canada as a whole.

And if I may say, the concept of wellness, as it started out in this province, was a sound one which was moving us forward in

our thinking of health care generally and in what health care involves and entails — the deinstitutionalization of health care, the looking at the whole individual, the looking at healthy lifestyles.

Wellness was a good concept which unfortunately has now been denigrated to be a euphemism in Saskatchewan for cut-backs and closures. And that is perhaps tragic because I concede that there was, within the concept and philosophy of wellness, a good principle there and something that we should be thinking about and talking about and trying to implement. But I say, unfortunately I think what's happened today is that people are so cynical that when you mention the word wellness, they simply wonder whose hospital is going to be closed today.

But as I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the concept of wholeness and wellness is not something restricted to Saskatchewan or even to Canada. In the latest version of the basic documents from the World Health Organization, there are some very broad statements concerning the definition of health. And I would like to read one of them to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

That, Mr. Speaker, is a point for all of us to consider. I think that we all recognize that not so many years ago we defined health or sickness in purely physical terms. And when we were faced with a sickness that was not purely physical, I can remember my parents and their friends using the phrase, well it's all in his head or it's all in his mind — which of course meant it wasn't real, didn't have a basis in reality; it was just something imagined. I think we have gotten past that now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know that's not the case now and that our psychological health is at least as important as our physical health.

And I think we also all recognize that with the increased pace and the increased tensions of modern life, that psychological stress is becoming more of a phenomenon and will probably continue to do so. The need for professional intervention, I suspect, is probably also increased by the regrettable fact that family breakdown is far more prevalent. And when family support is not available to our young people, the state, in the person of professional counsellors, is the only other answer here.

And in this regard I remember the hon. member for Moosomin telling us a few weeks ago that the solution is for parents to take more responsibility, for parents to take more interest in their children, for parents to provide their children with more guidance.

Well it's very difficult for anyone to quarrel with that concept, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and certainly I don't want to. But the sad, tragic fact is that unfortunately this parental support simply is so often, too often, not present and we as a society have to deal with that fact. And simply saying that, well they should be different than they are, doesn't really get us very far. And when that parental support, that parental guidance, is lacking we require the services of our professionals, particularly I would

say, of our child psychologists.

I would also like to quote from another document of the World Health Organization which states that:

The healthy development of the child is of basic importance; the ability to live harmoniously in a changing total environment is essential to the development of healthy children.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is perhaps trite to say that our children are our future and they are our first and most important resource. But while a trite statement, it is also a very true one. I think we also realize that the issues of psychological and family health are of increasing importance in the workplace. The non-physical health of employees is at least as big an issue in employee absenteeism as is physical ailments.

These are being addressed through programs such as employee assistance plans, which again involve the psychological profession. Many employee assistance plans have been broadened even further to include family assistance plans, in recognition that where the employee has family problems or a family member is under extreme emotional stress, that this affects all members of the family unit and not just the particular individual with the primary problem.

There is ample evidence to suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when these programs are in place, the workforce becomes happier, more functional, and more productive. And it is also quite easy to demonstrate that where these programs are not in place, where we have a dysfunctional environment, that absenteeism grows.

It is perhaps sad and tragic though that some of the figures we see suggest that one of the most unhappy work environments in the whole province of Saskatchewan right now is our health professionals. And that seems particularly, particularly unfortunate. As one best-selling book a couple thousand years ago put it, "Physician, heal thyself." And I note that in the last few months, 10 CEOs of health districts have quit.

And that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon me, is the empty barrel speaking again? I don't . . . I hear some rattling off that . . .

But I think it's unfortunate to say that in the province of Saskatchewan today our health industry seems to have as much or more problems in its work environment than any other work environment you can point to. And I submit that when you get 10 CEOs of health districts resigning within a few months, that is an indication that there may be an underlying problem here of an unhappy work environment, and more guarantee that there will be need for the psychological profession in this province.

Well I must say that while I have great respect for the psychological profession and their work for the people of this province, and while I don't discount that any one of us may sometime find ourselves in need of their services, I would say to the hon. member from Estevan that so far in my experience, I haven't met a group as sound in body and mind and spirit as my colleagues on this side of the House. And I see nothing but a happy work environment over here.

So I don't think we are going to need the employee assistance plan because we are a happy, productive crew. Absenteeism is low, motivation is high, and . . . I know there might be some people over there who would benefit from talking to their psychologist, and I don't deny that all of us may at some priceless point in our lives need this assistance, but I assure the member for Estevan that unfortunately right now the psychologists really will have to practise their profession elsewhere because the Liberal opposition is happy, in full harmony, and full productivity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the practice of psychology is an important one in our society today, albeit not one that Liberal members are in need of at this time. But you know if we have to listen to too much more from over there, who knows, I may need counselling in awhile. And I . . . so I'm glad they're available in case I start, you know, listening to the member from Regina South too much and he starts getting to me.

Okay. I mentioned the problem of the discipline measures not running parallel to the discipline measures for other self-governing professions. I mentioned that section 17 gives the minister the right to make bylaws. And this troubles me enormously. I say this is something that I know my own profession simply would not tolerate.

I'm frankly surprised that when we've heard from the members of the psychological profession that they have certainly mentioned to us frequently the issue of whether we're going to register master's or only doctoral level of practitioners, but they haven't mentioned as much as the dentists have, the humiliation and embarrassment that they cannot make their own bylaws, as can other professions. And we hear from members opposite, the issue of two tier; well we're getting two-tier professions here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I don't know why we need two-tier professions.

We appear to have full professions, and then we have sort of secondary professions in the mind of the government. And I suppose I should be grateful to members opposite that they have included my profession in the one of top tier, but I ask why are dentists and psychologists in the second tier? Why do we need two-tier professional organizations in this province?

Not only does the minister have the right to make bylaws, but of course bylaws do not come before this House nor do they necessarily come before the profession, and so they can be made in the back rooms with very little discussion, very little public debate.

And I just wonder why? I mean I haven't heard the minister tell us why this power is necessary and I haven't heard why the psychologists cannot be trusted to make their own bylaws. I would love to hear that explanation. Perhaps they can change my mind when they tell me. But so far, this part of the Act simply, simply hasn't made it.

Why is this ministerial power required? And is it something

more than a power grab? Is this an attempt to simply centralize more and more authority into the minister's office? Is this a problem that at the same time he sets up a self-governing, self-regulating profession, he is in fact concentrating more power in the minister's office?

Well I think the whole, the whole impetus in health reform and now in this reform has been to concentrate decision making while decentralizing blame assigning. And I think we see that all through the health industry. We concentrate decision making here in the minister's office, but in blame assigning of course we spread that around. So that the decisions about funding, the decisions about level of care, will be made in the minister's office, but then when people phone in to say my hospital and my health care centre just got closed, oh, we're supposed to blame the health district or we're supposed to blame the feds or we're supposed to blame somebody, anybody, but not the minister.

So we have a concentration of power. And for what little it's worth or whenever there's a little bit of credit due in the health care system, that's come to the minister, but when there is blame to be assigned, well we have a long, a long, decentralized list of where the blame is to be thrown around.

