

The Assembly met at 10 a.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 farmers concerned about the farm safety net program. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to demand that the federal government work with Saskatchewan to put in place a farm aid package that provides real relief to those who need it, and that the provincial government develop a long-term farm safety net program as it promised to do when it cancelled GRIP against the wishes of farmers.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the communities of Langenburg and MacNutt.

I so present.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well to present a petition regarding the farm safety net program. Reading the petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to demand that the federal government work with Saskatchewan to put in place a . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Now the Chair is having some difficulty being able to hear the petition being presented and I ask for co-operation from members on both sides of the House.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll begin by reading the prayer again:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to demand that the federal government work with Saskatchewan to put in place a farm aid package that provides a real relief to those who need it, and that the provincial government develop a long-term farm safety net program as it promised to do when it cancelled GRIP against the wishes of farmers.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition I present is signed by individuals from the Saltcoats area.

**Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Speaker, I present petitions this morning from residents of the Northwest asking that the provincial government move to alleviate the unsafe highway system to the

entrance of the city of North Battleford in order to alleviate the congestion.

Your petitioners come from North Battleford, Battleford, Cando, Mayfair, and Medstead.

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens that are concerned about our highway system in the province. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to call on federal and provincial governments to dedicate a significantly greater portion of the fuel tax revenues toward road maintenance and construction so Saskatchewan residents may have a safe highway system that meets their needs.

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

Those who've signed these petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Avonlea and Kayville.

I so present.

### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Clerk:** — According to order the petitions presented at the last sitting have been reviewed and found to be in order. Pursuant to rule 12(7) these petitions are hereby received.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure that I invite hon. members to join me in welcoming 20 adults who are in your gallery and in the top two rows of your gallery, Mr. Speaker. They are here to observe the proceedings for a while and tour the building. They're accompanied by their teachers, Warren Gervais and Linda Holowaty.

I invite all members to join me in welcoming these students to the Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's just a wonderful pleasure to be able to introduce to you and through you to all my colleagues, 81 grade 4 students seated in the west gallery. Mr. Speaker, these students are part of a partnership with SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation). They and their school have helped to develop the Web site for the legislative building project, and they've been involved in the history of Regina and are doing more work on that as well.

They are accompanied today by teachers, Betty-Ann Faber, Kathy Achtemichuk, and Kate MacLean. And risking someone's embarrassment, Mr. Speaker, I also have to say that they have among them a member of my family. And I so rarely get to introduce family here that I wanted to also say a warm welcome to Lauren Shiplack who's with them today.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming 81 students from St. Marguerite Bourgeoys School in the constituency of Wascana Plains.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature my nephews. These are my sister's children and her husband James Lokken, and I'm going to ask them to stand up so that you can see them when I introduce them. So James Lokken and in his arms is the youngest, Knut, and then Nils, Olaf, and Torbjorn. They live in the constituency of Saskatoon Nutana.

And accompanying them are their friends from here in Regina who are people who live in my constituency, and that's Sylvie Roy, along with her children Gabe, and Orion, Leilani, and Angela.

Let's all give them a warm welcome.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members in the legislature a young constituent of mine who is in the west gallery with the students from St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, young Stephen Yee. Stephen I see sitting there. Stephen is a grade 2 student at St. Mary's and is here with his aunt to get out and see the legislature, so please welcome Stephen to the legislature this afternoon.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Flavel:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to introduce to the Legislative Assembly through you and to the other members a farmer from the Craven area that's sitting in the west gallery this after . . . or this morning. He's a community leader, Mr. Alfred Wagner. He's been a Sask Pool delegate and a community leader out in that area and still is. And I would like to ask all the members of the Assembly to please welcome him here this morning.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Scott:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you a couple of young ladies in the west gallery, Lori Currie and her daughter Jackie. Jackie is visiting from Saskatoon and with Jackie is her friend Tim Funk. And I would ask all members to welcome them here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### First Nations/Department of Education Agreement

**Mr. Flavel:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the honour of attending the signing of a historic agreement. This agreement between the Sask Central School Division, the Gordon, Muskowekwan and Day Star First Nations and Saskatchewan Education established a unique partnership arrangement at the George Gordon Education

Centre.

