

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, 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 cause the government to take immediate action to ensure that the required level of service in radiology is maintained in the North Central Health District and the priorities of its board be adjusted accordingly.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to this petition come from the communities of James Smith, Melfort, Gronlid, and Carrot River. I so present.

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action to ensure that the required level of service in radiology is maintained in the North Central Health District and the priorities of its board be adjusted accordingly.

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

These petitions come from the Star City, Melfort, Meskanaw, Kinistino, across the province, Mr. Speaker.

I so present.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, as well to present a petition. The petition I'm presenting as well deals with the level of radiology service in the communities of Carrot River in the North Central Health District.

And, Mr. speaker, the petition I'm presenting is signed by individuals from the communities of Melfort and Star City.

I so present.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of citizens concerned about funding to support regional radiology service in Melfort.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Melfort of course, but also from Beatty, and Pathlow, and Porcupine Plain, and Kinistino.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

today to read:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action to ensure that the required level of service in radiology is maintained in the North Central Health District and the priorities of its board be adjusted accordingly.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people that have signed this petition are from Melfort, from James Smith, from Leroy, and from Lake Lenore. Thank you.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, I as well have a petition to present to the Assembly this afternoon dealing with the issue of the level of service at the North Central Health District and the concerns the petitioners have with that service.

The petitioners come from the Melfort, Kinistino area of the province and I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to:

(1) change the law to allow Saskatchewan citizens to erect a cross if they so choose where their loved one was killed; and

(2) to establish safety guidelines to ensure that it is done properly.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from the communities of Marquis, Keeler, Tuxford, Brownlee, Elbow, and Central Butte. And I so present.

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

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to:

(1) change the law to allow Saskatchewan citizens to erect a cross if they so choose, where their loved one was killed;

(2) establish safety guidelines to ensure that it is done properly.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are from Watrous, Regina, from Saskatoon, from Watrous, Kindersley, Young, and all throughout the land. And I so present.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens. These ones are concerned about posting reminders along highways so that families in the future

can avoid tragedies, which have occurred to others. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to:

- (1) change the law to allow Saskatchewan citizens to erect a cross if they so choose, where their loved one was killed;
- (2) establish safety guidelines to ensure that it is done properly.

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

Those who've signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are all from the city of Moose Jaw. I so present.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I join with my colleagues today in bringing forward petitions. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to:

- (1) change the law to allow Saskatchewan citizens to erect a cross if they so choose, where their loved one was killed;
- (2) to establish safety guidelines to ensure that it is done properly.

As in duty bound, your petitioner will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the people who have signed the petition are from Moose Jaw, Bengough, Assiniboia area. I so present.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions. The prayer of relief reads as follows:

Your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to:

- (1) change the law to allow Saskatchewan citizens to erect a cross if they so choose, where their loved was killed;
- (2) establish safety guidelines to ensure that it is done in a proper manner.

Your petitioners this afternoon come from Mankota, Lafleche, Ferland, Saskatoon, McCord, and Montreal.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also join my colleagues in presenting a petition on behalf of citizens who would like to have the locations remembered where loved ones might have been killed. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to change the law to allow Saskatchewan citizens to erect a cross if they so choose, where their loved one was killed and establish safety guidelines to ensure that it is properly done.

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

And the signatures are from the good citizens of Lang, Milestone, and McTaggart. I so present.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I rise again on behalf of citizens who are seeking justice for men and women who have had their spouses killed in work-related accidents and the prayer is as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to have the Workers' Compensation Board Act amended for the disenfranchised widows and widowers of Saskatchewan, whereby their pensions are reinstated and the revoked pensions reimbursed to them retroactively and with interest, as requested by the statement of entitlement presented to the Workers' Compensation Board on October 27, 1997.

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

The signatories today are from Saskatoon, Aberdeen, and Christopher Lake.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise on behalf of people petitioning with regards to Highway No. 1:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these folks today come from Morse, Saskatchewan, also from Ernfold and I see quite a few from Cabri and Hazlet as well, and I'm happy to present them on their behalf.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order a petition regarding the services in the North compared to the rest of Saskatchewan presented on June 2 has been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and are hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly on the following matters: the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway; to save the Plains Health Centre; to call an independent public inquiry into Channel Lake; to put a halt to all investments in foreign countries by Saskatchewan Crown corporations; to have the Workers' Compensation Board reinstate pensions for disenfranchised widows; to relocate Highway 40 to alleviate congestion at the entrance to North Battleford; to reduce the high costs of power rates in the North; and to ensure the required level of service in radiology in the North Central Health District.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 64 ask the government the following questions:

What is your government doing to defend the rights of gun owners in the ongoing battle against the federal government's gun laws? What position is your government taking on the issues raised by Douglas Fisher in his article in the June 3 *Ottawa Sun*, wherein he expressed several misadventures, a copy of which is attached, Mr. Speaker. And what is your reply to these allegations?

And this is to the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Hon. Members, today we are honoured to have a number of very special guests from Canada's internationally famous police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, seated in the galleries of the Assembly.

They're here of course on the 125th anniversary of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police). We want to recognize them in the legislative chambers today.

In just a moment I'll invite the Premier, then the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party to make a few brief remarks and following these remarks, there will be introductions of the senior RCMP officers and representatives who are seated in the galleries.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to welcome as you have done, sir, our very, very special guests who I might say look extremely distinguished and colourful and are the kinds of representatives and symbols of Canada that we've come to know and love.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we recognize the grand tradition and the great history of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police celebrating 125 years of duty and devotion to this nation and to its citizens, and one could even say to this nation and to the world in their peacekeeping and other efforts.

A few moments ago many of us had the opportunity to join His Honour the Lieutenant Governor and Mrs. Wiebe, colleagues in the House, and visitors for the parade of the troops of the RCMP. For me this was a very profound event to review these men and women — outstanding men and women — whose devotion to duty and to country are an example for all Canadians everywhere.

There we saw and met — and we will later today over the tea — with the RCMP veterans, most of whom are seated opposite me, with serving officers from around Saskatchewan, and with the young people who are learning how to maintain the tradition and to maintain the right, right here at the RCMP college.

How well I remember that training session when I was Attorney General and visiting there on many occasions between '71 and '82. And I want to say to all of my friends and colleagues in the House, if you think it's an easy course, put it out of your mind;

it's very, very gruelling.

All three groups are here in the gallery, sir, and will be more fully introduced as you've pointed out to the members in a few moments. But it's just marvellous to have them with us here in this Legislative Assembly in this forum of democracy, because I believe that democracy is not only free speech and debate and elections but democracy is something else, it is respect for the rule of law — can't have one without the other.

And the Royal Canadian Mounted Police respect the rule of law and enforce it and maintain the right . . . maintain their motto to the very, very best of their capacity — in my judgement the best police force in the entire world.

For me a 125-year anniversary is a special occasion; I think it is for anybody. If I may be permitted to reminisce briefly, I remember 25 years ago when I was a very, very much younger Attorney General, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the RCMP on the parade square. I was elected, as you can see, a boy Attorney General and a boy MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), Mr. Speaker. And what a grand, warm June afternoon that was. And the presentation of a beautiful black horse to Her Majesty the Queen which served as the Queen's personal horse on all formal occasions for all these many, many years.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great day. In another way we're paying tribute to the RCMP by paying tribute to their forerunners, the North-West Mounted Police, for on the first floor of this great building we will see a series of paintings by Richard Lindemere depicting some of the events of the proud history of the force in Saskatchewan from the march-out of Fort Dufferin in Manitoba through the establishment of Fort Calgary in Alberta.

Well that was back in the 1870s and the North-West Mounted Police and the RCMP have been an irreplaceable part of our common history in Canada and western Canada ever since. And the force deserves the credit for helping to create a society marked by civility and by dignity.

A former president of the University of Toronto, Sir Robert Falconer, once wrote in his academic studies in his capacity as president of the U of T (University of Toronto) the following in describing the Canadian West. He said:

The Canadian West never went through a riotous youth. From the first (he wrote), life has been held sacred, and respect for the law strictly enforced.

And the reason he thought behind this was because we had the Mounties.

In a strange way Sir Robert wasn't alone, Mr. Speaker. He had an unlikely ally, the American frontier lawman Wyatt Earp, who is reported to have said:

If I'd had a couple of those red-coated fellers behind me, maybe we'd have kept Tombstone clean for sure.

Well he didn't have those red-coated fellers behind him, and we did. And our country is the richer and the better for that.

And so in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let me say how proud all of us are, all of us in the province of Saskatchewan and indeed Canada, for the RCMP. Let me issue my warmest congratulations on this auspicious occasion. And let me thank the force and all of its members past, present, and future for 125 years of service and for answering the call of duty to a grateful nation and a grateful world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues in the official opposition, I am very pleased to join with the Premier in marking this very important anniversary.

For 125 years the North West Mounted Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have been a constant presence in our landscape and in our history. Indeed, without the presence of this world-class police force, one doubts our country could have or would have been settled in such a peaceful and safe fashion.

This achievement is all the more remarkable when you consider the size of the country, its geography, and of course its climate. And especially when you take into account that the original force consisted of just 300 officers. Settling the West was a daunting task and at the time it probably seemed to many an impossible goal.

But here we sit today. And the RCMP can claim its share of credit for opening this country up for settlement. In a nation that by world standards is so very young, the RCMP is one of the few symbols and traditions we have that is truly . . . that is uniquely Canadian.

Mr. Speaker, for 125 years the RCMP has made achievements that are unmatched by any police force in the world. The RCMP is deservedly recognized around the world for the first-class organization it is. And in an age when it's become too easy to criticize long-standing institutions in our country, the RCMP still commands the respect and the honour it so richly deserves.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues, I extend congratulations to all the men and women who make up the force today and to all those who have served with dignity and dedication since the RCMP was created on May 23, 1873. Much has changed in our country in the last 125 years, but one thing hasn't and I don't believe it ever will — that is the respect we all have for the RCMP today and for many years to come. Congratulations on this very special anniversary.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not only pleased but indeed honoured and very, very proud to have the opportunity today in this Assembly to honour a group that I hold very, very dear to my heart, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

As a serving member of the RCMP during my 25-year career, I certainly can appreciate the time and the effort that these members and all members of the force give and have given in

ensuring the safety of our communities. It was an honour for me to serve in north-western Ontario and Manitoba — in places like Fort Frances, and Virden, Portage la Prairie, and Hodgson, and places that a lot of people haven't even heard of. And there were those times, while I served on the force, I wished I hadn't heard of them either.

The Premier earlier talked about the ideals of the force, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to if I'm so bold . . . may be so bold as to say that some of those ideals I bring with me and to my continued service to the public of this great province.