(1530)

Well now, okay, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hadn't been planning on making my points again but if hon. members opposite insist I could turn these over . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Not necessary?

I would like then to deal with the issues concerning the lack of immunity, and I think this is the same, same issue as we saw in the case of The Dental Disciplines Act. I think that when we set up a self-governing profession, it is important that there be immunity from civil suit when officers act in good faith. And what was put to me by the dentists, and I think also apply here, that when you withhold that immunity for actions in good faith, you in point of fact really take away a lot of the disciplinary powers of the profession.

Because the fact is, in disciplinary matters, as in all matters, there is no such thing as certainty. As our friends from the psychological profession will tell us, certainty does not exist in this life. And if certainty is required before discipline, for fear of civil suit, then in effect the professional organization will be very, very reluctant to introduce and commence discipline proceedings.

And the other aspect about this which concerns me is that again we have self-governing professional bodies. It seems to me their powers and governing provisions should run parallel throughout the self-governing professions. Why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would you grant immunity for actions done in good faith to one profession and withhold it from another? Again, what is the rationale here? I don't understand it. What is the difference here?

And well, while I appreciate, while I appreciate the apparent position of the government, that my profession would act sensibly and reasonably in discipline matters so they should

have that immunity from suit when they act in good faith, to say I'm not sure why that has to be denied to other professions. And I say we have seen it, we have seen it here as well.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on for a long time yet, but I'm not . . . I could go on for a long time yet, but I am not totally without mercy, contrary to what members opposite may think.

I would like to, in conclusion, make one final quote from the constitution of the World Health Organization:

The extension to all peoples of the benefits of medical, psychological, and related knowledge is essential to the fullest attainment of the health of the people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my view that we are well served . . . one, we are well served by the psychological profession in this province.

Two, that it has been established that getting doctoral-level practitioners in this province, especially outside the two cities, will be difficult if not impossible.

Three, we need psychologists increasingly in our complicated and difficult society. And we also need them not only for the general needs of the population, but also as specific groups and organizations such as I mentioned — the youth centre in North Battleford that need psychologists attached to them. And I say, I think realistically that's not likely to be doctoral-level practitioners.

Four, the master's-level practitioners that we have had have served us well.

And five, I really ask the minister to have another look here. Why do we have discipline and complaint procedures different from one self-governing profession to another? I was not totally being sarcastic. I said, why are we having different tiers of professions? I think that's the first thing. I think it's demeaning to the professions. But I would also put to the minister that in terms of public understanding, if there is basically the same discipline and complaint proceeding running through all self-governing professions, that it's easier for the public to understand their rights and responsibilities in this matter.

And finally, why would we grant immunity for acts done in good faith to some professional organizations and withhold it from others, in disciplinary matters? I simply don't understand why we would draw distinctions in that regard.

In fact I would even question whether it might not be more beneficial if we had a professional organizations Act in this province which set out the rights and duties of each self-governing profession, rather than the rather confusing grab-bag of professional organizations the government is now bringing in, in which rights, powers and disciplinary proceedings run different, depending on which profession we are talking about.

And finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I encourage the minister, please, please, please, explain to me why you need

bylaw-making powers for this profession? You don't have bylaw-making powers for your own profession. I am positive you would not suggest that the Minister of Justice should have bylaw-making powers for your own professions; so why do you need it for this profession? Why do you need it for the dentists? I just don't understand that.

And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will simply say, have a good day, and I will sit down.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're pleased to be able to rise today to address this particular Bill. There are a number of groups across the province who do have some difficulties with the Bill but we realize that a good many of the psychologists also are very much supportive of this particular piece of legislation.

We are prepared to accept that this piece of legislation move ahead today into Committee of the Whole. But in conversations with the member from Greystone, she expressed the fact that she wished to present some amendments to this particular Bill, and therefore needed some more time to do . . . prepare those amendments themselves, Mr. Speaker.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, while we're prepared to allow this to move into committee today, we believe that time is still needed before Committee of the Whole is gone to.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was listening to the remarks made by the member opposite — the member from Souris-Cannington — and I just wanted to add to the debate at this time.

This Bill essentially sets up the governing structure for psychiatrists — psychologists, pardon me — and it gives legal status to the governance and self-governance of psychologists within the province.

Our government members were prepared to proceed with this Bill today into committee, and the reason being particularly because we have visitors in the gallery, members of the profession who have been working on this Bill for months if not years. And we appreciated the cooperation of the Liberal opposition and of the third party in moving this Bill into committee . . . through committee today, and we were expecting fully to do so. And I had received word from the member from Greystone that she was also willing to go through with this. But apparently she has changed her mind since she gave her word to our Deputy House Leader.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will still be asking for leave and we apologize to those guests who are here today who were expecting that this Bill would be proceeded with through committee. But we will . . . and regretfully have to just wait the procedure should leave be denied.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Calvert that **Bill No. 34 — The Young Offenders' Services Amendment Act, 1997** be now read a second time.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're now on day 33 of this legislative session. It's quite probable that perhaps we're nearing the halfway point of this particular session, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And for nearly each and every one of those days that we sat in this House since this session opened, this opposition caucus has presented petitions from the people of Saskatchewan asking that it do something to look into the problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan.

The hundreds of people that have signed these petitions are asking that the government live up to its responsibility under the Young Offenders Act. The people who are signing these petitions and who are calling and writing our office are angry that the members opposite are so unwilling to even admit that it does have responsibilities under the Young Offenders Act. And those responsibilities entail establishing suitable rehabilitation and deterrent programs for our young, for our young people who are at risk of falling into crime, and those who have unfortunately already began travelling that path.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think some of the members opposite must be very embarrassed indeed when they hear cabinet minister after cabinet minister stand up and deny responsibility for absolutely everything that goes on in this province. The question was asked recently whether the members opposite are running a provincial government or an excuse factory. And from what I've seen in the last six years, it's the latter, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

(1545)

On any issue that is brought up in this House, this government's first line of defence is to blame others. They don't say here's the problem, now what are we going to do about it? They never say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's become a reflex action now simply to point the finger of blame at others. It's a shameful lack of leadership on their part and they should be ashamed, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

On the whole issue of young offenders, the government has had the power to appoint youth justice committees since 1984. Yet the Justice minister himself stated in estimates that never once has this government done so, not even in the last few years when public concern over youth crime has grown and grown. Now with this Bill, it appears the government is going to bring committees that have been formed because of citizen initiative under the provisions laid out in section 69 of the Young Offenders Act.

They say it will help these volunteer citizen initiated committees avoid possible liability. And that's good, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's great. That's a positive move. But the question still remains, what else is the government prepared to do? We've been asking on behalf of the public since this session began that a province-wide task force be struck so professionals and citizens connected with young people can

look at the programs we have in place and see if there are things we can do better. Is that really a much off-the-wall idea, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Actually asking the people of this province — youth workers, police — what should be done and what could be done to get a handle on this problem, I don't see anything wrong with doing that. As a matter of fact something very productive might come of it. It's happened in other areas where legislation has been passed. Programs have been put into place as a result of consultation by the government with interested parties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite are always chattering away about their consultative approach. Of course any consultations they have rarely turn into anything concrete, as they are usually a sham. And perhaps that's why they're opposed to the special task force the people of Saskatchewan have been asking for.