The Gordon Education Centre is located on reserve land and owned by the Gordon's First Nation. It is administered like any other school in the Sask Central School Division and the local band education council has the same voice as other school councils in the division.

This agreement allows the bands to make their own decisions about off-reserve educational options for their children. This partnership also shows the government's commitment to quality education for everyone. The Department of Education has provided \$30,000 to the Sask Central School Division, double last year's amount, to provide support to Indian and Metis children in the school division.

Our government believes that we can best meet the needs of our children by working together. Together we can equip our young people with the skills, knowledge, and abilities they need to succeed in school and later in their adult lives.

I would like to congratulate Chief Brian McNabb, Gordon First Nation Chief Lloyd Kinequon, Chief Ernest Moise, and the Sask Central School Division Chair, Gary Orthner, for this historic agreement.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Ace Pilot Award

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently the Canadian Aerial Applicators Association presented their 1999 awards at a function in the city of Winnipeg.

A young pilot from Invermay was presented with the Ace Award. Jeff Dean, the son of Richard and Irene Dean, is just 22 years old but has been a pilot since 1995 but only an agricultural pilot for one year.

His employer, Michael Yaholnitsky, of Miccar Aerial Applicators indicates, and I quote:

Because of his great regard for safety for himself, his co-workers, and the environment, Jeff completed his first year as an ag pilot with no drift claims, no accidents or incidents, and no complaints from customers or co-workers.

Mr. Speaker, Jeff has proved himself quite a tenacious young man.

The Dean family lives just a short distance from our farm and I have watched him grow up and become the fine gentleman that he is.

I also note, besides his parents, Richard and Irene, that his grandparents, David and Doreen Dean of Canora must be extremely proud of Jeff.

Congratulations to Jeff Dean, winner of the 1999 Ace Pilot Award.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Soil Conservation Week

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week has been proclaimed Soil Conservation Week in Saskatchewan, a week to recognize the importance of protecting the thin lifeline of topsoil on which so much of our lives and livelihoods depend. This week is also designed to recognize what is being done in protection and education in order to continue and improve our stewardship of the soil.

Also, Mr. Speaker, yesterday was Earth Day, a day set aside for us to realize that this earth is ours to protect.

Saskatchewan producers lead the way in protecting the soil. Nearly 25 per cent of Saskatchewan's cultivated acres are seeded using low-disturbance seeding techniques and many producers use tillage practices that actually improve the land.

The Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association deserves our thanks for its work in creating awareness of conservation concepts and practices. Mr. Speaker, knowledge of the needs for conservation should begin early. And I congratulate the departments of Agriculture and Education for developing soil conservation kits as part of the grades 5 and 8 science and social studies curriculum.

Education, public awareness, sound practice, all are necessary to preserve the earth that nurtures us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### New Telephone Exchange for Ormiston

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week the government released its annual reports for Crown corporations. Once again they're back at it — helping the NDP (New Democratic Party) collect taxes through the back door.

Mr. Speaker, in their efforts to raise taxes and dole out NDP patronage, the Crowns have lost their sense of purpose. It's time the Crowns returned to providing universal access to service, jobs for Saskatchewan people, and ensuring that dividends are created that are used to provide health care and to help fix our roads in this province.

In my own constituency, Mr. Speaker, there's a recent example of how the NDP-run Crown corporations have forgotten their sense of purpose. SaskTel offered 88 of my constituents a chance to decide what they wanted done with the Ormiston phone exchange which straddles Thunder Creek and several other constituencies. They asked whether they wanted to keep it or move to the Assiniboia exchange.

