

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

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.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures are from the communities of Frobisher, Storthoaks, Bellegarde. I so present.

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to 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 Arcola, Kisbey areas, Mr. Speaker, of the south-east. I so present on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

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, Mr. Speaker, the petition I present has been signed by individuals from the Oxbow, Alameda, Estevan, Frobisher, and Kenosee Lake areas of Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to 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 these come from the people at North Portal, Frobisher, Alameda, and Oxbow. I so present. Thank you.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I too present petitions on behalf of people concerned about the impending closure of the Plains hospital. The prayer reads as follows:

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.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are all from the community of Radville. I so present.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm also pleased today to present petitions on behalf of people regarding the Plains Health Centre.

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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

People that have signed this petition are from Radville. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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.

And the signatures on this petition are from Yorkton and the area.

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, I present a petition this morning. The prayer of relief reads as follows:

Your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to relocate Highway 40 to east of the David Laird Campground in order to alleviate the congestion at the entrance to the city of North Battleford.

Your petitioners come from North Battleford, Battleford, and Cut Knife. I so present.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens concerned over the Plains Health Centre closure. 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've signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Mankota, Swift Current, also the city of Weyburn, and Regina. I so present.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to present a petition. And the petition reads as follows:

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.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are primarily from Ponteix, and I so present.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

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.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has signatures on from the city of Weyburn and from Colgate. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to relocate Highway 40 to alleviate congestion at the entrance to North Battleford; and to act to save the Plains Health Centre; to put a moratorium on the closure of the Plains Health Centre; and to have the Workers' Compensation Board reinstate pensions for the disenfranchised widows and widowers.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to the Assembly today two very special guests, His Excellency Robert Sabga, the High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago. If you would stand and be recognized. And as well, Mr. Stephen Kangal, the Deputy

High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago.

We had a very interesting conversation this morning, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the synergies between Saskatchewan and their country. We have some very interesting similarities and we have made some initial steps to putting together what we believe will be some very mutually beneficial dialogue in the upcoming weeks. So I ask all members to give them a very warm Saskatchewan welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of the legislature, 10 students accompanied by their teachers who are involved in the Interchange on Canadian Studies. I would like to ask them to stand while I read out their names.

The students are Stephanie Seeman from Lampman; Chandler Powell from Swift Current; Katherine Ganshorn from Regina; Joleen Kayter from Moose Jaw; Melanie Hrynchyshyn from Alvena; Shawna Brataschuk from Saskatoon; Ryan Frauchoux from Prince Albert; Leah Ritz from Lloydminster; Tymoor McKay from Cumberland House; and Marie-France Guerrette from Regina. They're accompanied by their teachers, Dale Reed and Heather Marshall.

Mr. Speaker, each year 10 Saskatchewan grade 11 students have the opportunity to participate in the Canadian Studies exchange, and this year these 10 students from all across our province, along with their two teachers, are on their way to Halifax, or Nova Scotia, which will host this year's conference.

The theme of this national bilingual conference is "Rethinking the Workplace". Now the students are in Regina attending an orientation session and then they'll travel to Halifax for the conference.

Mr. Speaker, because I'm introducing Bills I won't be able to meet with these students, but my colleague, the member from Lumsden, will, and I'm sure she looks forward to meeting with these students. So I'd ask everyone to welcome these students to the Assembly this morning.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, I would like to introduce in the gallery from the Gainsborough School, six students from the grade 7 and 8 class. Mr. Speaker, we're talking quality not quantity here. Along with the students we have teachers Patricia Wolensky and Bev Needham who are chaperoning today. And I would like to welcome the students and the teachers to the . . . I was going to say class, but to the Assembly today. I've already had the opportunity to meet with them, Mr. Speaker, and I hope they enjoy the rest of their tour.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce a class of students, 60 students from Langham, both quantity and quality. Grade 4 and grade 5, they're sitting in the west

gallery. I will be meeting with them at 11 o'clock in room 218, and I'm looking forward to that. And the 60 students are accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Kasahoff, Mrs. Swayze, and Mr. Kolach, and also some of the parents. Please help me welcome this group to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm especially pleased to introduce some people in the gallery today, some very special people. My oldest son, Tim, Pattie Gantfoer, a special friend, and also welcome the students on the Interchange on Canadian Studies, and especially one young lady from Saskatoon, my cousin, and that's Shawna Brataschuk.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not to be outdone — and I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, this is the first time there's been any real dissension in our caucus — I would like to introduce my daughter, Pattie Gantfoer, and her friend, Tim Draude.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Good News Headlines

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here are five recent good news headlines from Saskatchewan weekly newspapers: "Booming economy leads to area housing shortage," *The Outlook*, April 13; "Schaffer Seeds officially opened March 27," the *Foam Lake Review*, April 6; "New livestock business for Assiniboia," *The Assiniboia Times*, April 6; "Can-oat Milling officially opens," the *Saskatchewan Valley News*, April 8; "Canamera expands plant," *The Four-Town Journal*, April 1.

These headlines have two things in common, Mr. Speaker. One, each is further proof that the Saskatchewan economy and Saskatchewan communities, especially our smaller communities, are doing quite well.

Two, each story comes from the constituency of an opposition member — members who would ignore the good fortune of our province. Instead they spend their time praying for bad news and wishing their constituents ill, all for the sake of short-term political gain. They are as sad, Mr. Speaker, as these headlines are happy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign Begins

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to take a minute and speak to the members of the Assembly about the Green Ribbon of Hope campaign that is launched today by Child Find Saskatchewan for the seventh consecutive year. With so many important causes out there, I can't think of one more important than a campaign to find missing children and return them to their homes.

An astonishing 57,000 children were reported missing in Canada last year. Mr. Speaker, for those in the Assembly who have raised young children, I am sure many of us know the heart-wrenching feeling, when as a young parent you turned around in a store and your little boy or girl was not there. Maybe some of us have experienced a defiant teenager who ran away from home for a day and then returned home. But, Mr. Speaker, I wonder how many of us know the agony of that child not being found or that young teen not returning home.

Today we wear green ribbons as a symbol of many things. We wear the ribbon to raise awareness of the problem of missing children. We wear them as a symbol of hope for those whose precious children are missing. And finally, we wear these ribbons as a reminder to pray for these children — pray that they are safe from harm's way and that they will one day soon return home.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Spinal Health Care Week

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 1 to 7 is Spinal Health Care Week. During this week Saskatchewan chiropractors work hard to educate grade 3 students in particular and the public in general about the health and economic benefits of preventing spinal injuries. Fundamental to the preventative focus of Spinal Health Care Week is the important role played by education and physical fitness. This message will be shared with over 15,000 students during Spinal Health Week.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I . . . order. Order! I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member in making her statement, but I ask for the cooperation of all members to enable members' statements to be heard audibly.

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we have all experienced back pain at some time in our lives. But few of us realize how serious a problem this is. At any given time approximately 30 per cent of the population is suffering from back pain. In addition, patients with lower back pain represent a major segment of those who are chronically disabled. In Saskatchewan, 2 out of every \$5 of claim costs paid by Workers' Compensation are for spinal injuries.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important health issue. I encourage those of us without serious back pain to consider how lucky we are. For most of us lower back pain can be avoided through proper education and exercise. I think most of us will find that a little extra effort will be well worth our while. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan's Minister of Health will be involved in a conference call today with his provincial and federal counterparts to discuss the issue of reopening the compensation package for hepatitis C victims.

Now it's easy for provincial governments to simply suggest Ottawa should pay, and the Tories indicated in this House yesterday that they are prepared to let the NDP (New Democratic Party) government off the hook. We are not, Mr. Speaker.

Let's not forget that the Krever report underlined the fact that federal and provincial governments played a part in the tainted blood scandal. And we believe both must do their part to ensure all victims of hepatitis C are compensated.

Failing any agreement, the Liberal opposition will be moving first reading of a Bill today to strike a hepatitis C compensation commission, Mr. Speaker.

This body would be established to identify victims of the tainted blood tragedy, develop criteria to determine financial impact on the lives of victims, and use these criteria on a case-by-case basis to determine fair and reasonable compensation for victims and their families. A common sense approach, Mr. Speaker. And I hope all members of this Assembly will support this Bill.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

"Come Home Safe Tonight" Safety Campaign

Mr. Ward: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Farming is among the most dangerous occupations in the province. Every spring the risk of accidents and injury is increased as farm families work long hours to get their crops in. Farm accidents have already been reported this year in Saskatchewan.

Given this, promoting farm safety, especially in the spring and fall, is a top priority of SaskPower. This is the second year of the community-based farm safety campaign entitled "Come Home Safe Tonight," designed to help prevent deaths and injury by involving customers in raising awareness about farm safety.

The safety campaign will be carried in radio commercials province-wide from now until the end of May. The "Come Home Safe Tonight" message will also be promoted through advertising in weekly newspapers, outdoor billboards in rural farming communities, and by posting of information in all SaskPower offices, farm implement dealerships, rural coffee shops, co-op retailers, rural municipal offices, and grain elevators. All three television stations will also air commercials to support this safety message.

I know all members will join me in supporting farm safety initiatives to encourage farm families to stay safe during this busy spring seeding time and throughout the farming season.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Closure of Plains Health Centre

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, recently the big banks took out

ads to tell us that everything will be okay after they consolidate. Not to be outdone, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow just sent a flyer to his constituents telling them everything will be okay after health consolidation and the closure of the Plains.

Just as people don't believe the bank, Moose Jaw Wakamow residents don't believe that member. He tries to tell local residents services will be the same once the Plains closes. He forgets to tell them the NDP already slashed 53 hospitals, 968 acute care beds, 461 long-term care beds, laid off some 579 nurses, and now forces some 6,600 people to languish on waiting-lists in Saskatchewan.

