

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan residents. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to this petition are from the community of Englefeld. I so present.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to present today.

The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find out all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the Melfort, Saskatoon, and Pathlow areas of the province. I so submit.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition. I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

And these come from the good people at Carlyle and Manor.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well to present a petition. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

The signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are all from the community of Milestone.

Ms. Draude: — I also have a petition to present today:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

From Arcola, Kipling, and Windthorst. Thank you.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition on behalf of citizens of Melville and Kipling:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to demand that the chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee immediately call a meeting of the committee to inquire into the Channel Lake affair or else resign her position as chairperson.

I so present.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, I present a petition signed by a number of residents of the city of Regina:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to demand that the chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee immediately call a meeting of the committee to inquire into the Channel Lake affair or else resign from her position as chairperson.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too bring forward petitions regarding this issue. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to demand that the chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee immediately call a meeting of the committee to inquire into the Channel Lake affair or else resign from her position as chairperson.

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

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens of the province. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to demand that the chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee immediately call a meeting of the committee to inquire into the Channel Lake affair or else resign from her position as chairperson.

Those who've signed these petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Chaplain and Moose Jaw. I so present.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also will rise to present a petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to demand that the chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee immediately call a meeting of the committee to inquire about the Channel Lake affair or else resign from the position of chairperson.

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

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Hudson Bay. I so present.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition today to present on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to demand that the chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee immediately call a meeting of the committee to inquire into the Channel Lake affair or else resign from her position as chairperson.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by the good folks in Assiniboia and Rockglen. I so present.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy today to present petitions on behalf of the Saskatchewan people on yet another important issue:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reach necessary agreements with other levels of government to fund the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway in Saskatchewan so work can begin in 1998, and to set out a time frame for the ultimate completion of the project with or without federal assistance.

I'm happy to present these on behalf of the people, mainly from the community of Lancer, Saskatchewan today, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order a petition regarding the Plains Health Centre presented on March 24 has been reviewed. Pursuant to rule 12(7) it is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received. According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly regarding the funding of the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway; acting to save the Plains Health Centre; and cancelling of severance payments to Jack Messer and the calling of a public inquiry into Channel Lake.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day 18 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: as the proposed dam on the South Saskatchewan River west of the town of Leader would greatly improve the irrigated crop diversification of

Saskatchewan farmers in the area and provide much-needed water for expansion of industry as well as livestock operations, as well as to provide a crossing for the railroad and the highway traffic and a new source of cheap electricity, have you met with representatives of the Meridian Water Management Association or the Medicine Hat Chamber of Commerce to discuss this matter; what were the results of those meetings?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask all the members of the Assembly . . . seated behind the bar on the third party is a gentleman who served this province very diligently, very well for some 11 years, from 1956 until 1967, and he's come here this afternoon to join and be with us, with his former colleagues and some of the newer members of this Assembly. And I would ask all of you to please welcome him back to this Assembly — Wilf Gardiner.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce a lady again in your gallery today that was here last week. Paulette Lochbaum has come back with some very happy results from our lobbying on her behalf, which we'll talk about later in the House, and I would ask members here today to give her a nice warm welcome on our behalf.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to the House today a group of 23 public servants who are on tour here at the Legislative Assembly. They are from the departments of Justice, Agriculture and Food, Education, Energy and Mines, and Highways.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we sit and debate government policy in this Chamber, but these are the people who implement and produce those policies for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And by welcoming this group here today I would like, through them, to indicate to them and to all their colleagues, how much we in this House support the work that they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, please have all members join me in welcoming this group of public servants.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much. On behalf of the member from Elphinstone, I would like to welcome 18 students from Herchmer School in Regina, with their teacher, Mr. Aaron L. Anderson, Mr. Peters, and Mr. Nichol.

And I'll just say that it's part of the parliamentary tradition that both sides of the House express their opinions strongly to each other. So I hope you will take our antics in that vein. Thanks for coming.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Imperial Oil Mixed Curling in Tisdale

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I had the pleasure of attending the Imperial Oil Provincial Mixed Curling in Tisdale. It was a showcase of excitement filled with immense talent.

These are some of the most rewarding opportunities for an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), and Carole and I enjoyed the opportunity very much. Rural Saskatchewan remains dedicated to community involvement and this weekend was no exception.

Congratulations to the home town team of Wes Cowlshaw, Jodi Bruce, Jason Hankins and Barb Marleau. They were successful in advancing to the finals in a four-way tie.