Well just like every other Crown consultation, especially rate reviews, the NDP limits the options. Despite the fact that most of these Thunder Creek residents do their business in Moose Jaw or Avonlea, they weren't given the option of moving to those exchanges.

Well I recently wrote them and I gave them another ballot with the option of Moose Jaw and other exchanges, and among

dozens of residents who responded the vast majority of those preferred the Moose Jaw option and I'll send these letters over to the minister.

And in closing, it's time this NDP government got the Crowns back to doing the job of serving and listening to its customers. Please listen before the . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, the hon. member's time has expired.

### Canada Book Day

**Ms. Murray:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to propose a new kind of celebration. Just as we give chocolates to our loved ones on Valentine's Day, I propose that all members give Canadian books to friends and family today as it is Canada Book Day, Mr. Speaker.

In a world of the Internet, on-the-spot television news, and increasingly Hollywood-style entertainment, a book is a welcome relief from the daily barrage of often useless information.

Today is a chance to recognize the writers, editors, producers, and sellers of quality Canadian books. The best way to congratulate these Canadians is to purchase their books and show your support close to home. A book day fair held tonight at the MacKenzie Art Gallery will include writing workshops, music, Aboriginal storytelling, and readings by local authors.

But the most important goal of this day is to stimulate our thoughts, Mr. Speaker. Reading encourages intellectual fitness and opens the windows of our minds to new ideas and exploration. Canada has been the breeding ground for many famous writers in the past, and it is up to us to promote Canadian writers of the present.

Please join me in supporting the goals of Canada Book Day today and every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Prince Albert Business Awards

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At the risk of offending members of the opposition who hate hearing good news, I want to this morning in my place congratulate a number of Prince Albert businesses who were recipients of the awards at the ninth annual Samuel McLeod Business Dinner held Wednesday, and I was pleased to be able to attend.

I want to make a special comment to those who received the awards under the different titles. Job creation, Green Tree Fencing Supplies Ltd.. The legacy award went to Art Hauser, P.A. Bottlers. New business was presented to the Academy of Learning. The service industry award was received by Hunt's Foods (1985) Ltd. Marketing, to Leisure Sports, Prince Albert (1985) Ltd. Investment, to Mann-Northway Auto Complex. Community involvement, to Davidner's Clothing & Western Ltd.

And the business of the year, Mr. Speaker, went to a new company, Green Tree Fencing Supplies Ltd. The owners are Keith and Carol Ross. I want to make a special comment with

respect to their role in our community, the development and the building of that business that is creating new jobs for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

So to all of the award winners, but in particular to Green Tree, I want to mention and say congratulations.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### **Hockey Week in Prince Albert**

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Hello Canada and hockey fans in Saskatchewan. It's hockey week in Prince Albert. This week a Canadian AAA midget championship, also known as the Air Canada Cup, is being held with six teams competing in the . . . It reminds me at least, Mr. Speaker, of Foster Hewitt's fantastic hockey broadcast — used to be held on Saturday nights.

Each team here represents a different region of Canada and I'm proud to note that Saskatchewan's got two teams competing — the Prince Albert Mintos and the Regina Pat Canadians. The round robin started on Monday with Prince Albert winning its first game, 2-1 over Cape Breton. The final game will be played on Sunday and will be televised live on TSN (The Sports Network). Young players in the championship have reason to be excited about the tournament because scouts from the NHL (National Hockey League) are off in the stands.

And some NHL greats that have played in the Canada Cup include Joe Sakic, Al Macinnis, Wendel Clark, and Patrick Roy. So I'd like to congratulate and thank all of the people on the hosting organization for bringing this event to Saskatchewan and I'd like to wish all of the players good sportsmanship and good luck.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### **Cheque Presentation at Estevan Energy Training Institute**

**Mr. Ward:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to tell the members about an announcement made at the Estevan Energy Training Institute last week. I had the pleasure of presenting a cheque of \$5,000 to the early safety training program on behalf of the Department of Labour. This money will boost the safety training fund so it can provide opportunities for young people to learn about safety in the workplace.