This year does mark an outstanding accomplishment of the RCMP — the 125th anniversary of the mounted police as Canada's national police service — and they have come a long, long way. Initially in the West they provided services ranging from general law enforcement to establishing friendly relations with aboriginal peoples and easing hardships experienced by immigrants and settlers.

The North-West Mounted Police were contracted to police Saskatchewan in 1905, the year of the birth of this great province. The force has experienced an awful lot of change from its beginnings and even from when I was a member. It now plays a multi-faceted role enforcing federal laws, providing contract policing to most provinces, many municipalities, towns, cities, and first nations communities. The RCMP has played a vital role in developing alternatives to traditional justice. The force has also expanded internationally, now participating in peace-keeping efforts and supplying world-leading expertise in areas like forensics and criminal intelligence to Canadian and international police. These are considerable accomplishments.

The most important accomplishment I felt when I was within the force and the one I still feel is most important, is providing our people with safe communities. The RCMP provided me with many opportunities to get involved in the communities where I was serving; being able to build our communities through effective leadership, protection, and crime prevention are of the utmost importance to all of us and they continue to be today. I am confident that the RCMP will continue to provide safe homes and safe communities for all Canadians.

The force has come a long way and each and every one of you can be very proud of your significant contributions and accomplishments without fear, favour, or affection. Today the force represents one of the foremost national symbols in Canada — the Mountie. All those who serve in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police deserve that place of honour.

So today, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and my colleagues in the Liberal caucus, and I'm sure we're joined by everyone that may be listening, that's celebrating with us today, to congratulate the RCMP on their continued service to the communities and our country. I'm just bursting with pride, Mr. Speaker, to be able to have the opportunity and the distinct privilege to publicly express my appreciation and congratulation on behalf of all our citizens.

The force is held in extremely high esteem and has earned a proud reputation — one that makes all Canadians very proud of our national police force.

Congratulations and thank you once again.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Hon. members, we'll now have introductions of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who are here today. And to our guests, I'll ask that you stand while you are being introduced and then remain standing for the applause that I know that you will receive.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to introduce the three senior officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Saskatchewan.

Deputy Commissioner Roy Berlinquette is the commanding officer of the north-west region of the RCMP.

Five regions were established in 1997 across Canada to implement the new regionalized structure of the RCMP. Appropriately Saskatchewan and Regina were chosen for the headquarters of the north-west region which encompasses all three prairie provinces and the Northwest Territories.

Deputy Commissioner Berlinquette assumed command of the north-west region in January 1998, the 125th anniversary year of the RCMP.

I'd invite members to join me in welcoming him here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Assistant Commissioner Brian Watt is commanding officer of the "F" Division, which includes all of Saskatchewan. "F" Division is responsible for federal, provincial, and a large share of municipal policing in our province.

I'd like members to join me in welcoming Assistant Commissioner Brian Watt.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Chief Superintendent Harper Boucher is commanding officer of the Depot Division, the national training academy of the RCMP in Regina.

He assumed command at a ceremony last week on May 26. I'd invite members to join me in welcoming him.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, guests who are seated in your gallery. They are representatives of "F" Division, Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Commanded by Assistant Commissioner Brian Watt, "F" Division is effectively our provincial police force on contract to the province. It also provides police services to the great majority of municipalities in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, all citizens of our province are grateful to the

members of "F" Division for the high calibre of service they provide, helping to ensure the safety of our communities.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in welcoming the representatives of "F" Division here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to members of the Assembly, it is my pleasure to introduce staff and instructors of Depot Division seated in the east gallery, I believe. I'd invite them to stand.

Depot Division is the oldest division in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, founded in Regina in 1885. Since then it has been the national training academy of the force and has symbolized the colourful history of the RCMP. The chapel at Depot Division is the oldest building in Regina.

However, Mr. Speaker, Depot Division, commanded by Chief Superintendent Harper Boucher, also exemplifies state-of-the-art instruction in modern policing. Not only do all RCMP cadets pass through the academy, but it attracts police officers from across Canada and around the world. This is why Regina and Saskatchewan are proud to be known as the home of the RCMP.

And on a personal note, Mr. Speaker, I can add there was a fleeting moment when I thought of joining the RCMP until as a 4-H member touring training division — specifically the swimming area.

I thank you for joining us this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce representatives of the RCMP veterans seated in the west gallery. I'd ask them to stand.

The veterans retain a close connection with the force after retirement, showing their personal pride in the national institution where they have served the Canadian people so well. They are responsible for the success of the RCMP Museum here in Regina.

They play an active role in organizing events such as the 125th anniversary celebrations and the Musical Ride which we in Saskatchewan are privileged to have with us this month.

Mr. Speaker, it was wonderful to see the troop of veterans at the parade earlier this afternoon. We are honoured by their presence in the Assembly here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Hon. Members, three of the hon. members have school groups who are visiting here today to mark the 125th anniversary, and I'll invite them to introduce their school groups now.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I have a school group; I have another small delegation I'd like to introduce.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce 38 students from the Rosetown School. They are the grade 8 students and a number of them are seated in your gallery with teacher Richard Berezowski and some others are in the east gallery with teacher Mr. Cline.

It is an honour for me to be here to host you today and I think it's a very special time for you to be here to see this celebration. It's one of those very special days in the House.

And I want to commend the Rosetown students for their careful management of their two teachers and their three chaperons. When I last saw them, all the adults were behaving themselves well. Congratulations.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — I also want to introduce Wendell Star who is the program coordinator for the White Calf cooperative education program. He's in the east gallery.

I've had the pleasure of working with one of the students from his program, Vanessa Jack, who is also with Wendell. And I want to pay tribute to Wendell and the people who've planned this program, and to Vanessa who's been a real delight to have in my office.

We've completed the program now for this year and I look forward to the further success of the program and the contribution it's making to the development of young people and the development of our province. I ask members to join me in welcoming our guests.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Isn't this one of those days where it's just marvellous to feel surrounded and feel comfortable?

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to invite to the Assembly today and introduce to you and to the rest of my colleagues and everyone in the Assembly, 20 students from White Calf Collegiate who are seated in the east gallery. And I'm very pleased that they are able to be here on this very special commemorative day.

And I'd also like to welcome Wendel Starr as well for all the work that he's done with the White Calf Collegiate programs, and congratulate you on that effort as well.

Please help me welcome all these fine young people from White Calf Collegiate to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and to my colleagues in the legislature, it's also my distinct pleasure to introduce today 62 grade 4 and 5 students from St. Joan of Arc School in the constituency of Regina Sherwood, which is just north of the depot and training academy.

Mr. Speaker, they're accompanied today by their teachers Mrs. Riffel, and Mrs. Istace, and a chaperon, Mrs. Mercer.

Again it's my pleasure that they are here with us for this special day, and I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming them here to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This morning several of my colleagues, government colleagues, had meetings with the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association and I know that they are sitting in the gallery, in your gallery, this afternoon.

I'd like to welcome, on behalf of the government, the Western Canadian Wheat Growers to the legislature. I'd ask them to stand. Particularly I want to welcome your president, Larry Maquire, president, from Elgin, Manitoba; Hubert Esquirol, past president, from Meota; Keith Lewis, director, from Wawota; and Len Rutledge, advisor from Carievale; and Shelley Jones, Saskatchewan policy manager. I know there's some other people but I don't have your names, but welcome to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We in the official opposition would also like to welcome the representatives from the Western Canadian Wheat Growers. We had a very interesting and productive meeting with the representatives this morning, talking about a number of issues of interest to the agriculture community, finding ourselves very much in agreement on many of the issues that are facing the agriculture community. We would want to welcome all of the representatives from Saskatchewan and particularly the representative, Mr. Maquire, from out of the province of Saskatchewan to Saskatchewan. And we look forward to a good association with the western Canadian wheat growers in the future.

And I join with all members in welcoming them to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I would just like to add my words of welcome on behalf of the Liberal caucus to the western wheat growers association officials here today, and we're looking forward to meeting with them later on this afternoon. I just welcome them again.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know in this job of all the ties we develop, it's difficult to single out people in such a distinguished gallery. But as I mentioned, of all the ties we develop, family ties are very strong. And I don't often have a chance to have family visits. So I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, an aunt and uncle through marriage to a wonderful man, Bob Hamilton, seated in the west gallery, Frank and Margie Weeks, and with them cousin Arlene.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and to the members of the Assembly through you I have some guests in the east gallery that I would like to introduce to the Assembly and I'd ask them to stand as I introduce them.

From the constituency of Arm River and the community of Marquis, we have Mrs. Gwen Dale with us today. As well her daughter is here from the city of Moose Jaw, granddaughter Joan Wright, granddaughter Rhonda Wright is with us as well, and from Estevan . . . Kelly Paradon is here from Estevan.

Mr. Speaker, these folks are here today to watch proceedings, to meet with us and talk about a couple of issues. They're also hoping to be able to talk to the government on a couple of issues. And I ask the whole Assembly to welcome my guests here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I want to welcome a guest, a very special guest. It's not too often that we have guests from Ile-a-la-Crosse in the Assembly.

But in the east gallery we have a guest that is here with I believe the RCMP delegation, and I'd like to ask that we all welcome Mary Morin Burnouf. But I hope she doesn't tell her husband I used her maiden name, because the size of her husband, I'm sure I'll be sorry for saying that. But I do want to welcome her here today, and ask you all to join me in applauding her effort for being here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Luther Place in Outlook

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to tell the Assembly about an innovative housing project in my constituency. Luther Place is a new seniors' enriched housing facility which opened in Outlook in December. Luther Place was inspired by the desire of Bethlehem Lutheran Church to bring housing that would keep seniors in their community.

The condominium style complex offers one and two bedroom suites in the popular life-lease arrangements. This means that the purchaser is entitled to a right to use the suite for life, with a guarantee buy-back provision.

Luther Place provides a range of services including a health clinic, a chaplain, common dining room, recreation area, hair salon, elevator, underground parking, and most importantly it is within the community of Outlook.

Senior citizens can now enjoy the fellowship of their neighbours, be close to their families, shop at home, and spend time in their community. Their needs for both housing and health care can now be better met in the rural community.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we give back to the people that have

created this province. Providing facilities so senior citizens can stay in their communities in rural Saskatchewan with their friends and family should be of utmost importance to us.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate them on their innovative, local partnership and offer best wishes to the new residents, and I look forward to visiting with them on Sunday for their official grand opening.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Dividend for Pioneer Co-op Members

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few weeks ago I stood in the House and related a story covered in the local news regarding Swift Current's economic boom. Today I'm reporting that the economy in Swift Current is still going strong.