Capturing the provincial title was the Greg Anholt rink of Saskatoon. The Anholt foursome will now advance to the national title bid in Victoria, B.C. (British Columbia), January 9, 10 and 11, 1999. I would like to congratulate all the participants in this weekend's event, Mr. Speaker. They deserve to be congratulated for a spectacular performance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Agricultural Transportation System

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to pay tribute to the spirit of farmers and the people of rural Saskatchewan.

Over the last number of years the federal government has, first of all, pulled millions of dollars out of their economies by abandonment of the Crow benefit. They have given up all their duties in regulating the railroads and then . . . and putting a block in the way of wholesale abandonment. And to make matters worse, they refuse to invest in the infrastructure that's important to get grain to market, therefore leaving the farmers and their governments — locally and provincially — responsible for this travesty.

The people of the west-central area — through the West Central Road and Rail Committee — say that's not good enough, and they've started to plan and fight back. I want to pay tribute to the thousand, roughly 1,000 farmers who came out to meetings in Beechy and Eatonia and Elrose over the last couple of days to say that they want their own hand in planning their future. And they stated it strongly to federal people, to the CNR (Canadian National Railway Company), and to all people involved in the business.

I want to say that Saskatchewan has taken the lead in encouraging the western provinces to take a common approach to the Estey Commission in order to say that this system has to be designed in a way that supports farmers and their communities. And I want to say that the thousand people that came out support the view of Saskatchewan and all people in Saskatchewan, that the . . . that agriculture is central and their transportation system is essential for our province to prosper.

I ask all parties in this House to join me in congratulating the farmers of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

New Bone Scan Machine

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I introduced this House to Paulette Lochbaum, who joins us today in your gallery. Paulette approached the Liberal opposition after being told that you have to wait a month and a half to get a bone scan before she could even start receiving treatment for her cancer.

Amazingly, one day after we raised this issue in the House there was a cancellation and Paulette had the bone scan done. Furthermore — that is good news, Mr. Speaker — furthermore, when she arrived at the Pasqua Hospital for treatment, the staff indicated that because we raised this issue they were authorized to purchase another bone scan machine here in Regina. This issue demonstrates how effective an opposition party can be when it listens to the people of Saskatchewan.

While Paulette was able to receive her treatment and we're happy about that, I do feel for other cancer victims who are forced to endure your unacceptable waiting periods and the estimated 6,600 people who occupy waiting-lists with other various ailments. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Nova Scotia Provincial Election

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday was quite an interesting day in Canadian politics and I am reminded, in Nova Scotia, that they at one point lent us here in Saskatchewan a very great gift, one person named Allan Blakeney. I am very pleased to tell you that today I am quite certain Allan Blakeney is smiling in Halifax, that the people of Nova Scotia are smiling, because they have a strong NDP (New Democratic Party) caucus there.

The Liberals, as Liberals are known to do, often mislead and have a tendency to over-exaggerate. At one point they ran an ad saying: "Nova Scotia can't afford the NDP"; talked about Ontario; talked about B.C. — guess who they forgot to talk about? They forgot to talk about Saskatchewan. Fortunately, our friends in the NDP there ran a full page ad saying: "Why won't the Liberals tell the full story?" I mean we could ask that any time here. We often do.

Here's what the NDP have achieved for the ordinary people of Saskatchewan and it lists it off. It ends by saying: "This time, vote NDP." Well, Mr. Speaker, they voted NDP this time; they'll vote NDP next time; they will vote NDP the time after that. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Public Accounts Petition Drive

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, we have some serious issues to handle here in this legislature, and the Liberal opposition has

launched a petition drive demanding that the chairperson of Public Accounts Committee call a meeting of the committee or resign from the position. Our petition reads, and I quote from a public document, Mr. Speaker:

The chairperson of the committee, Saskatchewan Party MLA June Draude, is refusing to call a meeting of the committee and has been concealing important information about this matter.

On February 16, a Tory member from Melfort-Tisdale told the Public Accounts Committee, and I quote:

The issues raised by Mr. Hillson are valid, a very good example of why the committee has to function in a timely manner.

In agreement with her colleague, the Tory Chairman went on to say:

This committee has a mandate that's very strong, and we have an obligation to the people that elected us to make sure that we're doing our job correctly.

Mr. Speaker, if the Tory Chairman believes that these issues should be dealt with in Public Accounts, why is she refusing to call a meeting of the committee. If the Tory chairperson believes that the committee has a strong mandate and that members have an obligation to the people of Saskatchewan, why is she stonewalling efforts to get to the bottom of Channel Lake?

