

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I have petitions to present this morning on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to put a moratorium on the closure of the Plains Health Centre until they conduct a comprehensive review into the health crisis we are currently experiencing.

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

These petitions come from the Gainsborough, Carievale, Carnduff areas of the province, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well to present petitions, and reading the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to put a moratorium on the closure of the Plains Health Centre until they conduct a comprehensive review into the health crisis we are currently experiencing.

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

And the petition I am presenting is signed by individuals from the Gainsborough area.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present. 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 all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake's fiasco.

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

The community involved, Mr. Speaker, are people from Hudson Bay. I so present.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition and 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 are signed by the people from Midale, Carlyle,

Arcola, and all around Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I petition 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.

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

Everyone that has signed this petition is from Spalding.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition on behalf of people of Saskatchewan concerned about the closure of the Plains hospital.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And the signatures on the petition are from Carlyle, Coronach, and Big Beaver. I so present.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I also have petitions from upset and disturbed people concerned about crumbling health care under the NDP (New Democratic Party). Your petitioners come from Pilot Butte, Zehner, and Regina. And they are asking that the Plains Health Centre remain open.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens concerned about the closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

Those who have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the community of Weyburn and they represent some of the over 1,500 people who have now attended our public forums on the issue of the Plains . . .

The Chair: — Order. I'm sure that the hon. member will want to avoid entering into debate while presenting petitions. Continuing with presentation of petitions.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have

been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly on the following matters: twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway; saving the Plains Health Centre; and putting a moratorium on the closure of the Plains Health Centre.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, a group of 19 English as a second language students that are here with representatives from the Regina Open Door Society who are seated in your gallery. They're accompanied by Roshnie Thaver and Michele Bryce of the Regina Open Door Society, Mr. Speaker. And they're here this morning for a tour of the legislature and for a meeting with . . . I'll be meeting with them at 11 o'clock for a time in our caucus office.

I'd like to ask you and ask the members to join me in welcoming these students to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of people in the House today I'd like to introduce to the gallery. My husband is in the east gallery. Welcome to the House. And in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, I notice a young gentleman from the Leroy area, Aaron Schroeder. He's normally with the SADD (Students Against Drinking and Driving) group and I'm not sure if that's who he's with today, but whoever he's with must be good people because if you're with Aaron you're good people.

So welcome, everyone.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I too want to welcome Aaron Schroeder and that fine, fine group of people that he's with this morning.

Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery today we are privileged as members to have in our presence the Saskatchewan Council on Children, Mr. Speaker. I've taken the liberty, Mr. Speaker, of providing to each member this morning a one-page descriptor just to remind members of the make-up and the important role that the Council on Children plays in our province.

I would like, Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, to introduce them, each who are with us. There are some members of the council who cannot be with us. They are here in Regina for two days in their annual quarterly meetings. I would ask members of the council, as I read their name, if they would perhaps just stand and we can greet the entire council at the close.

Mr. Speaker, with us this morning are John Barton from Saskatoon, who is Co-Chair; Kathy Dammann from Griffin, Saskatchewan, Co-Chair; Kim Beaudin from Saskatoon; Rosemary Bolaria from Saskatoon; Marlene Bugler from Cando; Carol Glazer from Saskatoon; Cheryl Hand from

Saskatoon; Greg Hatch from La Loche. Dr. Deborah Hay from Saskatoon; Daina Hodgson from Moose Jaw; Jan Rowlinson from Moose Jaw; Aaron Schroeder from Muenster; Christine Watson from Regina; and Bonnie Durnford, who is with the Department of Social Services. Dr. Joe Kluger from the Department of Health; Rosanne Glass from the Department of Education; and joining the council this morning, someone who needs no introduction in this House, our child advocate, Dr. Deborah Parker-Loewen.

I would invite all members to welcome the children's council and thank them for the work they do.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, sitting in your gallery is a good friend of mine, and I'm sure many people of the Assembly, Richard Jack. Richard and his son are here today. Richard, if you would just stand up. Mr. Jack is chaplain at the Unitarian church here in Regina; is also vice-president of the Regina multi-faith forum, and there is a Regina faith fair that he is working hard on now that will occur on May 3 at the University of Regina.

And so it's with great pleasure that I introduce Richard. But even more importantly, one of the youngest constituents, his son Arthur, is with us as well today. So join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to add the voice of the Liberal caucus in welcoming — I'm sorry, I didn't mean to do that — in welcoming all the good people that have come to spend this morning with us.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery, I would like the House to welcome a new staff member to the Liberal caucus. Ted Olynik has recently joined us from our B.C. (British Columbia) Liberal cousins to take on the role as director of communications. And Ted will be working with Kelly Gleeson, the caucus press secretary, in delivering our message to the voters of Saskatchewan.

Just as matter of interest, Ted was instrumental in the Liberals' uncovering the bingogate scandal and is all too familiar with the NDP's famous botched Pakistani power deal called hydrogate. I ask the House to please make him welcome. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, two very important people from my constituency of Swift Current.

And of course I'm referring to the former member from Swift Current who is also probably one of the very popular ministers in the last term. So I'd like to introduce to you, John Penner, and of course the more attractive part of that couple and the one who is the driving force, Jo Penner. Welcome to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take the opportunity also to welcome all of the members of the council for children and a special hello to Debra Parker-Loewen.

And also to Aaron Schroeder, who is from out my way. Aaron certainly has done a great deal of work with youth in the abbacy of St. Peter's at Muenster and in the Humboldt area. And he needs to be commended highly for his work.

I am indeed grateful to all of you for the work that you're doing to benefit the children of our province, because after all, they are the leaders of tomorrow. So thank you again.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with my colleague from Swift Current in welcoming the former minister of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) and his wonderful wife Jo to the Assembly today.

But I just want to say a special thank you to him for talking us into keeping our shares in the upgrader.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — As you will know, Mr. Speaker, we were being encouraged to sell our shares for 25 million. He convinced us to keep them and we sold them for 310 million, for a profit of \$285 million.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, oftentimes those who make those decisions aren't appreciated enough, and I want to say to John, and through you to your staff of that day, thank you very, very much on behalf of the taxpayers.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Community Marketing Initiative

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, last night I had the pleasure of attending a meeting in my constituency held by the Community Marketing Initiative, a producer group based in Naicam and Spalding. This group was formed last year to investigate the possibility of building a grain terminal in the area.

Last night CMI announced that it would be the first to form a joint venture with the Alberta and Manitoba wheat pools. This new 20,000 tonne inland grain terminal will be located between Spalding and Naicam. Fifty per cent of the \$10.6 million project will be owned by CMI and the other half will be owned by the Manitoba and Alberta Wheat Pool.

Mr. Speaker, this new terminal is good news for the area farmers, local businesses, and the community. Depending on how fast the investment can be raised, construction should begin this fall or in the spring of '99. It is a testament of what the people of this province can accomplish and I congratulate all those in CMI who made it possible. Of course, anyone who wants to become involved need only contact anyone in Naicam when the prospectus is ready.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Regina Women of Distinction

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night the member from Regina Wascana Plains, the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, the Deputy Premier, and I were among the more than 700 people who gathered to honour Regina's 1998 Women of Distinction, the 16th time this event has been sponsored by the YWCA.

This awards banquet shows no signs of running out of steam. Last night's crowd was a record breaker; proof that we have just begun to tap the surface of women whose achievements deserve to be recognized. And as always, the proceeds go to supporting the Isabel Johnson Shelter in Regina — a worthy and regrettably necessary cause.

Nine women were named Women of Distinction, but of course all of the nominees were equally deserving and should be congratulated as well. I only have time to mention the names of the winners, but their community knows the importance and the distinction of their work.

In Arts and Culture, the winner was Christa Donaldson; the Business, Labour and the Professions Award went to Linda Hutchinson; the Community and Humanitarian Service Award winner was Gloria Barnett; Contribution to a Rural Community, Laura Vance; winner of the Health and Wellness Award was Marlene Smadu; Science and Technology went to Dr. Lynn Kirkpatrick; Sport and Recreation, Marlene Hoffman; the Young Woman of Distinction was Captain Maryse Carmichael; and the Lifetime Achievement Award was appropriately given to former Weyburn mayor, Isabelle Butters.

My congratulations to all the Women of Distinction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of compensating victims of hepatitis C has made headlines in Ottawa this week. And the comments being made by federal NDP leader Alexa McDonough are just as interesting. She says her party supports the Krever report. She says there should not be first- or second-class victims of hepatitis C. She says the only fair thing to do is compensate all victims.

Mr. Speaker, Alexa McDonough is absolutely right. As the Liberal opposition has been saying for months and months, all victims of hepatitis C should be compensated just as the Krever report suggests — the report which also notes that it is a federal and a provincial responsibility.

Mr. Premier, you refuse to acknowledge what is right . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Now the hon. member will recognize that when bringing remarks to the House, it is appropriate only to direct them through the Chair according to rule 28. And I'll invite him to continue in that form.

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier refuses to acknowledge what is right and what is his moral obligation. So we urge the Premier to pick up the phone, talk to his federal cousins, and listen to what they have to say. It doesn't happen very often, but the federal New Democrats are on the right track on this issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Popowich Milling Oat Plant Grand Opening

Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning the minister responsible for Agriculture and Food is attending the grand opening of Popowich Milling in Yorkton.

Popowich Milling processes and produces a variety of oat products for both retail and wholesale markets in North America. They have recently completed an expansion of their facilities in partnership with the agri-food equity fund. The agri-food equity fund invested \$1 million in the company which helped build a new processing facility on the northern edge of Yorkton. Existing facilities will also be redesigned for organic oat milling.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, the equity fund was designed not as a government grant but as an investment strategy where the government shares the risks associated with new ventures in the agri-food industry, but also shares in the profits. This is just one of the many examples of partnerships formed between the province and agri-food enterprises to develop and expand the agri-food industry in Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatoon Eastview By-election

Mr. Bjornerud: — So, Mr. Speaker, it looks like the Saskatchewan Party is the first one out of the blocks for the imminent by-election. Just today the former Liberal candidate, Francis Kreiser, announced that he will be seeking the Saskatchewan Party nomination for the Saskatoon Eastview by-election.

I hope the members to my left heard that loud and clear. Right now they're probably asking themselves, is it possible there are two Francis Kreisers? Don't rack your brains, boys; no, there isn't.

This is the Francis Kreiser who previously served as a Saskatchewan Liberal Association organizational Chair. It is the Francis Kreiser who just recently stepped down as president of the Saskatchewan Eastview Liberal Association. And it is the Francis Kreiser who believes that the Saskatchewan Party, and I will use his words, "is the only viable vehicle to get to a brighter future." Not the NDP and certainly not the Liberal Party.

My colleagues and I could not be more excited about Francis's show of support for the Saskatchewan Party and his willingness to get involved at the highest level. There is no doubt in our mind that Francis will bring a lot of Liberal support with him.

Mr. Speaker, this is also the Kreiser who wore a suit after last

August 8 to the Saskatchewan Liberal executive meeting because, in his words, he said he always wears a suit and tie to a funeral. He is a hard-working and dedicated individual, and isn't this novel, Mr. Speaker, he actually lives in that constituency.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Spring Gas Price Increase

Mr. Flavel: — Mr. Speaker, there are many signs of spring out there as the hon. member from Indian Head-Milestone keeps reminding us. Well here's two other signs of spring for the member from Indian Head-Milestone, ones that he will recognize as being as predictable as the return of the snow geese, crocuses, or the crows. The first one is, in Saskatchewan right now the farmers are on the land.

The second one is that in Saskatchewan the price of gas that those farmers are going to be using, the fuel, just went up 3 cents a litre. A coincidence? Perhaps. But it's as predictable as the snow melting, the grass growing, the creeks running, and as predictable as the days getting longer. And I ask again, Mr. Speaker, coincidence? Of course it is. Just ask the oil companies.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Lloydminster Town Hall Meeting

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was my privilege last night to attend a town hall meeting in the community of Lloydminster to deal with the Young Offenders Act, and it was an enthusiastic crowd that was out there asking some serious questions about what's happening with the young offenders.

It was good to see three members from the government side there as well. The member for Lloydminster, the Justice critic was there . . . or the Justice minister was there, and the member from P.A.(Prince Albert) Carlton. So it was good to see the government was well represented there as well along with some federal MPs (Member of Parliament). And it was an important issue.

The other interesting thing that happens is when you get to a member's constituency you often hear some interesting stories about them, as was the case when I got to Lloyd. Apparently the member from there, there's an interesting story that involves a parade, a half-ton and a deck chair, but it's her story so I'll let her tell it to anyone who wants to hear it.