June 1 *Southwest Booster* was inundated with terrific news for co-op members. Dividend days were announced to the Pioneer Co-op members. The board has approved a general repayment of equity equal to 35 per cent of the 1997 allocation: 5.1 per cent of food and drug purchases by members will be reimbursed; 8.5 per cent of service station and petroleum purchases will be back in the hands of the co-op members. In addition, 4.5 per cent of agro products; 2.5 per cent of family fashion; and 2 per cent of hardware, lumber, furniture, and plumbing purchases will be returned to the membership.

All this means that \$2.373 million will be paid out to 11,800 members. That is well over two and one-quarter million dollars will be put back into the hands of the consumers in the Swift Current area; money that will not flee Saskatchewan and find its way into the hands of the money hawks in New York, Zürich, and London. This is good news for Swift Current and good news for south-west Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

125th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this, the 125th anniversary of the RCMP, I want to add my appreciation to the entire force. But more specifically I would like to thank and congratulate the RCMP in Wadena area for their hard work and dedication.

Not long ago they allowed me to ride along with them so that I could experience firsthand an evening in the life of an RCMP officer. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that experience gave me a whole new perspective and appreciation for the huge workload, the huge amount of stress endured, and the huge capacity for caring our law enforcement officers have.

Many of my colleagues can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I too have been stopped by our men and women in uniform and paid my dues in speeding tickets. It's not only interesting but a very good learning experience to see a speeding ticket being given out from the other side. Throughout the shift it was clear that the officer's primary goal is public safety and that is why they don't take infractions such as speeding, lightly.

As I rode along in the patrol car I had the opportunity to witness the strong support network between officers. At 3 o'clock in the morning officers from the neighbouring districts radioed each other to see how things were going. It must be a comforting feeling to know that at a moment's notice you can call on your fellow officers and they'll be there to watch your back.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to close by expressing a special thank you to all Saskatchewan RCMP officers, including those in Wadena who provided me with the special opportunity to witness firsthand the hard work and dedication that goes into their respect for the law.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Nipawin Pike Festival

Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is Tourism Awareness Week and I want to report that at the beginning of this week of great importance to my constituency, that I was unjustly misrepresented by the media. This happened on media day, Mr. Speaker, media day for the Nipawin Pike Festival, which is the day we tag the \$5,000 great northern and runs from June 14 to October 2. Tobin and Codette Lakes by Nipawin provide some of the best pike and walleye fishing in the world. Consequently tourism is big business in Carrot River Valley.

There are over 100 businesses associated with tourism not including restaurants and hotels. These employ over 500 people. Over \$15 million is spent annually on tourism in the Carrot River Valley. On Monday I noticed licence plates from Nebraska, Wisconsin, Montana, North and South Dakota, as well as Alberta and Manitoba.

Along with the Pike Festival, this summer there is Walleye Classic, the Premier's Walleye Cup, the Ladies Fish for Freedom Day, and the Vanity Cup — something for everyone.

How was I misrepresented, you ask. I was reported that I only caught green stuff — weeds. But as soon as the camera shut off, Mr. Speaker, I caught a pike so big that when I brought it in the level of the lake actually dropped by two inches. And wouldn't you know it, when there is good news where is the reporters? None to be seen.

Actually the media continues to give excellent coverage of another great Saskatchewan tourism destination. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

McCallum Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 31, 1948 in Ile-a-la-Crosse, 50 years ago, Willie and Therese McCallum were married. And this past weekend they celebrated that 50th anniversary.

In a brief history, they have two children: one son, Lawrence McCallum of La Ronge; and a daughter, Rosie McCallum of Ile-a-la-Crosse. They also raised their grandchildren Julie Mispounas and Dion McCallum, and they have five grandchildren.

Just a brief history of Willie. He worked in Cluff Lake as a security guard. He also done some work with the resources officers and was travelling and hunting for most of his life. And Therese worked in a sewing factory. They both are retired and living in Ile-a-la-Crosse. And they used to work the sugar beets fields in Alberta during the summer months.

The family and friends and relatives all enjoyed the event. They had a good turnout.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

So what that is, Mr. Speaker, is after 50 years Willie tells me he is still the boss. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Economic Growth in Lloydminster

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please allow me to read into the record a few objective and entirely non-partisan comments about the city of Lloydminster in my constituency.

First, Mr. Speaker, where are the children going? Well many of them are coming to Lloydminster. Our populations has been growing steadily since 1991, and it is expected to reach 22,000 by the year 2001 — an increase of nearly 5,000 since 1996.

This means, of course, that the demand for housing is increasing dramatically, and that means that our vacancy rate is at .05 per cent, the lowest in the province. New housing starts last year were almost three times that of the year before.

With more people and an expanding economy comes increased optimism, and unemployment is below 4 per cent. And, Mr. Speaker, the cash registers are ringing in Lloyd. Last year retail sales were over 127.5 million. They are expected to project . . . to reach nearly 170 million by the year 2001.

Hard-working people, Mr. Speaker; great location; valuable resources; and sound, sensible, frugal, innovative government policy, all have worked together to make our city, Lloydminster, the city of opportunity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Deep South Personal Care Home

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to share with you and all members an example of how community-based health care is working in our province — in particular how it is working in the town of Pangman. Pangman is in the South Central Health District, and it's also in my constituency.

The members of the South Central District Board and the board of directors of the Deep South Personal Care Home in Pangman have established a unique partnership to provide necessary services to residents and seniors in Pangman, Ogema, and area.

Mr. Speaker, this is an example of a very successful health care facility conversion. First the communities of the area worked with the district board to renovate the health centre which included an addition of a new ambulance garage. Part of the

renovation also involved a new addition attached to the health centre.

So today in Pangman you have a district-run health centre with a newly attached ambulance garage; you have the Deep South Personal Care Home run by a non-profit community board working together in an integrated facility.

Mr. Speaker, this facility is providing vital and caring service to the members of the communities in the area. It took a great deal of hard work and dedication by the South Central Board, the Deep South Personal Care Home Board, staff and volunteers to develop this example of what community-based health care should be.

Mr. Speaker, it's the only facility of its kind in the province. I look forward to attending the official grand opening on June 9 and I want to congratulate all members of the district, the community, the leadership, in putting this together to provide quality health care for our area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Voluntary Grain Marketing

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture or his designate.

Mr. Minister, this morning our caucus met with the western Canadian wheat growers. As always it is a pleasure meeting with the most progressive farm group in all of western Canada; one that believes in voluntary grain marketing.

Voluntary grain marketing, incidentally, is gaining support every day. A recent survey showed that over 60 per cent of the farmers in the Melville area supported dual market for wheat and 61 per cent believe farmers should be able to sell their grain outside of the Canadian Wheat Board.

The amazing thing about this survey, Mr. Speaker, is it was conducted and published by the Liberal member for Melville. I'm glad to see that the Liberal member for Melville is coming onside, but I'm sure his boss, Ralph Goodale, won't be too happy about that.

Mr. Minister, even some of the provincial Liberals are now supporting voluntary grain marketing. When are you going to get with the program and start supporting a voluntary grain marketing system for the farmers of this province?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, I'd be pleased to undertake the reply to the hon. member.

Mr. Speaker, the position of the provincial government . . . By the way, I might add I extend my welcome to the members of the Canadian wheat growers association. The position of the provincial government has been that we favoured the notion of single desk marketing for a whole number of reasons — some historic. It's done a very good job for the people of Saskatchewan, and Canada for that matter, over a long period of

time, some on good, I think, sound, practical policy grounds.

I don't think the notion that the sellers of Canadian agricultural product from Sturgis, Saskatchewan ought to be competing against the sellers of agriculture products from Drumheller, Alberta when very often the buyers are single-agent, single-desk buyers. That really says that the sellers are competing against each other and the price is driven down.

Having said all of that, we should work to improve the Canadian Wheat Board — make sure that it is more efficient, that it is more responsive, that the complaints and concerns of organizations like the association here and others, is taken into account. But on balance the job done has been a good one. We should continue to support it and strengthen it for the 21st century.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, yesterday the Minister of Agriculture was encouraging farmers not to fertilize their crops. So why should it be any surprise if you people wouldn't be in favour of something as progressive as farmers marketing their own crops. Mr. Premier, many farmers do want to market their own grain and they are simply asking for that opportunity. Sixty per cent of the farmers in the Melville area now favour dual marketing.

I would hope their MLA would stand up today, represent those farmers, and say their party has reversed its position. And I would hope that for the farmers of Saskatchewan you would do the same, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, will you join us in calling for farmers to have the right to market their own grain. Will you support what farmers are asking for in this province in large numbers, a voluntarily grain marketing system?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, my answer to the question has to be similar to the answer that I gave to the first question. Undoubtedly some farmers are of the belief that they should be in a position to market their own grain. Although I think it must be also said, Mr. Speaker, that this should be carefully defined.

If the notion is that you can market your grain to the Canadian Wheat Board when it is to your advantage, and not market to the Canadian Wheat Board and go outside the Wheat Board when it is to your advantage, that is dual marketing. And it can only weaken the Canadian Wheat Board, and weaken the very good job that has been carried out in the past by the agriculture marketing system, the Canadian Wheat Board.

I firmly hold the view that the majority of the people in western Canada still hold the view that the Canadian Wheat Board and many farmers in other parts of the world also favour this. Single-desk marketing is the best, most efficient way, albeit we can do much to improve it and to make it more effective.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Citizen Neighbourhood Patrols

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, Saskatchewan has the unfortunate distinction of holding down two of the top three spots in a list of high crime areas in this country. City of Saskatoon had the third highest rate of break and enter of any city in Canada in 1996, according to Statistics Canada. Not to be outdone, the city of Regina held down the number one spot on the list with the highest rate of home break-ins in the entire country.

Mr. Minister, that is a disgrace. Every day in Saskatoon, 9 or 10 families come home to find their house has been broken into by thieves. In Regina as many as 12 families suffer the same fate every day — every single day, Mr. Minister.

And what is the NDP (New Democratic Party) government doing about it? Mr. Minister, what specific actions is your NDP government taking to curb the crime in our neighbourhoods?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this government is very concerned about making sure that our communities are safe. And if the member had been listening to the things that we've announced in our budget this spring, he would know that we are working very carefully with the various police forces in the province, including the RCMP, with the mayors and the communities, the rural municipalities, in addressing many of these problems.

We know that there are issues that have to be dealt with that include policing issues, but we also know that it includes working right through the whole of our society. As was announced yesterday by the federal government, they are looking at crime prevention through social development. They are taking up a task which we in Saskatchewan have been working at many years.

We're proud of the things that we're doing in this area, and we appreciate all of the work that we are doing with those people in the community to solve some of these very difficult problems.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Minister, the Saskatchewan Party today proposed the establishment of citizen neighbourhood patrols. These patrols could be organized within the community by local residents and they would act as an additional set of eyes and ears for the police.