Mr. Speaker, the Tories blocked our efforts to get to the bottom of this issue in Public Accounts on nine separate occasions, and once again they are standing in the way of clearing up this mess. It is important that we dive into the Channel Lake issue next Tuesday as planned.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Renal Dialysis Services Expand

Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a very . . . I am very pleased to inform this Assembly of an announcement made yesterday by the Hon. Minister of Health. Renal dialysis has been expanded to the East Central Health District to improve access for residents of rural Saskatchewan.

The East Central and Regina Health Districts will jointly develop a Yorkton satellite. Out-patients will be able to access the services at the Yorkton Regional Health Centre while being supervised by specialists in Regina.

Renal dialysis services will also be available at Tisdale Hospital, Mr. Speaker, in my home town in the very near future. The development of that service in the north-east will be a collaborative effort between Pasquia Health District, North Central Health District, North-East Health District, and the existing in-centre dialysis service in the Saskatoon district. Prince Albert and Lloydminster also have renal dialysis satellites.

Last week's good news, the budget contained an additional

\$370,000 to establish the two new sites as part of the government's total new investment in health of \$88 million. This illustrates that our government is both committed to the highest quality of health care possible and that we are responsible to the needs of all the people of Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Inquiry into Channel Lake

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, days will soon turn to weeks that this House has been unable to get to its work, thanks to the actions of the Tories. Those responsible are the worst kind of Tories too, because they are too ashamed to call themselves Tories. While the legislature has been held up before on matters of principle involving public safety or the sale of hundreds of millions worth of public assets, that's not the issue here. The real issue here is the Tory Party's lack of sincerity.

A few weeks ago Channel Lake wasn't even important enough to rush to the top of the Public Accounts Committee's agenda. The Tories even voted nine times against moving it to the top of the agenda. Now they figure they can score points and they want an expensive public inquiry. There's no sincerity in those actions, Mr. Speaker. They just want to try and score points and waste our tax dollars doing it.

Mr. Speaker, with the exception of renewed blessings from Grant Devine and Grant Schmidt, nothing's changed since the '80s for this group. To help them remember that Saskatchewan will not tolerate Tory waste, I prepared a few invoices and I'll send them to the Tory members. In the envelope they'll find they've won the Oscar yet again for wasting taxpayers' dollars, but instead of a statue it's a \$28,000 bill for each day they've wasted.

Mr. Speaker, maybe they can dip into that secret Tory trust fund to pay us back. No matter how much of our money they waste, the Tories are clearly never "tory" for anything they do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatoon Doctor Member of Goodwill Mission to South Asian Countries

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Speaker, this week the Governor General of Canada is on a goodwill mission to south Asian countries. And on this goodwill mission Team Canada will consist of prominent Canadians of East Indian ancestry or Pakistani ancestry. Among them, Dr. Ali Rajput of Saskatoon, who is professor and head of neurology at Royal University Hospital, who was selected because of his worldwide reputation in fighting Parkinson's disease.

Among his accomplishments, Dr. Rajput has been awarded the Order of Canada, and last year additionally had the honour of being asked by the World Health Organization in Geneva to serve as one of a select number of eminent medical consultants for their global health planning.

Dr. Rajput and the rest of the Canadian team will meet with heads of state and prominent members of the business community to solidify relations and promote goodwill. And I know as he visits, Dr. Rajput will continue his life's work of alleviating the sufferings of those who suffer from Parkinson's disease. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

SaskPower Gas Supply Contract

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan). Mr. Minister, every day more facts come up about the dirty deal in Channel Lake in spite of your best efforts to cover them up.

Now we learn that the deal wasn't worth 15 or \$20 million, it was, in fact, worth \$300 million. DEML (Direct Energy Marketing Limited), the company that ripped you off for \$5 million, got a secret, untendered deal worth \$300 million. Unbelievable! — 300 million untendered, Mr. Minister.

I have a simple question. Why? Why did you give this DEML company this sweetheart deal? Why weren't other companies given a chance to bid? Why would you award a \$300 million, 10-year contract without calling for tenders, Mr. Minister? Why?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, in the document that we tabled over two weeks ago, this issue is spelled out as one of the arrangements that the Deloitte Touche report dealt with in some detail. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is, where have these members been for two weeks — for two weeks — on this issue.

Today they stand in the House because the *Leader-Post*, the *Leader-Post*, in its wisdom — and with respect to the *Leader-Post* — chose to do a story about the report, in the Deloitte Touche report about the deal, the 10-year contract with DEML. And today the Conservatives decide they have found a secret out of the report — two and a half weeks later. Two and a half weeks later, after the members of the Liberal Party, the public, have been talking about this issue for two weeks.