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to admit last night was a very positive, very useful and very productive meeting, and a very non-partisan meeting in Lloydminster to discuss what we all recognize is a serious problem in our society. We met to discuss the challenge of young offenders.

The meeting was organized by two Members of Parliament — one from Alberta, Leon Benoit, and one from Saskatchewan, Gerry Ritz — and another MP from Camrose attended. Our Minister of Justice was there, as were the members from P.A. Carlton and Rosthern. And I directed traffic, Mr. Speaker.

I mention this meeting for the simple reason that it illustrates how democracy works, or at least how it should work. We have a problem with young offenders. We all recognize it, we all want to do something about it, we all want to deal with the problem without tarring all our kids; and we want to rehabilitate as many of the young offenders as we can while at the same time protecting society from those few we cannot change.

This is not a partisan issue. This is a social issue and I am proud to say that last night we made considerable progress towards dealing with this issue — in this case, by having our capable Minister of Justice outline exactly what is being done in Saskatchewan and in cooperation with other provinces and the federal government.

People who attended were given information; they gave us their views; and it was a meeting, Mr. Speaker, to affirm one's faith in democracy. And let me say, I did not fall off that chair on purpose.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd have to say that's a hard act to follow.

Mr. Speaker, Canadians have come to see the Health minister as Dr. No. No to more money for health care, no to fair compensation for hep C victims. The government can say yes — yes to human needs, yes to all victims of hepatitis C. Mr. Speaker, those are not my words. Those words were spoken yesterday in the House of Commons by NDP leader Alexa McDonough. She was speaking about Allan Rock. But, Mr. Speaker, she could have just as easily been speaking about Allan Rock's partner in crime, Saskatchewan's NDP Health minister who has also turned his back on thousands of hepatitis C victims.

Mr. Minister, you won't listen to the opposition. You won't listen to hepatitis C victims. Will you at least listen to your own federal leader and expand the hepatitis C compensation package?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Health I would want to indicate again to the House that the compensation package established for the tragedy of those victims of hepatitis C was a package that was put together over many, many months of discussion, and developed to provide the fairest package that all governments in Canada, including the federal government, including every provincial government, could come to.

It represents a fair package; it represents an investment of \$1.1 billion to provide that compensation. Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that too should rise above any petty or partisan politics.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, to the acting Health minister. Mr. Minister, it's just not good enough to simply pass the buck to all other governments. Your minister, or your colleague, is the Chair of the provincial Health ministers. You could show some leadership, pick up the phone, and call the federal Health minister, Mr. Rock, and tell him the package is unfair. Even your federal counterpart is telling you that it is unfair.

It's time to show, Mr. Minister, compassion to all victims who contracted hepatitis C through tainted blood. Will you do that, Mr. Minister? Will you ask your colleague the Minister of Health to listen to your federal leader, call Allan Rock, and get working to improve what has become an unfair package?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to repeat again that the package as it has been established by every provincial, territorial, and, Mr. Speaker, the federal government, in Canada is seen by every provincial government of every political stripe to be a fair and responsible package.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, this government at least is committed, committed absolutely to continuing to build a publicly funded, universally accessible medicare system that can provide for the needs of all folks in this country and in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, as you know this will be put to a vote in Ottawa on Tuesday. All opposition parties in the House of Commons, including the NDP, now support an expanded compensation package. Yet here in Saskatchewan this issue has never been debated or voted on in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, however that will change on Tuesday. Today the Saskatchewan Party is serving notice that there will be a special seventy-five minute debate on hepatitis C compensation this Tuesday in this Assembly. We will be debating the same motion on the same day that it comes to a vote in the House of Commons.

Mr. Minister, the motion calls for compensation for all victims who contracted hepatitis C through tainted blood. We are calling on your NDP government to allow a free vote on this issue.

Mr. Minister, will you allow your members to vote freely on this issue or are you going to muzzle them the same way Jean Chrétien is muzzling his members in Ottawa?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I want to repeat again, as the Minister of Health said yesterday quite publicly, that in the view of the governments across Canada this should not be — should not be — a partisan or political issue. It should not be treated as a political football. This is much too important, much too significant in the lives of Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, when that member stands up and requests a vote in this House, I noted that he and his colleagues, not days ago — not days ago — voted against the budget presented by this government. A budget which includes compensation for hepatitis C victims, a budget which includes \$1.7 billion for health care expenditures. They voted against it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskPower Commercial

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the minister responsible for the Crown Investments Corporation.

Mr. Minister, all the NDP propaganda yesterday about our Crown corporations glossed over the real story. It's a long and sad tale about how the NDP is gouging Saskatchewan taxpayers with power rate increases, gas rate increases, and insurance rate increases, and it's a story about mismanagement and cover-up.

Mr. Minister, amid all the glossy publications, one of yesterday's annual reports was unusually short and notably plain. It didn't even have a picture of the minister in it so you just know there's something not right about this.

The SaskPower Commercial annual report consists of a letter of transmittal and a dismal financial statement. It says the NDP lost \$2 million at SaskPower Commercial on \$5 million investment. Mr. Minister, that's a return of a negative 40 per cent — and not a single word of explanation. Why not, Mr. Minister? Why the cone of silence on SaskPower Commercial?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — One thing that the public did notice yesterday was the comment by the members opposite that they felt that the Crowns weren't working. And I go back to a document that says very clearly . . . it's called "Privatization Dividend;" it was released on July 1996 by the Saskatchewan PC (Progressive Conservative) caucus — that would be you — and what does it say about the Crowns?

Mr. Speaker, on page 8 it says, and I quote: "The government immediately take steps to privatize SaskTel." That's what it says: "take steps to privatize SaskTel." It says: "The experience gained from that privatization should then lead to the privatization of SaskPower, SaskEnergy, and SGI."

And what would they do with the money? They say they would pay down debt.

Well we've had some experience with Tories and Crown corporations. What was the debt in the Crowns in 1982 — 3.2 billion. It went to 5.3 billion under that term of your government. And you sold assets. You sold the saw mill; you sold PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company); you sold the Potash Corporation; you sold Saskoil. And . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Even Maxwell

Smart could figure this out.

Mr. Minister, SaskPower Commercial lost money because the NDP wanted to prop up the tourism industry in Guyana and El Salvador. You wasted a few million dollars trying to buy a third-world power company in a country on the verge of civil war. And apparently you have also been poking around in El Salvador and Peru searching for new places to waste taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Minister, you've been hemorrhaging money at SaskPower Commercial and yet the annual report doesn't provide one line of explanation — not one line. What are you hiding at SaskPower Commercial, Mr. Minister? Where is the money going?

Will you come clean and provide a full report on what is going on at SaskPower Commercial and not keep it hidden in the junk file?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, if I could mention on the issue of privatization . . . because I do want to table this document that shows how the ebb and flow of debt in the Crown corporations has occurred between 1982 and 1997.

It was 3.2 billion in 1982 when you Conservatives took over. It went to 5.3 billion under your administration, and it's now back down to 3.5 billion. And during your period, and during your period of government . . .

The Speaker: — Now I will ask for the cooperation of all hon. members. The Chair had some difficulty being able to hear the question being put and has not been able to hear the answer being provided by the minister. I'll ask for the cooperation of all members of the House. Recognize the . . . Order.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the members opposite that when they promise to privatize the Crowns and pay down debt, we've had some experience with Conservative numbers on that issue. You sold off Saskoil; you sold off the coal mines; you sold off the gas fields; you sold off the highway equipment; and the debt in the Crowns went from 3.2 to 5.3.

Now I want to talk to you about the Guyana issue which you raised, and how we kept this a secret. I want to quote from the Crown Corporations Committee, July 21, 1997. Here's the answer to the discussion that I gave to the member from Melfort about Guyana, and here's what he said, and I quote:

One final question, (asking about Guyana) and I have to say I very much appreciate the candour today in terms of this whole information (you've given) on Guyana.

That's what he said when I outlined what the deal would be. And he went on to say:

Because after it's done, (he says, the member from Melfort, this is what we're talking about) . . . we're (making) history . . .

That's what he said. And he went on to say:

And I think many of the questions have been (answered)
... today.

That's ...

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly understandable that the minister wants to talk about the ancient history, because he certainly doesn't want to talk about the present.

Mr. Minister, you talked yesterday about preparing the Crowns for deregulation and competition. But what the people of Saskatchewan find a little disturbing is, every time the NDP tries to compete in the free market you get taken to the cleaners. Every time you get taken to the cleaners you try to cover it up.

You tried to cover up the \$13 million you lost in Channel Lake and that blew up on you. You tried to cover up the million-plus dollars you lost at STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) when your brilliant management team forgot to charge the customers. You lost a couple of million more in Guyana and then you conveniently forgot to explain how.

Mr. Minister, the NDP spent hundreds of thousand of dollars preparing the Crown Corporations' annual reports and they don't tell the whole story. Mr. Minister, why the cone of silence on the NDP's mismanage of the Crowns? Will you lift that cone of silence and tell the truth about the NDP's mismanagement at SaskPower Commercial, STC, and the rest of the Crowns you own?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite, one reason that affects the rates in Crowns is debt, and you know that. And the fact that you increased the debt from 3.2 billion to 5.3 billion does have something to do with the rate.

Now I understand why you don't want to talk about the ancient history of a few years ago. I understand why you changed the name of your party. But you know what my constituents are ...

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Now the Chair is having difficulty, with the constant comment that's coming from the opposition, to be able to hear the response being provided. I'll ask for the cooperation of the members. Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the debt and the sell-off of assets we know what Tories do, and we know what you're trying to do by changing your name in order to trick the public that you're not Conservatives.

But you know what my dad told me? You know what my dad told me the other day, who is a bit of a philosopher, 81 years old? He said look, I tell you this, if it looks like a skunk and walks like a skunk and smells like a skunk, it's a skunk. And he

said these people are Tories, they're Tories. Don't let them have the Crown corporations ever again. That's what he told me. You people are Conservatives no matter what you say.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Regina Health District Employee Termination

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Liberal opposition has learned that Dick Chinn, the vice-president of medical operations ...

The Speaker: — Order, order, order, order. Now let's — order — let's allow the hon. member for Thunder Creek to at least begin his question without being interrupted by both sides of the House. And perhaps it could last longer than 10 seconds.

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, the Liberal opposition has learned that Dick Chinn, the vice-president of medical operations for the Regina Health District, has been fired. Will the Minister of Health confirm that Mr. Chinn has been terminated and please explain why.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I can neither confirm nor deny the member's statement except to warn all members that statements that come from that caucus always receive and should receive a double check.

I have a little illustration here — that not many days ago that same Liberal caucus was making all sorts of accusations about emergency room hours here in Regina. The Regina district board had to come very publicly in the *Leader-Post* and say that the Liberals are providing the public with inaccurate perceptions.

We had the same thing happening in Swift Current. The members from the Liberal caucus stood in this House and indicated the beds were going to be closed in Swift Current. We had to have the people from Swift Current go to the public media and say the Liberals are creating false perceptions. So, Mr. Speaker, I can't either confirm or deny what the member says this morning.

One thing I can though, Mr. Speaker, one thing I can confirm is this. I'd ask the Liberal caucus to listen to this to see if they agree with this statement.

Saskatchewan people accept the fact that health care must undergo changes to make it more efficient and effective. Some new technology has reduced hospital stays for patients recovering from surgery. All of these changes mean that we have to re-examine the ...

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, Dick Chinn has been one of the key players in this government's plan to close the Plains hospital. It's strange that he would be terminated before the NDP's plans to close the hospital are complete. We know that the management team of the district board has been under fire because of the Liberal campaign to save the Plains hospital.

The Liberal opposition has shown there are major cost overruns. We've revealed plans to convert the facility into a SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) campus before the government could. We uncovered an emergency room audit which shows the Plains is the most efficient hospital in Regina. We proved through this report also that there is a bed shortage. And on a daily basis we've shown how patients have become health care victims.

Mr. Minister, wouldn't you agree that if anyone deserves to take it on the chin it's you, the Premier, and others who are part of this ill-conceived plan to close the Plains hospital?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I want the member from Thunder Creek, or anyone of that Liberal caucus, to say whether they agree with this statement. I'll just read it again, Mr. Speaker:

Saskatchewan people accept the fact that health care must undergo changes to make it more efficient and effective. Some new technology has reduced hospital stays for patients recovering from surgery. All of these changes mean we have to re-examine the delivery of health care services to determine what we can afford and what traditional services we cannot afford to lose.

I wonder if they would agree with that today, Mr. Speaker, because that comes straight from the Liberal Party election platform, 1995. Now do they agree with that today, Mr. Speaker, or were they misleading the public in 1995?