The money will be disbursed evenly amongst 50 young people to help them pay for some of the courses they will be taking. The courses at the regional college deals with hazardous materials in the workplace, first aid, CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), and transportation of dangerous goods, and many other safety-related issues.

This program was encouraged by local people who saw the need for safety training especially considering the types of work done in the Estevan area. Local businesses also chipped in with the department to help young people pay for the courses that they might not be able to afford otherwise.

Please join me in recognizing the efforts of the early safety training program.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## **ORAL QUESTIONS**

### **Negotiations with Nurses**

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, once again SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations) and the nurses are not talking. Health services across this province are in jeopardy and the health of Saskatchewan people is at risk.

Mr. Premier, it's mass confusion over there on your side and everyone is pointing the finger at you. The nurses say you broke your word. SAHO doesn't know what direction to take. And now the mediator's report shows that both sides are still miles apart.

Mr. Premier, ever since you stepped into the negotiations two weeks ago the nurses' dispute has gone from bad to worse. In light of today's complete breakdown in talks, what are you doing to ensure that patient care and health services are maintained?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to be tabling after question period — which I think is in accordance with the rules — a copy of Mr. Stephen Kelleher's report which outlines the bargaining positions and indicates, as I indicated to the journalists earlier this morning, a very wide gulf in the negotiations.

Our position is the following: we believe in Mr. Kelleher's recommendation that there should be a cooling-off period and a consideration of these issues is wise. And we still hold the view that the memorandum of understanding, which was freely signed and entered into voluntarily by the SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses) people and by the SAHO people in the presence of the Government of Saskatchewan, those signatures count for something, and we believe that it is the basis of a settlement.

So what we're going to do is we're going to take the weekend, have the parties consider the Kelleher report; have the public understand where everybody's really coming from in this regard; and work on the basis that the MOU (memorandum of understanding) is still the best way to protect patient care; and urge the parties to do so quickly.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, the NDP's health reform process has left Saskatchewan's health system in a shambles. After eight years of NDP government the operative word in health is chaos. And now the NDP is using its same techniques to create the worst health care crisis in 40 years. We are on the verge of another nurses' strike because the NDP has stopped listening to the nurses.

Mr. Premier, nurses don't know who they are talking . . . who they should be talking with. By your own admission, Mr. Premier, neither do you. The other day you were asked who was in charge of the nurses' negotiations. Your response was, Mr. Premier, quite frankly we haven't figured this out yet. You went

on to say the strike has exemplified that there needs to be some heavy thinking about our relationship.

Mr. Premier, who should the nurses be negotiating with? Is it SAHO? Is it the Health minister? Or is it you, Mr. Premier?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, this is another example of the Sask-a-Tory party misrepresenting wildly, statements made by parties in this operation.

To answer the question clearly and consistently — as I always have — there are two parties to this dispute. One is SAHO, the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, who are the negotiators on behalf of the employers; and the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, who are the negotiators on behalf of the employees.

SAHO has negotiated successfully contracts with SEIU (Service Employees' International Union), CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees). There are good negotiations going on with SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union). Only one union yet remains outstanding to be resolved.

The Government of Saskatchewan will do all that we can in terms of helping out, in terms of meeting with people to avoid the difficulty of a strike. I think we've contributed in that regard. The answer lies with the two parties getting around the table, as Mr. Kelleher points out, and honouring the spirit and the intent of the MOU. That is the best basis of settlement.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier says that other health unions have successfully negotiated; they have not yet ratified. Mr. Premier, the mediator's report on the nurses' dispute clearly shows that the two sides are still miles apart. Nurses are very angry with you and with the NDP. SAHO appears to be confused about what their mandate is on how they are to negotiate.