Sir, if you were in the House instead of out campaigning, you would know about this issue, that it had been dealt with in the Assembly many days. Come to order. Come here and work. Get off this idea of being on strike. Tell your desk mate to call Public Accounts and this . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you lost \$5 million out of a \$20 million deal with DEML. How much of a bath are you taking or are we taking on the \$300 million deal? Did anyone over there bother to read the contract before you signed it?

Mr. Minister, why didn't you give other companies a chance to bid? Why wasn't SaskEnergy given a chance to bid? Poor old Ron Clark's office is just down the street from Jack Messer and no one even phoned him. Why?

You were handing out a \$300 million contract. You had an obligation to make sure that the best possible deal was resulted in, and the only way to do that is to call for tenders. Mr. Minister, you are responsible. Answer the question: why did you give a \$300 million contract without calling for tenders?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, this is one of the issues that when we looked at Channel Lake, we wanted the answers to. We commissioned Deloitte Touche. The report has been in the House for two and a half weeks, my friend. It's been here for two and a half weeks.

We have said and agreed with other people who say we want an inquiry into how this all happened. We've challenged your desk mate to call the committee, the inquiry, so we can find the answers. We want to call Mr. Portugal before the committee and ask him these very questions.

The nonsense of your question. If you would have been here the last few days you would know we've been calling for you to call the committee.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. The minister will know very well that it is improper in the course of debate in this House to draw attention as a part of that debate to a member's presence or absence in the House, and I'll ask him to avoid that reference and to wrap up his response very quickly.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I say to the members opposite, this: there is a responsibility of elected members to do the work on behalf of the people they're elected to do. One thing your caucus has responsibility for is Public Accounts. You have failed to call that committee to do its work, and I say to you you've failed miserably in your job as an MLA. How can you stand here and say you want to lead the official opposition in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious that the minister won't answer so I'll have to do it for him. You gave out a \$300 million, untendered contract to keep your political deadline. You had to ram through this deal by March 31 to try to cover up the \$8 million trading losses that were going on. It was a secret, untendered, fix-up job to cover up all the illegal trading activity SaskPower was doing in Channel Lake.

You know it; and what's worse, all the ministers who were there knew it. So talk about living up to your responsibility. It says so right in the CIC report that the ministers knew what was going on. Jack Messer said the minister knew what was going on.

Mr. Minister, live up to your responsibility and fire these clowns.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite, who pretends to be overly excited about an issue that we reported to the House two and a half weeks ago, that we've been debating in the House for two and a half weeks, wanting to set up an inquiry chaired by members of your committee, which you have refused to do.

So in light of the fact that you've refused to do the work of Public Accounts, we have now established that the proper process — as we said in the report — the other option is to go to Crown Corporations Committee. And on March 31 we intend to start work of the inquiry here in the Assembly, and I hope that all members — all members — will come and do their work at that committee, having refused to do it here, refused to do it in Public Accounts — come to Crown Corporations Committee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, everyone in Saskatchewan except you NDP and your patronage people and your wholly owned subsidiary Liberal hacks know that the only way to get to the bottom of this is an independent public inquiry. Everyone knows that. It's time that you came clean on these issues instead of with the cover-up. DEML had you over the barrel. You had no way out except awarding them this great, sweetheart contract.

Mr. Minister, you know that it was a sweetheart contract. Are you prepared to release the 10-year supply contract, in its entirety, to this Assembly?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say again to the members opposite. Other members of the Assembly, government members, Liberal members, independent members, have known about this issue because it's in the report that I released two and a half weeks ago. We've been debating it. How can you stand here and be all excited as if you found something new, when we've been debating it for two and a half weeks and calling for the committee to come and work on it?

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. Now I'll ask for the cooperation of the hon. members of the official opposition. Order. Order, on both sides. Now I was quite capable of being able to hear the question being put. The courtesy extended by the House was most acceptable and I'll ask for the House's cooperation in extending the same courtesy to the minister in providing a response.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the members opposite that one of the duties of MLAs is working here in the Assembly, but also when you're elected, and there can be no proud or more honourable profession than putting your name on a ballot, to be chosen by your friends and neighbours to come here. To do what? To pass laws that your community will live by. That's an important duty.

The other responsibility is, is carrying on the work of the Assembly and the work of committees. And you say that a judge — with all of respect to the judge — has a better understanding of the needs of the public than you do. I do not believe that to be true.

The role of MLAs is an honourable profession and one that is fundamental to democracy. By calling a committee of the legislature a kangaroo court, you have done a great disservice to the democratic process. And I say that is truly unfortunate, truly unfortunate, to say nothing about a judicial inquiry.