While the member writes his constituents to tell them what to think, we gave them a chance to tell the Premier how they feel. One Wakamow constituent writes, and I quote: "Even if you felt cuts were necessary, don't try and claim the system has not suffered. It has." Another says: "I'm a registered nurse and in the past four years I've seen firsthand how our health care has depleted."

Another writes: "I had life-saving surgery at the Plains. Please use our tax dollars to keep the Plains and remember what led to your demise in 1982 when you stopped listening to the people."

Mr. Speaker, I challenge the member and his colleagues to avoid telling their constituents what to think and start asking their views on issues like . . .

The Speaker: — The hon. member's time has expired.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The great Canadian jazz trumpet player, Maynard Ferguson, once said, and I quote: "Trumpet players should play, not talk." By logical extension, jazz fans should listen.

And from June 19 to June 28 this summer in Saskatoon, jazz fans will be able to listen to jazz musicians play. For nine days every finger will be popping and every toe will be tapping as over 500 musicians will be playing at over 200 performances — most of them free — on and around the river bank in downtown Saskatoon.

Maynard won't be there, but another great trumpet player, Wynton Marsalis, will. As well, local, national, and international players of all styles will grace us with their performances.

Mr. Speaker, for the fourth year in a row this is a smoke-free festival. It is now the SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival and I want to congratulate our communications Crown for its support of our province's cultural life.

As well I want to commend the hundreds of volunteers and organizers without whom the festival would not happen. And I want to thank them for the economic impact on our city.

Mostly though, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to a good time, as should you and all music lovers. As the great orchestra leader

Duke Ellington once said, "We would love you madly" if you joined us this June. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

May Day

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is the day which traditionally launches all of the themes we normally associate with spring: fertility, rebirth, youth, romance, even sexuality. But this is the legislature and I don't want to talk about that.

May 1, May Day, is also a special day for working people around the world. The international working persons' holiday. It is not a day begun by Karl Marx or Leon Trotsky, as some believe. Rather it is a holiday introduced first in North America in the last century as a result of workers struggling against the Pullman Railway Car Company. Their struggle, Mr. Speaker, set the tone for the international effort of workers to gain an eight-hour working day.

Coming as it does in the same week in the Day of Mourning for killed and injured workers, May Day is a kind of happy complement to this other, more sombre day dedicated to working people. On one day we remember those who have lost their lives in the workplace; on the other, today, we salute the efforts of working people the world over — successful efforts by and large — to fulfil their aim of equal rights and social justice for all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question this morning is for the Minister of Health.

Mr. Minister, this morning you will be meeting by conference call with Health ministers from across Canada, and the only topic of conversation is going to be the hepatitis C package.

Mr. Speaker, the compensation package you negotiated is not fair. Your compensation package turns its back on thousands of innocent victims of hepatitis C. And yet when the Saskatchewan Party forced a free vote in the legislature on Tuesday, you and your colleagues in the NDP lined up and voted against extending the compensation package to include all victims of hepatitis C.

Mr. Minister, that was wrong. Will you do the right thing this morning and recommend to the provincial Health ministers that all hepatitis C victims deserve compensation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that I appreciate the position that he has taken and his party has taken. And in my discussions this morning with provincial Health ministers across the country, we'll be

reaffirming, I expect, the position that has been taken by the provincial Health ministers and by the federal minister across the country.

Be reaffirming that we made some very difficult choices and some very difficult decisions, Mr. Speaker. And we recognize that there are people today who are not going to be compensated in the way in which the package is designed, and understand the kinds of hardship that those people will be experiencing.

At the same time also wanting to reiterate again to you that the health system cannot across the country take responsibility for all of the issues that are there. But for those that we believe that we have accountability and responsibility for because harm has been done, we take that very seriously and will continue to ensure that that compensation package is made to those people who have been harmed because of responsibilities that the federal government and the provincial government and the Red Cross didn't act upon fully or appropriately.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, a further question to the minister. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health in the province of Saskatchewan is the Chair of the provincial Health ministers' committee. Mr. Speaker, he is the leader of the group at this time.

Mr. Minister, it's time to show leadership. What is your position on the expansion of compensation to all hepatitis C victims? What will you be telling the other provincial Health ministers when you meet by conference call this morning? Mr. Minister, are you going to continue to show a lack of compassion for all hep C victims by just confining the package? Mr. Minister, provinces across this country have already indicated that the package should be opened up.

Mr. Minister, will you demonstrate leadership this morning, and compassion, by recommending, as Chair of the Health ministers' committee, that the hepatitis C package be reopened to ensure all victims of this horrible disease are dealt with fairly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, the comment that the member makes in terms of providing leadership. And I want to advise the member opposite that leadership is achieved through the collective participation of all of the individuals who are involved in the process.

And so I carry today two responsibilities. One to ensure that I express the voice of all of the Health ministers across the country, of which I think I have been doing, and say to you that the instruction that I've received from all of my colleagues across the country and from Mr. Rock, is that the package that we have in place today is one that we're continuing to ensure remains in place, is the direction that I've been provided.

When you say to me that other provinces have said we should be opening up the agreement, there isn't one province that has said we should be opening up the agreement that we have. What

the provinces . . . what some provinces are saying is that there should be a greater responsibility in terms of the financing of the package by the federal government. None of the players have said that this agreement should be opened up. None of the players have said that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Plains Health Centre Closure

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Health. The NDP may be slowly starting to open its eyes on the hepatitis C issue but it still has its eyes shut tight on the Plains hospital. In today's paper, we have one NDP MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) writing a letter to the editor entitled: "What health-care cuts?" We have another NDP minister saying the Plains is not a big issue. Which begs the question: why does the Regina District Health Board have a \$5,000 three-quarter page ad on page B3 of the same paper defending the closure of the Plains?

Mr. Minister, in spite of these ridiculous comments by your two members, I'm sure you have some MLAs who are telling you the Plains is a big issue. And it's going to cost them their seat in the next election.

Will you give those members the chance to save the Plains and try to save themselves by allowing a free vote?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that's there anyone on this side of the House and certainly there are people in southern Saskatchewan who don't agree that the services that are provided at the Plains hospital over the past several years have provided an excellent service to us, both in Regina and southern Saskatchewan. No dispute. No dispute about that.

But when you have, Mr. Speaker, now four rallies that I've attended and the members opposite in the new Tory Party and the members opposite in the Liberal Party going around the province and saying that there are going to be hospital bed reductions, that there are going to be staff losses, that services aren't going to be as good — what would you expect that the people of southern Saskatchewan might start to think?

And I say to the member opposite, you need to stop going around the province and telling the people of Saskatchewan that the services in Regina will not be as . . . better because it's false; it's a political rally; and it is continuing with the Liberal/Tory politics, which are fearmongering to people in Saskatchewan. That's the process, Mr. Speaker. That's the process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, my question then is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, why are you refusing to let your MLAs represent their constituents? Do the people of Weyburn want the Plains hospital closed? Do the people of Estevan want the Plains hospital closed? Do the people of Indian Head-Milestone want the Plains hospital closed? Will you give those MLAs the

chance to represent their constituents and save the Plains hospital? No.

Why not? Why won't you allow a free vote on the future of the Plains hospital?

Mr. Premier, on Tuesday, the Saskatchewan Party will be moving a motion calling for the Plains to remain open until its future can be determined in the next provincial election. Mr. Premier, will you allow a free vote on that motion?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that the decision about the closure of the Plains hospital was made in 1993, made in 1993. And at the recent rally in Regina, the recent Liberal rally in Regina, Mr. Hermanson stood up and made the comment that the decision about the Plains health closure was made in 1993.

It was made in 1993, and we've had an election, Mr. Speaker, in 1995. We had the election in 1995 with the decision having been made. And I say to the member opposite, say to the member opposite that our strategy is to ensure that people in rural Saskatchewan get the best services they can. And we provided that example to the member from Canora when he was standing on his podium a few years ago saying that we should retain services in rural Saskatchewan.

This government is about ensuring that people services are provided across the province, across the province in a fair and equitable fashion. That's what this government is about, and we'll ensure that in the Regina health care system we'll continue to have the most, the best services that we have for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Child Prostitution

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Minister, the Government of Alberta is warning other provinces to follow Alberta's lead in toughening up child prostitution laws. Alberta's changes have been so successful that pimps appear to be moving their child prostitutes out of Alberta and setting up shop in other provinces. The last thing we need is for Saskatchewan to become a safe haven for this kind of disgusting, obscene child slave trade.

Mr. Minister, Alberta's legislation is working. There is currently legislation before this House, introduced by the member from Humboldt, that would provide Saskatchewan with tough new laws like what Alberta has. This House could send a message loud and clear that pimps and johns who prey on children are not welcome in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, will you send that message? Will you pass the Bill introduced by the member from Humboldt?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of sending a message to the adults who will abuse children on our streets,

that message has been sent by this Minister of Justice and this government loud and clear.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And let me repeat, Mr. Speaker, should any individual in this province be convicted of such a heinous crime, they will be dealt with by the full extent of the law. There is no mistake about that.

Now the member from Rosthern stands in the House this morning and credits the Alberta legislation recently passed with having some effect. Now the only testimonial to that comes from the Premier of Alberta. Mr. Ralph Klein says his legislation is working. Well I understand he'll say his legislation is working.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what would work, I'll tell you what would work a whole lot better, is if we had a change to the Criminal Code of Canada so that you could run but you could not hide, Mr. Speaker. That's what we need — is change to the Criminal Code of Canada.

What is the use, Mr. Speaker, I say of driving some individuals from one province to the another province. The true solution is stiffening up the Criminal Code of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. And that's exactly what we're after. We don't want them to be able to run and hide but this government seems to want to provide a hiding place. And I think that's unconscionable.