Mr. Minister, citizen neighbourhood patrols would work with the police by patrolling local streets and reporting suspicious activities via two-way radio or cellphone. The provincial government could contribute to the formation of citizen patrols with funding for those cellphones, signage, and brochures.

Mr. Minister, this kind of community-based solution has been introduced in Manitoba with very promising results at a relatively low cost. Mr. Minister, will the NDP government support this important community-based initiative? Will you support the establishment of citizen neighbourhood patrols as

the first step in making our communities safer?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I would want to say to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition with no apologies, this government's record on making safe communities a priority is second to none. And the announcements the Minister of Justice has just said a moment ago and made earlier, I don't need to repeat, but they are there.

The idea of citizen community patrols, namely, stated another way that citizens should follow their obligation as citizens to report crime when they see suspicious activity, is nothing new. It has been an activity in a number of communities in Regina and in Saskatoon, even in Eastview in ridings that exist.

There is a fine line, however, that has to be drawn between drawing in that kind of proper citizens' activity, which we would support and laud, and getting them into the question of law enforcement. Because we know that the people who are competent to do law enforcement are those men and women who have been trained, disciplined, at spotting the difficulties and the facts surrounding a suspected crime and are capable of doing it. That's the best way to protect the population. It's a combination of working together to be of assistance to the police force.

What the hon. member here is proposing is something, I think, entirely different and entirely one that has to be looked at very, very carefully.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, it must be a great source of embarrassment and shame for your government that two of the worst neighbourhoods in the whole country for home break-ins are Saskatoon Riversdale and Regina Elphinstone. It is a sad commentary that almost after eight years in government, the constituencies of both the Premier and the Deputy Premier continue to be two of the most unsafe neighbourhoods in our country.

But then again, why would you care, Mr. Premier? After all, neither you nor the Deputy Premier actually live in your constituencies.

Mr. Premier, half of those home break-ins are being committed by young offenders. We need tougher laws so the courts and the police can deal effectively with young offenders.

Mr. Premier, when are you actually going to take some action to make our neighbourhood safer. Will you support the establishment of citizen neighbourhood patrols and tougher laws for young offenders?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I don't live in Ituna or Sturgis or Preeceville or Canora, and I am just as concerned about law and order and safe communities there as I am in Riversdale or in any other part of the province of Saskatchewan.

And if I may say so with a slight amount of personal umbrage, after 11 years as Attorney General of the province of

Saskatchewan, I don't think I need any lessons from that collection of discredited Tories and discredited Liberals, who got together in the middle of the night, to tell me about law and order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — I don't need, I don't need any former Tories telling me about law and order in this House — not one whatsoever.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, what we need to do is to work on the basis of making sure that the necessary amendments to the Young Offenders Act are implemented. This government with the support of the Saskatchewan Party, so-called, and the Liberals, to their credit, all the members of the House, got together to urge those amendments be made to Ottawa. Those are before the Ottawa House of Commons now. The preventative implications are before the House of Commons now.

Our measures of a million dollars have been announced. Our measures of more police and prosecutors, those have been announced. We stand four-square behind making safe communities, and that's something more than those old, discredited Tories can say about it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Drinking and Driving

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question's for the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Minister, Students Against Drinking and Driving are calling for tougher penalties against drunk drivers in light of a recent tragic accident that killed a young Regina woman. Mr. Minister, when the new laws were introduced last year I said they didn't go far enough. One of the measures Students Against Drinking and Driving is proposing is adding a fine on top of the 24-hour license suspensions. This is already the law in Alberta, Newfoundland, and Manitoba, but not here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, are you considering such a measure? What other steps will you be taking to bring in tougher laws for drunk drivers?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. member that the legislation that we have in Saskatchewan came from the report of an all-party committee that worked throughout the province to come forward with some proposals that would work, and we are very pleased that we have some of the, or if not the most strict and stringent laws in Canada.

Now any time there are suggestions that will work to enhance that, we are willing to listen to that, and we meet with the various groups that are involved. But I would say that we spent a number of years actually working on bringing forward this legislation so that we could deal with this very difficult problem of drunk drivers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Referral to the College of Physicians and Surgeons

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has indicated that the case of a Yorkton man who died because there were no critical care beds in Regina will be examined by the college of physicians and surgeons. As a general rule of thumb, the college only steps in after a patient or family member has registered a complaint about patient care. We contacted the victim's father this morning who says no such complaint was made by the family.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, why — why has this matter been referred to the college of physicians and surgeons?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, a couple of days ago the member opposite raised in this House what I would consider a very, very serious allegation, where the member opposite said that an individual in this province has in fact lost their life and they've lost their life because the system has failed them — the system has failed them, Mr. Speaker.

And so I say to the member opposite, I think it's incumbent upon the ministry and the Department of Health to do an evaluation, assessment, of what happened in this case. And so I have engaged and asked the department to contact the two districts that were involved in dealing with this individual; have asked the professional community to do an examination of this process.

And so today what we find is we have a full examination for disclosure for our department of what happened to this situation.

And so I say to the member opposite that we need to receive the facts and we need to have a full understanding of what's happened in this case. And that's the rationale, Mr. Member, and Mr. Speaker, for why today we have engaged this process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as we all know the role of every physician is to be an advocate for each of his or her patients. In this case the physician's treatment options in Yorkton were limited. He spoke with a Regina cardiologist on a number of occasions during a two-day period attempting to find a critical care bed for his patient.

Mr. Minister, if you believe this is a care issue and not a bed issue, why didn't it even warrant a letter from you last October when Dr. Javier brought this to your attention? Why did you not call the college of physicians and surgeons last October when you learned of this case? Why is it only now that you're involving the college of physicians and surgeons?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, to the member, and to the House, when I received the letter from the doctor it clearly stated — and the letter was copied to me, as a copy to me, Mr.

Speaker — and in that letter it's clearly identified, or identified by the physician from Yorkton, that in fact he was advised by the facility in Regina that this was not classified as an emergency.

And so on that basis I left it to the discretion of the district health boards to follow up on the work that they were doing.

When the member brings the issue to the House, however, here . . . And I want to say to the member that this morning I received a telephone call from the family that you talk about and they say to me that they are extremely upset. And well they should be, because today they're reliving an issue that they put behind them only because you've raised it publicly, politically.

And they say to me that only this morning for the first time do they get a call from your caucus, which you just reinforced a couple of minutes ago. And I say that this is a very, very unfortunate situation that you've raised for the family, for the House, and for the people of Saskatchewan.

We have a process, I say to you, Mr. Member, in where we can deal in dignity with the people of this province and you are . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that's right, it is a tragedy, and it is tragic that we have to bring situations to this government's attention that are very real. And the real thing is we have a bed crisis, we have a shortage of beds, and that was a way that the doctors themselves are letting us know about what's happening.

It certainly appears now, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Health is looking for a scapegoat. The minister and his government are trying to make an example of Dr. Javier so other physicians will get the message — don't speak out or else. We saw the same strong-arm tactics that this government used a few weeks ago when the NDP went after the chairperson of the Save the Plains Committee.

Mr. Minister, why don't you spend your time trying to address the real issue here — it's a bed crisis — instead of conducting a witch-hunt. Why don't you take the responsibility and admit this patient died because there were no critical care beds available at the Plains hospital, instead of trying to find a scapegoat?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I say one more time to the member that as long as I occupy this chair, I take the responsibilities of the people of Saskatchewan and the functioning of the Health department and the services that we received around the province very, very seriously.

And when in this House, it's raised publicly and politically that an individual has lost their life, I think it's incumbent upon the ministry and the Department of Health to examine the process.

And I say to the member opposite, that's exactly what we're

doing today. We're not laying any blame or any fault or making any accusation towards anyone, as you point out. We're examining the process to get a full understanding and appreciation of what happened here, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Commemorative Markers on Highways

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, on September 27, 1997, Kelly Paradon and Rhonda Wright and their two-and-a-half-year-old son, Cody, were driving just outside of Milestone on Highway 39 when the vehicle they were in was hit head-on by a truck. The vehicle then rolled down an embankment and young Cody died at the scene of the accident.

What the family would like to do is place a cross at the scene of the accident. They would like to place a small memorial at the site of such a tragic loss.

Madam Minister, your government does not allow roadside crosses to be put in the place where a loss of life has occurred. It seems your department views this as a roadside nuisance. Madam Minister, do you agree with your department?

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to address this issue. First, I do understand and appreciate the desire of family members and friends to be able to grieve for a lost life that's been tragically taken. Actually our department is reviewing the signing policy, both private signs, commemorative crosses and part of that, and during this review what we're doing is looking at each on an individual basis, on an individual request.

And my understanding is, and I've actually seen the crosses, that the cross has been placed in the ditch there and it's been left in the ditch at this time. One of the things that we have to consider any time in these kinds of issues is to make sure whatever's being placed is small enough, that it's not another safety hazard for the motoring public.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Speaker, that's exactly our point. Let's make it law. We have the regulations in place and everybody knows what size a sign has to be, where it has to be placed.

The family of Cody is in the gallery today and they brought with them a number of petitions to give them support asking the government to reconsider this, and I'm glad to hear that you are.

Just for your memory, memorials serve two purposes: one, they provide a memorial to family that has lost a loved one; and secondly, they serve as a reminder to all of us who travel these precarious roads that life is precious and speed kills.

Madam Minister, the Liberals have prepared a private members' Bill allowing the families to place a simple cross on the spot where a loved one was killed in a traffic accident. The crosses will not interfere with traffic nor will they be distracting to drivers.

Madam Minister, will you support the opposition and allow the families an opportunity to provide a memorial to their loved

ones, and a reminder to us all, and support the placement of roadside crosses?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, we are currently reviewing the whole policy on private signs, on commemorative crosses. And so that we will certainly look at the information that they will be providing for us. And as I said, we are allowing, as people come forward, to evaluate each case. And if it looks as though there's not a safety hazard in it, that we have proceeded with signs at this time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Economic Development in South-west Saskatchewan

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, my question today is to the Minister of Economic Development and has to do with the natural gas fields.

Mr. Speaker, as you will recall, the town of Burstall is on the west side of the province, just a stone's throw from the Alberta border. And they are experiencing something of an economic boom just now. Unfortunately that economic boom is mostly happening in Alberta. I had a call from a contractor who informed me that upwards of \$5 million is scheduled to be spent in that area over the next five years.

They are planning to build three new gas plants. They are rebuilding the old plants. The new pipeline will extend to the United States. And all of this is going to happen just a couple of miles across the border in Alberta.