To say that Public Accounts is a kangaroo court is an . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Teacher Contract Bargaining

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education. Madam Minister, school trustees and the provincial government began bi-level bargaining in 1972. In the 26 years since then the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association has refused to sign three teachers' contracts, including the last two contracts negotiated under your leadership.

Madam Minister, the bilateral bargaining arrangement was based on a trust relationship, a partnership between trustees and government. But under your stewardship a wedge has been driven between your government and school trustees. The trust relationship has been broken.

Madam Minister, what are you doing to begin to repair the broken trust between your NDP government and school boards?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the fact that we're now getting down to the business of the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, as the members will know, we successfully concluded a collective agreement with Saskatchewan's 12,000 teachers this past week, and we signed the collective agreement for the next couple of years on Tuesday. That collective agreement was signed by the Government of Saskatchewan and the teachers.

Now as we will all know, the government decided in December of 1997 to conclude our arrangements with the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association after nine meetings where we tried to come to some sort of consensus over a mandate.

Unfortunately after nine meetings and having spent a great deal of time discussing our differences, we just couldn't come to a consensus and the government chose to conclude our arrangement with the school trustees in order to get on with the business of concluding a collective agreement with Saskatchewan's 12,000 teachers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rural School Closures

Mr. Krawetz: — Madam Minister, your government's lack of leadership and vision is forcing rural school boards to make difficult decisions. Yesterday, your lack of vision forced the

Yorkdale School Division to make two extremely tough decisions. The board decided to close MacNutt School and eliminate grades 10 through 12 at Theodore.

Now what is the plan for students who attended those schools? Most will be bussed into Yorkton; many having to travel over 60 kilometres or more one way. Is that the NDP vision for education in rural Saskatchewan — bus students for one and a half to two hours one way to school every day? What is the next step, Madam Minister? Are you going to close down all the schools in Moose Jaw and bus them 60 kilometres to Regina?

Madam Minister, when is the NDP going to stop its policy of simply shutting down rural schools? When will you start to look to innovative solutions like distance education through SaskTel? Madam Minister, what is your plan for rural Saskatchewan? When will you begin to show some leadership and innovation?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. As the member will know, as the former chairperson of a school division in this province and as the former Chair of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association whom I understand did close schools in rural Saskatchewan, I want to say this, Mr. Speaker, that the number of . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now the Chair is having difficulty being able to hear the answer being provided because of interruptions on both sides of the House, and I'll ask the House to extend the courtesy to the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What I would say to the member is that since 1970 to present, there have 356 school closures in this province. Schools were closed in the '80s when we were increasing educational funding, Mr. Speaker.

I would say to the member that I've concluded, after looking at this issue very carefully, that one of the reasons why schools are closing in some parts of Saskatchewan is because of enrolment decline, Mr. Speaker. I would say it's a demographic shift, and I would say to the member that I suspect that he closed his school because of enrolment decline.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Board Deficits

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the minister of sickness and health. Yesterday the Liberal opposition revealed . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Now when all hon. members will recognize — and I know the Leader of the Third Party will — that when addressing questions in question period, they're addressed to members of the Executive Council in the context of their responsibilities and should be addressed that way in putting the question.

Mr. Osika: — I apologize, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Health. Yesterday the Liberal opposition revealed that the Regina District Health Board faces a \$5

million funding shortfall.

We have also told this House that Saskatoon faces a \$5 million deficit in the coming year and as much as \$13 million the following year.

The East Central District is about \$2.4 million into the red — a situation board members have described as a crisis.

And the sky is falling in on the Living Sky District, which is battling a \$1.5 million shortfall in money.

Mr. Minister, what are you doing to help these and other cash-starved districts which have already been cut to the financial bone?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to advise the member opposite that as of this morning — and I know he raised with me yesterday — as of this morning I had the opportunity to speak with the members from the Regina Health District. And we explored what sorts of avenues what might be available to them into the future in order that they might be able to sustain and maintain the level of services that they have today.

And in conjunction with the district health board and the Department of Health, will ensure that they'll continue to provide services to the people of Regina and to the district in a way in which we've been accustomed to receiving those services.

The member opposite also talks about the importance of adding additional funding to the health system. I want to say to the member opposite that today we've spent \$1.72 billion in health care in this province. It's a larger expenditure that we provide into the health system ever in the history of our province.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we have not received one penny, one penny from the federal government in assisting us to deliver health care services in this province — of which the member opposite is a cousin of, and does nothing to support us in getting additional federal funding to help with the development of health care services in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is finger pointing at somebody else that's responsible for the problems that our health districts are facing, continues. There is no hope for these people with answers such as the minister has just given us.