You keep making cameo appearances in the process that takes a bad situation and makes it worse. Saskatchewan people are fed up with the whole thing and worst of all the health of Saskatchewan families is at risk.

Mr. Premier, you say both sides need a cooling-off period. You need to use that cooling-off period to figure out whether or not you should be in these negotiations, and you need to ensure that health services are not disrupted again.

Mr. Premier, what steps are you taking to ensure the continuation of health services for Saskatchewan families?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, note the fundamental inconsistency of the Sask-a-Tory party. On the one hand and in the two preceding questions, the essence of those questions were, you, Mr. Premier, made things worse after a strike notice was given and after the patient safety was in endangered. That was their advice. That's what they would have us do.

Thanks but no thanks to people in this province who expect the Premier always to get in, regardless of ideology, when patient safety is in danger. On the one hand they say get out, get out,

and in this question what does he say? Get in. Get in and do all of these things and do all of the negotiating.

What is it? Are you coming or are you going? Are we in or are we out? What's your position? Or is it zap, you're frozen for five years in health care? Zap, your nurses frozen; zap, the health care system freezes under the Sask-a-Tory party. Is that your position? Of course it is.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, the people of Saskatchewan want to know whether you're in the negotiations or whether you're out of the negotiations. You seem to be a little confused about whether you want to even be Premier.

Mr. Premier, you set up the health boards five years ago so that you could hide behind them when the going got tough. You thought you could deflect the responsibility for difficult decisions by blaming them on the health boards. Well it hasn't worked, Mr. Premier. Your health reform process is a bust.

Thanks to the NDP, Saskatchewan is in the middle of the worst health care crisis in 40 years. It's time to admit that you've failed, Mr. Premier. Whatever the NDP has been doing in health it hasn't been working.

People have lost confidence in the health care system and nurses are on the verge of staging an outright revolt. Thanks to your interference, SAHO can't figure out which end is up.

Mr. Premier, will you finally take the responsibility and admit you messed up? Will you commit to come clean with the nurses and get this labour dispute resolved?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Here we go. The first two questions, we're blaming the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan after strike notice. And by the way, we know factually, within hours after the notice, the strike took place. We're blamed for trying to get the strike resolved.

Now the argument is, will you get in to make sure that the health care situation isn't further exacerbated? What is it? Or is it really what your agenda's all about? And what it really is all about is this — they want to butt out of health care funding . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. Order on both sides of the House. Hon. members, I ask for the co-operation of members on both sides of the House to permit the Premier's response to be heard.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, so there is mass confusion on the Sask-a-Tory party with respect to the question of negotiations.

But one thing there is no mass confusion about is where they stand on their platform on health care funding — pull out of the Canada Health Act. That means no national standards, no national funding. Americanize the health care system — two-tier health care; put deterrent fees; and butt out of

negotiations when patient safety and health care is at stake. That is clearly where the Sask-a-Tory party is at.

You're doggone right — somebody's going to be making a decision as to where you stand sooner than you like, and they are going to reject your destruction of the medicare system because you are opposed to medicare. You never supported it and you don't now.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Retention of Physicians in Province

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health seeing as the Premier has great difficulty and seems to have some confusion as to how we address the problems here in Saskatchewan regarding health.

Madam Minister, over the past number of weeks, and certainly the last few weeks have not certainly clarified the issue in regards to the availability of doctors in the province of Saskatchewan.

As we indicated, doctors in the community of Maple Creek are leaving the province. And why are they leaving the province? Mr. Speaker, they are leaving the province because they are tired of the high tax burden and the failure of this government to address a very serious problem — that of incorporation.

Madam Minister, what are you doing to address the availability of . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Now the Chair is having . . . Hon. members will recognize the hon. member from Moosomin is not located far from the Chair. Order. And the hon. member had begun his question; I'll ask the hon. member to give his question again.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, when are you going to take leadership and let us know what you are going to do to address the concerns of the doctors in the province of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — I'm going to answer this question on behalf of the government because the hon. member prefaces this — if you can believe the audacity of this — that they're leaving Maple Creek because of high taxes.