Perhaps they know that such a body would come up with such reasonable suggestions that they would be hard-pressed to ignore them, like they do in any other consultation process. And actually taking advice from the people of this province, actually taking some responsibility, is just not what this government is all about, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

These people refuse to listen. If they did, we wouldn't have the Minister of Justice standing up in this House and saying that youth crime is not a big problem. We wouldn't have the Premier of Saskatchewan saying this issue isn't important enough to discuss in this legislature. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they actually listened to the people that they govern, if they actually cared about their concerns, they would realize that they should be treating this problem far more seriously than they are.

But again, that would entail taking some responsibility for their own failures as a government, for their own actions. They haven't done that yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not in the last six years. And I don't really expect them to start now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course we have a problem with youth crime in this province. It's all over this province — not just in the cities, it's all over the province. The people are telling us that every day.

And thankfully, we do have good, solid citizens of this province who have developed and operate a form of youth justice committee in certain locations around Saskatchewan. And I applaud them for those kind of efforts. And I support giving them some immunity from potential prosecution.

But more has to be done. And the first step is to convince this government to at least be honest and admit yes, they do have a responsibility in regards to this issue and they know it. Mr. Speaker, all we're asking on behalf of the people of this province is that the NDP live up to its own responsibility as the government, and that means taking some meaningful action on the whole issue of young offenders.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm really delighted to get in on the debate on young offenders.

I was listening to the hon. member from Melville talk about responsibility and I guess that my question is, does the government consider that anything is their responsibility?

The rash of crime in Regina lately involving young offenders has left many people wondering if the word responsibility has been eliminated from the English language, or at least from this government's language.

We all know that youth involved in robbery has risen 77 per cent between 1992 and 1995. In Alberta there was a 5 per cent increase in robbery at the same time. Regina alone has had an average of 10 car thefts a day in 1996, and at the beginning of March, in one 24-hour period, there was over 70 car thefts.

When questioned in the legislature on March 7, the Justice minister stated, I think we should remember this is not a common occurrence. Well personally, I beg to differ. I think that any time you have 10 car thefts a day, you could consider it a common occurrence.

The vast majority of our young people are law-abiding, responsible citizens who make us proud to be Canadians. Young offenders are causing fear and suspicion of all teenagers in the minds of many people and especially in the minds of our seniors.

The police are being taunted by youngsters who know full well that they are nearly protected under the present law. There's no concern about the consequences of their actions because there really doesn't appear to be any consequences at all. The victims of crime are frustrated and they're appalled at their own lack of rights under the present system.

One of the victims of car thefts that I spoke to had her 20-year-old vehicle totally destroyed by a young offender. The car had low mileage, it was in excellent condition, and it was the prize possession of this lady. The insurance pay-out could not replace her vehicle, her insurance premium increased, and as if she needed another insult, the youngster came back to her in about two weeks and laughed, and then bragged and said no one could touch him.

When SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) introduced no-fault insurance two years ago, one of the arguments was to guarantee that there would be no rate increases for the next three years. Now we are hearing that rumours of increases are likely because of thefts and highway accidents. The accidents include the damages caused by the treacherous conditions of our highways.

I would suggest that the term no-fault should be used by those who have their vehicles stolen as well. It is not their fault the vehicle was stolen and yet they are the ones who are having to pay the increased costs of insurance. Is it the victim's fault that their vehicle is stolen? And why should the victim pay for the crime?

Our justice system is obviously not dealing with the problem in

a manner that's making an impact on the offenders. We have one of the highest incarceration rates in the country. And the remand facilities are understaffed and can do little else than just babysit.

Punishing the offender is not really getting to the cause of the problem. Are our young people committing crimes just because they can do it and they can get away with it? Are they doing it because there are bigger problems and concerns in our society right now? I think that we'll find that the problems of not having a decent job, of not having the money to actually exist in society, leads some people to find other ways of existing. They're not right, and those of us who are trying to succeed in life are paying for this problem.

The values and morals that would deter most people from theft are lacking with young offenders, and the consequences are lacking and the alternative is lacking. Jobs, responsibilities, and the faith that there is a place in the future that is brighter than the present is also lacking for many young people.

I believe government has a responsibility to provide a foundation for the future that can be built on by all our citizens. The justice system has the responsibility to ensure that the offenders, not the victims, pay for the crimes; and that youth must learn that with rights come responsibilities. One does not happen without the other.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government doesn't understand that many of our youth are very much at risk. Manitoba government does, Mr. Speaker. Manitoba has assessed the scope of the problem. They realize that there are 4,300 high-risk children in Manitoba.

This Bill proposes to use the federal Young Offenders Act to establish youth justice committees. This provision has been in the Young Offenders Act since 1984. The Liberal member from North Battleford has called repeatedly for a youth justice task force, but the movement really began at the grass roots level.

Local communities are working together to combat youth crime. In Shaunavon, the member from Wood River's constituency has established a youth justice committee to try and keep young offenders from becoming adult offenders. It's about time this government recognized the dedication and the hard work of grass roots movements like the one in Shaunavon, by finally offering protection to the committee from legal action.

What can governments do? The third party would like to lock up these kids and throw away the keys. This government wants to deny responsibility. They'd rather blame the federal government and do nothing, than take action for the young people of this province. Their approach to young offenders is much the same as their approach to child prostitution — let's just wait and see; let's study it and do nothing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the people of this province want more, they expect more, and they deserve more. I think that we have a responsibility, and as elected members of this legislature, it is our responsibility, and I think it's time that we do our jobs.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think there are a good number of people in our province and throughout the country and throughout the world, who are concerned about having healthy communities, and healthy people in those communities, including our young people.

But I think it's important to understand somewhat of what these people are going through, and what has brought them to the point they're at now. And I think it's important to understand that a great deal of dependency and social upheaval that sometimes leads to crime, including youth crime, is a result of an individual's inability, or their perceived inability, to meet their own basic needs.

Speaking of psychologists just previously, psychologists will tell us that human beings have some very basic needs — four primarily. The need to live, to love and to be loved, the need to feel important, and the need to grow. When a person cannot meet their needs or they don't believe they can meet their needs within the boundaries of the societal definitions or acceptable behaviour, then the person does one of two things. They can act out against society. That means they can seek to meet their needs in behaviours which are outside the accepted societal definitions. Or else they act out against themselves, meaning that they abandon hope of meeting their own needs and they withdraw from society in some ways like addictions, depressions, suicides, etc.

It is important for people to understand some of these human needs, and so as an individual grows from a child to an adult, they develop a set of beliefs about how to meet their needs. That set of beliefs is their framework within which they make their behavioural decisions. If that set of beliefs that they learned, does not allow them to meet their needs appropriately either because their beliefs do not describe the acceptable range of behaviour accurately or because the conditions in society — for example systemic discrimination and employment — prevent them from exercising their appropriate beliefs to meet their needs, then they are driven by their needs to seek out other ways of getting those needs met.