Mr. Speaker, the minister promised there will be no further bed closures and that no more front-line care-givers will be eliminated. In fact he indicated yesterday in this House that any further bed closures would be inappropriate. In spite of the promise, the Living Sky district faces one of two options to cut costs — the elimination of 39 hospital and long-term care beds in Watrous and Lanigan, or the elimination of 41 hospital and long-term care beds in Watrous, Lanigan and Wynyrd. Mr. Minister, you promised no more bed closures yet this is exactly what faces the people in the Living Sky district. What are you going to do to live up to the promises that you made? Health

care in our cities in already in a state of a crisis and are you going to continue cutting health care in our smaller communities as well?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well Mr. Speaker, I want to, I want to take the member to a piece of work that has just been completed in the province by HSURC (Health Services Utilization and Research Commission). And they released their report this morning or yesterday during the SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations) of which I had an opportunity to address this morning.

And what HSURC said after considerable research, and they did some research involving 780 Saskatchewan patients, and this is what they said. They said that they found over one-quarter of the hospital beds used to provide non-acute care could be . . . could have been delivered in a much less costly fashion. They went on to say that the study results that were released at the annual conference say that by continuing to use hospitals as the site of choice for convalescents, we're not allowing home care to do its intended work. And went on to say that our finding suggests that we're using hospitals as a costly substitute to home care.

So when you ask me the question, Mr. Speaker, as to — or the member opposite — as it relates to whether or not we have other options to provide services in the provinces today, outside of hospitals, the answer is that we do. The answer is that it is home care. And we are putting a hundred and sixteen per cent more dollars today in home care than we did in 1991-92 and that's our option.

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

Northern Ambulance Service

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On December 19, 1997 at approximately 8:30 in the morning, Harold Aubichon and Tony Stewart were involved in a two-vehicle accident on the Canoe Lake Road in northern Saskatchewan. This is not the first time that this road has claimed lives and was the scene of serious accidents.

Both of the accident victims had undetermined injuries and at least for four hours stayed in their vehicles and were finally freed from these vehicles. And after the serious accident, Mr. Aubichon was finally transported to Ile-a-la-Crosse hospital, not by road ambulance, not by rescue vehicle, nor by air ambulance, but by taxi-cab.

My question to the Minister of Health: is a taxi-cab the appropriate emergency care transportation method that should be used to transport critically injured or critically ill patients?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, across the province in the past three years we have added significant funding to road ambulance services, and as well we've added the new aircraft to assist us with air ambulance travel across the province. We've been able to do that.

Now if the member opposite is suggesting for a minute that

there are parts of the province that aren't adequately covered and that we should be involved in enhancing services in those areas, I want to say to the member opposite that those discussions are currently under way.

We've just completed a signing agreement with the two northern municipal . . . with the two northern health districts, who today are working closely with the Department of Health to work at enriching the level of services that we want to provide to people who live in the northern part of the province.

If the question is are we doing a full, adequate job today and ensuring that people of northern Saskatchewan get the types of services that we think they need, the answer is that we've not achieved that. Are we working towards achieving that in partnership with the health district? The answer is that we are, and we'll continue to work with the two districts, and we'll continue to enhance services to northern communities, as we have in the southern part of the province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Needless to say, Mr. Aubichon has survived the accident and recovery is a long journey that he'll have to make. The sad note of this story is that Mr. Stewart died in the air ambulance on the way to a Saskatoon hospital.

There is no doubt that air ambulance service is crucial to the quick transportation of critically ill or injured patients from the North to Saskatoon's hospitals. But this injury and death should not be in vain and response to emergencies of this nature could be vastly improved if a road ambulance service was made available to compliment the current air ambulance service.

And I ask the Minister of Health, will he stand up today in the Assembly and make a provincial commitment for the people of the North, to finally and quickly provide them with a qualified and proper road ambulance service? Will the minister do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ensure the member opposite that the working relationship and the development of health services in northern Saskatchewan we're working on collectively with the two district health boards that are there and the Department of Health. And as we improve on our services in northern Saskatchewan we will see enrichments. We will see enrichments in the ambulatory services to northern people.