We know what the Sask-a-Tory position says, zap — you're frozen in health care; zap — you're frozen in education; zap — you're frozen in every expenditure. But I tell you what they promised the people of Saskatchewan. They promised, in order to meet that member's requests, tax reductions which will leave us in a \$2 billion deficit.

We did that in the 1980s under the Tories — been there, seen it, done it. It nearly bankrupted the province. And the province will never go back to the Sask-a-Tory position of doing it again — never. You're to fault for that situation in Maple Creek. You are.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I suspected, the finger pointing was going to come out again. Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate part is the government has not recognized the complexity of the problem and one of the serious concerns of doctors in this province.

Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, when your government signed its last contract with doctors in February of 1998, you signed a letter of understanding that promised to give the doctors the right to incorporate. Maybe the doctors should ask the nurses what they think of the NDP's letter of understanding. The nurses signed a memorandum of understanding with the NDP to end the nurses' strike in exchange for good faith bargaining on a new collective agreement. Today we find out what that means to the nurses.

Madam Minister, the doctors have an agreement signed in 1998. To date we have seen no movement on your part to address that concern. Madam Minister, why hasn't your NDP government introduced legislation to allow doctors to incorporate so they won't continue to run from NDP Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, doctors are not running from NDP Saskatchewan, contrary to what the hon. member says. And we have a rural physician retention and recruitment program that the ministers of Health have packaged together — an excellent one; emergency room coverage program; rural practice establishment grants; undergraduate medical bursary programs; medical resident bursary programs; rural enhancement training programs; locum service programs; weekend relief programs; re-entry training programs — all of these are specifically designed for rural physicians. And rural physicians — there are more of them in Saskatchewan today than there have been in quite some time.

These programs are working. It is absolutely incorrect, the member's questions. And they're incorrect because his answer would be to health care — the Sask-a-Tory answer — zap, you're frozen, no national standards, no Canada Health Act; zap you're frozen in order to put us \$2 billion in deficit. You should be ashamed of yourself with that position.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Retention of Nurses in Province

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Premier has ever heard of Global Career Services. Well if he hasn't, plenty of Saskatchewan nurses have. That's because Global Career Services is a head-hunting firm that specializes in recruiting nurses for jobs in other countries. They look for nurses who want to work elsewhere. They look for nurses who are unhappy in their current situation. And guess what, Mr. Premier, they struck gold right here in Saskatchewan.

Global Career Services have told us they have taken on up to a hundred nurses as clients — just from Saskatchewan. You don't have to believe us and you don't have to believe the nurses, but you better believe this company. Nurses are voting with their

feet, Mr. Premier. Nurses are taking you up on your take it or leave it offer, and they are leaving.

Mr. Premier, will you admit that this company's success of recruiting almost a hundred nurses from Saskatchewan is an indictment of the complete failure in managing health care in this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I am advised by the ministers of Health — and I said this to the House yesterday — that during the strike, the Regina District Health Board actually hired nurses. And I want to tell you that of the nurses who are recruited, we're finding more coming back. Of the ones that have been hired, the \$9 million expended by the ministry of Health, we see them coming from all parts of Canada and the United States of America.

I never listen to this show but I was told a report about a show — what's his name on NTR (News Talk Radio), former Conservative MP?

**An Hon. Member:** — Gormley.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Gormley. Gormley — the former Conservative MP who runs a hotline show — he gets a Florida recruiter, the kind that you're talking about, on the hot . . . you get the transcript. He's making out the big case about how bad it is in Saskatchewan. Can't get the answers because the Florida recruiter says, higher cost of living, all kinds of difficulties in Florida. Then he's asked one final question. So what's your big sales pitch about getting nurses to Florida? He says, well frankly, the big sales pitch is beaches. That's what he says. Gormley says, sorry, you're off the air.