Mr. Minister, I notice today that many members are wearing their green ribbons signifying the beginning of the missing children month. Many children in this country are missing because they've been drawn into the child sex trade. We do need more . . . to do more than put on green ribbons and make speeches about how much we care.

This is a disturbing form of child exploitation that has no place in our province. Yet you don't want to do anything about it.

Mr. Minister, the solution is clear. The Alberta legislation is working. The member from Humboldt has introduced a private members' Bill based on the Alberta law. We could get to work today passing that Bill and sending the message that pimps and johns are not welcome in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister of Justice, every day that you wait as Minister of Justice, another child could be lost to this immoral slave trade.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Now the hon. member has been extremely long in his preamble and I'll ask him to go now directly to his question. Order, order.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question is: will you allow second reading of this Bill today so we can get to work making Saskatchewan a safe place for children instead of a safe place for pimps and johns?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to that member, remind him again of the extent of the commitment of this government in working with the children, and particularly the children at risk on the streets of our province.

Mr. Speaker, we're not working alone. We're not working alone. We are working with community organizations in Prince Albert, in North Battleford, in the city of Saskatoon, in the city of Regina.

Reflected in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker, is a new commitment to that work, of a half a million dollars, bringing us to a total of \$750,000 directed very specifically, very specifically, to those children who are on our streets, who are being abused and who are at risk, Mr. Speaker. That is a very, very significant commitment, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We are prepared as a government to work with all governments in this country — we are prepared to work alone — to find appropriate solution.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of legislative change, the appropriate course of legislative change is not simply to bring a Bill and drop it in the legislature but to consult with the communities that will have to enforce that law and who will be affected by that law. And that's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. We are consulting on this and other legislative strategies.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Surgery Waiting-lists

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Liberals have obtained a report by the Saskatoon Health District which indicates how many people underwent surgery between January and March and how long patients were forced to wait for surgery.

This document contains some very disturbing figures. Let's start with the wait people are forced to endure for elective surgery. For general surgery the average wait is 370 days at St. Paul's Hospital, and at City Hospital the average wait is 342 days.

Mr. Speaker, my question of course is to the Minister of Health: what are you doing to address the fact that people are forced to wait more than one year for surgery?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite, that of course he takes the privilege of painting part of the picture.

And it's true that across the province today we have some pressures, as I've said, to ensure . . . in ensuring that we get the kinds of services completed that we need to get completed in terms of procedures. But never in this province, Mr. Speaker, where there has been an occasion where somebody has required emergency services, has that not occurred. Never, Mr. Speaker. We have always ensured that that's occurred.

Now when I look at the kinds of services that we provide across the province, I want to say to the member opposite, last year in Saskatchewan, last year in Saskatchewan, just completed, we had 27,400 people who received home care services in this province. Up three times the number that we did in 1992.

We had 875,000 days, in-patient days, in hospital care, and we're estimating today about 650,000 emergency room clinical services in this province, for a million people. That's almost one every day of every person who lives in this province in an emergency room, Mr. Speaker.

And I say to the member opposite, just for a minute that we're not meeting the requirements of Saskatchewan people's health needs is inappropriate and false.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I guess the minister doesn't understand, so I'll paint some more of the picture for him.

The findings get more disturbing as we go. For surgeries identified as urgent, the waiting period is unacceptable to say the least. The average wait for urgent surgery — for urgent surgery — is 34 days. More than one month for urgent surgery, Mr. Speaker. Urgent means immediate, right now, is what urgent means, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Minister, do you acknowledge there's a serious problem here? And what answer do you have for people who occupy urgent waiting-lists but are forced to wait more than one month for their surgery?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — You see, Mr. Member, I think . . . Or Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite. We have again an occasion where the Liberal member doesn't fully understand the way in which the health care system works. And there are many, many occasions that the member in the House has misled the information and the facts.

First of all he talked about, a few weeks ago, about the fact that there haven't been resting periods in the system today during Christmas and Easter, which has been traditional — has been traditional. The member opposite has been going around the province and saying there's going to be loss of beds here in Regina, there's going to be loss of staff, of which none of that is true.

And today the member opposite stands up and says that urgent is immediate. Urgent is not immediate. Urgent is not immediate. Emergency is immediate. Emergency. And physicians in this province decide what health care needs individuals need. And you need to understand the process.

There are elective, urgent, and emergency. And you need to figure it out so that you'll be able to share that information in an accurate fashion with people around Saskatchewan and the next Liberal rally that you're at.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly evident that the minister doesn't understand. The minister doesn't understand. He's the one that doesn't understand, Mr. Speaker. There is no one I'm sure in this Assembly who doesn't acknowledge the need to treat cancer patients immediately. However that's not what's happening in Saskatoon either. I'll paint some more of the picture for the minister.

Cancer patients are being forced to wait an average of 20 days, almost three weeks, for surgery that should take place immediately. Is this not urgent either? What's the minister's definition.

Mr. Minister, by any measure of common sense, don't you agree that three weeks is far too long for any cancer patient to wait for surgery when that cancer may be spreading throughout their body in that time?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that he's forgotten completely, forgotten completely that in this province we lead the nation in some of the cancer services and treatment that we provide — lead the nation.

And just completed, Mr. Speaker, adding last year \$8.8 million in the completion of the best cancer clinic anywhere in Canada, the Allan Blair. And so when the member opposite stands up today and talks about the fact that there are people in Saskatchewan who don't get quality cancer treatment or services, it's absolutely false.

Now I say to the member opposite you should take some time, you should take some time and pay attention to what Saskatchewan is doing in leading the nation on health care services. And you should take it, take some time to write the note to your federal, to your federal minister and ask him to provide some additional funding to the provinces across the piece so that we can enrich even more — even more — the quality of service that we provide today across Saskatchewan.

You take that effort, Mr. Member, and make sure that the federal government helps participate in some of the costs that they've reduced over the last period of time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess it's not that the government doesn't understand, or the minister, it's that they don't care that people's lives are being impacted every day that they are forced to live with pain or illnesses without proper treatment. And the NDP refuses to do what a responsible government would begin to do by resolving this serious problem and admit that their health reform was ill-fated and there was no plan. Will you immediately stop, Mr. Speaker, will the minister immediately put a stop to Roy days in which operating rooms at City Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon are closed every third Friday. Will you make a commitment that all operating rooms will be open for full service at these two hospitals?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that when he goes around and talks about the fact that there's been a reduction in services in Saskatchewan he obviously hasn't been paying attention to what's happening in this province and/or around Canada.

The member opposite needs to realize that in this province today we have the largest health expenditure that we've ever had in this province — leading the nation. And where does it go, he asks me. Where does it go? Well it goes into providing more surgeries today than we ever have in the province. More surgeries today.

It goes into tripling the home care services that we provide today. It goes into ensuring that we have greater emergency services for all of Saskatchewan. It goes into ensuring that we have a good air ambulatory service, which we've added a new aircraft just a couple of years.

And, Mr. Member, the litany goes on and on about all of the additional services that are provided. And a new MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) program that's going into Regina. And higher quality services for people who are going to receive services in southern Saskatchewan.

That's where \$1.72 billion is going into, and we're doing it alone, Mr. Member — Saskatchewan — without any additional money from the federal government, which is your responsibility to help sustain some of that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, there are more than 6,600 people presently occupying waiting-lists in this province. We know that former NDP premier, Allan Blakeney, found any level exceeding 2,000 unacceptable. In fact the former premier called his minister of Health onto the carpet and suggested that if that number wasn't reduced to an acceptable level, he would find a new minister. Mr. Premier, Allan Blakeney would not accept this situation. Will you put the same challenge to your Minister of Health?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health as demonstrated by today's answers, has a vision which is positive, which is caring, compassionate, in rebuilding the health care system for Saskatchewan to be absolutely the leader for the 21st century — not only in this province, but for this country.

We started four years, five years ago. We've made occasional mistakes and there's no doubt about it. But we've done it on a philosophy which is rooted on the basis of buttressing acute care, making it the best possible acute care we can get in Canada, with the prevention and wellness model which is now being followed in other provinces of this country, following the province of Saskatchewan.

I say, as the Minister of Health says, to the member opposite, this government has full confidence in this Minister of Health. I do. He is Chair of the national Health ministers' conference as well.

And I tell you something. What you need to do is to get your

credibility in this operation by making sure that the Liberals share the same commitment to medicare that we have and to get your friends in the Conrad Black newspapers fighting your campaign, the Tory campaign, to start telling the truth too.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Child Prostitution

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wonder how the Minister of Social Services sleeps at night. If he sleeps peacefully, he obviously is not being kept awake by concerns over the children of the streets. Child prostitution, Mr. Speaker, is an issue of stolen youth and it is a form of child slavery.

Child prostitution and its sexual abuse of children by pimps and johns will not only continue but it will grow in severity with the influx of pimps and johns bringing child prostitution into Saskatchewan from Alberta.

To the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Justice: why will you not support legislation that provides prevention and help to the sexually abused children whose lives are being devastated through this enslavement by pimps and johns, legislation that has proven immediately effective in Alberta?

Mr. Minister, give this Assembly and all the people of this province . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I interrupted the hon. member. Her final statement wasn't on the record because I asked her . . . I interrupted to ask her to go directly to her question, to put her question very briefly, and immediately.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I ask the ministers of Social Services and Justice to give this Assembly and all the people of this province a direct answer to the question: why will you not support legislation that has proven immediately effective in Alberta?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker the effectiveness of the Alberta legislation is yet to be determined, Mr. Speaker. I'll tell you what is not to be determined — what is not yet to be determined — is the commitment of this government to share with that member, to share with all members, in dealing with this very tragic and difficult circumstance, Mr. Speaker.