Now the member from, the member from Melville shouts from his seat. He and his friends are travelling all over the province holding rallies. I'll tell you where they should hold their next rally. I've got two suggestions. Hold your next rally about health care on the doorstep of the federal MP from Regina, Mr. Ralph Goodale. Why don't you hold a rally in front of his place? Or perhaps, or perhaps better yet, perhaps better yet, why not hold it over on the tarmac at the airport when Mr. Goodale gets off his first-class seat on Air Canada?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, the Liberal opposition held another very successful public meeting last night in Redvers. More than 1,500 people have already attended four meetings that we've staged. A number of others will take place in the days to come and there will be a rally at the legislature at the end of May. Momentum is building . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. Now the Chair is having a difficult . . . Order. The chair is having difficulty being able to hear the hon. member from Thunder Creek put his question because of the shouting from the members of the government bench and I'll ask for the cooperation of the House to allow the hon. member from Thunder Creek to be heard.

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, momentum is building, and this government and the management team of the Regina district board can expect the pressure to be relentless in the weeks and months ahead.

Mr. Minister, it's not too late to show you care. Swallow your pride. People will understand if you explain the decision to

close the Plains hospital was wrong. So will you reverse the decision or at least place a moratorium on the closure of the Plains hospital until after the next provincial election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, this government, the Minister of Health, and all of its members fully respect that privilege that exists in a democratic society for people to gather and express their opinions. If, as Dr. Melenchuk indicates, there are 10,000 people who will rally here in Regina, that's entirely, that's entirely appropriate. But what is inappropriate, Mr. Speaker, are duly elected members of the legislature being dishonest and miscommunicating to the public about what's happening in the city of Regina.

Mr. Speaker, when the medical family at the Plains moves from that building into the expanded hospital facilities at the General and the Pasqua, we will have in southern Saskatchewan at long last, Mr. Speaker, the finest medical services for the people of southern Saskatchewan that we have ever known.

If that caucus and its members truly, truly were interested in health care in Saskatchewan and Canada, they would talk to their Liberal friends in Ottawa, who have forsaken — forsaken — a commitment to publicly funded medicare in this country. That's what they would do if they were truly responsible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Youth Addiction Services

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, how dare those people question the credibility of people on this side of the House? Eight months ago, eight months ago the Minister of Health said there was a need to move quickly to provide better addiction services for our young people. He indicated a new facility could be opened by the new year. But four months into the new year — still nothing. Does that not sound familiar? False, false commitments.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP made a huge mistake when it closed down the Whitespruce treatment facility. Now the NDP must correct the mistake by immediately providing the services that our addicted youth so desperately need. It's unforgivable that the Calder Centre in Saskatoon, with only 12 beds, is the only facility in this province with the resources to handle young people.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell this House . . . ask the minister what immediate action he is taking to live up to his promise. What is he going to do to provide appropriate drug treatment for the young people of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to assure the member that in every health district in Saskatchewan there are treatment and addiction services for the people of those districts.

An Hon. Member: — More than ever.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I just . . . More than ever, Mr. Speaker.

Does that mean there isn't more to be done? Of course not. And this government and this ministry and this Department of Health will be working towards doing more.

Now he asks about credibility. He asks about credibility. Mr. Speaker, does that member remember, does he remember what they said to this House and the people of Saskatchewan before the '95 election, what their plan for health care was?

Here it is, here it is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, no. It's to hire Texas-style, Texas-style efficiency audits. They wanted to do a Texas-style efficiency audit on our health care in the province. What does that tell you?

And I wonder if that member would just phone his Liberal friend, Mr. Goodale, and ask Mr. Goodale how he's been voting in Ottawa. Has he been voting in Ottawa to cut health care funding from 50 cents down to 13 cents on the dollar?

Is that what Mr. Goodale's position in Ottawa has been? Is that the position of the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan, that the federal government should be contributing now, instead of 50 cents on, 50 cents on the dollar, now federal funding at 13 cents on the dollar?

Mr. Speaker, that is an abdication, an abdication of responsibility to health care in our country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crown Corporation International Investments

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the minister was talking about yesterday, we in Saskatchewan have the highest power rates in western Canada; among the highest in Canada.

This year alone natural gas rates were raised an average of \$40 per Saskatchewan family. And yet we found out that SaskEnergy is looking at acquiring an interest in a company in Chile called Compania de Consumadores de Gas de Santiago. What is this all about? Not one word about this in the reports filed yesterday. We're told as the people of Saskatchewan that we own our Crowns. But we're not told what our Crowns, our companies that we own, what they're up to. Are we going to get heartburn in Chile? That's what the people in Saskatchewan want to know.

Will the minister file a full list of all foreign adventures in this House so the people of Saskatchewan will know where their power bills, and their telephone bills, and our natural gas bills are really going. Will we get a complete list of our foreign adventures?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — The member from North Battleford, who again stretches the truth in saying that our power rates are the highest in Canada, which is false, and he knows . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, you went on to say they were the highest in Canada, which is false.

I want to say, I'm going to say I want to take you one step further on the international investments and say this. Like we

did with Guyana, which was brought to the Committee of Crown Corporations, which you, sir, had an opportunity to talk about and speak about, and if you missed the meeting, well then get on the committee or tell your members to ask the question. Or like the member from Melfort who did ask about Guyana and said it looks like a good deal and never passed a motion not to do it — never passed a motion, never spoke against it, nor did your members speak against it — and to come here today and say you don't know about international investment is dishonesty.

And I say to you, sir, when it came to the Saturn investment, which you had a chance to ask about in the committee, or Guyana, which all of you had a chance to ask about, you never said one negative thing. You didn't pass a motion, and today you're being dishonest by coming here . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Capital Construction Tax Exemptions

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, through their own initiative, the people in the Naicam and Spalding areas have come to an agreement with the Manitoba and Alberta wheat pools to build a \$10.6 million inland grain terminal in our area. Mr. Speaker, those behind this initiative say their work would be much easier if there was a capital construction PST (provincial sales tax) exemption on the whole project. Included in this price tag is hundreds of thousands of dollars in PST charges.

Mr. Minister, your government did extend such an exemption when the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool wanted to get into the development of the hog industry in the province. The M & P (manufacturing and processing) tax credit and some agriculture exemptions provides a little relief, but it also adds administration costs to pick out which are the exempt products.

Mr. Minister, will you extend a total exemption to other capital projects, such as grain terminals, or will you continue picking the winners and losers in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, in the provincial budget presented March 19 the horticultural and livestock tax credit had a deduction reduced from \$500 to \$100 so that every producer, Mr. Speaker, would get a tax break on livestock and horticultural production.

The member is asking whether a tax break will be given to large construction projects. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the answer to that question is that it's not the policy of the government. There are many construction projects going on in the province of Saskatchewan — more, Mr. Speaker, than in the past, and certainly more than when the Conservative Party was in office. Things are moving along well in Saskatchewan. I do not anticipate that there will be any special tax treatment for the particular project the member refers to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — We would ask leave to return to ministerial statements.

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Serious and Habitual Youth Offender Comprehensive Action Program

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to inform the Assembly about the establishment of the serious and habitual youth offender comprehensive action program, where we will be working with the cities of Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina, and other people in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, over the next two years the government of Saskatchewan will invest more than 1.1 million to establish a partnership that will target those youth offenders who cause the greatest concern in our community.

Our government is proud of Saskatchewan's young people. In the past month alone, nearly 13,000 young people from all over Saskatchewan came to Regina to engage in athletic and music activities. Three thousand athletes paraded into the Agridome on April 13 to open the 1998 Saskatchewan Indian Winter Games. And in early April 10,000 young musicians gathered at the Saskatchewan Centre for the annual Optimist Band Festival.

Because the majority of our young people, Mr. Speaker, are engaged in positive activities and are leading productive lives on the way to becoming responsible adult citizens, the people of Saskatchewan expect us to maintain our common sense and compassion for children and youth who impulsively do thoughtless things, but are willing to learn from their mistakes.

However, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan also expect us to protect society from repeat and violent offenders who do not take responsibility for their actions. We intend to hold those youths accountable for their crimes. We know, Mr. Speaker, that in Regina and Saskatoon more than 90 per cent of residential burglaries, car thefts, and acts of vandalism are committed by a very small number of repeat and chronic young offenders — about 50 in each city. Prince Albert has a similar situation but on a smaller scale.

Mr. Speaker, this new initiative, SHOCAP (serious and habitual youth offender comprehensive action program), is targeted specifically to this small group. The new program will be staffed by designated police officers, prosecutors, and corrections workers. This partnership will work to apprehend, identify chronic offenders.

Maintenance of comprehensive files on chronic youth offenders will enable prosecutors to make appropriate recommendations regarding bail and sentencing. And joint case-planning and sharing of information will ensure a firm, consistent approach with chronic young offenders and will provide enhanced, intensive, coordinated supervision and monitoring.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are fair-minded and responsible. They believe young people should be held accountable for their actions. And they want us to deal swiftly and effectively with those who do not respect the law. Keeping our communities safe is a top priority of this government, and working with police and prosecutors to protect the public from serious, violent, and chronic young offenders is a key piece of this strategy. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it sounds like this should solve everything, but I have some very serious problems if it will. We've just been told that there's only a handful of people that are criminals doing these offences in our three cities. Numbers such as 10 or 30 or 50, those kinds of numbers are mentioned. And yet with those few numbers that are apparently out there, Mr. Speaker, we have achieved the car theft capital of Canada. We've achieved the break-in capital of Canada.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that if we only have those few people committing those many crimes, we should be able to just pick them off the street, take care of it, and our cities would be perfectly safe. Obviously something is very wrong in what we've just been told. The numbers are either all wrong, or we just don't know what's happening out there.

The other concern that I have about the direction that's being taken is it only applies to three centres in Saskatchewan. And I object strongly to that. And I have to, Mr. Speaker, just give an example from my community to sort of underline what I'm trying to say.

At approximately the last snowfall that we had this spring, a couple of young fellows in my community were working on a car in their shed. When there were done, around midnight they walked out, found their car had been vandalized and stripped of a lot of things. Because of the snowfall that was taking place, they tracked three young offenders, managed to capture two of them, and phoned the police. The police came up and said, oh, we just caught these two for the same thing a couple hours earlier that day.

The effort that is being made with what we've just been told from this ministerial statement, Mr. Speaker, isn't going to change that one little bit because, in my community, we're not getting any help and exactly the same thing is going to keep on happening.

And as I look around this particular House this morning, and I look at all the people on this side, and I look at the people sitting over there, most of their communities aren't going to be getting any help. And all those people that are going to be going to bed every night and putting their heads on their pillow will have to say, this minister hasn't helped us one little bit. You have to move to either the car theft capital of Canada or the break-in capital of Canada to get any help. For the rest of us, there is nothing in this ministerial statement. And I suggest to that extent this falls far short.

If we take this one step further and divide the money that's being spent here, which is over two years, divide that down to

one year, and then look at what's left per city per month, it is a very negligible amount and I doubt if it will have a long-term effect, even though it is a good-sounding ministerial statement.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to say what I like about this statement. And there are two good points underlying it that I think the minister should be congratulated for.

The first is that just by virtue of making this statement and by creating this new program, he is acknowledging that there is much that we can do in Saskatchewan to address the issue of young offenders. And I don't mean to be either political or defensive about the federal government when I say I dislike it when the provincial government continually makes statements that, whatever is wrong with our province, the only solution they have in mind is a letter to Ottawa. There are things we can do here at home, and I congratulate the minister for taking that attitude.

Certainly there are parts of this problem, parts of the piece of the puzzle, where we will have to lobby Ottawa and we will have to get the cooperation of the federal government. But that is not to say that we do not have a responsibility or there is nothing that we as provincial legislators and the provincial government, cannot do to address the situation.

I also, Mr. Speaker, like the fact that the Minister of Justice is zeroing on what I agree is that small number of young people who are committing a disproportionate amount of the crime and creating a disproportionate amount of the problem.

I certainly agree with the minister's oft-repeated statement that most of our young people are good people and there are only a very few who are responsible for our quite appalling break and entry statistics. However, Mr. Speaker, I think we have to acknowledge that the converse of that point is that if that is true, then we have to acknowledge that our justice system has not been very effective in dealing with that small minority.

And of course it is particularly frustrating when people have had their home burgled or their car stolen and they find out that that same young person was in the court system on another charge a matter of a few weeks or a couple months ago. That's very, very discouraging and disconcerting. And it does lead to a certain amount of disrespect and loss of confidence in our justice system when they find out how long it's been.