If community justice initiatives are to have an impact on the rate of criminal behaviour in all people and our young people, and on the rehabilitation of those who have engaged in criminal behaviour, then change must occur not only in the justice institutions through the police, the judiciary and the correction system, but in the entire community. Individuals must have the opportunities to learn how to meet their needs appropriately, and then they must have the opportunities to actually meet their needs in the ways that they have learned.

(1600)

Individuals must also have opportunities to experience the results of their actions in their own lives and to see the results of their actions in the lives of other people. Actions which violate the accepted societal standards must bring automatic consequences, and the pain of these consequences must be visible to the individual whose behaviour violates the standards in their own life and in the lives of their victims. Rewards for keeping the acceptable societal standards must also be visible in

the lives of those individuals keeping the standards, and in the lives of others.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to refer to a model of what can be done for young offenders that are abusing drugs, alcohol, or have been in trouble with the law. In Ontario there is a foundation entitled the Vita-Nova Foundation. Basically it's private individuals who have set up a farm situation whereby young offenders can in fact fill the vacancy in their souls through work. They gain a great deal of sense of self-worth out of that. They learn to interact with other individuals and they learn what the consequences of their work are, in the form of reward.

And so as these young people have a model whereby they can interact with society in an appropriate manner, in a satisfying manner, they in turn leave this farm situation going out armed with an idea of how they can fit into society and have their needs met.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, family violence, youth crime, stress and addictions that are widespread in our rapidly changing society are often rooted in individuals' low self-worth, and in the widespread attitude that our worth can be found in external things, things outside of our self. When those things change, their worth is threatened. People can only grow, thrive, and flourish in periods of rapid and significant change if they have a firm sense of their own worth.

What I have stated reflects a great deal of my own vision of the role of governments in relation to individuals and families. The development of appropriate skills and values of self-reliance and appropriate levels of self-worth in individuals is best done at the family and community levels of society. When these skills — these values and insights — are not developed, then there is no foundation for the ability of an individual to work effectively in any group process. Society can only function on group processes.

The family truly is the basic unit of society. The role of the community is therefore to support effective family processes, and the role of provincial and other senior governments is to support effective community and family processes. If this is not done, the glue that holds our society together and the cooperative process that enable our society to function will deteriorate until society cannot be governed any more.

I think we're at a period in our history, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where a number of our young people have simply not had proper guidelines. They are acting out their fears, they're acting out their lack of sense of self-worth, and they are ending up in great trouble. And it's very detrimental to all of us. We cannot continue to have this process go on.

I believe that government can play a role, and it is incumbent upon government to at least put a youth task force together so that the appropriate people may study some very appropriate measures that should be taken in order to assist them.

And so I am pleased to have had the opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to put forth some of my views on this. I believe that we're at a point where government must take in hand what is

being required and asked of them by society at large and to at least form committees and task forces to deal with this problem. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Just a couple of comments I wish to respond in reference to Bill No. 34, The Young Offenders' Services Amendment Act. And I wish to speak about a number of reasons why we must begin to stress the need to recognize the challenges many youth face in northern Saskatchewan.

I don't wish to elaborate at great lengths in terms of some of our southern locations and some of the southern specific problems in reference to youth and young offenders. But certainly in northern Saskatchewan we must begin to realize that the youth of the North certainly are the forgotten people.

An effort of this nature of trying to form up some kind of committee and trying to deal with the issue and talk about the problems with the youth is certainly a first step in a very, very long and comprehensive journey that we must take as lawmakers.

Certainly coming from a small community in northern Saskatchewan of 1,500 people, I've seen firsthand and I've been through it as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of living in Ile-a-la-Crosse and going through the motions of a young man being raised in what you don't want to call the streets of New York but certainly the streets of a very challenging place to live.

In reference to some of the work that's being done at the community level to deal with young offenders, they certainly haven't got the resources available to them and they certainly haven't got the technical support that is required to deal with the issue. But many northern people in La Ronge, in Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, Beauval, Pinehouse and on and on, a lot of them really begin to realize that there is something that we could do; that there is something that we can fix in the community if we put our mind and our hearts and our efforts towards that goal on a collective basis.

And while this Bill will certainly do somewhat in recognizing the need to have a coordinated approach and certainly to have the community involved, we must look at all the resources afforded to that process. Again many community leaders and community people know in these various communities that there isn't enough effort being made to deal with the problem.

Now some of the organizations that we have had some consultation with and discussions with includes the friendship centre movement in northern Saskatchewan. As you're probably aware, there are three friendship centres in the North: one in La Ronge, one in Buffalo Narrows, and one in Ile-a-la-Crosse.

And while the friendship centres are very poorly equipped to handle some of the challenges associated with living in the North, they certainly are very quick to point out that the youth and generally the young offenders' problems are really quite low on the priority list of families and battered women and so

on and so forth. So with young offenders, in terms of getting recognized and getting programs at the northern level, simply does not exist.

And the key thing we have to look at again when we approach any matter, especially for the young offenders, is to look at the environment in which they are being raised. And you look at the situation in reference to housing. There's a severe shortage of housing in northern Saskatchewan. You look at the recreational facilities that are available, which are very few. You look at the training that's being afforded to these young offenders — there is very little of that.

So in essence what you have, Mr. Speaker, is you really have no programs. And again we're talking about the first step at this point in time in recognizing that we have to have a cohesive approach to this whole problem of young offenders.

I had the distinct honour of serving as mayor of Ile-a-la-Crosse and, just for the House's information, we had a program delivered through the Corps of Commissionaires to deal with some of the young offenders in the community. And what we done as a community group is we amalgamated the young offenders with other people that wished to work and learn about security training. The program was called the security guard's training program. But we did have a few troubled youth that were taken into the course and trained in security guard.

And what the Corps of Commissionaires brought to the class, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is they brought attention to the young offenders that were in there and to the young people in general. They showed them the word, "discipline," and they showed them the value of work. And they also showed them that they were worth something.

And although there was some people that may have alluded to the idea of a boot camp in terms of dealing with young offenders, to a large extent that's not going to work. We have to look at a very, very comprehensive strategy in dealing with these young offenders.

Just to elaborate on that point, they spoke about a number of things during the security guard training. And I'll have you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of the participants of the security guard training administered by the Corps of Commissionaires certainly excelled at the program and many of them are now working at the Cluff Lake Mine site as security guards. They've completely turned their lives around simply for the fact that somebody took the effort to show them time, to show them patience, understanding, and also to train them. And now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you look at this process and there's two or three of the troubled youth who were in that program that are now contributing to society in general.

So a lot of these Bills that we introduce in the Assembly simply miss the whole mark. The intent is there but there is no follow-up in terms of dollars and there is no thought of community development as a whole. Because if you don't deal with the housing problems and the social development problems, and certainly the lack of recreation facilities and programs in general, then you're not going to solve the young offenders' problems.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, again I'll allude to some of the attributes that was brought to the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse by the Corps of Commissionaires.