But I think the member needs to stand up and/or put his pen to paper and write a letter to his friends in Ottawa. And to his friends in Ottawa he needs to say, how is it that in Saskatchewan we've seen a reduction of health care funding from the agreement around the medicare . . . around the medicare plan for funding we've lost to the province, that has gone from 50 per cent, which was cost-shared with the federal government, to today to 13 per cent on the dollar, Mr. Speaker. And I think the member needs to put his pen to paper and ask how that has happened, because today in this province we cover uninsured services 100 per cent — which are ambulatory services, home care services. And the member from

Cumberland needs to stand up and make that statement and put his pen to paper and assist us in getting some additional federal funding.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The problem that we have, Mr. Speaker, is that we've had in the provincial scene for the last 20 years, we've had provincial Progressive Conservative governments in power, we've had a New Democratic government in power, but we have not had our federal cousins in power for the past 20 years. So the problem is we simply can't slough it off and say, talk to your federal Liberal cousins.

The fact of the matter, the fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, this is a provincial responsibility, and we have not had ambulance services in northern Saskatchewan for the past 20-some years, and we've had a consecutive New Democratic government and still no action.

When can the people of northern Saskatchewan expect a decent road ambulance to compliment the air ambulance service for the injured and critically ill people?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that the member opposite has identified an issue that is extremely important to us in the way in which we prepare our discussions and work with our federal partners, because today the federal government pays for a large portion of the air ambulance services that come out of the North. And we've said through our relationships with the two new districts, that we need to enhance those services and improve them and grow them. And that's currently what we're doing.

Now at a recent conference, Mr. Speaker, the summer of '97, the federal Minister of Health stood up at the Canadian Medical Association and he said the provinces have had to reduce their level of services because of federal cut-backs from Mr. Allan Rock. He makes the statements, Liberals make the statement. And the member opposite, who is a cousin to Mr. Rock, gets up in this House today and says that he in fact wants the provincial government to assume all of those responsibilities.

When will it be that the member from Athabasca and his Liberal cousins will stand up and make a position for the province of Saskatchewan to assist us with getting additional funding?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 201 — The Crown Corporations Disclosure Act, 1998

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move the first reading of Bill No. 201, The Crown Corporations Disclosure Act, 1998 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 202 — The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 1998 (Foreign Investment Prohibitions)

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 202, The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 1998 (Foreign Investment Prohibitions) be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 203 — The Government Accountability Act

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move first reading of Bill No. 203, The Government Accountability Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 205 — The Crown Corporations Rate Review Act, 1998

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of Bill 205, The Crown Corporations Rate Review Act, 1998 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 285 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Blaine Lake)

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 285, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Blaine Lake) be now introduced and read the first time.

The division bells rang from 2:22 p.m. until 2:32 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Krawetz	D'Autremont	Boyd
Draude	Gantefer	Heppner

Nays — 26

Flavel	Van Mulligen	Wiens
MacKinnon	Shillington	Atkinson
Tchorzewski	Johnson	Whitmore
Goulet	Upshall	Kowalsky
Teichrob	Koenker	Trew
Lorje	Cline	Hamilton
Stanger	Kasperski	Ward
Murray	Jess	Langford
Murrell	Thomson	

Bill No. 286 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Borden)

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill No. 286, The Channel Lake Indemnification

Act (Village of Borden) be now introduced and read a first time.

Yeas — 4

The division bells rang from 2:34 p.m. until 2:44 p.m.

D'Autremont
Heppner

Boyd

Gantefoer

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Nays — 17

Yeas — 5

Krawetz
Gantefoer

D'Autremont
Heppner

Boyd

Flavel
Lingenfelter
Whitmore
Teichrob
Kasperski
Murrell

Wiens
Tchorzewski
Goulet
Hamilton
Jess
Belanger

MacKinnon
Johnson
Kowalsky
Sonntag
Langford

Nays — 24

Flavel
Tchorzewski
Goulet
Teichrob
Renaud
Hamilton
Kasperski
Langford

Wiens
Johnson
Upshall
Koenker
Lorje
Sonntag
Ward
Murrell

MacKinnon
Whitmore
Kowalsky
Trew
Cline
Wall
Jess
Thomson

**Bill No. 289 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Village of Bradwell)**

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 289, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Bradwell) be now introduced and read the first time.

The division bells rang from 3:10 p.m. until 3:20 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

**Bill No. 287 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Village of Bounty)**

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of Bill No. 287, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Bounty) be now introduced and read the first time.