(1100)

I am also disappointed that smaller centres are not included. I would point out that I get a lot of complaints from Cochin. North Battleford — we actually have our house insurance surcharge because of the bad break and entry statistics.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring two other matters to the attention of the Minister of Justice. I would request that when we approach Ottawa, we ask that section 22 of the Young Offenders Act be withdrawn . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now in accepting the ministerial statement, the minister was clearly within the acceptable time allotment. And I remind the hon. member he has already exceeded the amount of time in his response to the ministerial statement than the original statement itself. And therefore I'll ask him to take his place.

Ms. Julé: — By leave of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

Ms. Julé: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of chronic young offenders has caused serious concern among the citizens of Saskatchewan. Their concern surrounds the idea or the fact that certainly there's a lot of destruction done and problems in society created by the actions of young offenders when they're hurting something in our society that has been whole. The other aspect of the issue that people are concerned about in my constituency is just how young offenders are dealt with.

Now the minister in his statement has certainly taken some expedient action to address the problem, but society must be protected and we know that. And so the statement today seems to be an attempt to address that. However it is not a comprehensive strategy as I see it, Mr. Minister.

What is equally as important is that young offenders experience healing in order to restore for them an accepted and meaningful place in their communities. There are successful models of restorative justice, Mr. Minister. In various centres . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I'll want to remind the hon. member of rule 28 which requires that the comments made in the House are to be directed through the Chair and not directly to other members of the House.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are successful models of restorative justice in various centres throughout our country. And that form of justice leads to peace, as justice should. It uses the concept of individual responsibility, and it uses the concept of forgiveness and restoring what one has done wrong.

Saskatchewan municipal and provincial governments would be wise to examine and adopt some of those models because they do result in a complete healing of mind, body, and spirit for everyone involved. I would challenge this government to take the initiative, to take some real leadership, by adopting more fully the concept of restorative justice.

And there are models in Manitoba. The Mennonite community has adopted these models, some of the aboriginal community have adopted them, and I believe our communities throughout the province can adopt them successfully also.

And, Mr. Speaker, this province is sadly lacking in rehabilitation for young people. Places like Whitespruce need to be restored as centres for youth in distress and their families and for the healing of their addictions.

But those are places where a healing process is started. Young

people need a continuum of healing. And so I would recommend to the House, to the minister, that those whole aspects of healings are looked at. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 32 — The Wildlife Amendment Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, after my remarks I will be moving the second reading of The Wildlife Amendment Act, 1998.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's wildlife resource is cherished by the people of Saskatchewan. In order that citizens of this province may obtain maximum benefit from, and at the same time protect, this valuable resource, we have legislation and regulations under The Wildlife Act. This Act provides provincial authority and control over the province's wildlife resources.

Last year we passed an amendment to the Act which expanded the province's definition of wildlife to include wild plant and animal species. This amendment was necessary to allow us to develop regulations to provide protection for endangered and threatened species.

The amendment being debated in the legislature today deals with new penalty provisions under the Act. We believe the new adjustments will bring the fines and forfeiture provisions more in line with other provincial resource legislation including The Fisheries Act and The Forest Resources Management Act.

The new fines and forfeiture provisions will also ensure our approach is consistent with the serious crime task force announced by our Justice minister in late March. The province will invest \$1 million over two years to establish police-based serious crime units in Regina and Saskatoon to focus on organized crime activity.

These units will work with the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) integrated proceeds of crime units. All property or cash acquired through criminal activity will be seized and becomes the property of the government.

The proposed Wildlife Act amendments better reflect the value the province places on its wildlife resources. This amendment will provide for a maximum penalty of \$100,000 for contravention of any section of the Act and provide the option for the court to order forfeiture of vehicles in any situation where, because of the seriousness of the violation, it was deemed necessary.

The Fisheries Act sets fine levels for all offences at a maximum of \$100,000, and allows the court to forfeit vehicles where a person is convicted of any offence. Similarly, The Forest Resources Management Act sets fine levels for all offences at a maximum of \$250,000 and allows the courts to forfeit seized vehicles for conviction of any offence.

Mr. Speaker, conservation is a high priority with Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, and we are amending this legislation to recognize the value of our natural resources and enable adequate protection of these resources. The added provisions provide the necessary deterrents that are needed to curtail the illegal trade and traffic in wildlife species.

The illegal trade and traffic in wildlife is a serious concern in Saskatchewan and internationally. The potential impact on our provincial wildlife resource is very large. Gall-bladders from black bear, trophy antlers from white-tailed deer, eagle carcasses and parts of eagles are all worth thousands of dollars on the black market. It is critical that Saskatchewan have the necessary fine levels in place to serve as meaningful deterrents against illegal poaching, trade, and traffic in wildlife.

Our wildlife resources are one of the greatest natural assets of this province and we need to work together to ensure that they are managed in a sustainable fashion.

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to protection and responsible management of wildlife populations and public access to wildlife resources. The public expects no less, and we will take every measure necessary to fulfil this obligation to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I now move the second reading of The Wildlife Amendment Act, 1998.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a few comments in regards to The Wildlife Amendment Act and the comments that have been brought . . . made by the minister responsible, the minister for the Environment.

Mr. Minister, it's . . . or Mr. Speaker, certainly the minister acknowledges the fact that I think everyone in this province enjoys wildlife. We enjoy the different species that are a part of our province and that are available to us, and the fact that almost any time, especially in rural areas, when you walk out the door you come in contact with so many different species of wildlife growth, whether it's animal or flowers or even some of the trees that grow wild in our province.

Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that there are areas that we need to look at preserving some of this wildlife and some of the heritage that we have here, especially with some of the changes that have taken place. And I note specifically the recent legal decision that open up the doors to night hunting and a major concern that has become in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we're quite well aware of the fact, and the minister is certainly aware of it, that even the peoples that might be perpetrating the issue, amongst their own people they find that there's a lot of opposition. And I applaud the members from the aboriginal community, and certainly the Metis community, who have spoken out against illegal night hunting and illegal hunting, and the fact that . . . the abuses in night hunting.

The fact that this Bill is bringing forward penalties, whether or not the penalties or the increased penalties that the minister

talks about, we'll be able to address some of the concerns we have here or the trafficking of wild animal, wildlife, wild animal organs that we see that has been perpetuated for a number of years, whether or not these penalties will certainly address those concerns, we'll have to wait and see.

I think one of the problems that even wildlife resource officers may come and be pointing out to us is the fact of the lack of support they have indeed in following up on accusations, whether it comes through a tip that's received on the TIP (Turn in Poachers) line or other means whereby people would communicate with them. But I think in general, the fact that you're coming through with stiffer penalties points out the fact that this is something that will not be tolerated. And that's the important question to be brought forward.

The Minister of Justice just a few moments ago talked about extra expenditures in the area of dealing with youth crime. Well I don't believe, when we're talking about wildlife and people abusing the privileges of hunting, is much different. And if it's just a pat on the hand because you've disobeyed the rules, that isn't going to deal with the number of problems out there.

And this Act goes and moves in the direction of bringing forward penalties that are more reflective of the seriousness of the crime. And, Mr. Speaker, we certainly in that regard can acknowledge and accept the fact and we believe that it's appropriate that a penalty fits the crime.

However, Mr. Speaker, I think it's certainly important as well that when we're dealing with the serious nature of some of these crimes, that there be the resources as well available to the officers or the people in charge, to make sure that people are dealt with. I think one of the problems we have in this province is that on too many occasions we just do not have resources to follow up, and as a result we have the continued abuses of The Wildlife Act and the treatment and illegal poaching of wildlife.

Mr. Speaker, in general, as I said, the penalties reflected . . . I believe what the minister is talking about is indeed bringing forward penalties that more reflect the seriousness of these crimes and that would deal more appropriately with people who would abuse and take advantage of and perpetuate crimes in the area of wildlife. And in that regard we can be supportive of the Bill.

However, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be appropriate as well for us to review it a little more in depth because I think there are some questions we're really going to want to look at, some concerns we would want to raise in a more serious fashion and make sure we're prepared to look at all the aspects of protecting our wildlife at a later date.

However at this time I would move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1115)

Bill No. 33 — The Provincial Court Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Provincial Court Act, 1998. Mr. Speaker, this

Bill incorporates a number of significant changes. The Bill specifically affirms the independence of the Provincial Court and the judges that sit in that court.

The most significant changes in this Act are being made to make it consistent with the agreement that successfully resolved the outstanding issues between the government and the Provincial Court judges and the recent ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada with respect to the independence of Provincial Court judges in Alberta, Manitoba, and Prince Edward Island.

A Provincial Court Commission is established to determine salaries, benefits, and pensions for Provincial Court judges. This commission will make recommendations to the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that the Legislative Assembly will have the authority to roll back any recommendations of the commission in accordance with the constitutional test of judicial independence. Salaries can be rolled back to the national average. Other benefits and pensions can be rolled back without restriction, other than meeting the rationality test stipulated by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied that this process strikes an appropriate balance between recognizing the independence of the judiciary and maintaining the ultimate control of the legislature over the expenditure of public funds. This legislation reaffirms the independence of the court and establishes an independent, effective, and objective process for determining judicial remuneration and benefits as mandated by the Supreme Court of Canada.

This Bill also incorporates a number of other important initiatives that recognize the evolving role of the Provincial Court.

First, the qualifications for appointment to the court are increased from 5 years experience as a lawyer to 10 years. However, discretion continues to exist to appoint someone with other legal or judicial experience that is satisfactory to the minister and the Judicial Council.

Second, the discipline process for judges will be updated. Mr. Speaker, hearings before judicial councils have traditionally been held behind closed doors. With this Bill, hearings will be held in public to ensure the public is able to see the process at work.

As well, the remedies available to the Judicial Council in cases of misconduct or incapacity are increased. For example, the Judicial Council could order that the judge may continue in office on conditions such as that the judge receive medical treatment or counselling, or that the judge apologize to the complainant or any other person. The membership of the Judicial Council is expanded to include two Provincial Court judges elected by other judges.

Mr. Speaker, the process used to create this Bill is a tribute to the dedication of our Provincial Court judges. The chief judge, and members of the Saskatchewan Provincial Court Judges' Association, worked cooperatively with me and officials in my department to ensure that all aspects of the Act reflect the

public interest in ensuring a strong, independent court.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act respecting the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan and making consequential amendments to other Acts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to the piece of legislation the minister is bringing forward this morning, The Provincial Court Act, a few comments I'd like to make. While I commend the government for addressing the need for independence of the Provincial Court, I guess we're going to have to wait and see whether or not we indeed find that independence is certainly recognized. The unfortunate part is a person has to wonder, when we continually have appointments that are just . . . whether or not there really will truly . . . or will be independence. And maybe there are other avenues to follow.

But I know one of the concerns that the judges have talked about for a number of years, and the government is quite well aware of it, is the fact that even — what was it? three years ago I believe — the government had brought a piece of legislation in indicating that they were going to put a panel in place to address salaries and remuneration and pensions, and what have you. And that they would certainly agree with, and they would implement, the recommendations of the panel. However when the panel's views were brought forward, the government found themselves in a position where they were not prepared to accept it and then had to retroactively change the legislation. I hope we don't find that in this case.

I think the minister is addressing that to the point that this piece of legislation still however, when you talk about giving independence, I believe as the minister indicated, this legislation is still going to give cabinet the opportunity and the ability, if they're not satisfied with a report that's been brought forward in regards to, especially salaries and pensions and what have you, to overrule that. There I think, Mr. Speaker, the government may find themselves at odds again with the Provincial Court and with certainly the judges who sit on the court.

I think it's certainly time that we really talked and looked at very carefully, independence and how we identify independence of judges and of the Provincial Court. I'm not exactly sure how you totally come to identify that, how you set it out, so that it is seen as totally independent. As I indicated earlier, every time you're appointing individuals to the bench — whether it's provincial or federal, because of the fact that we have provincial and federal courts — there is, I think the reflection by the public that it isn't totally independent.

And while this piece of legislation may go a long ways to identify that, to draw out and basically set some parameters that really say this court is now going to act independently and responsibly . . . and I guess that's the other important point to remember as well — with independence comes responsibility. And we would hope that . . . and we will certainly look forward to addressing some of these concerns with the minister in Committee of the Whole when we arrive at that point of seeing what the intent of the Bill is; how it's going to meet the goals that the government is laying out, as the minister talked about;

and how it's also going to make sure and protect the public and certainly bring forward the fact that the court is acting responsibly and that the public in general can feel comfortable that they will be dealt with fairly if perchance they should find themselves before the court.

So there are a number of issues that need to be raised, as there certainly will be questions to be raised in the Committee of the Whole. But I think it would be appropriate to review this Bill a little more in-depth before we move into that process of committee. And therefore with that in mind I move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 2

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 2 — The Correctional Services Amendment Act, 1998** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dealing with The Correctional Services Amendment Act, I think there's quite a number of things that we need to address and talk about today and we need to clarify quite a number of things that have been talked about today and in the previous days and is being addressed by this particular Act.