As you're probably aware, the Corps is a group of retired soldiers and RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) officers and different people that served in a number of different capacities. I believe there's also fire-fighters, professional fire-fighters, that are involved; some emergency medical personnel are also involved. But of course the people are all getting on in their years, so they're volunteering for the Corps to teach other people their skills.

And that's certainly a very admirable quality about the Corps of Commissionaires. Here we have older people that are willing to volunteer their time to transfer their skills and their time and effort to the young people who may be troubled or who may just simply need a helping hand.

Now we're certainly no bleeding-heart liberals when it comes to young offenders and the crime that obviously is caused from time to time. But we know one thing: those that continue to abuse the system certainly need corrective measures. There's no question about that.

But those that are reaching out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and are trying to change things in their lives, and in spite of all the insurmountable odds against them they still continue to struggle to find a new way of doing things . . . and this is where the whole situation of our argument, and certainly my argument from the Athabasca constituents' point of view is, that if we're going to have a youth justice committee established, we must have the corresponding program support dollars to go along with that Act. If we do not have that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then really the Bill is a shell. There's no question about it; it will just remain simply a shell.

And again, the Corps of Commissionaires' effort, the Friendship Centre movement, all these people at the local level recognize the problem.

So again, I'll have a couple examples. We have Pinehouse, is another community that's in dire need of some technical and some financial support to address their social development problems. If they've got 50 million problems, and one of them happens to be a young offender problem, how are they going to prioritize it and how are they going to deal with this when they haven't got one red cent to deal with problem number one yet?

So really, you can see there's so many pressing problems at the community level that we have to address in order for us to change the whole context and the whole process associated with Bill No. 34.

There's been a number of community people that have been taking action. Their mayor and their council and a few other community groups, including a great number of local ladies, have seen the problem firsthand. They've seen the young offenders and the problems that they could create, and they're going to make sure that they have an opportunity to do something about it.

But the whole problem comes back to us once again, is what can the provincial governments or the federal government do to alleviate the situation? They cannot come in here with a plan, they cannot draft up a Bill or a shell of a Bill, and say the problem will go away because we now have the wording as law. Wording does not mean nothing unless you certainly have the resource to go along with it.

And the question we have — in the example of Pinehouse, I'll use — people don't like to be viewed as negative all the time, but there are prying and pressing problems there that need to be resolved, and working with the young offenders is certainly a big, big step.

But another good example — and I talk about the community development as a whole — housing is a problem, adequate housing. And the poor quality of housing is going to impact and affect on the attitude of the young offender. The lack of a recreational facility — Pinehouse does not have an ice hockey arena of any sort — so as a result a lot of young people don't participate in sports. And the only thing that we could say is, thank heavens for the school and the efforts of the staff and the teachers there because they have been making a significant difference in terms of dealing with the people in general, the children, and of course in the midst of the school system, our young offenders as well.

(1615)

So the whole argument that we have in terms of Bill No. 34: yes, it's good to have a youth justice committee established and yes, we'll continue to support that process, but it's only one step in a long journey — in a long, sophisticated, and very, very challenging journey. But that journey, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is not ours to take. That journey is up to the community level, and the people that live in that community. And the people will rise to the challenge and they'll change things for their community if they're given adequate financial and adequate technical expertise and support programs to deal with these problems.

And some of the interesting figures that we come up with, attending a few conferences a few years ago, is that on occasion we've heard of some of the Manitoba examples of how much it costs to deal with young offenders. But there was a pressing number that rode, certainly in my mind, about how much it cost to care for a young offender, and the figure of \$52,000, which was released by — I'm not sure which jurisdiction — that is what they estimated that it cost to house a young offender, \$52,000 per year. And I think that was an estimate from Corrections Canada, if I'm not wrong. But that \$52,000 — is there some way we could use that in a better and more comprehensive strategy to deal with that young offender at the community level? And the obvious answer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is yes, we certainly can.

So as a young man growing up in northern Saskatchewan communities, there are challenges. I know; I've been through there. And there are mistakes you make. Lord knows, I've made many mistakes and continue to make mistakes. But the path to go wrong is so easy — it is so easy to go wrong. It does not take much.

And the path to go on the straight and narrow path, one path that we can all respect, is very difficult to stay on amongst the northern people, especially with the young offender. And all throughout our time as legislators in this Assembly we talk the talk, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we got to start learning to walk the walk when it comes to programs of this nature.

A shell is a shell, and the whole problem is that's all that we have been giving to northern Saskatchewan — especially young offenders in that area — is simply a shell, simply words.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, words are not enough. We need programs and we need action and we need to empower local people to begin to help young offenders and their families deal with these issues now — not 5 years from now, not 10 years from now, not during election time, but now.

And if you don't do it now, then the problems will persist. And once again, the people will continue knocking down their communities and again the crime rate will continue to build up and in the end, who loses? All of Saskatchewan people lose — especially northern Saskatchewan people.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill No. 34, while we can certainly support the initial step of establishing youth justice committees and recognize the vital role that communities play — of course we support that — but it's got to go much deeper and much more complex than that. You've got to begin to deal with the housing issue that many of these young offenders face in northern Saskatchewan, the lack of social development, the lack of training dollars, the lack of recreation facilities, the lack of youth centres and youth services.

So again the point we made here earlier, it's easy to go wrong. We have to make it easy to go right. And as the Hon. Paul Martin, the federal Minister of Finance has indicated in his budget, it's not a good country for any of us unless it's a good country for all of us. And that's the same phrase that goes to all of Saskatchewan, and especially young offenders: if it's not a good country or not a good province for the young offenders, then it can't be a good province for any of us. And that's a key thing we must know.

I guess in the North the employment training, and the recognition and respect that the young offenders need, certainly goes a certain way. But eventually and ultimately, we have to teach them to become independent and we have to teach them to become responsible. And we can't do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by giving them a shell in this legislation. We have to provide the meat and the bones and the effort on which they could use to build their future.

So therefore, we certainly support the intent of Bill No. 34, but we certainly are waiting and hoping and listening and eagerly and patiently watching to see if there is some real intent, and some real effort, behind the Bill. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I note that the Young Offenders Act passed by the federal parliament in the 1980 session, I believe it was,

contained a provision for the appointment of youth justice committees by the Attorney General of the various provinces. So our Minister of Justice, in other words, has had the power to appoint a youth justice committee for the last, about 17 years.

And of course, the Liberal opposition has been pushing for the appointment of a youth task force, an interdisciplinary task force, to bring together all of the various players. In the deep social issues which face us regarding the problem of youth crime, we've been pushing for this, and obviously the people of Saskatchewan want it. We have filed hundreds of petitions containing thousands of names.

And I don't want to be partisan about this issue, because I don't really think it is a partisan issue in the sense that we all want what's best for our young people. We all want safe homes and communities. And we are all concerned with some of the social trends we see that don't seem to be going the way we want.