I repeat again, I repeat again the commitment of this government through programing, to meet the needs of children who are actually on the street, is firm. There's no question about that. The resolve of this government in dealing with those who will abuse the children on the streets is firm. There is no question about that.

In terms of any piece of legislation, we need to consult with the people who will need to enforce that legislation and with those whose lives will be affected by it, Mr. Speaker. We're doing that. We're doing that with that member's Bill, with some legislative suggestions that have come from Manitoba, and

elsewhere. Again I repeat, changes to the Criminal Code, which will govern all provinces, would be most effective.

Now I do have to say, Mr. Speaker, just it's Friday and it's the end of question period, I think I want to respond to the member's first question. She asked me how I sleep at night — always with my wife.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Increased Funding to Saskatchewan's Public Prosecution Service

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, keeping our community safe is a top priority of this government. On March 19 my colleague, the Minister of Finance, announced an increased investment of 5.9 per cent by this government in the Justice budget. Part of that investment involves increasing the number of prosecutors working in the justice system throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, an effective public prosecution service is an essential component of an integrated justice system. As such, prosecutors have the same objective as police and the courts. They must all enforce the laws our society has enacted to preserve social order and ensure public safety. The prosecution service in Saskatchewan is staffed by highly competent professionals who perform their duties in an increasingly demanding environment.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to advise the members of this Assembly that in 1998-99 the Government of Saskatchewan will invest 1.1 million in increased funding to public prosecution. This investment will provide an overall funding increase of 14 per cent to public prosecutions; increase prosecution staff serving northern Saskatchewan by more than 40 per cent; provide base funding for additional resources added in 1997-98; and increase office automation and library resources.

In 1997-98, three additional prosecutor positions were created and assigned to Crown offices in Regina, Saskatoon, and North Battleford. Other resources added in 1997-98 included the establishment of economic crime units in Regina and Saskatoon with teams of prosecutors specializing in prosecutions of white-collar crime.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, on March 30 this year, I announced a \$1 million investment in establishing a serious crime task force in Saskatchewan — a partnership between police and prosecutors to put gangs out of business in this province. Our investment in new prosecutor positions in 1997-98 and again this year supports this important initiative.

Our government will also invest more than 1.1 million over two years to establish the serious and habitual youth offender comprehensive action program. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are fair-minded and responsible. They believe 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.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, keeping our communities safe is a top priority of this government. Working with police and prosecutors to make this province inhospitable to criminal gangs, protecting the public from serious violent and chronic youth offenders, and ensuring an effective prosecution service are key pieces of this strategy. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With reference to the information that we were just given about some changes coming to the Justice department, I think to the extent that those changes increase the possibility of shortening the time that it's going to take people to get through the courts and getting that whole thing lined up, particularly the beginning of that document that talks about the number of prosecutors working in the province will be increased, I think those are good.

However it's unfortunate that the Justice department is working in dribs and drabs — we don't fix it, we just tamper with it. I think the kinds of things that need to be addressed are the sorts of things that we already discussed to some extent this morning. If we just took something like the member from Humboldt and passed that particular piece of legislation, we'd get a lot further down the road than just dealing with prosecutions and throwing people in jail.

I think what we need to do is deal with the situations that cause crime. That would be one of the ways that I think we could address this, and these line-ups would be a whole lot shorter, not because we spent more money into putting more people into the system, but we'd have done something significant to keep people from being into the system in the first place.

Also as we've seen this morning, it seems that there's a major mix-up, Mr. Speaker, between the Justice department, Social Services department — neither one knows who's running what. And I think maybe if we made sure that things such as young offenders was totally under Justice, things would work a whole lot more smoothly and more effectively. And we could probably achieve the results the people of this province want without spending all that money.

There is, as I said, little new in this. It's a repeating of things we've heard earlier on. One of the questions we will have later on, and that is with the statement that's here that we're going to increase prosecutions staff in northern Saskatchewan more than 40 per cent. It raises a number of questions for which we will want the answers, and that is the justification for that.

Have we done such a poor job in the past? Is there a higher crime rate or are we just being very ineffective in that particular area? Why is that major boost in northern Saskatchewan needed? The answer hasn't been given. It will be something that we'll be looking forward to finding out in the near future.

So to the extent that this will probably shorten some of the line-ups that are there, I think we probably support that. To the extent that it does nothing to really address the problem of curbing crime in Saskatchewan, we have some concerns that it is not going in the right direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, certainly it is impossible to argue against the initiative taken by the Minister of Justice this morning. And it will be, it will be gratefully received. However, I think it will also fuel in some respects the unease we see in our province by some of the statements the minister has made.

I think there is enormous concern out there that the direction our province appears to be headed is that in each succeeding year we will spend more and more on police, on jails, on judges, on prosecutors, on house insurance, on car insurance, and none of this is resulting in safer communities. Indeed, the Minister of Justice says it is resulting in the opposite effect, or to quote his statement, "It is resulting in an increasingly demanding environment".

I would like to give just one example if I may, Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness, and that is the issue of fetal alcohol syndrome. That has not been addressed in any way, shape, or form. We all know that fetal alcohol syndrome is a growing problem in this province. We all know it has no cure. It must be stopped at source. And we all know that once we have the problem of fetal alcohol syndrome, no amount of money spent on courts, on police, on jails, on social workers, on counsellors or anything else will eradicate the basic fact that fetal alcohol syndrome results in antisocial behaviour, and there is no cure.

So I would ask that the government address some of the core causes and accept that more and more money on facilities is going to burden the public treasury but not give us the safer communities we all seek.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1100)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 41 — The Teachers' Dental Plan Amendment Act, 1998

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 41, the Teachers' Dental Plan Amendment Act, 1998 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 42 — The Teachers' Life Insurance (Government Contributory) Amendment Act, 1998

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 42, The Teachers' Life Insurance (Government Contributory) Amendment Act, 1998 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 744 — The Hepatitis C Compensation Commission Act

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 744, The Hepatitis C Compensation Commission Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the Assembly to move second reading of Bill No. 742, The Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act.

Leave not granted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 32

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Scott that **Bill No. 32 — The Wildlife Amendment Act, 1998** be now read a second time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today on this particular Bill as it deals with all of Saskatchewan and a very important resource that we have in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — our wildlife. It's one of those resources that brings a lot of people to Saskatchewan. It allows us the opportunity to show off our province, Mr. Speaker, as people come in all summer long to have a look at our birds and our animals, and also unfortunately though, Mr. Speaker, gives them the opportunity to see what our roads look like.

And we do get people coming in once, Mr. Speaker, but a good many of them take one look at our roads, take one look at our gasoline and fuel prices, and simply get out of Saskatchewan as quickly as they can.

We need to do a lot of work, Mr. Speaker, with our wildlife. We need to utilize it as a resource to bring people to Saskatchewan time and time again, not just one single time.

Mr. Speaker, we generally agree with the intent of this particular Bill but we see several areas in it that are in need of addressing.

As the minister pointed out, the Bill does three main things: it increases the maximum fine for all major hunting offences to \$100,000; it strengthens legislative references to night hunting; and it strengthens the Crown's power to seize and cause forfeiture of articles involved in hunting offences, such as vehicles.

Clearly all of us in this Assembly should be concerned about the growing problems with night hunting and other hunting offences. When people are involved in hunting offences, Mr. Speaker, and the taking of game illegally, it deprives the province of its resource and it deprives those who wish to enjoy that resource from their opportunities to do so.

Our province's natural resources are a vital part of our environment, our tourism industry, and our overall quality of life. It is a valuable commodity that we must protect at all

times.

Many people talk about hunting as an integral part of the native way of life. And that is certainly true, Mr. Speaker. In addition I think we should all acknowledge that hunting and fishing are a part of the Saskatchewan way of life no matter whether you are native or non-native.

And that way of life has increasingly come under attack by poachers, night hunters, animal parts exporters, and other hunting criminals who kill off our wildlife in an unethical and unsustainable way.

That way of life, Mr. Speaker, has also suffered another attack, and that was with Allan Rock and his Bill C-68, the Liberal gun control law that they brought in in Canada that the regulations have just come down on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That particular Act, Bill C-68, is also an attack on the Saskatchewan way of life just as much as the illegal hunting activities that take place.

Mr. Speaker, the takers of our wildlife in unethical and unsustainable ways need to be punished. And to that degree we certainly support what this Bill is attempting to do. However, there are several areas where we believe there needs to be some improvement.

First, the original Act described a range of penalties for different sorts of offences. Some incurred fines of up to \$500 while others went up to as much as \$25,000. I think that we can all agree that in many cases these maximum fines were clearly too low, which is supported by the fact that other jurisdictions had much higher penalties. The fact that our penalties were so low, Mr. Deputy Speaker, encouraged people to carry out these illegal activities in the province of Saskatchewan because the potential profit returns more than offset any costs of fines. But by increasing the penalties, that offset has been eliminated, Mr. Speaker.

Nevertheless, the approach of this Bill seems to be a bit peculiar. Instead of creating a new range of fines, it simply jacks up all of the fines to \$100,000. That seems to be a little excessive, Mr. Speaker.

We've all heard the word Draconian applied to tough legislation, and I think it's very apt in this particular case. For those of you who don't know the story, the ancient Greek legislator Dracon established a law code where the penalty for every offence was execution. When asked why he did that he said, well I thought the minor offences deserved it and I couldn't think of anything tougher for the major ones.

You have to wonder if sometimes some of the minor offences or first offences are now going to be covered by this \$100,000 limit and whether or not they really deserve such an onerous fine.