The division bells rang from 2:46 p.m. until 2:56 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 4

D'Autremont
Heppner

Boyd

Gantefoer

Nays — 21

Flavel
Johnson
Upshall
Koenker
Cline
Kasperski
Langford

Wiens
Whitmore
Kowalsky
Renaud
Hamilton
Murray
Murrell

MacKinnon
Goulet
Teichrob
Lorje
Sonntag
Jess
Thomson

Yeas — 5

Toth
Gantefoer

D'Autremont
Heppner

Boyd

Nays — 19

Flavel
Johnson
Kowalsky
Renaud
Wall
Langford
Belanger

Wiens
Whitmore
Teichrob
Lorje
Kasperski
Murrell

MacKinnon
Goulet
Koenker
Sonntag
Jess
Thomson

**Bill No. 290 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Town of Bredenbury)**

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill No. 290, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Bredenbury) be now introduced and read the first time.

The division bells rang from 3:22 p.m. until 3:32 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

**Bill No. 288 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Village of Bracken)**

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill No. 288, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Bracken) be now introduced and read the first time.

The division bells rang from 2:58 p.m. until 3:08 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Toth
Gantefoer

D'Autremont
Heppner

Boyd

Nays — 21

Flavel
Tchorzewski
Goulet
Teichrob

Wiens
Johnson
Upshall
Koenker

MacKinnon
Whitmore
Kowalsky
Renaud

Lorje	Hamilton	Sonntag
Wall	Kasperski	Jess
Langford	Murrell	Thomson

**Bill No. 291 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Village of Briercrest)**

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move first reading of Bill No. 291, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Briercrest) be now introduced and read the first time.

The division bells rang from 3:34 p.m. until 3:44 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Toth	D'Autremont	Boyd
Gantefer	Heppner	

Nays — 20

Wiens	MacKinnon	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Goulet	Upshall
Kowalsky	Teichrob	Trew
Renaud	Lorje	Hamilton
Sonntag	Wall	Kasperski
Ward	Jess	Langford
Murrell	Thomson	

**Bill No. 292 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Town of Broadview)**

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move first reading of the Bill No. 292, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Broadview) be now introduced and read the first time.

The division bells rang from 3:46 p.m. until 3:56 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Toth	D'Autremont	Boyd
Gantefer	Heppner	

Nays — 22

Wiens	MacKinnon	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Whitmore	Goulet
Upshall	Kowalsky	Teichrob
Koenker	Trew	Renaud
Lorje	Hamilton	Stanger
Sonntag	Wall	Kasperski
Ward	Langford	Murrell
Thomson		

**Bill No. 293 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Village of Brock)**

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move first reading of Bill No. 293, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Brock) be now introduced and read the first time.

The division bells rang from 3:58 p.m. until 4:08 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Toth	D'Autremont	Boyd
Gantefer	Heppner	

Nays — 21

Wiens	MacKinnon	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Whitmore	Goulet
Upshall	Kowalsky	Teichrob
Koenker	Trew	Renaud
Lorje	Stanger	Wall
Kasperski	Ward	Jess
Langford	Murrell	Thomson

**Bill No. 294 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Village of Broderick)**

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move first reading of Bill No. 294, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Broderick) be now introduced and read the first time.

The division bells rang from 4:10 p.m. until 4:20 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 3

Toth	D'Autremont	Gantefer
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Nays — 18

Johnson	Whitmore	Goulet
Upshall	Kowalsky	Teichrob
Koenker	Trew	Renaud
Lorje	Hamilton	Stanger
Wall	Kasperski	Ward
Langford	Murrell	Thomson

**Bill No. 424 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Village of Clavet)**

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill No. 424, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Clavet) be now introduced and read a first time.

The division bells rang from 4:24 p.m. until 4:34 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5Toth
GanteferD'Autremont
Heppner

Boyd

Koenker
Hamilton
Kasperski
ThomsonTrew
Stanger
JessRenaud
Wall
Langford**Nays — 18**

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.

Wiens	Johnson	Whitmore
Goulet	Upshall	Kowalsky
Koenker	Trew	Lorje
Hamilton	Stanger	Wall
Kasperski	Ward	Jess
Langford	Murrell	Thomson

**Bill No. 425 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Village of Climax)**

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill, No. 425, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Climax) be now introduced and read the first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order.

The division bells rang from 4:36 p.m. until 4:46 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5Toth
GanteferD'Autremont
Heppner

Boyd

Nays — 16

Wiens	Johnson	Goulet
Upshall	Kowalsky	Koenker
Trew	Renaud	Lorje
Hamilton	Stanger	Wall
Kasperski	Jess	Langford
Thomson		

**Bill No. 426 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Resort Village of Cochin)**

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill No. 426, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Resort Village of Cochin) be now introduced and read the first time.

The division bells rang from 4:48 p.m. until 4:58.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5Toth
GanteferD'Autremont
Heppner

Boyd

Nays — 16

Flavel	Wiens	Johnson
Goulet	Upshall	Kowalsky

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