But I still have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I think that a statement from the minister responding to our request for the youth task force would be in order. His initial response, now nearly two months ago, was that he needed to have a look at it, and that was a fair response at the time. But you know, the time for looking at it, presumably, has passed. And I don't think it's unfair to say that some word from him would now be fair, some word to the thousands of people who have signed the petitions that have been filed with the Clerk, filed in this House, is also in order. It seems to me that mere politeness, mere manners, would dictate that some answer would be given to these petitioners.

I also have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I'm disappointed that when the minister introduced this Bill, which I took to be his response for our calls for a youth task force — when he introduced this Bill, I interpreted it as meaning that he now wishes to move on the appointment of youth justice committees — he confirmed in speaking to estimates that in point of fact no youth justice committees have been appointed in this province; although it's been there in The Young Offenders Act, as I say, since I believe 1980.

I think it would have been of great value for the Minister of Justice in introducing this legislation to tell us what he intends on doing with youth justice committees, what his vision is, what the purpose of this amendment is.

What is the real plan here, and if, as I think, the minister is talking about broadly appointed committees that will bring together, firstly, the players in the justice system, the prosecutors, the police, the defence, the court people, the related services — and of course we were talking about the psychologists today and their role in youth services, the youth workers — but also ultimately the community itself, both those who have been victims of offences by young people and community leaders who are attempting to deal with these issues, and elders and aboriginal leaders as well, I would have liked to have heard from the minister some statement as to what he had in mind. Instead all we are told is that this amendment provides for immunity for youth justice committee members, but we don't have any youth justice committees.

So that's what I say, that presumably there is some other thinking going on in the Justice department behind this. I don't think it's unreasonable to ask the Minister of Justice if he would be kind enough to share it with the rest of us — and by that, I do not mean the Liberal opposition; I mean the province at large. It's clear that the people in the province want some answers and they want to see some action.

And I recall that I asked the minister if this Bill . . . I asked the minister in question period: does this Bill mean we're going to now get youth justice committees? The Minister of Social Services stood up and said, well I should know that there are committees doing marvellous work. And I have to say I was involved in a broad justice committee in the Battlefords; although as I said previously, the Minister of Justice has confirmed that no youth justice committees, no formal youth justice committees under the Young Offenders Act, have ever been appointed.

So it would be just very helpful and I think send a positive message out to this province, that if the minister would tell us beyond the technical provisions of this Act about immunity from civil suit, what is his vision, what is his plan, what is behind the proposal? Are we going to finally get the youth justice committees that the federal government called for so many years ago?

And may I say that I don't say that in a critical, partisan sense because it strikes me that one of the things that happened under the Young Offenders Act is that we got immediately constructed, the detention facilities. We did not however, get very much in the way of the support services, the youth workers, the psychologists that were referred to by my colleague from Athabasca and by my colleague from Humboldt.

Instead what we got was that there is such a lack of youth workers that when a youth comes into his initial contact with the justice system, placed on probation, that there isn't that intensive supervision, that close monitoring that could hopefully redirect this young person before he takes the next step and of course has to be put into custody and into detention.

I also have to say that the hon. member from Moosomin told us that he considers that the solution is for parents to take more responsibility. Well again I couldn't agree more, but the sad reality is that many of the young people who are in our youth justice system, first of all, they don't really have parents as you and I might understand that term; and secondly, in many, many cases, they are parents themselves.

Indeed I have been told at the North Battleford Youth Centre that perhaps 50 per cent of the boys are parents. I have been told that in the girls' facility in Saskatoon, it could be more like 90 per cent are parents.

So in terms of saying their parents should take more responsibility for them, well the reality is they're already in the parenting business themselves. And it has to be said that in many, many cases, the parents of those young people in the youth centres are . . . have a great many problems of their own that they have so far been unable to address.

So to say that parents should be more responsible, while you can't quarrel with that concept, it does come up against the hard rock of reality of who so oftentimes is falling into our youth justice system.

And we would like to catch these young people before they have become offenders, and of course repeat offenders, because basically it's only the repeat offenders who find themselves in detention.

Youth justice committees which start a community dialogue can be a positive step in that regard. I think that victims have to hear some of the social backgrounds of the young people and the families and some of the social problems out there.

On the other hand, some of the young people who have stolen the cars and spray-painted the houses and stolen the property have to hear the harm they have caused. They have to hear it firsthand.

(1630)

Because I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in most cases they simply don't have any concept that the people they have harmed, the people they have stolen from, these are real flesh and blood people with feelings and who have been harmed in more than merely monetary ways; and that when these things are done to them, they have suffered more than simply having to fill out an insurance claim.

And I think the only way that could be brought home to the young people is through some of this face-to-face contact.

I think we have to include the aboriginal leaders and the elders so that they too can be part of the process. Because we know that when we are dealing with aboriginal youth, that it is elders from their own community who have the best chance of reaching their young people, rather than people such as you and I.

So we have to involve the aboriginal community if we really want our young people to buy into the process.

My colleague from Athabasca said that we shouldn't be always stressing the negatives. And of course he's absolutely right. Some things have been said in this House which suggest that our young people are the enemy and we must be afraid of our young people.

And I have to say that we've been getting a lot of telephone calls in our caucus which indicate that there are people out there who are afraid of young people, afraid of young people generally, especially if those young people happen to be of a different race.

And this is very sad, and this is something I believe that a youth justice committee which brings together a broad range of citizens from different backgrounds can hopefully address and give us a commitment to face up to our problems together as one community and not as individuals, and not even indeed as members of various groups or backgrounds but indeed as the people of Saskatchewan.

And I must say in that regard that that is my comment too on separate justice system. We are ultimately one province and one people. We do not live in watertight, airtight compartments. Our actions do indeed affect all other citizens of this province and must be treated as such.

So when the member for Athabasca says we shouldn't be stressing the negatives, we shouldn't see our children as our enemy, I couldn't agree more. But neither can we hide our heads in the sand.

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

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I've listening with great interest to the member from North Battleford and it seems to me that the Act before us deals with a strict question of liability, and adding a provision regarding liability for young offenders . . . or for youth committees. The member for North Battleford is all over the map dealing generally with issues of social concern. I really have to question the relevance of his remarks.

The Deputy Speaker: — Your point of order is well taken, but the hon. member is speaking about young offenders and that's the Act before us. And I would ask the member to continue.

Mr. Hillson: — Like I say, I'm not trying to be partisan here, but as the member for Victoria pointed out, we're talking about the liability for committees which the Minister of Justice said don't exist, and they haven't existed although we've had provision for their appointment for 17 years. So I'm honestly . . . I'm trying to understand this and I think the people of Saskatchewan are trying to understand it too, and I really wish . . . As I say, I invite the Minister of Justice to share with us what the plan is, what the vision is, what he hopes for youth justice committees.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, far from leaving the point of this Act, I was trying to lay out what I would hope, what I hope youth justice committees can do in this province, what my vision of youth justice committees are. And I say, I invite the Minister of Justice, I invite the Minister of Social Services, to share their vision with us. I've tried to share my vision with this House.