I think first of all I'd like to spend some time discussing this government's neglect — and I use that word in a very planned sort of way — has had on this province's justice system. It seems every time that we talk about the justice system the first comment, and it seems to be the only comment that comes all the way through, is that there are so many good, honest people in Saskatchewan. And yes, Mr. Speaker, let me say at the outset that is true.

Now having said that, let's put all those people, by far the majority of them, let's put them aside and let's deal with what we're dealing with here, are those people that need to be dealt with by the justice system.

As you're well aware, Mr. Speaker — I mentioned that earlier in a different situation this morning — we have the dubious honour of being a number of capitals — the break-in capital of Canada, the car theft capital of Canada. And here's the interesting question, Mr. Speaker: how did we get to be that way? How did we get to be that way?

We are famous in Saskatchewan for being a helping province. We're famous for, if we see someone in need, doing something for them. Yesterday on the way to Lloydminster, there was a young fellow who was hitchhiking and I picked him up and he was going to Edmonton to find . . . well he actually has a job there for the summer. And so I picked him up. And he's hitchhiked many times between Saskatchewan and Alberta and gets rides, because that's what people of Saskatchewan are all about.

We still take our chance. We still stop and pick up people. We help people. That's a very positive trait in Saskatchewan.

How then, Mr. Speaker, did we get to be the break-in capital of the world — or of Canada at least, maybe of the world for all I know — and car theft capital. Something must have happened.

And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that when we deal with this sort of thing, there are always some people who say, oh we need to, we need to address social issues, and it's some other government that has no concern for social issues.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if we check for the last three, four decades and see which philosophy has been in charge in Saskatchewan, we see it's the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) kind of concept. And where has that led us? Where has that led us? It has given us those dubious honours of being those break-in capital and car theft capitals in Canada. And I suggest it shows that this government and this government's philosophy is exactly what's at the root of all of this. What other answer could there be?

Are the people of Saskatchewan more wicked than any other place? They're no more wicked in Saskatchewan than any other province, I wouldn't think. So it must be something else. It can't be in the water; it can't be in the air . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I hear the people from the government side picking up on that — maybe it is.

And I'm not surprised, Mr. Speaker, that they grabbed at that opportunity because it would give them the out of not taking responsibility for saying they've governed this province for most of the time for the last number of decades, and this is where it's got us. There has been a mismanagement. It's been a gross mismanagement. We need to ask ourselves those questions and I don't think the government has. I don't think they have.

We must look at our social programs and say they haven't worked. This government's social programs — they haven't worked. If we look at the correctional institute and our Justice department and how they work, they haven't worked. No other answer.

The Justice department in this province, Mr. Speaker, continually tells us how there's just a small number of criminals in this . . . of young criminals in this particular province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe we need a couple of numbers thrown out here just so we can get a grip on what's happening . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Member from Redberry is talking about throwing members out. Well we'll throw the numbers out and I would hope he would understand the difference between the "m" and the "n." They come close in his alphabet as well, but he should be able to follow that.

Violent crime by youth has doubled, has doubled since '86 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . We will leave the member from Lloydminster in here though because I don't think anyone would want to throw her out.

Youths charged in 4 out of 10 of all cases of break and enter. So we may say there's only a few number of them committing

crimes, but if they're still committing 4 out of 10 of all cases of break and enter, that's just about half. They're charged with 4 out of 10 of all motor vehicle thefts. That's across Canada, and I believe in some communities such as Regina that's probably a whole lot higher.

Charged in 3 out of 10 of all robberies, 10 per cent of homicides, 12 per cent of attempted murders, and yet they only make up 10 per cent of the population. Something is way out of whack there, Mr. Speaker. And it's way out of whack in Saskatchewan, and this government and its Justice department needs to take some responsibility for that.

How did we get here? Until that's addressed, we can throw all kinds of money willy-nilly in all sorts of directions and it's not going to do that much good. It at least won't solve the problem to the extent that the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, want it solved.

Any time this government passes a piece of justice legislation, I believe it's incumbent on the members of this Assembly to reflect back on the lack of confidence Saskatchewan people have in their justice system and this NDP government's tendency to flip-flop on important issues such as youth crime.

The Bill we have before us today, dealing with this Bill specifically, Mr. Speaker, it deals with extending protection of Justice employees to volunteers who give their time in pursuit of justice through justice committees and sentencing circles. And that's a moderately new concept, the idea of justice committees and sentencing circles.

Recently in a town hall meeting I was at, Mr. Speaker, it came to light that one of these justice committees that exists in British Columbia has had some really amazing success. And it deals specifically with this component of this Act that we're dealing with — the volunteer component.

In this particular community in the lower mainland of British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, on average the one time a week that youth went through the justice system there'd be between 40 and 60 young people would come through on that one time every week. That's a scary number.

They set up a community justice system committee staffed virtually totally by volunteers, which incidentally, Mr. Speaker, had an interesting response from the professionals in that area who obviously hadn't been able to accomplish very much, who objected strongly to that. And I think if we move in that direction in Saskatchewan, we'll probably have that objection there again.

However, here's a success ratio. One year later, Mr. Speaker, those numbers going through that justice system in that community, which had been between 40 to 60 kids, dropped to an average of eight — an average of eight. That's one-fifth; that means out of every five young people that used to go through there, four are no longer going through there. It has worked.

That's exciting, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully if we can look at some of those things in Saskatchewan, maybe we can end up not being the capital of all the unwanted things, as we are presently.

So this particular Bill that we have before us deals, and I'll repeat this again, extending the protection of Justice employees to volunteers who give their time in the pursuit of Justice through justice committees or sentencing circles. It was an issue that was brought up in Lloydminster yesterday, Mr. Speaker, when . . . There is also in Lloydminster, I believe, a group that's working in this general direction and the people were concerned about the exact position that volunteers find themselves in.

And it's exciting to know, and I mentioned this earlier, Mr. Speaker, that in Saskatchewan we consider ourselves a caring province, a helping province; that if volunteering is needed, we do that.

(1130)

The people who were involved in some of these volunteer situations wanted to know exactly what is the status of a volunteer who's working through justice committees or sentencing circles.

I would like to say at the outset, I have no real problem with sentencing circles. It is clear that our present way of doing things is not working so indeed we need to seek out alternative measures. And I was fairly critical of what was happening in this province earlier on, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's why we need to look at some other options because what we've been doing has not been working. It has in fact been a disaster.

Sentencing circles, Mr. Speaker, and justice committees have a number of strong components that I think we need to look at. One of the components that I think I'm excited about and I think almost everyone else is, is that the victim is finally involved.

In our traditional system, the person that was apprehended came in front of a judge and the judge sternly looked down on him, gave him a sentence, and that was it. The victim might be some place in the courtroom, had no opportunity to be involved in the situation, had no opportunity to look eye to eye with the perpetrator and say, you have hurt me, you have hurt my family, you have done damage to me — and talk face to face and explain that kind of thing that has happened. Sentencing circles, justice committees do that. And I think the more that we move in that direction in our justice system, I think the better it is.

The opportunity for those sorts of things to happen, and if we do it right, we may have the same success that's happening in British Columbia at this point. We haven't seen it here as yet, but hopefully we'll see those successes.

The other thing I think that's good is that when we work with the volunteers in the communities, we develop an ownership for the problem, Mr. Speaker. Because the volunteers then say, I'm putting time and effort into the perpetrator of this particular crime, therefore I have a commitment to go ahead and help this person along life's way and hopefully straighten out their way, get them to become a contributing member of society.

But, Mr. Speaker, not only will the volunteers themselves maintain that ownership, that sense of ownership I believe will go on to other individuals. It'll go on to the family members, to

the social circle that the volunteers work in. And so I think in many, especially smaller communities this will become a whole community thing because everyone will know what's going on. They will know who the volunteers are. They will talk to them, and they can get involved with the young people that are involved in sentencing circles and people of other ages as well. So I'm very supportive, Mr. Speaker, of involving both the victim and the community in the sentencing process.

As members may know, the community of Shaunavon created a youth justice system just over four years ago to deal with first time young offenders right in the community.

In order to be eligible for that sort of a process, that youth mediation process, the offence must be eligible for regular court; the youth must admit guilt. And I think that's important, Mr. Speaker. If the youth just keeps on saying I didn't do it, I'm not responsible, it's somebody else's fault, the school messed up in my life or my parents messed up in my life so it's not my fault, it's not going to work.

But when the youth admits guilt and says yes, I was wrong on what I did and I really don't want to go down that road any longer and I don't want to hurt my community, then we have an opportunity to work with these people. So the youth must admit guilt and both the youth, the parents, and the victims must agree to use the process.

And I think that's important because if the parents aren't involved in it and the youth comes home and he's supposed to or she is supposed to go ahead and be involved in a certain process and the parents say it's not critical, it's not important if you're involved in that or not, obviously it needs that support from home in a major way.

And I like very much, Mr. Speaker, what was involved in the Shaunavon thing, where the victim had to be involved as well. That part of looking your victim right in the eye and saying, I'm sorry for what happened, and the victim can look back at him and say, and you hurt me very seriously, you hurt my family in these ways — I think that's good.

Before the mediation circle takes place, the youth is interviewed by a youth counsellor to determine whether any intermediary factors are in play, such as abuse and some other things that may have an effect, that might have a bearing on how successful these programs might be. From there, the committee contacts members of the community which they believe will have a positive impact on the youth.

In the situation last night in Lloydminster, Mr. Speaker, one of the individuals was somewhat concerned about where do we get all these volunteers from. And I guess it's sort of the same answer that comes back any time that we're looking for volunteers, is you look for those people that are already busy, those people who are already working, those people who are already contributing, because they always seem to find some extra time to help. In the Shaunavon situation, the actual circle was conducted in a facility owned by the credit union, showing that business itself became involved in those situations.

The mediation circle is quite a relaxed situation where everyone gets an opportunity, and repeated opportunities, to become

involved in what they have to say. A mutual decision between all members of the circle, including the offender and the victim, is made on the terms of the punishment.

And I think, from those of us who have been involved in the education field, we've understood many interesting situations where we've had a young fellow or a young girl who's been involved in a situation at school where they've broken some rules, and sometimes when you ask them what they think the punishment should be, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting the punishment they pick for themselves is sometimes much more severe than we would pick for them, sometimes severe to the extent that we almost want to temper and moderate some of the punishments that they choose for themselves.

It's important to note that according to the situation in Shaunavon the victims who have been involved in the circle are very satisfied with the process, and I think that's a key element of it.

To continue, volunteers in the Shaunavon situation believe the goal of the circle is to keep the young offenders from becoming adult criminals. And to that extent, monies that are spent in the young offenders' situation, especially on rehabilitation, I think is money well spent. If we don't spend it there, and if we don't cure the problem, and if we don't help these people, they will become adult criminals. And that means there is 30, 40, 50 years of expense and cost that they will be to society, both in the harm that they will do to society, the fear they'll put on society, plus the cost of the incarceration and the apprehending and all those sorts of things that are involved with it. So I think in the youth situation, that is always money very well spent.

But again, I want to underline the point I made at the beginning. What we've done in Saskatchewan in the past hasn't worked, so we have to keep looking at the programs as we introduce them, as we work through that system. If they're not working we must change them quickly before we end up building a system that becomes just a bureaucratic boondoggle, and after that it just isn't something we can moderate, modify, and change to meet the needs of our society.

I believe those criteria of admitting guilt are in place and are valid. Too often a victim is the last person considered in our judicial process, and that must stop. And, Mr. Speaker, it is my concern that's not always the case. We must also make sure that proper boundaries are set for punishments, to ensure the offender learns their lesson and the community is protected.

So when we're . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I have been listening very carefully to the member's remarks on second reading of an Act to amend The Correctional Services Act. I want to remind the hon. member that second reading debate is debate in principle, and by the nature of debating in principle there is a certain amount of latitude.

But when I look at Bill No. 2 it is not a . . . I remind the hon. member this is not, this is not the entire Correctional Services Act which is before the Assembly, but some fairly finely defined amendments to it. And I'll encourage the hon. member to tie his remarks to the principles of the Bill which are before

the Assembly.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I think we'll be doing that. I think the preamble, Mr. Speaker, I felt was necessary to show that we look at these situations carefully and that we understand the difficulties that exist in a province. And that changes that are made are changes that we don't consider permanent, but that we understand if they have to continue to be modified to improve them.