As legislators we always have to be mindful to ensure that the penalties fit the crime, and our caucus is not convinced that this Bill accomplishes this goal. At a minimum our caucus will want to hear assurances from the government in committee that this Bill will be accompanied by regulation that will spell out a definite schedule of penalties within that \$100,000 upper limit.

If for the first offence of some minor infraction of the game Act, Mr. Speaker, I think a \$100,000 penalty is excessive. Certainly a penalty is warranted, but \$100,000 seems to be a bit excessive and hopefully within regulations, there will be a schedule of fines laid out.

This is especially important because fines and penalties like this are often subject to abuse at the enforcement level. While we want to do everything we can to ensure that illegal hunting is stopped, none of us would want to see law-abiding hunters being harassed by the provisions of this Bill.

It is this kind of bureaucratic abuse that has made firearms legislation such a flashpoint and we don't want to see it repeated here in the Saskatchewan legislature.

The official opposition also wants to take this opportunity to repeat our call for a complete and unequivocal end to night hunting. We appreciate that the government is trying to do something about that in this particular Bill, however it is still uncertain whether they have the cooperation of the Metis Society in enforcing it. More can, should, and must be done to ensure that this dangerous and abusive practice is eliminated.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on the provisions that increased the Crown's power to seize and expropriate vehicles and other articles that are involved in hunting crimes. Again this is an important power to have when dealing with criminals but we have all heard horror stories of one hunter or another who got involved in a minor hunting infraction or who was accused and later cleared of that infraction who nevertheless lost his vehicle, had it impounded for a long period of time. As I mentioned earlier, whenever we look at punishing criminals, we have to be sure we are not punishing innocent people at the same time.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our caucus would like to examine this Bill further. I move that we adjourn debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 26

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lautermilch that **Bill No. 26 — The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 1998** be now read a second time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems that Friday is my duty day. Mr. Speaker, this is an entirely new Act replacing The Pipe Lines Act as it was passed in 1978. This particular Act deals with construction, operation, alterations of all pipelines not covered under the National Energy Board Act or The SaskEnergy Act.

The old Act simply stated that the legislation applied only to those pipelines that were completely within the province of Saskatchewan. This exemption for pipelines under ... the exemption for pipelines under the SaskEnergy Act I think though, Mr. Speaker, is worthy of some questions and consideration in dealing with this Act.

Surely all pipelines are relevant in coming under this Act, Mr. Speaker. We have one set of rules for the pipelines owned by one individual corporation, Mr. Speaker, when there are many, many companies who operate pipelines in this province, Mr. Speaker.

So I think we need to take . . . ask the minister and take a very careful consideration of why one corporation's pipelines will be treated differently in this province compared to those owned by everyone else.

It appears that SaskEnergy gets to play with a different set of rules than the others do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think that is worthy of some questions. And I'm hopeful that the minister, when we reach Committee of the Whole, will have the proper answers available for those particular questions.

This Act also deals with pipelines that are wholly situated within plants. Again, I believe that's a bit of change, Mr. Speaker; that previously, pipelines were considered as delivery transportation systems between two particular points, not just moving fluids around or gases around within a particular plant.

Does it also cover flowlines though, Mr. Speaker? That seems to be an area that has not been particularly closely addressed in this particular Act. It needs to be dealt with because we have a good, good many flowlines in this province.

If you ever had the opportunity to look at a flowline map or a map of all the pipelines that are in the ground in the south-east corner, in the Swift Current area, or up in the Lloydminster area, it looks like a very huge spider web, Mr. Speaker. There are lines running every direction that you could possibly think of, and a good many of them are stacked one on top of the other. So all the lines need to be dealt with, Mr. Speaker.

(1115)

Under the old Act, a permit had to be issued by the minister for the construction or operation of a pipeline. And the new Act refers instead to a licence — not to construction and operation, but simply to a licence.

Under the old Act, no reference was made to an application fee for a permit. With the new Act, it expressly states that a fee must be paid to the department when applying for the licence. The fee is not stated, so we have to assume, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it will be set out in regulation.

I guess the questions that have to be asked there, Mr. Speaker, is: how will that fee be determined? Will it be determined on the material that's being carried in the pipeline? Will it be determined based on the size of pipe in the ground, by the volume that it's carrying, by the pressure that it's running under, the various types of material that it could be constructed of? There are a number of very different variables here, Mr. Speaker, and no place in the Act does it seem to set out how a fee determination will be made, simply that a fee will be applied.

Again that's another area, Mr. Speaker, where the minister is going to have to provide some answers and some explanations as to what the intention of the department is and how easily that

is going to be able to be changed. If today pipeline A is charged a set fee for a licence, will tomorrow pipeline B, which is similar to A, be charged the same licence, or will it change?

A company which is intending to construct a pipeline other than a flowline, but is otherwise exempt from this Act but desires to have the authority to expropriate land under this Act, must apply for a licence. So if you want to expropriate some land, Mr. Speaker, you have to apply for a licence and pay the licensing fees even though you may be exempted under the particular provisions of this Act from being forced to do so.

Again we are looking at some changes in the expropriation of land in this particular Act, I think, which bears very serious consideration. Because as I mentioned in the previous debate, we see expropriation under Bill C-68. Expropriation is a very controversial issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know that a number of members in this Assembly are aware of the expropriations that took place by SaskPower in the Condie power line situation.

Many of the producers in that area were not happy with the power line going through their property, and the government expropriated that, without very many qualms I would suggest — simply walked in and took the land that they needed. Expropriation is a very heavy hand of government, Mr. Speaker, and it needs to be questioned very seriously.

The circumstances under which the minister may refuse or approve a licence application will be set out in the regulations. In the old Act there was very little detail given anywhere under which the minister could refuse a permit application. The new Act also gives the minister the opportunity . . . not the minister, the landowners, the opportunity to appeal the matter before the Oil and Gas Conservation Board.

Well at least that's one extra step in the process, Mr. Speaker. That's a good thing. But the questions have to be asked, who appoints the people to the Oil and Gas Conservation Board? How are they selected, what's the criteria for membership, and what kind of power does their recommendation have? It would seem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that while they can make recommendations, the Oil and Gas Conservation Board can make recommendations dealing with a particular expropriation or a licence, the minister still has the final authority on that. And again, we need to ask further questions on that, Mr. Speaker.

The old Act made references to highways when discussing the process for construction of pipeline. The new Act refers to roads instead. It states that the minister, and the minister alone, may give approval for a pipeline to be built on, across, over, or under any road. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this makes it appear that the RMs, the rural municipalities, do not have to even be consulted or even informed about this construction.

I can see a lot of difficulties with that particular area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because RMs know how deep their ditches have been dug. They know where the pipelines are. They're the ones who have been dealing with the whole process up to now. They need to continue to be into that loop, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The RMs need to be given the opportunities to have some input

into this, both through consultations and directly at the time that the pipelines are going in. There may be some particular reason why it's inappropriate for a pipeline to be placed in a particular area. There could be RM water wells that are in close proximity to the pipeline going in. There may be other issues that have to be dealt with within the RM and they need to be carried on in the loop, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The expropriation clause has been rewritten. And instead of laying out the conditions and the time frame for expropriation of private lands, as is the case in the old Act, the new Act simply refers to procedures under other Acts.

Easements will conform with The Public Utilities Easements Act, and expropriations will fall under The Expropriation Procedure Act. Moreover, the old Act refers to procedures under The Expropriation Act, which seems to have been a more onerous procedure than for expropriation.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems that we're lessening the power that the people have to resist some of the changes that are taking place in their lives. In south-east Saskatchewan in my community, we face a lot of these issues, a lot of the problems that arise from the oil and gas exploration.

And while a good many people want to have that carried out in their area, want to have an oil well on their land, there are those, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who do not. And they need to be given the opportunities to express their concerns and their desires not to have any kind of foreign activity taking place on their property — on the land that they rightfully own and hold title to. That's why the expropriations Act needs to be looked at and the procedures by which people have the opportunity to express themselves and where they can go to appeal, Mr. Speaker.

There is a common carrier section in the new Act. But it does not apply to pipelines for the transportation of natural gas. If the minister declares a licence holder to be a common carrier, while the definition of common carrier is not entirely clear in this legislation, it generally means that a licensee who is declared a common carrier must, for payment, provide transportation or delivery of any fluids that are normally carried by the pipeline where capacity is available and at rates that are comparable to what the common carrier charges other customers. The licensee has no choice but to provide this service.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in most of these areas you have one common carrier for the transportation of crude oil and possibly for liquid natural gases. But I find it surprising that this also doesn't apply to the transportation of natural gas. Again I guess it goes back to the SaskEnergy Act, which gives SaskEnergy different rules and regulations than are faced by all of the other pipeline operators in this province.

Again that's an area, Mr. Speaker, where we hope the minister will have some explanations as to why this Act does not apply in a common carrier classifications to those who transport natural gas.

Under the new Act, no person shall cause a ground disturbance within 30 metres of a pipeline without giving notice to the operator of a pipeline.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would on the surface think that this is a good amendment to the Act, because some of these pipelines do carry fairly high pressures — anywhere up to 1,200 pounds. And if for some reason that line was punctured you would have a major explosion, fire, and would almost certainly have some personal injuries.

But when you say, shall . . . no person shall cause a ground disturbance within 30 metres, or roughly 100 feet, of a pipeline, you have to ask, what about the guy cultivating his field. He's certainly causing a ground disturbance even though he, in every case virtually, will not be anywhere near that particular pipeline in depth. It should be significantly lower than what a person would be cultivating.

Is he going to have to get a permit every time he wants to go out and work up his summer fallow or work up his stubble, pick rocks, whatever the case may be. I think there needs to be some very serious answers here from the minister on what kind of an effect this is going to have on agriculture.