My question to the minister is very simply this: Madam Minister, what are you doing to attract some of these structures into Saskatchewan so that we can enjoy having the tax base in our province and not just watch Alberta walk away with all the profits?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite from the Maple Creek area, Cypress Hills area, will know that the south-west part of the province is booming as we have record number of wells drilled . . . last year record number of oil wells drilled in that area. And if you go to your home town of Maple Creek or Eastend or Shaunavon, you will find that housing is very, very difficult to get in large part because of the booming oil industry.

While the price of oil has meant that there's been some reduction in the number of wells drilled in the oil patch, obviously natural gas prices being up has meant that that area north of the Trans-Canada Highway in the Cypress Hills constituency will see extra activity as it would relate to gas drilling.

I say to the member opposite that the Department of Economic Development, Energy and Mines, along with CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) are working with all of the companies to see what we can do to make sure that the maximum amount of economic development take place in the province of Saskatchewan.

And finally I would say, with the many tax reductions including the 2 per cent tax reduction of the E&H (education and health) tax, reduction of income tax in this budget, we're moving in the right direction. And with your support and cooperation I'm sure we can go even quicker at that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a supplemental to the same minister. Well, Mr. Minister, I'm very happy that we have an economic boom in our area and all of the residents are as well. Unfortunately these gas plants are all being located in Alberta and that's where a big part of the tax base is going to come from. It's unfortunate that for some reason we keep on losing that.

But we are happy with what we are getting, Mr. Minister, and of course that is the housing and the need for housing. Upwards of 250 to 500 more workers are expected in the Burstall area in the next few months. We also of course already have reports from the town that 125 persons have already booked into Burstall and you couldn't rent a closet any more.

I guess what I'm asking you now is, what is the government going to do to assist these small towns in the area, like Leader and Richmond and Burstall, to put in water facilities and sewer facilities and that kind of infrastructure to be able to keep those workers in Saskatchewan rather than have them locate in a camp across the border in Alberta, which is the next alternative that they're now considering.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite what difference a question makes. You're now saying that there are so many people coming into that area that we have need to improve our funding for municipal infrastructure.

And I say to you at a very serious way that these are the kinds of problems we like to have as compared to previous administration when we saw record numbers of young people leaving the province. This cycle has changed very much since the era of the Devine administration. We now have many rural communities, whether it's Humboldt, or your friend, Mayor Clary, in Leader, or the mayor in Meadow Lake who are talking to us about ways and means of helping them with infrastructures.

I'm not saying we have all the solutions. Obviously we don't. But with the comparison, Mr. Speaker, of the out-migration of record numbers during the 1980s, the opportunities we now have of building communities is a very pleasant challenge for all of us and I appreciate you bringing this to our attention.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 752 — The Highway Fatality Marker Act

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of Bill No. 752, The Highway Fatality Marker Act.

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

(1445)

ORDERS OF THE DAY**MOTIONS****House Recess**

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That we recess for tea and return to orders of the day after the tea at the time designated by the Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — The House will now stand recessed for a Speaker's tea in honour of the 125th anniversary of the RCMP. I'll ask that the Sergeant-at-Arms will have the bells ring at 3:25 and that the House will resume with government orders at 3:30. This House now stands recessed.

The Assembly recessed for a period of time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**Bill No. 45 — The Automobile Accident Insurance
Amendment Act, 1998**

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

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — It's my privilege to introduce my staff from SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) who are with us today, Mr. Chairman. Seated to my right, Larry Fogg, president of SGI who members opposite will know. Seated in the back is Bob Lundy, he's the assistant vice-president of claims; and behind me and to my right, Anna Lapierre, the manager, underwriting services. And directly behind me Elizabeth Flynn, legal assistant. And we are looking for an opportunity to answer questions that members of the opposition might have.

Clause 1

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome, Mr. Minister, to your officials. I just have a few questions to ask today about this Act.

I think that we all realize that there's been trouble in the city with youth well under the age of 16 stealing and vandalizing vehicles. I guess I have a problem believing that this is really going to put any stop to this problem. And I'm wondering if you . . . how you feel this is going to actually help in the crime prevention?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I say to the member opposite that while she may be right that this will not act as a deterrent to young people who are involved in theft of cars, but our view is that in Manitoba where this has been done, some of the reports . . . This is from a May 25 article, 1998, which says: "driving suspensions biggest deterrent for auto theft MPI says in wake of charges".

It seems in areas where they have introduced this kind of an amendment there is a psychology that occurs with young people. Because as you will know — having young people in your family who wait with great anticipation for getting their driver's licence, and having two 13 year olds in our house and realizing already at 13 years of age one of the big highlights in the future that they look forward to is turning 16 and getting their driver's licence. There's a psychology about anything that might take away the opportunity to drive or a driver's licence.

The thought is, and the recommendation from our officials is, that this is something we should try to see whether or not there isn't the same kind of deterrent that has occurred in other areas. We believe it will help. Obviously it's not a panacea for ending car thefts. That's not what we're saying. But we think anything we can do to make our property and homes and communities safer, if this is part of that full-meal deal that we're looking at, then we should take an opportunity to try it.

And I know that the member isn't arguing here that we not make this amendment. He's questioning how it will work. I think we should all wait, see, and judge it once we have implemented it for some months and years.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and you are right. It's not going to hurt anything but the question is, is it going to help anything? Of course my children are considerably older. I can hardly remember the days when they were worried about getting their driver's licence. And perhaps the kids right now that are thinking about this aren't the types of kids that are going to be worried about . . . thinking about stealing a vehicle anyway.

But in terms of paying restitution to SGI, do you foresee a time limit for such restitution orders? Presumably you won't be withholding their driver's licence forever. So can you tell me what time frame you're looking at?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — That's an interesting question but in fact we have the option of holding the licence indefinitely until restitution is made. So this is I think a powerful tool that the people who enforce this Act will have in making sure that restitution takes place.

Ms. Draude: — Will SGI be going after the parents of children if the children don't pay the restitution . . . don't pay?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — No. At this time parents aren't included in the formula.

Ms. Draude: — Is there anything in this legislation regarding paying restitution to people for the cost of their deductibles? Or is it really only going to benefit SGI?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Yes. It could potentially include the deductible if SGI has a claim as well that the opportunity — when there is a position put by SGI that restitution should be made — the deductible could be included in that as well.

Ms. Draude: — Just to clarify, does it mean that only if SGI is involved; it won't help anybody if SGI isn't involved in it.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — If only the deductible is at stake

then there isn't an opportunity because the Act affects SGI. And so if you think about it for a moment there's great logic to this. If SGI can't be the entry point, then there isn't an entry point on the deductible only. So SGI would have to be involved in the restitution process.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. That's all the questions I have. Thank you to your officials.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 15 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 55 — The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — With us today, Mr. Chairman, I have John Malcolm, v.p. (vice-president) of regulatory affairs and corporate counsel in our corporation; as well as Wendell Anderson. Wendell's seated to my left, he's manager of treasury. Seated behind me, Ted Boyle, who's one of our officials at CIC (Crown Investments Corporation).

Clause 1

Mr. Osika: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Mr. Minister, to your officials. And while you have your officials here, I would like to ask a question that . . .

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would ask to have leave to move to the SaskTel Bill, please.

Leave granted.

Bill No. 40 — The SaskTel Pension Implementation Act

Clause 1

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple of questions and welcome to your officials, Mr. Minister.

I'm wondering how the changes introduced in this Bill will affect the former employees under the defined benefit plan?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — My officials tell me that it will not affect former employees.

Ms. Draude: — How will these changes affect the amount contributed by taxpayers?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I want to make it clear that these funds that are being put in don't come out of the tax or General Revenue Fund of course, they come out of the Crown corporation, SaskTel. And so therefore to save tax dollars, money, I would compare it to a pension plan in AT&T or a pension plan in Bell. But the contributions will be in fact fully funded so the principle of how the pension plan will work, it will be in fact fully funded through our contribution along with the employees.

Ms. Draude: — Then can you tell me, Mr. Minister, what the total cost will be?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — This is much to do with administration, not to do with cost. There's no additional change in the cost of the plan. It's simply a matter of administration of bringing it in to the system.

(1545)

Ms. Draude: — With the new pension plan will it allow more funds, more money for retiring SaskTel employees?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Yes, at the present time no. There will be no change, but it does give the flexibility within the plan to make the modifications as the fund increases, decreases, changes. It gives more flexibility to the plan but at the present time no change in the amount that will be paid out.

Ms. Draude: — Do you foresee that similar changes will be made to other plans within the Crown corporation?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well no I can't say that today because it was part of a long system of negotiation requests by the employees, and something that ended up being part of a signed agreement, a negotiated agreement. So for me to say that somehow the other unions will negotiate or that there will be successful negotiation I can't say that. But what I can say is that this is an arrangement whereby the employees and management came to an arrangement on the pension plan that I think works in both of our interests.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and thank you to your officials.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 20 inclusive agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I move report the Bill without amendment, and also if I could, thank my officials for being here today.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 55 — The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — To my left, I've already introduced Ted Boyle, and I take the opportunity to introduce Catherine Wall, with SaskPower, and Catherine you'll have to tell me what your official title is . . . legal counsel for SaskPower.

Clause 1

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to ask a question with respect to SaskPower. It may or may not be directly related to what this specific Bill is before us, however it may have some implications as it applies to some of the facilities that SaskPower services.

I raised an issue sometime ago — and because you have your legal counsel here that perhaps I would like to have it on the

record and hear it directly — where an individual business pays for power that's supplied to their business and the outside facility, the outside line or power pole or whatever has a breakdown or is damaged in one way shape or form.

And it's not — not — the fault of the person who is buying that power, but it's a breakdown in the equipment whether it's accidental or otherwise. Why does that individual not have any recourse for any indemnification for equipment that is ultimately harmed by this power failure, power surge that occurs under any circumstances?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I say to the member opposite that we are responsible for the happening or the situation from the meter into the household or into the business. And on some occasions where there could be the issue of negligence outside of that — say you've got the meter here and your business here — we're responsible in this area, could be responsible out here if there was an issue of negligence somewhere along the line that caused the surge.

Let me use the example of the case that happened recently in Elphinstone. The initial comment from the Power Corporation was that because the problem happened outside of the meter to the residence, that the power company wasn't responsible. And then in checking they found that actually an insulator that should have been removed when the pole was changed, was actually left hanging on the power line unsuspended, bouncing up and down which caused a break in the line that then caused the surge.

It was decided in that case, because of the issue of negligence, that the leaving of that insulator caused the break. We then took responsibility for the surge in. Now this is common standard in the industry across Canada, as I understand the responsibility of power companies. That if there is an issue of negligence on the power company's front outside of the meter to the home or the meter to the business, the power company will pay damage. If there is no negligence, then damage is not paid.