And so as we've mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the Bill itself deals mostly with the protection of volunteers. That, Mr. Speaker, is the key thing, because in a society as ours which seems to have, unfortunately in some cases, looked south of the border for litigation and suing and all those sorts of things, people from time to time become a little more apprehensive about volunteering because of the fear that somewhere they may be held legally responsible for what's going on.

And I think because of that, we need to ensure that the volunteers that do come forward have that feeling of comfort and security with the programs that are there and that they have standing behind them, and a substantial way behind them, Mr. Speaker. The province saying, we support what you're doing; you do what you feel is correct in this case as a community; and as a community, directs the individual volunteers and bring that to fruition so that the things that we become famous for will be gone and that we can stand up and hold our head up high in this province and say we've developed a program, a program that works; we're modifying the program, and we'll continue to do that.

But I will say that from what I have heard, this is a model Saskatchewan should be very interested in looking into — the things that are happening in Lloyd, the things that are happening in Shaunavon, and the situation that I talked about in British Columbia.

So those are things that we should be looking into, and seriously consider replicating in whole or modifying if need be, with our serious youth crime problem. And I underline, it is serious, in spite of the fact that the majority of our youth are honest, trustworthy, contributing members of society. And to that extent I will end my discussion, Mr. Speaker, and continue that when we get into Committee of the Whole.

Thank you.

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

Bill No. 17

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 17 — The Certified Management Consultants Act** be now read a second time.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned previously when we adjourned this debate, this is a very straightforward piece of legislation. As far as we can determine this is a routine professional association Bill. I'm sure that we see a half a dozen or more of these sorts of Bills every session. It is the usual procedure that the association involved writes the

Bill, and the government, and ultimately the Assembly, simply rubber-stamps them.

This is how the system should work. And I don't think that we in this Assembly should be trying to micromanage people's lives the way that the members opposite so often try to do. I think we should in most cases just get out of their way and let the people in the groups run their own affairs as they see fit. Bills like this show how this kind of attitude can work and I think that we should do it more often.

Obviously the members of the certified management consultants communities know best what the needs of the members are and their clients are. In Bills like this one we give them the well-deserved opportunity to translate that knowledge and skill into law.

(1145)

Having reviewed this Bill, I would like to congratulate the certified management consultants of the province on the job they did in composing the Bills and for the high ethical and professional standards that it reflects. I would like to note, in particular, aspects such as the professional duty to report offences, which I think speaks well of the integrity of the profession.

Further, our caucus believes that it is very responsible that the Bill outlines the schedule of intermediate disciplinary actions. Very often we see the professional associations only have the power to strip a member of his or her licence. Because this action is so extreme, it is very rarely used.

Intermediate actions ensure that professional ethics and the public interests are preserved by making sure that offences are regularly punished, and making the punishment fit the crime.

I have further discussed the Bill with the management consultant association and we understand that the few concerns that they do have can be dealt with in Committee of the Whole. We will have some detailed questions and comments to raise in the committee, but otherwise we have no objections in seeing this Bill pass.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 1 — The Arts Board Amendment Act, 1998

The Chair: — I would ask the minister to introduce her officials before we start.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On my left, Brij Mathur, assistant deputy minister in the Department of Municipal Government; and on my right, Bill Werry, from the culture, sports and recreation branch.

Clause 1

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Madam Minister, I'd like to welcome your officials here this afternoon. We don't have many questions this afternoon on this subject, Madam Minister, but I guess the first question we have is what was the reason for the amendments and the changes that have been made?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — The basic intent was to form a single arts agency from the basically two large groups now, one being the SCCO, the council and culture organizations, and the Arts Board, and to bring together the arts community under one umbrella which would include the professional artists, those who are engaged in some facet of the arts for a living, and those who are emerging or beginning; and also those who engage in the arts for recreational purposes and really have no end point of ever becoming an arts professional. So it brings everyone together.

The other change basically was to set up a vehicle, an endowment fund where if individuals wish to make donations either financially or in kind of works of art to the province to be held by the Arts Board, that there would be a recognition of the fund, and that there would be an acknowledgement that any bequests or gifts made under the provisions would always be there for the benefit of the arts, and that the fund would never be drawn down for other purposes. So basically, broadly that was the intent.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I kind of gathered from that maybe that you don't trust yourself and you make sure the money ends up in the right spot. Is that what you're saying?

I guess in a way what we're doing is kind of putting more money in more spots. Will that actually draw down the money that was used to go in for the so-called professionals? Will that cut the money back from the funding that they used to have?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there won't be any change at all. The Arts Board has a schedule that they use, if you like. There are three levels of grants that they call A, B, and C. And the A grants go to recognized professionals, who have already achieved national or international acclaim, for some assistance. The B category goes to emerging, if you like, artists, and the other category is for beginning artists. They try to maintain an appropriate balance in terms of percentage in how the funds are allocated.

And the endowment fund — there's to be no confusion at all and that's the reason for the legislation; that the operating funds for the Arts Board have always come either from the General Revenue Fund of the government or as an allocation shown in the *Estimates* or, in the past, some funding from the lotteries — and the endowment fund is meant to be something separate and apart from that. Because often there are individuals who are interested in the furthering of the arts and cultural principles and they want to make some kind of a bequest and there never was a vehicle to do that.

So that will be something that will be separate and apart and held in trust, administered by the Arts Board, and not to be confused with the core funding that goes to the agency.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Madam Minister. So is what you're saying, will there be more money then in the pot now than before? Are you planning on raising the funding to the Arts Board to accommodate the expanded range artists now that you're covering or not?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Well the money that would potentially go into the endowment fund would be private donations and there is no intent on the part of the government to reduce the core funding to the Arts Board as a result of that.

So presumably through the generosity of donors who give either in kind or financial donations to the Arts Board endowment fund, then if it was managed and interest accrued to it and so on, there would be more money then potentially available, more resources available to the arts community.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Could you elaborate more on the kinds of artists maybe that will be covered under the avocational artists? Could you maybe explain that for us?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the avocational . . . And actually one of the reasons for this amendment is that the legislation that we passed last year differentiated between the two and the arts community thought that was . . . we had consulted with them but on sober second thought, after seeing it, they said, we think that this is divisive in our community because some people that might be classed as avocational today might, at some point, develop their skills and the market, for instance, for their product and actually become . . . evolve into professionals. So they don't want that distinction to be made.

But in the current context, I think you would say that avocational would be people who engage in some kinds of arts or crafts or some cultural endeavour as a hobby, most often operating out of their homes, not full-time, and sometimes for a profit. But they wouldn't be . . . an avocational artist wouldn't be described as making their living from that source.

Mr. Bjornerud: — I guess the kind of the information I was trying to get, Madam Minister, is for an example if my aunt knitted booties and every once in awhile sold some, would she qualify? Like where do you start and stop? How wide-ranging are the people that will qualify for this money?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Well that would be the kind of division that some people, for instance, that take their wares to farmer's markets or bazaars and that kind of thing, but really have no, they have no end point in mind that they will ever engage in this as a living and they never become professional. It's something that they enjoy doing and they want to share their talents with others.

In terms of the Arts Board allocations to artists, the Arts Board itself is composed of membership from the professional and the avocational arts. And there's the process that they use — we call it peer review — where the applications, for instance, for assistance will come in from people from a wide range of artistic endeavours. They will be judged by their peers on the board in terms of the merit of the application, and the assistance and support does go to professional and avocational artists.

Mr. Bjornerud: — So it's the members on the board then that will make the decision who qualifies and who doesn't. Is there actually though a set of guidelines that they have to go by, or is this strictly by their own judgement.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — The Arts Board has, you know, a written and stated policy in terms of who fits what category. And they need to do that so that their adjudications and their . . . the assistance that they do distribute is done fairly and consistently.

Mr. Bjornerud: — I guess the Bill also removes the distinction means between . . . or what it's doing is removing the distinction between professional and avocational artists. Does that mean that board can now show, if it so wishes, a preference towards one of the other because of who is making the decisions now?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — No, the answer to that question would be no, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because the members are drawn from all parts of the province — geographically, regionally; from all different forms of artistic expression. And they try to maintain a balance where rural and urban artists are given assistance. There's some attention paid to regions and also the different, the different media, the different art forms, that there's a balance from year to year, and that that balance is fairly well maintained.

Mr. Bjornerud: — I believe in your speech, Madam Minister, three arts groups were specifically mentioned: the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations, and the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance. Given the broader view of the arts community reflected in this Bill, are there any moves afoot to bring the whole thing under one heading, or is that really what you're trying to do here?

(1200)

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Yes, as I said at the outset that broadly that is the intent, is to at the end of the day, through a process of evolution, and the wish of the arts community is as well, that there will be a single agency at the end of the day.

But this legislation doesn't force that. It's enabling so that it doesn't, you know, won't happen with a big bang and some organizations won't be dissolved and melding into another and there'll be a . . . and they're working that out themselves now. There'll be a process of evolution whereby they eventually will come under a single agency.

Mr. Bjornerud: — I guess that really answers my question. I guess one of the ones I was thinking about is the Saskatchewan Craft Council so the door will be open now for them to, in time be . . . come in as they wish.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — In that particular instance that the member cites, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Craft Council would be one of those organizations which is now under the SCCO (Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations), the Saskatchewan Cultural Organizations' umbrella. And yes, the intent is and talks have been taking place for some time between the SCCO and the Arts Board for them to eventually become one.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I think that's all the questions I have on the municipal Arts Board at this time.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 1 — The Arts Board Amendment Act, 1998

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — I move that Bill No. 1, The Arts Board Amendment Act, be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Municipal Government Vote 24

The Chair: — I would ask the minister to introduce her officials, please, before we start.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On my left is Ken Pontikes, our deputy minister; behind me is Ron Styles, the associate deputy minister of housing, protection services and facilities division; on his left is Brij Mathur, the associate deputy minister, municipal and community services division; and to the left of the deputy is Larry Chaykowski, the director of financial and strategic support in the Department of Municipal Government.

Subvote (MG01)

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. And welcome, Madam Minister, and to your officials as well.

I'll only take a short part of your time here today but I do have a few specific questions, some of which were given to you — my people, my constituency, and a few other ones that have come along in the last while — and I'd like to have an answer to a few of those.

The Regina MacKenzie Art Gallery pays no cost for things such as lights, heat, security guards, air conditioning — those are I believe supplied by Sask government. Could I have the number of dollars that is worth?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the estimates for our department, it shows, as the member will see, \$275,000 as an annual grant to the MacKenzie gallery. But the actual . . . the value of the rental of space and utilities and the other costs that you mention would be a factor in the, probably the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation's estimates because that building, which also, as you know, houses the Department of Health and the Arts Board, is owned and

operated by the SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation).

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, so I guess when they're up we will ask that question of them. How many dollars does your department then attribute . . . contribute to the Regina MacKenzie Art Gallery?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would be the \$275,000 annual figure that I just referred to that's shown on page 94 of the *Estimates*.

Mr. Heppner: — What is the difference between the grant this gallery gets and the Saskatoon's Mendel Art Gallery gets, and what is the reason for the difference if there is any?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, there . . . it's very difficult to draw parallels with these facilities. The history of the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon is on a much different path, if you like, and there is some assistance provided through the lotteries not shown in the *Estimates* of the department, not coming from the General Revenue Fund to the Mendel Art Gallery.

But there are a number of distinctions. For instance a large part of the provincial art collection, which is a provincial asset, is housed at the MacKenzie gallery, and we would, as a province preserving our asset, incur some costs in holding and displaying that collection, in any event.

So there are, you know, relatively different ways that the use and establishment of these facilities have evolved.

Mr. Heppner: — You're probably quite right that the way that these have evolved is quite different. Because I would submit to you that in all likelihood there has always been more taxpayers' money go into the MacKenzie than into Mendel Art Gallery, and that's just the point of my questioning. I think you mentioned that this was hard to draw a parallel between these two, and I think we need to start to do that.

The question comes up: if we just have art for the sake of storing it, why not let what Saskatoon does? They have a functioning art gallery without the province owning any art there; why can't the MacKenzie Art Gallery operate the same way? Because there's nothing wrong with what the Saskatoon art gallery, or the service it supplies, so why the insistence that in this one gallery, in one part of the province, the taxpayer has to own art there?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, in response to the question, the provincial collection is certainly circulated. The MacKenzie Art Gallery is the result of a collaboration between the university, which had a collection, the province and the MacKenzie. And MacKenzie provides services to some of the other galleries in the province. So of course it's in the interest of the people of Saskatchewan to have access to these works, and that was the intent of the city, the province, the university, coming together sometime during the '80s, which resulted in the arrangement that now exists for the MacKenzie gallery.