But simply saying that we have an Act . . . to simply say that we have an Act here that deals with the liability of committees, which don't exist, really doesn't help anyone to understand what is going on. And so I'm saying the subject of the Act is youth justice committees; the subject of my remarks are youth justice committees. And I really invite . . . I really invite the members opposite, instead of trying to restrict, instead of trying to restrict my comments on youth justice committees, please share with us what your view of youth justice committees are.

Why do we need this legislation? I mean clearly we don't need exemption for liability for committees that don't exist. We need liability, we need liability from suit for committees that are going to be appointed. As so does this mean we're going to get them after 17 years? And if so, I can only say to the minister, congratulations, and he will have no problem with full support from the Liberal opposition in that regard.

I said also that while we must not dwell on the negatives with our young people, we also can't hide our heads in the sand because that also does not deal with the issues. We have to face realistically, we have to face courageously, the fact that we do have citizens out there who unfortunately are coming to fear our young people. And I think youth justice committees might be a way of addressing them.

For instance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had last week in a section of Regina spray painting on a lot of houses, and some of those houses of course were occupied by senior citizens who now don't feel safe in their own homes. Now a youth justice committee that brings together some of these home-owners with some of the offenders can, I think, help to impress on them better than any judge or prosecutor or police officer ever could the harm that they are doing.

And I don't honestly think that those young people understand the terror they are striking at some of these senior citizens. I don't think they comprehend that. And I say I don't think they're going to be taught by the police or the courts or even by a stint in a youth centre. But a youth justice committee which confronts the young person with this senior citizen, this 80-year-old lady who says now I can't live in my home because this is happening, I think would have an impact on these young people.

And I want to know: is this what the Minister of Justice is talking about? Is this his vision in the bringing forward of this Bill? I hope it is. And let's say, if it is, he needn't fear that there will be any opposition from this quarter of the House.

Canadian author Hugh MacLennan coined the phrase, "the two solitudes," and my fear is that Saskatchewan could become two solitudes too. And I think that properly managed, youth justice committees can be a bridge — can be a bridge — between the two solitudes. And I hope, I hope my vision is shared by the minister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, people are demanding protection. People are demanding the right to be safe in their own homes. People are demanding security of their property. And I trust there is no member of this House who does not agree that those are basic rights that all citizens ought to enjoy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — We also recognize that a strictly punitive approach, a strictly punitive approach with youth justice is unlikely to result in those safer homes and communities that we all want.

And so in taking a broader approach to what is happening and acknowledging that when we are talking about youth crime, we are also talking about education, we are talking about poverty, we are talking about health of families, we are talking about fetal alcohol, we are talking about the psychologist profession — we're talking about a whole range of things — and we are talking about the good of young people. But we are also confronting our young people at times with the tragic effects and results some of their wrong behaviour has had on some of

our citizens.

I didn't mean to make the member surrender, but I had hoped actually that rather than giving up that he would join debate, that he would share with us how he thinks youth justice committees could be part of the solution.

And I say while I don't want to increase the negatives and to accentuate the negatives, on the other hand, statements such as car theft is not a problem in Regina really don't help either. So while it does not help to try and spread public fear and alarm, to minimize our problems, to trivialize our problems is also no solution.

Mr. Speaker, when I rose in this House I pointed out in the issue of youth justice committees and young offenders some of the points that our province has the second highest level of youth poverty in Canada. I also pointed out that the education level of Saskatchewan young people is now unfortunately below the national average. So education is part of the mix.

The community schools program — I commend the Education minister for . . . I'm sorry that there's no dental health component in that, but that's another matter. But at any rate, when I pointed out that the education level of Saskatchewan young people is unfortunately not as high as some other provinces, this was found by some people as an attack on our teaching profession.

Well it's anything but. I commend our teachers for the wonderful work they do sometimes under very difficult circumstances, sometimes with children who come to school without proper guidance, without proper nourishment, without proper clothes.

But it shows that the education people must also be involved to find solutions — broad solutions — to the social problems facing our communities. The social problems which lead ultimately to the criminal problems we see, first of all, in young offenders and of course all too often young offenders who graduate into the adult system.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that youth justice committees can be part of the mix here in bringing together a broad range of community interests, a broad range of community backgrounds. And we have been proposing this; we have been pushing this.

The people of Saskatchewan have been signing petitions demanding this, and I hope that this Bill means that the Minister of Justice has bought in to the concept. I'm disappointed he hasn't yet told us if he has. I'm disappointed he hasn't shared with us his vision; his purpose in youth justice committees.

But I hope rather than trying to shut down debate, as we saw a few minutes ago, I hope that instead our friends opposite will in fact join in the debate and tell us how they wish to address the social, the economic, the educational, the cultural problems of our young people which have led to an appallingly high level of youth crime that has . . . damages to the fabric of this province, and especially the city in which we are speaking this date.

So they don't have to worry about opposition from us. We're not trying to be partisan about this. We simply say, share your vision. We want to be part of the solution. We don't want to be part of the problem.

(1645)

And we believe that by adopting a measure that the federal government called on us to adopt 17 years ago, namely the appointment of youth justice committees, we can do that. Let's bring together young offenders, their families, the victims, the people in the justice system, the professionals, and the people I say who have been victims of crime — let us bring them together for broad-ranging discussions of how we address these issues and these problems in our society.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments regarding this specific piece of legislation that we're dealing with and talking about today, this Bill No. 34, The Young Offenders' Services Amendment Act.

And I'd like to begin just by referring to some opening arguments and comments. Actually I should say comments made by the hon. minister when he introduced the Bill for second reading, where he made the comment that:

I believe it's becoming increasingly evident that the formal court-centred system of dealing with young people who break the law has for at least some individuals met with very limited success both in terms of accountability to victims and in terms of reducing the likelihood that youth will re-offend.

And then he went on to say:

. . . we believe there must be more effective ways and alternate ways to deal with youth in our communities who break the law.

And to that extent, Mr. Speaker, I certainly can concur with the minister. Because for a long period of time I've felt that in many cases and in many ways we tend to treat individuals who would commit criminal activity in one regard. And while we're treating or trying to address the criminal activity or the crime that's been committed, Mr. Speaker, many times the unfortunate part is the victim of an act or a criminal activity is certainly left out in the cold.

And when it comes to young offenders or young people, Mr. Speaker, I have for a long time felt that we have been maybe missing the boat, we may not have been addressing some of the activity, we may not be addressing the reason why a young person may involve themselves in criminal activity, or why they may have committed an act which if looked at in a different format that young person may, after giving second thought, ask themselves why did I do that?

Many times young people react or respond in circumstances

because of peer pressure, or maybe it's as a result of problems they face in the home. And I think the minister is certainly right when he talks about the fact that just by incarcerating individuals does not really address the problem out there.

And I just had the privilege a moment ago of talking to an organization that really is looking quite seriously at another Act before this Assembly in dealing with security guards and how we address that concern and how we make sure that we are bringing forward legislation that indeed addresses the issue of education and training so that we protect people who are out performing a duty.