And I say again, that we have a great deal of obvious concern about surges that occur. We do here, I'm sure they do in Manitoba and Alberta. We do what we can to mitigate that.

We encourage homeowners and businesses to put in place equipment that will avoid those kind of surges. Because if you look at your computers nowadays, many of them have this kind of equipment and people buy that as an insurance against these surges occurring, because there's no way, with electrical lightning strikes and this kind of thing, that you know when this might happen.

But we urge our consumers to protect themselves as best they can by becoming involved in equipment that might protect against those kind of surges.

Mr. Osika: — I guess what you're saying then, equipment failure then is not a responsibility of a company. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I say again that if it's an issue of negligence where someone could say we knew the power pole was going to fall down and there was a problem with it, it was leaning, or some problem that was identifiable where it

could be said that negligence was involved, then there would be an argument that payment should be made.

But let's say a tremendous storm comes through an area, Quebec for example in the ice storm; or in this case in our province, a lightning storm; an act of God in some way came and created the problem, in those cases there is no responsibility to the power company.

Now obviously then at the end of the day you would say, well what happens in the case of a huge disaster where a hurricane or a tornado would come through and wreck a whole lot of equipment? Obviously then, through the General Revenue Fund at the federal and provincial level or the municipal level, you would have the option of saying yes, we're going to move in and we're going to take responsibility for that.

But under the Acts that regulate power companies, this clause — defining cause — in terms of paying out settlements as it would relate to surges is a very standard clause my officials tell me.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, just a couple . . . just to clarify again. We really want to clear this up because it's kind of distressing to an individual that appears to suddenly be left to hang out to dry. Where through no fault of his or her own — whether it's a woodpecker or a bird or somebody that cuts through the wire, or the wire gradually, as a result of the weather, being weather beaten, wears out and causes a spark and causes such a spike or a surge — and somebody gets their equipment fried to the tune of lots of money and they have no comeback and no help. Now where do people go?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — In areas where they have competition, for example in Alberta where you'd have two or three different companies, you can change companies, but I would argue the policy's the same in all of them.

And so therefore what the public do in those circumstances in Alberta where there is competition — and will in Saskatchewan, competition eventually will come — what they do is buy insurance by getting surge restrictors and equipment that will protect their . . . And this is left up to the individual because some people will worry about it because they have technical equipment that's very valuable and they want to protect it. And the responsibility then rests with the individual business owner or individual household in order to make that decision whether to invest in this kind of protective equipment.

I think what's important for the Power Corporation is to explain to the public in advance, in the promotions that they do, as to the need for this kind of protection so it doesn't come as a shock, as I think it did in my constituency in Elphinstone, when a block had this kind of a surge. Equipment was hurt and the public thought they were protected and in fact weren't because the surge occurred outside of the meter to the house.

Now in the end there was a settlement because negligence was established that the conductor was left hanging on the wire. Had that conductor not been left and a wind storm had knocked the line down, those residents would have found out that, I think, that they weren't able to collect.

And part of our issue is that we have to do a better job, I think, of explaining what responsibility our power company has in terms of these kinds of surges. Because, I think, the element of surprise and shock is really what you're talking about, sir, and what we should try to avoid by talking to people if they're buying expensive equipment. If they have hog barns and these kinds of things, we should be telling them clearly when we do the hook-up of what is our responsibility as a power company and what is their responsibility as an individual business person or an individual householder.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you. Since that occurrence in your constituency, has there been a promotion to inform and advise people? Or is it just a matter of, well, I hope people have learned from this unfortunate incident and that everybody else now knows what they have to do because we won't protect them unless there is some negligence. And the negligence . . . well, however, you discovered that there was negligence. But it still happened and people were subsequently compensated.

So has there been any advertising done?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Yes, we're doing a bit of a promotion now, and with your comments, we'll look at doing even a better job of that.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, and I don't want to belabour this. And it's fortunate for those people that it was found that there was negligence, so now we're going to inform a lot of people. But it's unfortunate for those people that were not properly informed previously, that faithfully paid their bills with a high cost of power for their businesses, and this happened as a result of something they had no control over whatsoever.

And now they're told, well it's too bad, you know we're not responsible. It had something to do with bad equipment and equipment's not our problem; it's your problem, and you should have protected yourself some other way for something that we're supplying you, for power we're supplying you.

It just bothers me that someone is now out of pocket and there isn't anything going to be done for that individual. And there was some serious dollars. And it just does not seem quite right to me that that person should be out because of, through no fault of his own, he suffered this loss.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I think you've done an excellent job of making your point. And one thing we're finding as we move from a monopoly, where we don't have to do a lot of communication I think because your customers are there, that when we get into a competitive market-place communication becomes much more important.

So I think you've made your point in a very able manner and we'll certainly take it into consideration.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and thank you to your officials.

(1600)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chair, I would move we report Bill No. 55 without amendment.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 54 — The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chair, seated to my left, Ted Boyle, who I introduced earlier; and to my left, Myron Gulka-Teichko, legal counsel for CIC.

Clause 1

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And welcome Minister and officials. Minister, I know that one of the huge issues that is circulated around the Crowns, going back to the task committee and a lot of those issues, the whole issue of appointments on board of directors and who should be there.

Minister, this Act goes part of the way at least in terms of saying that the requirement of cabinet or CIC to appoint ministers on individual Crowns is removed, is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — What it says is that legally you do not have to have ministers as Chair of the boards. It does not say that you have to have them off, but it would be our intention to remove ministers. But it gives a flexibility under the Act to be able to manage your Crown corporation boards without ministers on the boards.

Mr. Gantefer: — So it is solely enabling and is not necessarily a commitment on the government's part. Minister, I think in some of our conversations in the past — I gathered the clear impression from yourself — is that it was your intent as the Minister responsible for CIC, I think your words were, "to depoliticize" the appointment process on the Crowns. Did I understand your comments and commitment correctly?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — We believe that the perception that the public may have — and this was during the 1996 review that my colleague from Rosetown so ably conducted across the province — indicated that there was a wish to have less political involvement on the boards of our Crowns. Our response to that was, in June of 1997, to announce that we would be moving this amendment that would give the flexibility to government to remove ministers from Crowns.

Mr. Gantefer: — I recognize that you've now created the flexibility to do it, what I'm asking from you is that . . . your commitment to indeed do that.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Yes it is our intention. Various members of our cabinet have spoken to this issue, including the Premier, that we intend to remove officially ministers from the boards of directors of Crowns. And in a balanced way though, keep ministers on the umbrella holding company, CIC.

And so this is an attempt to strike balance between the needs of having influence in the direction which we believe because we are the people elected to run the Crowns, but not in a day-to-day

operation or local decision making within the Crowns.

So it's tried to achieve the balance of direction in a general way within our Crowns which we believe we have the responsibility for. But on a day-to-day operation of buying computers, or looking at who's staffing and sitting at which desk, I feel quite honestly no responsibility for that once you get below the level of CEO (chief executive officer) of each of the corporations. So it's an attempt to remove any perception or reality that there may be political influence within our Crown corporations.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Minister. Minister, we could speak probably at great length on accountability and responsibility and how those different, various lines flow.

From what you're telling me, you are clearly saying that CIC, as the umbrella body if you like, representing the ownership of the Crowns still clearly intends to exercise its responsibility and you as the Chair would be ultimately responsible for the operation of the Crowns. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Ultimately we are trying to move towards industry standards. For example, there are many large corporations, billion-dollar corporations that will have a holding company that will have responsibility for setting direction for the subsidiary corporations. And in reality, the holding company has responsibility overall for the corporate structure of the companies that fall under their mandate. But it's a very narrow function.

It's very narrow in the sense that you will set direction. The other corporations will appear before you to give direction, design, the vision for the future, but when it comes to the day-to-day operation — general operation — of the corporation, the holding company does not have responsibility for that, except to monitor and make decisions on a regular basis as to whether the direction, the performance, the profit margin, the rates are set in a proper manner.

So I would expect when the shareholder meetings are held, which we intend to start doing in the near future within our Crowns, there will be still the responsibility of the minister who needs to explain some small portion. But the vast majority of explaining and working with the public, if the corporation is running right — and I say this whether it's a public or private corporation — should come from the managers and the officials from within that particular corporation.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Minister. In trying to separate the lines of authority and responsibility and I clearly hear you saying you're . . . CIC and the ministers are not going to be involved with minute types of decisions.

The board of directors of each of the Crowns that you're envisaging will they be responsible for more serious — solely responsible I should ask — for, for example, the appointment of the chief executive officer?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Under the scenario we're working under now — and of course this is our mandate as the government in charge of the corporations — would be that our responsibility would end at the level of CEO (chief executive officer).

So if someone says what about the individual who sits in the vice-president's chair at Power. I would say with legitimacy that under the management scheme that we have, that is the responsibility of the CEO and the board of directors of SaskPower; that would not be the responsibility of cabinet or of a cabinet minister.

When it came to the performance of the CEO, that's my job to explain and give them bonuses on the occasions that they do the very good job that they generally do. On those rare occasions where you have to deal with a CEO that may not be living up to the performance expectations, that would remain the responsibility of . . . to use that as the example.

Mr. Gantefer: — So clearly then, you're going to retain as a function of cabinet — as you said the majority of members of the CIC board are going to be cabinet members — you're still going to retain within that body the appointment of the CEOs of the individual Crowns, that's correct.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Yes, we will retain that authority and the appointment of the board of directors. And some will argue that government that is elected should give that authority of the appointment of boards or CEOs to somebody else. But quite honestly I believe fundamentally in our democracy, and this is true at the federal level as well as any provinces I've checked into, that the appointment of boards of directors is done at the cabinet level, and the check and balance on that of course is the election every four years.

Now there may be a more perfect system and obviously there are many changes that have to go on because this process never ends. But at the present time our responsibility is the appointment and the final sign-off on CEOs, the appointments of boards of directors.

However, in approving the appointment of boards of directors we are making sure they have proper training. We have contracted the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon now where board member appointments and those people appointed go and take training as to what are the fiduciary responsibility of a board member. And this is a huge improvement. Also picking people with industry-specific backgrounds as much as possible to make sure, and strengthen the boards of directors of our Crowns.

Mr. Gantefer: — Well, Minister, I mean for all the rhetoric about how you're depoliticizing the Crowns, you're still going to retain within the authority of cabinet the ability to appoint all the CEOs, so you haven't depoliticized that in any way at all. You're going to still be able to appoint all the boards of directors. And you may or may not, at your discretion, decide to indeed appoint cabinet ministers as boards of directors. You have now at least gone a little small step in saying they at least have to get some training in terms of exercising their fiduciary responsibility.