Certainly if somebody is going to go out subsoiling in areas where there's pipelines, for their own safety they should be inquiring and letting the operators of the pipelines know what they're doing, where they're doing it, so that the land can be marked.

I worked for a pipeline company, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I got elected. And there was many times that we had to go out and mark pipelines for people who were doing ground work, who were digging rocks with backhoes, or trenching water lines, and all those sorts of things.

It's very easy to do, Mr. Speaker, but it does take advance notice and it does take time. And I'm sure that both the farmers and the operators of the pipeline companies would not consider it appropriate time spent if every time the farmer wanted to go cultivating he had to notify the pipeline company and the lines had to be marked.

As usual the Act concludes with a long list of instances in which regulations will apply. There is also an equally long list of occasions when ministerial orders apply. Included in the regulations is the option to exempt any person or pipeline from this Act; prescribe terms on which the land can be entered; and prescribe measures for the protection of life, safety, and fees for licences.

Ministerial powers are granted for those pipelines that do not require licences and they cover the general specifications for the construction, maintenance, and operation of these pipelines.

Again, it gives the minister considerable amount of power and latitude to make determinations. I think it'd be important, Mr. Speaker, that we have a standard set of rules and regulations that the pipeline industry has to fall into and meet within certain categories. And that within those categories you meet the standards.

The fines for contraventions of the Act have been increased significantly. And summary convictions for those who do damage to pipelines or otherwise hinder their construction have been raised from a maximum of 500 to a maximum of \$5,000.

Well the previous Act that we were dealing with, The Wildlife Act, fines went there from \$500 up to \$100,000. This area seems to be somewhat more conservative. Those who contravene this Act, where a penalty has not been laid out, face a maximum fine of \$5,000 a day for each day the contravention continues. That's up from \$1,000 a day. A significant increase, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The fine for obstructing a minister or his representative in carrying out their duties under the Act . . . face a fine of \$5,000 up from \$500 — again a significant increase, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a lot of questions to be asked. There are people contacting us with their concerns about this particular Act. I know that other members of the House also want to address this particular Act, Mr. Speaker, therefore I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 25

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lautermilch that **Bill No. 25 — The Pipelines Act, 1998** be now read a second time

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're dealing with again the same industry and oil and gas and pipelines Act, Mr. Speaker. And all of the same comments apply as I commented in the previous Bill, Mr. Speaker; therefore I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1130)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 13 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 1998

The Deputy Chair: — I will invite the minister responsible for the Liquor and Gaming Authority to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Seated beside me is Dave Innes, the president and CEO (chief executive officer) of the Liquor and Gaming Authority; and immediately to my right is Lorna Chomyn, legal policy analyst, licensing, of Liquor and Gaming Authority.

Clause 1

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Welcome, Mr. Minister, to you and your officials. Bill No. 13, changes to the alcohol and gaming regulations, I have a number of questions.

And first of all I'd like you to sort of describe the consultation process you've gone through prior to bringing forth these amendments.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you. The consultation took place primarily with the hotels association and many of the charity

groups. The one component of the Bill, as it pertains to the fines, was actually an amendment recommended by the hotels' association. So that's to a large degree why we have the Bill before the committee today.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm wondering . . . The hotel association then of course is in agreement with it. Are the bingo hall operators and the organizations who use them also in agreement?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you. We've consulted them fairly extensively. And some may be opposed to it, although we've not heard any opposition to it at all. So we are assuming generally that they would be in support of it, though I don't want to categorically say that all are in support. There may be some who are in opposition but we're not aware of it at this point.

Ms. Draude: — Was the draft of the legislation sent to all the owners of bingo halls, the operators of them, so that they all had an opportunity to review it before it was passed?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — No, it was not.

Ms. Draude: — And the hotel association itself is in agreement with it. But do you know if the bar owners all on an individual basis were aware of the Bill?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — To our knowledge, through the hotels' association, yes they would all be aware and generally in support of it.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister, can you tell me approximately how many suspensions do your department hand out each year to bars and lounges under the current Act?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — We don't have that specific detail with us today. The suspensions are only in the most severe cases and this would — I caution the member — this would just be a guess, but in the past year would be in the range of two to three dozen; so that would be the magnitude of the number of suspensions. That would be the maximum.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. My colleague has just been called out for a few moments, Mr. Minister.

A couple of questions that I'd like to ask you, Mr. Minister, though, on this same line. You've indicated that suspensions are in the most severe cases and we understand that. You're saying that somewhere between two and three dozen is the possible likelihood. Under the old Act, were warnings issued as a system of dealing with the not very serious type of infractions? And the number approximately, if you could make a guesstimate of the number of warnings that were issued in one fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I'll just try and run through the process as well just to complete the answer.

First of all, normally what would happen is they would receive a warning, either verbal or written, from the director of the . . . branch director. They might possibly receive a second letter, and then in fact a third letter would come possibly under the

president's signature. And then lastly, we would go — after consultation with them — we would move to the actual suspension, whereby then they have the right, of course, to appeal that also.

Again the exact number we don't have with us here today, but I'll again step out and guess that we're in the range of about a hundred per year.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you again. Under the new provisions, will you still be using the warnings or will you be going directly to the fine system?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — We'll continue to use exactly the same process.

Ms. Draude: — Then what time will you start using the fines instead of the warnings?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — We would consider the use of fines after the warnings that I've gone through — first, second, and third warnings. So then we'd consider the use of fines in place of the suspensions now. So that would be the change.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Currently, what are the types of infractions that warrant a suspension for a bar or a lounge?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Just on the previous question as well — I think it's worth clarifying a bit more — that the use of fines would be before suspensions. It's not intended to replace suspensions; so if there's continued abuse, suspensions will follow.

Okay, typical violations would include serving alcohol to minors, and that's the most severe; overcrowding, consistent overcrowding usually, because normally there would be a warning as well if there was overcrowding; and lastly, over-service. So that would be three of the most common violations.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister, right now under the current legislation, is the maximum penalty closure — permanent closure?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — You've read the old Bill correctly; that's exactly right.

Ms. Draude: — Okay, what will be the maximum . . . What type of infraction will incur the maximum suspension under the current Act?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The new Act essentially isn't going to change that at all from what existed under the old Act. Consistent service to minors, consistent overcrowding after repeated warnings and a number of suspensions — that will constitute closure the same as it does now.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister, if somebody comes into a small bar 12:30 on Saturday night and it's considered overcrowded, does that mean that they will get a fine or a suspension now?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Typically if it's their first offence, they

would receive, as I've gone through, they would receive the first warning by way of either verbal or by letter from the branch, from the branch director or in fact even the inspector might notify them of that. Then they get . . . if it happened again, there'd be read a second and thirds, and then we'd move to recommended fines. And lastly, if there's consistent violation again, then comes the suspension.

(1145)

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister, now that stripping is illegal once again in Saskatchewan, what type of fine will a bar pay if they bring in strippers?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The process would be exactly the same. If the question is what the maximum fine might be, once we get to the level or to the stage of actually fining an operator, the maximum fine that we're recommending under the new legislation would be \$10,000.

Ms. Draude: — Has there been any case of strippers in bars since the court ruling made it illegal again?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The answer is yes, there have been.

Ms. Draude: — Can you give us an idea of how many?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The information that we have . . . with the information that we have with us today it's our understanding that there is one.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister, how many investigators are employed by Liquor and Gaming to watch over bars and lounges?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — We have, across the province we have 12 inspectors.

Ms. Draude: — Across the entire province? Are complaints against bars or lounges launched as a result of the complaint by police or through direct observation by one of your officers?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — From both, and in fact from the public as well. And it's not uncommon to receive complaints from the industry itself.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister, how many times under the current Act can a bar or lounge receive a suspension before they are permanently shut down?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Each case is different so there's no sort of model for each case. So each case is different. But again closure would only result after continued violation and blatant after continuous . . . after warnings and blatant continued abuse is what I'm trying to say.

Ms. Draude: — So then depending on how an owner would get along with the investigator, they could have . . . they could be shut down sooner in one area of the province or by one officer than they could . . . may happen by another officer?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The warnings and suspensions aren't issued by an inspector. So we would send an inspector in to

report to us if we found or there was reports of concerns.

In most of the case I guess I want to re-emphasize that violations reported to us are not done through the inspector process at all. We would send them in afterwards. But they are all, in my view, to be professional people and they would have no influence on how suspensions are handled at all.

Ms. Draude: — I guess I'm wondering if each officer then is given some flexibility to deal with each individual case. Or is there specific guidelines laying out saying that after so many suspensions . . . or that they receive a, you know, something more drastic will happen? I'm wondering how much flexibility each of the officers are given?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The suspensions are issued by the president of the Authority and the inspectors in the field have no influence on that at all, other than reporting to us. If we've sent them in to investigate the particular establishment, they would investigate for us if we so requested but they have no impact on how suspensions are issued. The president will issue the suspension order.

Ms. Draude: — Maybe I misunderstood then, but I think you said previously that there wasn't any exact number or times that there could be an infraction before they would be shut down, or I think it was shut down. There was a little bit of flexibility.

So I'm wondering is that true then or once your . . . once this gentleman has got a number of infractions or complaints then at this time, and then all of a sudden they are shut down. Is there an exact number?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — There needs to be some flexibility so there isn't anything cut and dried. And when I say there needs to be some flexibility — for instance, if an establishment was found to have 20 or 30 juveniles or under age children in it, we need to be able to react immediately.

But generally the policy that we follow is the three letters of warning. Then under the old Bill, it would have gone from after the third warning to suspension. Under the new Bill, it will be the three letters of warning, fines, and then possibly to suspension.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister, with this new Bill, do you foresee that there will be specific fines for specific infractions?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — It is contemplated that the regulations would set that out.