Mr. Heppner: — An interesting but not very impressive

conclusion because I'm sure the people of Saskatchewan, by and large, will say when you look at what Saskatoon is providing through that particular art gallery — as I said earlier on — why, you know, the taxpayer should be owning this particular section of the arts of Saskatchewan, when that provides a very good and an adequate facility and service to the province. This seems to be just an unnecessary thing that is stuck in the city of Regina, probably for no other reason than to have it here.

Also on museums as opposed to galleries. What were the contributions this year to the museum at Osler?

(1215)

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — The situation with the provincial museum is that they fall under the umbrella of the SCCO, the cultural organizations. And the SCCO makes an allocation to the Museums Association of Saskatchewan, who in turn has a formula or criteria for distributing money to their member museums.

So the information would be available in an indirect sort of way, but we . . . they're at arm's length, and so we give no direction to the SCCO or the museums association about how they should allocate the money. So whether the museum at Osler received money from the museums grant program last year, or how much, would be information that you could get from the museums association but it wouldn't be something that we would have here today to share.

Mr. Heppner: — Interesting, Madam Minister, because it seems what is happening here is that provincial financial management's rather gone amuck. You say that you give a certain amount of money to SCCO, but you really have no idea how they spend it, you have no idea who got it. So first question then, how much did you give to SCCO and do you have any input into how they distribute it?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the money that goes to fund the organizations that come under the SCCO umbrella is lottery money. And it again is peer review. It is at arm's length from the government. And we think that's a good and positive thing. And they report to us regularly and that information is available from the annual report from the SCCO, or their member associations also provide annual reports on their activities. And it's a peer review.

I don't think that it should be . . . I agree that it shouldn't be a subject of people sitting in this House to make allocations to their pet projects or, you know, whatever the case may be throughout the province. I think the museums association, being it's a peer review where they have their standards, their criteria, that museums and collections and curators need qualifications and need to measure up to. And they make the allocations based on that.

And I think they prefer that, we prefer that. And it isn't that they're not accountable. They do report to us in the form of annual reports which would be available to all of us.

Mr. Heppner: — Interesting. You have no control over it, you want no control over it, yet they report and yet you don't know.

Well for your information, Madam Minister, Osler didn't get a single red cent. Neither did the Hague museum get a single red cent. And so maybe rather that just say so, you should look into how come.

Those are people in those communities who have put their own time and effort and items, that have put that museum together, and they do not get one red cent. That's totally unfair because there's taxpayers and people of Saskatchewan putting money into it. And the reason they're putting money into it and the way they're putting money into it is under your control in some way or another. So you need to take some responsibility for that.

And when those individuals from those communities ask how come they don't get one cent, it's pretty hard to give them any sort of a reason. It might be easy to explain why they don't get as much as someone else is getting if there's some criteria there, but to say these museums are totally out of the loop, that is not satisfactory and the people of those areas are fairly unhappy with the position that you're taking on that, or the position that you're not taking on it.

Continuing, the Centennial Auditorium in Saskatoon pays all its own costs with a grant from the taxpayers of Saskatoon. The Centre of the Arts receives over \$400,000 in grants from provincial taxpayers and has been granted \$7 million over two years for renovations. Why that difference in the way those two are being treated?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again this goes back several decades, a process of evolution, the establishment of the facilities in the two cities. In 1967, the 100th anniversary of the country, the federal government made a decision that they would fund some kind of a public performing arts facility in every province — one. And they provided some funding and the decision was made that the Saskatchewan one would be in Regina.

Well Regina wasn't successful for whatever reasons at the time — this is over 30 years ago now — in raising the money that they needed to complete their project. Saskatoon, on the other hand, was kind of miffed that Regina was chosen and they decided to go ahead and build their own, which they did. They raised their own funds and they completed it and they've operated ever since.

Regina's was partly built. And if you remember at the time, in the late '60s, there was a very serious economic recession in the province and Regina's project fell on bad times and it was called the monkey bars beside the lake for a long time when the steel frame was there. And so the province of the day stepped in and completed it.

So it is and always has been — since it was taken over and completed — a provincial asset. So at this time it needs renovations and, being a provincial asset, the province has to spend the money to upgrade it and keep it functioning.

I know there are always comparisons drawn between Saskatoon and Regina ad nauseam. And if, you know, if you made yourself a little list, treatment is actually probably on balance, quite equal. Where Saskatoon has Wanuskewin, which is partly funded, Saskatoon has Meewasin; Saskatoon has Sask Place, so

Regina has the Centre of the Arts; and Regina has the MacKenzie Art Gallery.

Saskatoon on the other hand has the Western Development Museum, which last year we spent I think about, just over one and a half million dollars replacing roofs. Because again, that's a provincial asset. It attracts 150,000 visitors to Saskatoon. It's an important asset to Saskatoon.

And so I mean I'm just not going to get into who is getting more and who is getting less. The history of all these facilities is different. It's evolved in all sorts of different ways. They're under different management. So to be trying to compare and saying this gets more than this, I think that on balance that the people of the province see the treatment as being relatively fair even though it's not the same.

Mr. Heppner: — It's not the same and it is also definitely not fair. Here you have one particular city that gets a building half built, so you finish the building. Then you maintain the building. And now you're going to refurbish the building. Where Saskatoon builds its own building, maintains its own building, and does its maintenance on its own building. Why not be very generous at this point, Madam Minister, and give the whole thing to the city of Regina?

They're big enough. They're much bigger now than Saskatoon was when it built theirs. If they can't handle it and they have to shut the doors, let the people of Regina deal with that — would be the fairest thing to do for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, the individuals that you were mentioning.

Now I hear a whole lot of squawking from the people back there, who are specifically individuals from Regina, and I have no doubt they're concerned about that. I think they should rather hang their head in shame that their community can't handle the same kinds of facilities that other cities can; and that they have to come running, cap in hand, to the provincial government and the taxpayer. From every individual across Saskatchewan, from Lloydminster, Prince Albert, Unity, Moosomin — everywhere — have to pay the taxes to go ahead and keep these facilities open in Regina and yet other cities can do it on their own.

There's something wrong there and I think you need to tell them to grow up and just give it to them. Let them handle it on their own. I'm sure they can do it quite well. I think you'd be surprised how well they would do it if they were given the opportunity. So let's be generous, give them the opportunity.

How much money went to maintain the Museum of Natural History?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've got . . . It's on page 94 of the *Estimates* — \$1.335 million, and as you know there was a fire in the museum about 1990 or 1991. Last year there was an additional amount because the insurance claim for that fire was finally settled, and there's a redevelopment going on in the museum in addition to restoring the part that was damaged by fire.

The world of museums is changing and people aren't happy to just go around and see stuffed animals any more and read little

labels. They want to have interactive displays and so on. Also we've added the first nations pavilion that's been developed there; so are continuing to renew that.

I just want to say on the other . . . the comments that the member opposite made with respect to the Centre of the Arts, sometimes the opposition members are critical about downloading onto municipalities, and I suggest that giving the Centre of the Arts to Regina would be a huge download.

I'd also like to point out that it was the then Liberal administration in Regina in the late '60s that decided to take over the Regina Centre of the Arts and own it as a provincial asset. When you talk about some of the small museums not getting money, I can see why we got \$15 billion worth of debt in the '80s. The amount of funding is finite; there's only so much. So the museums association makes their determination how it should be divided.

Of course there are small, local museums; good work by our volunteers in our province, with efforts to maintain our history and artifacts from previous times. And that's good, but it can't all be funded. There isn't enough money for everything. So I think that it's, on balance, fair, as I said before, even though the treatment is not always the same.

Mr. Heppner: — Well you may want to hide behind the Liberals of the past, but I don't think saying that just because they did something that maybe they shouldn't have done, you're going to perpetuate that for ever; I don't think that's valid at all.

You mentioned parks in Saskatoon and that money was going to things like the parks that they have there. How many dollars would be going to Saskatoon parks, particularly the Meewasin one that you referred to?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have, by virtue of legislation that has been passed, four Authorities if you like. The one in Saskatoon called the Meewasin Valley Authority receives funding of \$740,000 a year. That's on page . . . this is all on page 93 of the *Estimates*. The Wascana Centre Authority in Regina receive \$782,000 statutory and this year will receive 1.84 million in maintenance funding. The Chinook Parkway in Swift Current receives 78,000 and the Wakamow Valley in Moose Jaw receives 127,000.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. One or two more questions. Regina YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), how much funding did they get from the province and did the Saskatoon YMCA get . . . what amount, and the same thing for the YW's from both cities.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, to my knowledge, we do not fund either the YWCA or the YMCA in either city.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. The series of questions that I had, Madam Minister, I think points out some of the inequities are there. It has nothing to do with the debt in the past, what the Liberals did in the past — it has to do with dealing with people and municipalities and jurisdictions equally. And I think that needs to be looked at.

If you're so convinced that on balance the Saskatoon/Regina situation is equal, I challenge you to go ahead and put that all on paper and say, here's where the money goes for each city, and we'll take a look at it. And if you're correct, I'm sure these questions will not reappear. If it isn't fairly close, these questions will continue reappearing.

Thank you, Madam Minister.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Madam Minister, I'd like to also welcome your officials here today.

The first question I have today is I'd like . . . Could you run me through the new policing funding that you came out with in this budget, or give me an explanation of what you're doing.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't happen to have the detailed tables with me showing exactly the dollar effect on each community, but I can broadly.

It was determined that, as you know based on the recommendations of a task force headed up by SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) . . . their recommendations were that a certain per capita charge would be placed on every municipality in the province to equalize the funding. Because there are those municipalities now with population under 500 and all rural municipalities, regardless of their population, that are not required to provide policing.

(1230)

So it was determined that the amount required to have the same per capita charge — well based on the municipality size — across the province would be \$4 million. But that would have . . . If we had done it in the method recommended by the task force, it would have meant a new charge, a cumulative charge to rural and municipalities under 500 population of \$4 million a year.

And we just felt that at this particular time a lot of those communities are under stress with all the changes that are happening with rail-line abandonment and elevator consolidation and all the changes that we're faced with in rural Saskatchewan; that we didn't think it was appropriate to have a new charge at this time.

But we did want to provide relief for those that perceive themselves paying more than their neighbours, so we've made it . . . it's represented in the budget in the *Estimates* on page 93. It's called sub-programs: policing costs restructuring assistance. And the effective date will not be till January 1, 1999. So the first quarter, being one-quarter of 4 million, \$1 million appears in this year's *Estimates* because in our fiscal year it will come in the last quarter — January, February, March of 1999 — and the administration of it hasn't been determined yet. There are some options. We could send the municipalities a bill and then give them an offsetting cheque. We could simply distribute the \$4 million, in this case a million dollars in our . . . the fiscal year that's here under review to relieve those municipalities of the additional you know the costs, the higher costs. Personally I'm sort of leaning towards you know sending a bill and a reimbursement, so that there's some recognition that, you know, of the amount that is being picked up.

But we're consulting with municipalities now on the administration. We have of course until 1999 to determine how that's done. So we will try to come up with a mutually acceptable arrangement for how to distribute the money. But we think that it is good news in relieving those municipalities that are paying more than their neighbours, and at the same time not representing new costs to those who feel they can't afford it.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Madam Minister. And I want to be on the record as saying I commend you and your government for putting extra money into covering the policing costs, because I do agree with you that the smaller towns and the RMs (rural municipality) in no way can afford to pay for policing with the downloading that's gone on.

I just want a little bit clearer picture of what's happening out there and I'll give you an example of a small town out there that's paying very close to \$40,000 — and it's the town of Saltcoats that I'm very familiar with — and I believe their population is about 540 and I think they're up to around anywhere from 38 to \$40,000 for policing. Had we gone through with what were the recommendations had said — and we'd have talked about \$15 per capita for small towns and RMs — I believe the town of Saltcoats would have ended up paying roughly \$7,000 instead of the 40. Will that now, with the \$4 million that your government has put in, will that put them down to the 7,000 that they had hoped to get to before?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was the formula that was used to identify that it would take \$4 million to provide that equalization. And that the example that you cite is really a good one because that's where, that's where the heaviest burden really was, is on those communities that are just over the break point of 500 . . . 500 population. So that when they have to pay for . . . According to the legislation, they're required then to commit to the minimum contract with the RCMP. Well they have the alternative — having their own town policemen or whatever — but most of them opt to contract with the 20-hour a week with the RCMP, which is the \$38,000 that you mention.

So in a case like Saltcoats, they would go now to the \$15 per capita which would be like roughly \$7,500, or you know based on 500 population. So they would now have a savings if you like, of over \$30,000, that they could either reduce their taxes or use that money to provide other services.