And when you look at young people, my feeling has for the greater part I guess I would say, Mr. Speaker, been that on many occasions I think we tend to look at incarceration as a means of addressing the problem, and trying to make young people feel that they have infringed on another person's rights, and because you've infringed on that person's rights, we're going to teach you a lesson. And teaching you a lesson may mean it's easier to incarcerate rather than having that individual face up to the problem that has arisen as a result of their actions.

And I certainly can agree with the minister that I think we need to look at some new approaches. And when I say that, Mr. Speaker, I say that based on the fact that approaches need to be kind of tied to the severity of the crime involved.

And the member from North Battleford talked about some example where maybe a number of our seniors don't feel quite safe in our communities. Even our smaller communities are starting to . . . we're starting to find that people are not really feeling safe at home, let alone being able to walk on the street . . . go for a walk on the street at night and just enjoy the fresh air and the outdoors because of the fact of the way we treat young offenders. And it would seem to me that the Bill that we're addressing today, while it addresses some concerns and some issues, is we're going to have to look at even broader aspects as to how we deal with young offenders.

Now I realize when it comes to young offenders that the federal government actually sets down a number of the . . . or the guidelines and the legislation to deal with young offenders. But I believe that certainly it doesn't take away from our responsibility as elected members in this province to bring forward some suggestions that the Minister of Social Services can share with his counterpart in Ottawa, or the Minister of Justice can share with his counterpart as to how we make people be more accountable for their actions.

The fact of having young offenders sit down and talk to a victim of a crime that has been committed, I believe the minister made a comment about the fact that when a young person is brought face to face with a victim, the comment by some young people who have been actually put in that circumstance was, as the minister said, was for that person one of the most difficult, if not the most difficult things, that they have ever done in their lives.

And I don't doubt, Mr. Speaker, that there isn't any one of us in this Legislative Assembly today would admit that if something

we'd done, or said something . . . I noticed the other day on TV, or actually last night, I think it was Fuzzy Zoeller made some comments which he was responding to and with great regret. And while the comments . . . I viewed the comments, saw them actually at a later time. To a lot of people actually just hearing Fuzzy Zoeller and knowing the man, and having watched him and comment on different activities about his golfing activities, you wouldn't have taken it as really being something serious. But because different individuals interpreted it as being something that should not be said in the way that it was, Mr. Zoeller responded and you could see that he had some real remorse and regret.

And I can see even for in our . . . as young people, if we treat young people with respect and help them to recognize that when they infringe and when they interfere with another person's rights that they certainly . . . that is something that is not appropriate. And if we confront them, or have them confront the individual . . . and I for example can recall I believe it was about a year and a half ago where on the news they had shown this young offender talking to the victim, and in this case it was a stolen vehicle. You could see that that young person probably had more remorse than if that person would have been taken before a judge in a courtroom setting and a judge would have made a decision based on the fact that that young person had offended or infringed on a person's rights and stolen a vehicle.

The fact that that individual had to face the victim caused the person . . . and you could see it had a dramatic affect, as the minister says here in the one comment from one individual: it was the most difficult thing I ever did. And I think we have all found that in our lives.

So I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that when we talk about young offenders, and when people are working with young offenders, when we have committees who are trying to sit down with individuals who have committed acts of violence or committed activities of crime against individuals, and you say to an individual, we want you . . . or to a group of people, we want you to sit down and see if you can address some of the concerns here and deal with these concerns, it's important that those individuals realize that when they are working on behalf of society, or working with young offenders, that they are certainly protected, that they are offered protection.

And I believe section 12 under this current piece of legislation, or section 12 of The Young Offenders' Services Act, grants statutory protection against liability to various individuals and groups of individuals, including employees or agents of the department over which the minister presides. But while it protects them against liability while they're acting in good faith in the performance of individual or collective function or duty imposed by the Act or its accompanying regulations, it does not cover, as the minister said, justice committees and people in our communities who will volunteer to be part of a youth justice committee.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would have to say that anyone who would volunteer of their time to work with young people, to help them, to help steer them in a different direction rather than allowing them to be just basically picked up by their peers and

maybe follow along and go along with their peers and they get involved in actions that they normally wouldn't get involved in, I think we need to certainly recognize the efforts of volunteer groups and volunteer organizations as they reach out to try and steer young people in a direction that would be more beneficial and more positive to our society, and certainly in being more productive members in our society. And so in that regard, Mr. Speaker, I commend the minister for this piece of legislation that he has brought before this Assembly.

And the fact that we are looking at ways in which we try to address the problems and try to help people — and especially in the area of young people — try to help them understand that there are certain responsibilities that come with the actions they take. And that they should be recognized that . . . if they commit a crime, regardless of what the crime may be, if they would infringe on another person's responsibility, or a person's rights, that there is a responsibility that goes with those actions.

And so I think it's imperative, Mr. Speaker, that we certainly take the time to recognize the work of our volunteer groups and include them in provisions and protect them against libellous actions.

And, Mr. Speaker, given the changes that have taken place in our society, given all of the different ways in which people's reputations can be tarnished simply by one person making an accusation, or two or three persons making an accusation . . . Even a person who is reaching out in good faith to help an individual and doing the best that they can and trying to, if you will, steer a person away from the avails of prostitution, trying to help them and to steer them into another . . . into trying to better their lives and not get caught up in that problem, and then all of a sudden, possibly finding themselves being accused of maybe having molested . . . or a sexual misconduct feature.

I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we certainly try to make sure that we are addressing some of the problems that can arise, and that we are giving people some — I'm not saying immunity — but giving them some protection. But at the same time also, when we as individuals are working with groups — and I say this as an individual myself — I find it in my line of duty, Mr. Speaker, that it's imperative that I protect myself, and I hate to say that.

I think I can protect myself quite well, but on many occasions, Mr. Speaker, I find I'm asked to deal with situations. And you go to visit . . . you're asked to come and visit a person to hear a concern they may have, and because of the way our society is, because of the way the laws are now, you think, well should I go and visit? What if there is . . . what if I am the only one that enters that home? What if that young person — it's a young person that's raised an issue . . . you want to make sure that you have someone along with you so that you cannot . . . don't find yourself in a slanderous situation down the road.

And I think it's . . . even though a person has a position of responsibility in dealing . . . let's say a youth worker — even though they've got that position of responsibility and they feel that they're reaching out and they're going to young people and asking them to get involved in programs, or asking them to abstain from getting involved with certain groups, and they may

go in good faith and try to work with that individual.

And the unfortunate part, Mr. Speaker, is, as I had happen personally . . . or just recently where an individual came to me and mentioned about what they've been trying to do. My comment was: were you responding on your own or, even though you are a youth worker, don't you think it would be better to have another person with you in dealing with it, a situation such as that? Because you never know when a comment could be made that you may find yourself having to deal with a criminal matter that you never even thought of or never even occurred, could happen.

So I can see that it is imperative, Mr. Speaker, that we have changes, or we have pieces of legislation such as we have today, that offer protection.

And, Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the comments that the minister made in bringing forward this piece of legislation. And I observe, somehow or other, I think the clock's getting away on us here.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think in view of some of the concerns I've raised here today, and in view of the time of day, it might be appropriate for me to save some of my comments for another day, and therefore I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.

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