Ms. Draude: — So there will be a specific fine structure in place then for . . . so that the Authority won't be able to arbitrarily hand out fines on a case-by-case basis?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The short answer to that question is yes.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister, I understand that the maximum fine is \$10,000. Can you tell us what would warrant a \$10,000 fine?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Repeated and blatant violations would constitute a fine of that magnitude.

Ms. Draude: — Or one occasion of bringing in a stripper?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Again I say, we look at each case based on the facts that are presented to us.

Ms. Draude: — Can you tell me how the appeal process currently works and if it will change with these new amendments?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Let me answer the second part of the that question first. First of all, no, there won't be any change in the process as it pertains to the appeal process as it pertains to this new Bill.

First of all, the fines and suspensions that would be levied . . . and once they go to the appeal process, the appeal process, the commission operates at arm's length, and that process then will, that process then will levy onto them, I suppose, a new, a new, a new verdict. And they have to live by that then. But they . . . it operates independent of the Authority.

Ms. Draude: — So is it a board that actually looks at each complaint or each issue at a separate time, or is a group of people? How many, how many are on the committee, or is it actually a committee that meets at a regular time?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — It's a four-member quasi-judicial board. They only meet on issues that are actually appealed, and they meet on an as need, as need's basis.

Ms. Draude: — How many appeals of suspensions of bars and lounges were dealt with last year?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Now I'm going to be guessing a little bit here again, but your question was as it pertains to bars and lounges.

The total number of appeals that were heard last year was 56. But I advise the member that that pertained to liquor and gaming. So we're assuming that roughly half of them, half of the appeals would have applied to bars and lounges. So somewhere in the magnitude of 25.

Ms. Draude: — And can you tell me how many suspensions were overturned on appeal?

(1200)

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — As it applies to the liquor component, there were two that were changed by the commission. So they would have varied the penalty that was recommended by the Authority.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I've got a few questions dealing with bingo halls and I'm wondering if you can tell me at the current time how many are operating in the province?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — We're not absolutely certain, but we believe it's 38.

Ms. Draude: — Can you tell me how this number compares with the number of four or five years ago?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — There has been a rationalization within the bingo industry to reduce costs. And several years ago it would have definitely been within excess of 50 halls, so their down to what we believe is 38 right now.

Ms. Draude: — Can you give us a breakdown of the number of halls between Saskatoon and Regina and the rest of the province. Meaning how about the larger centres — do they have a bigger percentage of them and if those numbers have changed in the last five years?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — There are 18 halls in the two cities, Regina and Saskatoon. The balance are outside of the two centres. But in both situations, Regina/Saskatoon and the outlying areas, the number of halls have seen a reduction.

Ms. Draude: — Can you tell us how many suspensions were handed out to bingo halls last year?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — It's our belief that there weren't any suspensions to bingo halls last year or ... yes, last year, I believe that was the question, yes.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister, with the bingo halls, a number of them have callers that are perhaps below the age of 16 or are there ... Is it possible to have a caller that is below the age of 16?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I'm reluctant to answer that question only because we don't know for certain. But we would endeavour to get that to you in writing if that's okay with you. Okay.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister ...

The Deputy Chair: — Order, order. I've been listening to the line of questioning and the questions very carefully, I simply wish to say I'm having difficulty relating the questions to the Bill. I think the questions are very appropriate in the estimates for this department when they come up. I'm not at this point ruling the questions out of order, I want to state that. But I do ask the hon. member to relate her questions to Bill 13 as directly as they can be linked.

Ms. Draude: — And I'll do that, but before I'll do that since the minister had agreed to get a number for me, I'm going to ask him if he'll also get one more answer for me and answer if a player can be younger than the age of 16.

For my next question I'm wondering if you can tell me what kind of infractions would warrant the closure of a bingo hall.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — For bingo halls it would be much like other establishments, continued violation of key components of the licence. And a couple of examples that we would suggest is use of the profits from bingo for non-charitable purposes, and also continued lack of financial reporting to the Authority.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister, can you tell us if all the infractions by bingo halls result in the actions of the owners or the managers, or that the organizations who use the halls actually break the rules themselves?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Certainly the answer is both could be in violation, and we would issue sanctions, letters, suspensions, to whoever is in violation of the Act.

Ms. Draude: — Under this Bill only the owner of the hall can be fined and not the organization using the hall. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — You're correct. Under this amendment only the hall can be dealt with.

Ms. Draude: — So if it's the organization who actually breaks ... who's using the hall and breaks the rules, is it fair that it's the owner that's going to incur the fine?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — As it exists, the hall operator would not suffer any of the penalties; we would be dealing with the charity themselves if they were in violation. And I guess that's the answer. We'd be dealing with them directly if they were in violation of the Act.

Ms. Draude: — Then I guess I misunderstood because I thought you said a minute ago that it was the owner of the hall is the one that would incur the fine.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I think there may have been some confusion. When I answered the question I was referring to the amendment itself. So under the entire Act, whoever is in violation, whether it's a bingo hall, or whether it's the charity, whoever is in violation, that's who the fine is ... or I shouldn't say the fine but that's who we'll be dealing with. The suspensions won't be levied against the hall if the charity is the one that's in violation.

Ms. Draude: — So then just to clarify for our own purposes then, if there is a problem and there's a suspension — well I guess it can't be a suspension — the fine would actually be against the charity if that was who had caused the infraction. If it warrants a suspension then the hall owners themselves are going to be the one that's in trouble. Or they wouldn't be allowed that; they would only get a fine. Is that what you are saying?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Okay let me try it again. With a hall owner we would go through the whole process of letters of warning and all of those things, the fines and suspensions. So that's the range of penalties and notices of violations that would be applicable to a hall if they were in violation. To a charity, really our only recourse would be temporary or permanent suspension, and in most cases that would work.

Ms. Draude: — That would be temporary or permanent suspension of their permit. Okay. And they would never get a fine then, they'd only get their permit suspended.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — That's correct. The charity would be suspended. We can't fine them at all.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you for that clarification. For both the bars and the bingo halls there is a three-year statute of limitations in which your department can take action on an infraction. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — That's correct.

Ms. Draude: — What would be the purpose of this statute of limitations of this length?

(1215)

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I think for purposes of clarification, because it is a bit technical, I'll quickly just read through the exact wording, okay.

The Bill allows the Authority or the commission to impose a penalty within three years after the date of its knowledge of the violation. Valid reasons exist for the three-year time period.

First of all, that this type of provision exists in other provincial legislation that imposes sanctions for violations. As it relates to penalties, this time limit can be found, for example, in The Forest Resources Management Act and The Trust and Loans Corporations Act, 1997.

Secondly, and most importantly, a limitation period often states when proceedings can be commenced or initiated against a person. The limitation period in this Bill is different. All proceedings must be completed — and that's the key difference — within three years from the date of the Authority's knowledge of the violation. Therefore all investigations, hearings, and appeals must be completed before a penalty can be assessed by the commission or the Authority.

Thirdly, the period of three years was not simply selected at random. This provision reflects the investigation responsibilities of the Authority and the procedural process that must be followed before a penalty may be imposed.

And I can provide just some details about the investigations that must be carried out before a penalty is imposed.

External sources such as the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and city police or a member of the public may initiate a complaint about a violation to the Authority. It would be irresponsible for the Authority to accept a complaint at face value, so the Authority must carry out its own thorough and independent investigation, and obviously that takes some time.

Expert investigative tools may be necessary. And again, as an example, liquor analysis may be required or forensic accounting may be needed to analyse financial information submitted by gaming suppliers. And clearly the Authority needs to properly investigate an alleged violation before initiating any action.

And lastly, the existing procedural process included in the Act, instituted for the protection, is instituted for the protection of permittees and gaming suppliers, requires additional time. Appeal periods, adjournments of proceedings, hearings, and court appeals can cause time delays. And for these reasons the three-year time period in the Bill is, in our opinion, reasonable and based on solid principles.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. So the appeal has to be finished within three years. And it sounds to me like there can be a lot of work required to bring it forward. So if somebody brings forward a complaint after two and a half years, does that mean that you have to do all of that work within the last six months in order to fall within your Act?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — That's not quite right. It's three years from the time that the Authority becomes aware of the violation.

Ms. Draude: — Is it reasonable to assume that even the most minor infraction can be dangling over the heads of a bingo hall owner for three years?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Minor infractions would almost always be dealt with simply by letters of warning.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, and welcome to your officials. I just have a few questions perhaps of clarification.

I want to first of all say that I'm pleased to see that there has been consultation with the industry prior to moving in the direction you have taken. And I believe that's important whenever there are any laws that are changed or brought into force that do affect private industry and people who need to be guided by authorities and regulations. So I'm happy to see that there was consultation.

One thing that we've always been concerned about is the reference to . . . we will subsequently, as the government always says, once the law is in place we will deal with putting together the regulations. And that's always been a concern since we do not then have an opportunity to debate what regulations will in fact complement the legislation that goes into force.

And I guess what I want to ask you for is your confirmation, affirmation, that in effect you will be consulting with the industry when determining the regulations, the range of fines, the specific violations, that you will have the broad industry involved that will be affected by these regulations and by this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — First of all, any time any member opposite compliments me I should thank you for that, thank you for the compliment regarding the consultation. I want to ensure that in fact it has always been our, it has always been our plan to consult with the industry as it pertains to the regulations.

Mr. Osika: — All right and . . . but you did not confirm that you will undertake, in your deliberations for the regulations that are not yet in place, dealing with the range of fines that will be . . . You have a maximum of a \$10,000 fine, but there may in fact be fines in between for a variety of infractions — I believe I'm correct in that assumption — that will in fact perhaps be dealt with in the regulations. Is that my understanding? There are regulations yet to come, is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I got so carried away with my thanks for your compliments that I maybe didn't explain well enough. I can undertake and confirm for you that we will, and has always been our plan, to consult with the industry as it pertains to the regulations and the range of fines.