But really you're still having all of the real authority vested within cabinet. What you've done is almost a similar move to what you've done with the health boards. You just sort of remove yourself; the illusion or the impression of backing off a bit so that when the trouble hits then you can sort of say, oh well, not me, not me, it must be someone else.

And, Minister, I don't think that that's at all recognizing the needs of what the task committee had found out in their deliberations about depoliticizing the Crowns. I'm sure you would agree that there must be a better way of coming up with a system that gives not only the impression of a move towards depoliticizing it but takes concrete steps in order to do that. And I wonder if you've considered any other options?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I say to the member opposite that this is exactly the debate that has gone on across the province, and to a large extent right here in the Assembly and in the committee that you serve on, the Crown Corporations Committee. And I think it's interesting that this is really all about balance.

And the member for the Battlefords would argue that we should leave ministers on the board of directors. That member of the opposition from the Liberal Party if he were here today . . . I know he would because he has made that statement publicly. You . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. Order, order. Now the minister will know that you cannot refer to whether someone is in the chambers or not.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to say that the member from Battlefords has taken the position that ministers should be on the board. And you, in a very legitimate way . . . and I believe it to be legitimate because that point of view is held by a number of people in our political party as well — that the Liberals say we should keep them on.

Some of our party members, some of our party members say that they should be removed, some say they should. We should go as far as you are saying that we should take even bigger steps to remove ourselves. And I know what you're leading to — you would like us to get right out of the business. And if you're being honest today, you would say, yes, you should get right out of the business, you should sell them.

And that's legitimate. The argument of privatization is a legitimate, economic argument. I don't deny that one bit; I just don't happen to agree with it. And your party policy clearly states in your policy that if you were elected, the first thing you would do is privatize SaskTel. And I appreciate the honesty of that statement. It's a legitimate argument — many areas have gone to that.

The Liberal opposition has not stated their position on privatization nearly as clearly, but on the other hand, in Ottawa, they keep very clear control over Crown corporations like AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) that do investments around the world; and they're proud of them. And so this is a very fascinating debate that goes on about where governments, through their Crown corporations, should position themselves in their economy.

(1615)

What I'm saying today is that we are moving to take the politics, if there was politics on the board of directors of our specific Crowns, by removing ministers. And you're telling me that we're not going far enough, and I understand that to be the

case that that's your position. But I don't think I can satisfy your position because I know your position is to privatize the Crowns.

And so I think we understand; we agree on many things. But on the issue of Crowns, I don't think that the members on this side of the treasury benches can satisfy your needs, because in your own policy book, your needs are to privatize the Crowns.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I think you certainly, as you usually do, misconstrue exactly what we're saying.

First of all, first of all — and let me clearly put on the record what we're saying — first of all, we're saying that in order to even make an assessment about the future role of the Crowns, they have to be given the opportunity to function properly, that they have to be given the opportunity to exercise their responsibility independently.

And what's so upsetting to people in this province right now, they've come to see the Crowns as nothing more than being an exercise in a political arm of the government in power. And that isn't being fair to the Crowns in any stretch of the imagination.

So first of all, Mr. Minister, we have to give the Crowns the opportunity to operate properly. And that is why I think it's so important that we do depoliticize the Crowns in the first instance so that they be given the opportunity to function in the service of the people of Saskatchewan irrespective of who their political masters are. That's the first step in the process.

And if after they have that opportunity to do that it could be clearly demonstrated that it be in the best interests of Saskatchewan people to look at the idea of privatization, we're not afraid to look at that.

But at this stage it's academic because the Crowns are not being allowed to function as they truly have the potential to function, Mr. Minister. And that's why I think it's so important to depoliticize the Crowns so they can be independently evaluated.

For example, in the United States their systems of looking at appointments that are made by Executive Council or nominations for appointments on boards or various things, that these individuals would come before a standing committee of one form or another in order to be questioned and looked at in terms of their credentials, their experience, their outlook as to how they would serve if appointed to the board.

Would not it be a good idea, Mr. Minister, for Executive Council to nominate people to the board, including the CEO, and perhaps have the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations actually interview and visit with the people that are nominated to satisfy this Assembly that you're operating independently?

The government still has the majority membership on that committee, so in essence you have not relinquished anything. That's why I'm asking: have you considered any other alternatives except this system which merely seems to be window-dressing?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I want to say to the member opposite again that we had hearings across the province in 1996 that came to some, I think, very positive conclusions about where we should take our Crowns. And there were many people involved.

And since then I have gone out and talked to hundreds of people at many meetings across the province — chamber of commerce, REDAs (regional economic development authority), aboriginal people who talk about the Crowns — and I don't find that their comments, while they may be legitimate to a small percentage of the public, that the Crowns are ill-run and are bad and all of these negative things, that is not the mood of the majority of the public at the meetings I go to.

In fact, they're very proud of their Crowns. They think they're well run and they want them to run better even than they are now. I think that would be much more accurate about what the public thinks about their Crowns. They're not your Crowns; they're not my Crowns. This \$8 billion or \$7 billion in assets belong to the people of the province.

And whether I was here or not, we would still have Crowns. Why is that? Because the vast majority of the people have said they want their politicians to keep the Crowns. In fact the party you now belong to, the Conservative Party, was defeated on the very issue of attempting to privatize.

So politically, I think you're on the wrong track. But I do give you respect, for even though you're wrong in relation to the public of continuing to state that you want to privatize the Crowns, that deserves respect because at least you speak your mind even though it's a bad political move.

But where I come to really disagree with you is this idea that many people in the right wing — the extreme, radical, right wing — of this province believe, and I'm surprised that you reflect that view, that somehow a model from the United States is what we should be doing here.

And whether it's medicare or whether it's Crown corporations, you want to go to the American system. I have great respect for our American cousins. I worked as a customs officer on the border for many years. I understand the American system and I much respect what they do.

But I do not want to change our system that we've spent a whole century building to go to the American model. And we had those kind of people in the House. At one time when I was a member sitting here in the treasury benches, Dennis Ham from Swift Current and Dick Collver said legitimately we should go to the American system.

He went one step further than you. He said we should give up Canada. He created a party called the Unionest Party — maybe that's what you're referring to here. Maybe you'll jump from the Liberals to the Conservatives and then to the Unionest Party.

But I want to say to the member opposite, that will not be accepted by the public of Saskatchewan either. And it's not far-fetched because we had people leaving the Conservative Party before while I sat here in the House — Dick Collver and

Dennis Ham going to the Unionest Party. And so I say to you your argument does have merit with a small cluster of people but it's not mainstream.

Mr. Gantefer: — Well, Mr. Minister, you, Mr. Minister, may seem that you can get away with exaggerating the truth and misrepresenting what is obvious what I have just said, but fortunately I have a great deal of faith in the vision and the wisdom of the people of Saskatchewan out there who are probably watching this performance today.

Mr. Minister, you know that everything you said is a total misrepresentation and the people out there know, so I'm not really worried about your allegations. What I'm seriously trying to do is offer constructive alternatives and ideas for how our Crowns can be made better.

That's not to say they're performing at an abysmal rate. It means that any organization, if it's willing to throw off the shackles of your political nonsense, can probably do better. If we allow them the opportunity to do better, they probably can do better.

And that's what I'm challenging you to do, Mr. Minister. The people out there know that's what I'm challenging you to do.

And, Mr. Minister, you know that this hasn't gone far enough. It's a step in the right direction, I'll grant you that, but it is not enough. It will not address the concerns that people have of the way you and your party politicize the Crowns and it still leaves that suspicion that the Crowns are not able to function independently, Minister.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, I was attending some correspondence in my home constituency when I heard the Deputy Premier desperately wanting the benefit of Liberal views on our Crown corporations, and I couldn't resist accommodating him.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I look at this Bill I can understand why the Deputy Premier needs some Liberal input into our Crown corporations. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I look at this Bill this explains why we have a Bill on the order paper to forbid foreign adventures and taking equity positions around the world without a full debate in this legislature and a full public debate.

So we already have that Bill before the legislature. We also have an amendment coming up this afternoon which I will read into the record, that this Act will come into force, that is the one now before this House, after the Government of Saskatchewan establishes a fair and impartial rate review mechanism with authority to regulate electric power rates under Saskatchewan Power, telephone service rates established by SaskTel, and natural gas service rates established by SaskEnergy.

Now I think I can very simply state the Liberal position on our Crown corporations and it is this, Mr. Speaker. Well, you can often find it's best to explain your position by explaining what it is not. What do we not agree with?

Well one, we don't agree with using the Crown for back-door taxation, building up large slush funds to do whatever with. We

do not agree with using our Crown corporations to finance forest boondoggles. We do not agree with a fire sale of our Crown corporations, as some might suggest. We do not agree with using our Crown corporations in the way of finding a safe landing and a job for someone's campaign manager.

We would say if we are going to have multi-billion dollar corporations they must be run by people with an expertise in these utilities. And I am not sure that having expertise and running NDP campaigns or expertise in raising NDP campaign funds — impressive and all that that is — I'm not sure that's experience for running a major utility. I mean my hat is off to anyone who is able to convince the people of this province to vote NDP. They must have a lot of talent, but whether that talent and ability is the talent and ability we need to run a power corporation, I suggest is another matter.

So I say, Mr. Chairman, that I hadn't actually planned on entering this debate but the invitation from the Deputy Premier was simply too much to resist so I thank him for asking me to come. And I say if he wants to know the Liberal position on the Crown corporations, it is to get back to why Liberal governments in the early days of this province established the Crown corporations in the first place — and that is to provide service to the people of Saskatchewan at reasonable cost; it is not to find jobs for party supporters, it is not for back-door taxation, it is not to finance foreign travel, and we do not favour dismantling them in a fire sale at the first available price to the first available purchaser, whoever that may be.

We do submit, however, Mr. Chairman, that if we want confidence by the people of Saskatchewan, we'd need two things. One, there will not be foreign equity investments without a full debate in this House. And two, all rate increases will be subject to some mechanism that will assure us that the rate increases are fair and equitable. Some mechanisms such as every other jurisdiction in this continent has, but not Saskatchewan.

And I had talked to some of the officials especially of SaskEnergy, and I agree that sometimes rate increases are necessary. It's simply a matter of passing through changes in the price of natural gas. I think we appreciate that. But the fact remains, Mr. Chairman, until there is a rate review mechanism, suspicion will remain and cynicism will remain.

And when we see a rate increase followed by announcements of record profits followed by announcements that we're going to invest 31 million in some country nobody ever heard of before, this feeds cynicism and this cynicism can only be met by a rate review mechanism — and that will restore confidence in our Crown corporations.

So I really encourage the Deputy Premier that, when we get a new permanent head of SaskPower, it isn't some former campaign manager. I really encourage you to accept my amendment that there be a rate review mechanism, and I really encourage you to vote in favour of the Liberal Bill that says, we won't have foreign equity investments without debate in this House.