And in some of those communities their biggest single cost at that population level is that policing contract. So it will provide a great amount of relief for over a hundred Saskatchewan municipalities.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you Madam Minister. Yes, I agree, I think the town of Kamsack alone is \$131,000 that will save them. And I know it's much appreciated.

One thing though, is this a one-year deal? Is this something that's going to be ongoing every year? Or if I kind of understood what the explanation was, that this is for this '99 year; what happens after that?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — We're calling it transitional funding but we . . . the intent is — and this million dollars is the first

instalment — that in next year's budget the full \$4 million would be there; so it would be continuing.

The one thing I would say is that these numbers, this \$4 million annual amount is based upon the cost of the RCMP now. Those services are subject to a contract between the federal and provincial government as you know. And so if at some time in the future the costs per capita increase . . . I mean we're not saying now that we will pick up all of the costs into infinity, but the intent is certainly that in next year's budget that this figure will be \$4 million, not \$1 million.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Okay, with revenue sharing for these same towns that are receiving this policing money, will this in any way affect their revenue sharing?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — If we use the old formula, which has been suspended now for a number of years because of the changes in the size of the pool, there would be an effect. But we have suspended the formula and we're consulting with municipalities. We're taking it to the municipal round table — you know, we have on a number of occasions — to come up with some new method of distribution. And the answer is at the current time and in the absence of a new formula, the answer to your question is no. It will not affect the amount they get through revenue sharing in any way.

Mr. Bjornerud: — What about then the towns under 500 and the RMs out there that are now not being asked, and I'm sure are very grateful they're not being asked, to pay towards the policing, but will their revenue sharing then in any way . . . will they be penalized in any way or cut in what they would have expected in revenue sharing because they are not being asked to put into the policing fund?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — The answer is the same, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as before, that in the current context with the formula being suspended, no. There won't be any effect whatsoever.

Mr. Bjornerud: — On to a different subject, Madam Minister, and I'm sure you're much more aware than I am even of the problems that reassessment caused. And I guess my first question would be what have we learned from the reassessment we've just gone through and the mistakes I believe we've made?

I believe one of the things . . . that we were not anywhere near ready to go into a reassessment with the rules we had in place. And I guess what I'm asking you is what have we learnt from that and how more or better prepared are we going to be in 2000 or whenever the next assessment will be? If I understand right, it may be even delayed a year.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — I think the member opposite asks a very good question: what have we learned? I think the most important thing we've learned is never ever to wait 30 years again before doing a reassessment.

We have some concerns. We're setting up a committee now that will include representation from the municipal associations and so on. We're not suggesting that the reassessment for the year 2000 should be delayed in any way, but there is a proposal

which has not been, you know, accepted — it's just a proposal that's out there — that in the event that we don't get the numbers from SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) early enough, that there's sort of a plan B where municipalities could run two parallel tax rolls.

And we may not have to do that. If we got SAMA's final assessment figures by the end of 1998, we would have a year then to work through what the percentages of values should be, how the education foundation grant distribution will be affected and so on.

Because last time we had a, as you know, as everybody knows, we had a crunch where we set the percentages of value based upon . . . in August of 1996 based upon the best information that was available to us at the time. But then by the time the final numbers came out and the pick-ups and all of that. It was seen that there was, if you like, some unacceptable shifts. So we had to come up with percentages of assessment to — like the .83 per cent on agricultural property — to mitigate that.

And we were doing those changes in the year of reassessment. You know, we were bringing in legislation in 1997 for the 1997 amendment, that in April and May, that was retroactive to the first of January and was after municipalities had set their mill rates, or were required to. And we just don't think that's acceptable.

So we're trying to plan ahead for a plan B in the event that we don't get the numbers soon enough. If we do then everything will be fine, but we're trying to cover off that eventuality.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Madam Minister. I guess, and probably you know this as well as I do or maybe better because of the problems that it caused for your people, but if we had of gone with the last reassessment and let SAMA go through their procedure they were doing and then . . . but put off the actual numbers being used till the following year, which would be this year, I think we'd have saved a lot of headache for you and us and everyone out there. I think it was the fact that we were being asked to go by the new numbers but we weren't really ready to put the other rules in place that would guard against shortfalls.

One of the problems there, the problems that I keep getting calls about, Madam Minister, and I believe maybe you do, is about the revenue sharing for — this is from the towns out there right now but I guess for everyone — is that they feel that the revenue sharing and the numbers should be out now. They can't understand why we have to keep waiting and waiting to get our numbers, and it is causing problems for them out there. Why can this not be done earlier in the year? I think it's causing a lot of inconvenience for the municipalities out there.

The Deputy Chair: — Order. Before I recognize the minister, I just wish to remind the hon. member to address questioning through the Chair, and I appreciate your cooperation.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now I forget what the question was. No, I don't. It was . . . We had to take it through an approval process through government and that approval has been given, and I would say that the cheques and the indication of how much municipalities will be getting

on an individual basis will be known momentarily. It should be out within the next few days.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Is there a reason though, Deputy Speaker, that this can't be done earlier. We get the same concern every year. And I know even the RMs too, if we could get these numbers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier in the year, these people could finalize their budgets. And it seems to me that . . . And I know from my years in rural municipal government, we were always waiting to find out what our shares would be on the funding out there and it does cause inconvenience. Is there no way that we can move this time line up — probably even a month or two months would sure help.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know the member opposite raises a good and valid point, and I know it comes from his personal experience in local government as well. And I have the same experience. It's not quite so difficult for rural municipalities because they set their mill rate later in the year — or they're not required to set it as early, let's put it that way — their statutory deadline is later in the year than for urban municipalities.

But the problem that we run into is that we can do it hypothetically before the budget, but we can't talk to the municipal organizations or the municipalities prior to budget day about specifically how big the pool will be because that's budget information. So we have to wait until the amount of the pool is made public.

And then we wanted to consult with them about whether we should suspend the formula, whether they wanted a new formula. There's been some expressions that the cities wanted to have a separate pool from the larger urban pool. So we talked to the municipal organizations and the municipalities about all of those options to determine if there was a consensus around one of them. And whatever consensus could be reached is what will be reflected in the figures that come out. But that's why we wanted to talk to them about it.

(1245)

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I have a suggestion that may help you with this problem and help the people that I'm concerned about too, is that if we had about a six-week fall session, then come in here in about the middle of January like we should be coming in here, we would be out of here by now. Those numbers would have been out — the budget could have come out a lot earlier than this — and it would make everybody happy that's concerned.

I know the members opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would appreciate that. I know everybody in my party would.

Madam Minister, on a little bit different subject here but a concern that has been brought to me and I'm not sure if this maybe should be Highways or Municipal Government. But the towns of Langenburg, and I think Kamsack, and I know there's towns that size all over the province where the highway runs right through town, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I think are very concerned about the assistance they get, or lack of, for the portions of the highways — I know in Langenburg's case it's No. 16 that runs right through the town and the lack of

assistance they get on this portion of the highway.

I believe in the smaller towns, assistance is given for a portion of the road that runs into those towns off the highways. Why, when we get to towns of that size, do we not have funding or some assistance for them? Or more assistance?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I like to offer whatever information I can but I think that particular question should be directed towards the Minister of Highways in estimates for Highways.

I just want to make a comment on the member's suggestion that maybe . . . that we should have a fall session to make information on municipal revenue sharing earlier. And I'd just like to observe that having a fall session would cost quite a lot of money and we might have to reduce the size of the revenue-sharing pool in order to pay for that. And I don't think the municipalities would like that very much.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Madam Minister, I think it would work really well if we had a six-week fall session. And I think we should run it like the party that I was with before. Leaks came out of there all the time every time we did something, and I would think you could leak what was coming in the budget and then towns would know ahead of time.

Regional parks, Madam Minister, regional parks, the funding has dropped considerably over the years for regional parks. And I guess the question I have is, are we getting to the point that there's . . . I know a lot of the regional parks aren't being funded now. Is there anything in the works, now that financially we have got our house in a little better order than it was before, to return some of the funding to these regional parks?

These regional parks are really good for the tourist industry in this province. I've known a number of the smaller regional parks are totally funded by the municipality and it's a real load on them right now. And I believe they're doing us a great service here by bringing people into the province. And is there any future plans of maybe starting some funding back up for these people?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again the funding for all parks, except for the urban parks and the Authorities that are funded under statute, the funding for parks has always been and is now in the Department of the Environment — Environment and Resource Management.

So I would suggest, with respect, that perhaps he could reserve this question until the Minister for the Environment is in Committee of the Whole.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, welcome to your officials. I have one issue that was brought forward by one of my towns and it's regarding a downloading of responsibility again. This one is for inspection of new buildings.

I've been told the volunteers on councils have the responsibility now to check over the new buildings and ensure that they meet the new codes. These people are volunteers. They are elected in rural communities, they take time out of their real lives to take on an additional responsibility. And they now are expected to

know, and if they don't know . . . they're expected to find the funds to hire someone to ensure the building codes are met. Can you give me an idea of why this change was made. Is it done through regulations? And when did it take effect?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, from memory I'm not sure of the year, but it must have been prior to 1990 because I remember as the reeve of a rural municipality myself, we passed a bylaw. I think most municipalities around that time period were asked to pass bylaws adopting the National Building Code.

And most municipalities, rural municipalities and small urban municipalities, do contract this out. They will engage . . . I am told that it's 1988; I knew it was prior to 1990. But they will engage someone from a larger urban community, you know nearby or something like that, because of course most smaller municipalities don't have enough construction activity to warrant the hiring, you know, the engaging of a full-time building inspector, so they usually contract that out.

There is a great variance in the method and the amount of sophistication, if you like. A lot of rural municipalities, for example, don't even have a zoning bylaw and don't have a system that requires building permits to be taken out.

My experience was that in a larger rural municipality, that we did have a zoning bylaw, we did adopt the building code, we did require development permits for any kind of construction. We didn't charge a fee for any kind of agricultural buildings, but we wanted to know where they were going, you know, just to make sure that they didn't obstruct sight lines and so on. So we had a development plan that asked people to apply for any kind of development. And if it was a building that required inspection, then we had an arrangement with the city of Saskatoon where their building department would go out, for a fee, and do that inspection so that it was done by a qualified inspector.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Has there been any changes in the regulations? Are there any new regulations that make . . . that have occurred recently that have made it . . . that is bringing this to the attention of the local municipalities and made their responsibility even clearer?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm told that in 1995 there were some updates to the National Building Code. So that would have an effect on any municipality that had obviously adopted the National Building Code; then they would be also adopting the changes or the updates to it.

But I don't think that it would be onerous on a municipality, either the previous provisions or the changes, the updates. And the municipality would want to consider very carefully their liability if they permitted some kind of a substandard building to be put up and say a fire or a collapse of the building or something ensued. So I think it would be considered normal practice for a municipality to be satisfied that standards were being met.

Ms. Draude: — Of course, Madam Minister, Deputy Speaker, I'm sure that the minister knows that all councils, everyone, wants to have safe buildings. Of course though there can't be

any opportunity for them to be liable, and that's exactly what these small towns and the RMs are trying to do.

But again this is going to cost money. There are provincial standards. There are federal standards that have to be met. And larger centres, like you said, can afford to have somebody hired, paid staff. But this is just another . . . (inaudible) . . . for the small towns who are trying to encourage businesses to start up, because they now are required to check not only the commercial buildings but also residential as well.

They now need not only just a floor plan, they actually have to have a blueprint. And this is going to slow down the issuance of permits. And I also understand that during the construction they have to have it inspected three times. So not only is someone that's trying to build something going to have to wait for town council to have a meeting and to check over the permit, they're also going to have to wait until somebody can come out to do some of the inspections. And I think this is again something that is a great concern for the smaller communities.

I also understand that in the community it could cost up to around the 6 or \$700 mark to have one of these permits or the inspections taking place. It's an additional burden. And I'm wondering if it's something that the government is well aware of and if it's something that the . . . if you've been told by the councils how tough this is going to be on them when it comes to their budgeting again.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really believe that this need not be onerous for smaller municipalities; that they certainly can, you know, contract services from a neighbouring municipality that has someone on staff. And certainly there don't have to be delays because the council can pass resolutions delegating that authority to their administration; so that the administrator, secretary of the municipality, or other staff people can act with dispatching these cases.

And there is a variety of different reasons for an inspection. There is electrical inspections; all kinds of trade inspections; might be mortgage inspections. In the event of a mortgage, the institution requires inspections at regular intervals.

So there are a variety of circumstances, but I think that they shouldn't . . . small communities shouldn't make it difficult for themselves. There are ways to do it with dispatch and at a very minimal cost to the municipality and the ratepayer.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:58 p.m.

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