Mr. Osika: — I thank you for that, Mr. Minister, and I'm sorry I kind of threw you off. I recognize the fact that people on the other side of the House seldom get any compliments for . . .

You mention that you have 12 inspectors for the entire

province. I just wanted to — and I don't recall, this may have been asked previously and perhaps I should be aware of it — but what type of training do these inspectors go through? First of all I should ask, what would be the qualifications for an inspector on behalf of the Authority?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — First of all, we look for people with investigative experience such as retired RCMP. So if your next election experience turns out not to be so good, come and let us know. Also the training certainly involves investigative training.

Mr. Osika: — Is there a formal training program that the Authority provides or is this something that you expect people to come with?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The answer is essentially both. We do formal training, but if we can find people that already have investigative experience, that's certainly the candidates that we're looking for.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you very much, and you point out with my previous experience perhaps if things go awry . . . I'm happy to hear that. Usually defeated politicians become consultants, and I . . . (inaudible) . . . or judges or whatever . . . (inaudible) . . . or researchers. Anyway I believe you've already, you've already responded to the member from Kelvington-Wadena that there will not be any frivolous type of infractions that will be held over the head of operators of public establishments.

You mention that there is an appeal process and it is . . . you responded it's a four member quasi-judicial panel that sits. Does that panel include members from the industry, from the hotel industry, from charities? Are any of those people involved on the panel in the hearings — in the appeal hearing?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Currently members on the commission, there's none who are involved in the industry directly right now but it's our understanding that a number of the members have had or several of the members have had past experience in the industry. Though currently in the industry acting on the commission it certainly would be conceived or perceived as a conflict.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. That's pretty well all the questions I had. The move in this direction is one that the industry has welcomed I understand, and I'm sure that the Authority will work within its proper parameters when coming up with the regulations. I'm pleased to hear you confirm that you will be talking to the industry when coming up with those regulations.

The three-year limitation period, I appreciate your explanation. The concern was that there was anywhere up to three years that the Authority could initiate some action. And I'm pleased to hear that you've confirmed that's not the case. It's a matter of having that process completed during the three-year period. Those were the confirmations I was looking for and responses.

I thank you and your officials very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 11 inclusive agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Before I make that motion I want to thank both of my officials and the opposition members for their good questions. And appreciate the opportunity — since this was my first Bill before the House, I appreciate your cooperation. Thank you very much.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 13 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

(1230)

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Vote 53

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

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Seated immediately to my left is John Law, president of the Sask Property Management Corporation. Seated directly behind him is Debbie Koshman, vice-president of finance and corporate services. Seated to my immediate right is Al Moffat, vice-president of commercial services. Seated directly behind me is Garth Rusconi, vice-president of accommodation services. And seated directly behind Al is Barb Loveridge, acting-director of financial planning.

Subvote (SP01)

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Chair of Committees. Welcome, Minister, and officials.

Mr. Minister, I would like to start off in the general sense to see where the general direction you're taking the department is. And I want to ask you, first of all, if you see any significant shifts in the way the department is functioning since you've become the minister.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I'd like to say that things have improved dramatically since I became the minister, but I think we continue to operate a good quality service as it pertains to accommodation services in the best interest of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Gantefer: — Minister, can you share with us, do you do an analysis of your occupancy rate, vacancy rate, the

comparative costs of properties in different locations? I guess to start, you know, what type of analysis do you do of your properties?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — We certainly do an ongoing analysis of the market. In each location it will be a little bit different. We are currently operating in 200 different communities in the province here in Saskatchewan. So some communities that are fairly small, there would be not much analysis done unless, obviously, there is some significant changes that are taking place within that community.

Mr. Gantefer: — Do you have reports that are available that would, in the major centres, make comparisons between properties that you're responsible for in terms of the cost recovery on a square footage basis as to compared what the commercial market may be at, at that particular time?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The short answer to that again is, yes we do. We do ongoing analysis for operating costs and that to a large degree will determine whether we own or lease a property.

Mr. Gantefer: — I'm pleased to hear that you do it, and I ask, are those reports, are those comparisons available in a summary form or a comparative form or in a form that could be made available to us?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The information that we currently have in the reports that are developed are . . . have been historically for management purposes and largely that is a result of the industry requiring that this information remain confidential. But what we will do is we will endeavour to try and provide a bit of a summary, a report, for you if that's okay.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, minister. Where I'm heading on this is to try to understand if the department on an on-going basis makes a determination of the appropriateness of the rates you charge, for example, to third parties or to clients of the property, to see if they're comparable to an ongoing, shifting industry standard in the open market-place, if you like. Certainly in the real estate business in my experience, there can be a fair bit of volatility in terms of fair market value of . . . depending on availability of space and all the rest of it.

So I'd appreciate if you could do it in terms of at least the major centres, and say the going rate for properties or office properties in Regina is X number of dollars a square, and our comparative rates are X plus 10 per cent, X minus 10 per cent — some type of a comparison. I appreciate the confidentiality of individual properties, and things of that nature would likely be inappropriate, but to sort of get a gauge of what's going on in the different communities. And so if you could do that, I'd very much appreciate that.

The other area is, do you do an analysis about — I guess the best word would be, is — the ongoing appropriateness of your continued ownership of property? Do you do a comparison to say, for example, we have 10,000 square feet of property in this location and that we have an opportunity, or perhaps we should explore an opportunity, to sell that to the private sector and move out of this.

Do you do an ongoing analysis of the appropriateness, I'd like

. . . I guess for a lack of a better word, or the desirability of you to continue to be the owner of the property?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you. You had a number of components to your question, and first of all, yes, we can provide a general report for you that you asked for. Essentially I want to answer it this way. We . . .

(1245)

The Deputy Chair: — Order, order. I invite members that wish to carry on conversations to either step behind the bar and lower the volume significantly or, or step completely outside of this. The minister and the hon. member from Melfort-Tisdale are unable to hear each other.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — We don't actually operate as it pertains directly to the markets. We simply react to the markets; so ours, our analysis is always based on a . . . simply a cost recovery. The second component or second part of your question, 70 per cent of the facilities that Sask Property Management Corporation owns, owns are . . . or operates I should say, are program based, such as schools, correctional centres, and therefore most of the, most of the time in those cases it is most prudent to be owning those facilities. But in the other 30 per cent, there's an ongoing analysis done to determine whether or not we should be owning or leasing those spaces.

Mr. Gantefer: — In that 30 per cent area that you speak of, Minister, have you bought or sold properties that would fit into that broad category in the last year?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Okay, it's not common that we would actually buy properties but if it makes sense and we believe it . . . and it does make sense for the taxpayers then we will in fact pursue actually buying a, buying a building. And most recently, I think just April 1 of this year, we bought the federal building in Estevan.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Krawetz..... | 895 |
| D’Autremont | 895 |
| Toth | 895 |
| Heppner | 895 |
| Gantefoer | 895 |
| Draude | 895 |
| Osika | 895 |
| Hillson | 895 |
| Aldridge | 895 |
| Belanger | 896 |
| McLane | 896 |

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Clerk | 896 |
|-------------|-----|

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Lautermilch | 896 |
| Atkinson | 896 |
| D’Autremont | 896 |
| Jess | 896 |
| Draude | 897 |
| Gantefoer | 897 |

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Good News Headlines | |
| Stanger | 897 |
| Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign Begins | |
| Toth | 897 |
| Spinal Health Care Week | |
| Murray | 897 |
| Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims | |
| McLane | 897 |
| “Come Home Safe Tonight” Safety Campaign | |
| Ward | 898 |
| Closure of Plains Health Centre | |
| Aldridge | 898 |
| SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival | |
| Atkinson | 898 |
| May Day | |
| Wall | 899 |

ORAL QUESTIONS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims | |
| Toth | 899 |
| Serby | 899 |
| Plains Health Centre Closure | |
| Krawetz | 900 |
| Serby | 900 |
| Child Prostitution | |
| Heppner | 900 |
| Calvert | 900 |
| Surgery Waiting-lists | |
| McLane | 901 |
| Serby | 901 |
| Romanow | 903 |
| Child Prostitution | |
| Julé | 903 |
| Calvert | 903 |

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Increased Funding to Saskatchewan’s Public Prosecution Service | |
| Nilson | 904 |
| Heppner | 904 |
| Hillson | 905 |

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Bill No. 41 — The Teachers' Dental Plan Amendment Act, 1998 | |
| Atkinson | 905 |
| Bill No. 42 — The Teachers' Life Insurance (Government Contributory) Amendment Act, 1998 | |
| Atkinson | 905 |
| Bill No. 744 — The Hepatitis C Compensation Commission Act | |
| McLane | 905 |
| ORDERS OF THE DAY | |
| Toth | 905 |
| GOVERNMENT ORDERS | |
| ADJOURNED DEBATES | |
| SECOND READINGS | |
| Bill No. 32 — The Wildlife Amendment Act, 1998 | |
| D'Autremont | 905 |
| Bill No. 26 — The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 1998 | |
| D'Autremont | 906 |
| Bill No. 25 — The Pipelines Act, 1998 | |
| D'Autremont | 909 |
| COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE | |
| Bill No. 13 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 1998 | |
| Sonntag | 909 |
| Draude | 909 |
| Krawetz | 909 |
| Osika | 913 |
| THIRD READINGS | |
| Bill No. 13 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 1998 | |
| Sonntag | 914 |
| COMMITTEE OF FINANCE | |
| General Revenue Fund | |
| Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation — Vote 53 | |
| Sonntag | 914 |
| Gantefoer | 914 |