And finally, I assure the Deputy Premier that the Liberal opposition continues to believe that our Crown corporations can

serve public policy goals, can serve the continued development of this province and the future, as they have in the past, and we will oppose the fire sale of our Crown corporations.

And with that, I thank the Deputy Premier for inviting the Liberal Party to join this debate.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 12 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 13

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to move an amendment to clause 13 which reads as follows. We:

Amend clause 13 of the printed Bill by deleting everything after the phrase:

"13 This Act comes into force" and replace it with the following:

"after the Government of Saskatchewan establishes a fair and impartial rate review mechanism with authority to regulate:

- a) *the electric power rates charged by Saskatchewan Power Corporation, (SaskPower);*
- b) *the telephone service rates charged by Saskatchewan Telecommunications, (SaskTel); and*
- c) *the natural gas service rates charged by SaskEnergy Incorporated (SaskEnergy)."*

I respectfully submit that this amendment will bring Saskatchewan into line with every other jurisdiction on our continent and this amendment will go a long way to restoring confidence in our Crown corporations. And I encourage all members of this House to support this very desperately-needed reform.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1630)

The Chair: — The Chair would like to take a few minutes to look at the amendment seeing as we haven't had prior notice of it. The Chair has found that the amendment is in order and will be put before the committee.

The division bells rang from 4:34 p.m. until 4:35 p.m.

Amendment negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 9

Krawetz	Toth	Draude
Gantefoer	Osika	Hillson
Aldridge	Belanger	Goohsen

Nays — 22

Wiens	MacKinnon	Lingenfelter
Shillington	Atkinson	Johnson

Goulet
Bradley
Scott
Stanger
Kasperski
Thomson

Kowalsky
Trew
Serby
Jess
Langford

Crofford
Renaud
Hamilton
Wall
Murrell

English was inappropriate. I would like to introduce "a guest," being the only person in the gallery.

I'd like to introduce to you Gwen Falconer who is joining us today. I noticed her actually here earlier today, just before we adjourned for tea, with a school group and unfortunately I didn't get a chance to introduce her then. Gwen is a regular follower of this House, I think in part now, because her son is working here also as a tour guide so she takes a particular interest. Her son, Blair, works here. Could you join me in welcoming Gwen; I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

Clause 13 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 45 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 1998

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

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

Bill No. 40 — The SaskTel Pension Implementation Act

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I move 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.

Bill No. 55 — The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I move 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.

Bill No. 54 — The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I move 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.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

The Deputy Chair: — Why is the hon. member for Regina South on his feet?

Mr. Thomson: — With leave, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has corrected me to tell me my

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1645)

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Women's Secretariat Vote 41

The Chair: — Before I call the first subvote, I'll invite the minister to introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I want to introduce, to my immediate right, Faye Rafter, who is the executive coordinator of the Women's Secretariat. And just sitting behind her is Joan Pederson, the assistant executive coordinator. Thank you.

Subvote (WS01)

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. And welcome, Madam Minister, and welcome to your officials again.

Madam Minister, there are a number of items we'd like to discuss this afternoon, but I'd like to start with the actual issue of gender equity. And I'd like to begin by saying that in terms of achieving gender equity in social and economic terms, which is one of the goals of the secretariat, I believe the way we'll get there is not through legislation but by government setting an example and allowing people to actually achieve of what their ... their own potential.

Madam Minister, can you tell me how many women there are currently as deputy ministers in your government?

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Chair, to that answer is, there's two deputy ministers. And there's also two — would be heads of the Women's Secretariat and also of the Public Service Commission — that are women.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, so that's two out of how many — probably 60 or 70 or 80 people. Is that how many deputy ministers and heads do you have, of departments, do you have?

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Chair, there would be 13 departments, so we'd have 13 deputy ministers, different heads of different agencies and so on. We don't have all of that data here.

What we do have as of December '97, that women in

management positions within government is at a percentage of 35.6 per cent. And that has been improving. The number of women that we do have in government is 54.7 per cent. So there is been a gradual increase though of women in management positions within government.

The Deputy Chair: — Order, order, order. Members, the din in the Chamber is getting a bit loud. I ask members to either tone it way down or take their conversations outside. That's for all members.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. So what you're saying is there's 13 heads of departments. Actually I'm noticing there's basically, there's about 24 different departments, isn't there? And out of that there's only four heads that are heads that are women. Is that correct?

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — I think yes there would be, what I had said, there would be four that would be heads — either deputy ministers or heads of departments, or like I said, the Women's Secretariat. I think the one piece here on it is that women are moving into more management positions within government.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, if we're going to look specifically at out-of-scope employees making greater than \$50,000 a year, what proportion of these employees would be men and what proportion would be women?

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Chair, on that question we would have to get back to the member on that because we just don't have the information on it.

Ms. Draude: — Okay, Madam Minister, just so that . . . then so I can clarify this. I know there are 24 departments and there's deputy ministers and there's heads of departments, and out of that we have a great fine number of four of them are women. And we don't know how many of the out-of-scope employees making greater than \$50,000 a year are women.

And I'd like . . . Maybe the minister can share with the Assembly then any statistics she's aware of which reflect the government's commitment to advancing qualified women to senior levels of government.

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Chair, to your . . . to your question, I should say. There has been a steady increase of women, as I'd said earlier, in management levels. And we've improved from 25 per cent in 1990 to 35.2 per cent in 1998.

And since the spring of 1992 we've approximately 43 per cent of appointments to boards, agencies, and commissions have been women. And also 50.6 per cent of those elected and appointed to district health boards were women.

So I think within policy, within the way we do job search, in the way that government is trying to lead by example, and I also believe the way that we've worked on pay equity through a policy framework through government departments, agencies, this is also a way for the government to lead in trying to address this issue, and we still need to continue to work on it.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, I hear that the word "appointed" comes up quite frequently. And I understand this is

a real catch-22 how you get . . . do we have to appoint the women to the positions or do we have . . . Is there a way to make it possible for them to apply for these jobs and get them because of their own current standing or because of their own capabilities?

I also have a question regarding a current initiative being undertaken by the Department of Labour looking at balancing family in the workplace. I presume that because women tend to be the primary care-givers, they'll be a large focus of this study. I've been informed by someone working in one of the Social Services departments that the government refuses to allow some departments to move to a 36-hour work week, in other words every second Friday off. This is a normal thing to have happen in Crown corporations and for many department employees, and it gives people the opportunity to spend more time with their families.

Why is the government launching an expensive review and then hindering this kind of solution? Again I'd say if it's the government's role to change the work week to assist in balancing families and work, they'd have to lead by example. My question is, what initiative has the government undertaken to address the difficulties some parents are experiencing balancing work and family?

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Chair, the government's commitment is very strong on this type of initiative, on trying to balance family and workplace. And a lot of these are negotiated settlements and so that . . . I do know that through SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union), our union with government employees, that there is in that settlement — a flexible work time is allowed and I think that's one piece.

Certainly the initiative on balancing work and family — actually I just attended a meeting last night on that in a community, well in the community of Weyburn — and I think again there is a lot of information that needs to go out to employees. And people had a lot of good discussion around the importance of this initiative and were very, very pleased to be participating in it. And so I believe our government is very committed to balancing work and family and we should be leading as a government.

We've also implemented changes in The Labour Standards Act to reduce qualifying periods for maternity leave, for parental adoption leaves. I think all of those pieces are important parts of trying to balance work and family, things like flex time and stop-times and job-sharing. Those kinds of things again are important things, which we think are an important part of that — balancing work in families. But I think this initiative right now is an initiative that cuts across our whole province — is a very important initiative for all of us — to look at what we need to be doing both as a government but also on individual good examples throughout our communities.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Deputy Chair, Madam Minister, this program that's brought forward is — I believe that the spirit behind it is correct — but I do imagine that if most people were honest they would tell you most of the problems come from the fact that they don't have enough money, they have to go to work. By the time they pay their taxes and pay their babysitter and pay for the vehicle to go to work, there just isn't enough

cash in their pocket and I think that that basically will be the root of all the problems.

Madam Minister, the government allocated — Deputy Chair, Madam Minister — the government allocated a million dollars last year for special projects over a two-year period, and I believe that about 750,000 of it went to Internet hook-up. And at that time when we've been discussing it, it was considered that this program would probably benefit rural women. I think we've had this discussion earlier where we differ on whether this has been a great advantage for rural women.

But I guess one of the questions I have first of all is: what costs were involved in administering this program and having the minister travel around and giving out every one of the cheques that these different organizations that applied for a grant were given.

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Well I think if I got — if I'm to be clear, Mr. Chair, on the question — is that you want to know the cost of my going out to present the presentations on this? I just want to be clear that that was the question.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Deputy Chair, the cost for the minister to travel around, but also for her officials and the staff in her department and the staff in constituencies, the press conferences, and what it cost to actually go out and tell people about this program, and actually dispensing the cheques that were given out

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Yes, Mr. Chair, so it's been clarified. Because I wanted to say that I'd actually attended two, and one was in Regina and one was in Prince Albert. Overall though, on the cheque presentations and what was done in transportation costs and so on, it looks to be around \$2,000, \$2,300 is what was spent on that.

I do also want to just add that this program had more overwhelming acceptance than what we ever, ever did think. And people are still writing us and letting us know of all of the ways in which they can utilize the connection, the kind of training; what it will mean to these women's groups right across this province has been very, very positive.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Deputy Chair, Madam Minister, excuse me, I think we may not be on the same wave length when we discuss the cost. You said \$2,300. Now I would think then that we have travel time, we have actual travel expenses for going out with the cheques, we have press conferences, we have people figuring out and making arrangements to talk . . . to meet with different groups to have them there.

Everybody who spends time on making sure these cheques are sent out are working . . . They could be doing something that would have been their original job. Surely there must be secretaries and people running around, but their time has got to be worth something to your department. Are you figuring out the time is worth \$10 an hour? I guess I have a difficult time seeing how you can administer the number of cheques that I have seen being sent out, for \$2,300.

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — I guess what I could say on that is that we don't have the time . . . I mean the people are doing their

jobs in communication and those pieces are paid for that. Now we do not have a breakdown on how much time it took to organize this.

What I gave you is the breakdown of what the transportation costs, the travel costs were, if there was room rentals, refreshment, anything like that had been provided in any of these presentations; that is in this figure, and the photographer and so on. So that is in.

But as far as the other people that are working within our department, this would be part of their job through communications and through the work that they do. And that's not broken down.

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

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Chair, I would like to draw your attention to the clock — it now being 5 o'clock.

The Deputy Chair: — Time has been called. The committee will rise and report progress.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

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