You take a look at the facts and do not go into those kinds of areas as to what we're doing. We have a retention and recruitment program that's contained in the MOU. We're addressing the issue of nurses. We understand their needs, and they can solve it by going back to the MOU.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was surprised to hear the Premier say that the strike was a positive way of recruiting nurses. Mr. Speaker, today I received a letter from Cécile Jessie, a nurse in Regina with 10 years experience. She writes:

I am a registered nurse working in Coronary Care in the Pasqua Hospital. I was born and raised in Saskatchewan. Most of my family live in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, she goes on to say:

On Friday, April 9, 1999, I have faxed my resumé to a nursing recruitment company called (Global Career Services) who deal in placements to Australia.

Mr. Premier, what are you going to do today to keep this nurse from leaving this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, individual nurses will make decisions, as in this case, their own decisions for a variety of reasons. I can tell you that we have people coming from California back to Saskatchewan for nursing. We have people from Newfoundland, as members opposite say.

We need more nurses. We need to make sure that the workplace is work-friendly. The MOU has retention programs, recruitment programs, and a special amount of money dedicated specifically to answer that question that you ask in the general circumstance.

But if you give me an isolated example, we'll give you isolated examples of nurses coming back. That is not the way that it's going to work. It's not going to work by the Liberals out there saying nothing about any of these issues at all except spend, spend, spend, and defy the law.

Tell me if you support your leader saying to defy the law, and tell me if you support your leader's position that the nurses deserve 22 per cent. And if they do, where are they going to get the money from? Tell me that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, this nurse goes on to say, and I quote . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. Now the Chair is having difficulty being able to hear the question being put. Order, order. The Chair asks for co-operation from members on both sides of the House and all the caucuses, all the caucuses.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This nurse goes on to say, and I quote:

My two (colleagues), Beverlee Zieffle . . . who has five years' experience, and Michell Janes, who has ten years' experience, also sent their resumé (in).

She goes on to say:

. . . we are all accepting positions in Australia.

Mr. Premier, we know you're getting flooded with calls and letters from nurses the same as we are. This is no coincidence. You've created this problem, Mr. Premier. This is all on your shoulders. Don't you have that infamous plan B to entice nurses to stay in this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I note and I guess I can't get the answer from the member in his question or anywhere else. Maybe the journalists if they're . . . (inaudible) . . . ask about whether or not they endorse, publicly outside the Chamber, the call to break the law by the leader and the 22 per cent. Somebody is going to have to answer for that question sooner or later.

But more . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, good. You do it; you do it.

Now here's the specific answer to the question. We have in effect a

worldwide shortage problem of nurses. If you take a look at the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) Web site for example, they are . . . Tony Blair in the United Kingdom is now seeking nurses in places like Philippines. It is a worldwide shortage; it's a Canadian shortage.

We are addressing the \$7.4 million retention plan and recruitment plan. And nurses are coming back; that is the fact. We need more. We need to improve the workplace. We're dedicated to improving the workplace. That's why the MOU is so core and so central and forms the basis of the agreement.

And nurses are coming back. And it's not a question simply of money. It's a question of safe streets; it's a question of good schools; it's a question of quality of life; it's a question of a civil and decent society; and it's a question of a government that is committed to the fundamental principles of medicare, which this government is. That's why they're coming back.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, let me continue to read from Cécile Jesse's letter:

Our husbands, also born and raised in Saskatchewan, and children are coming with us. Our registration fees, flights, housing and utilities are paid for. Their wages are more than ours. Why should we stay here for (2, 2 and 2)?

Mr. Premier, as of this morning you are still bargaining through the media and saying the nurses want 22 per cent. And you're prepared to give them the MOU, Bill 23, or the back of your hand. That's what you're prepared.

Mr. Premier, won't you stop stepping in it, and now step into it. Put some money on the table to be competitive with other provinces and countries so the nurses stay here, and cut out your political games through the media.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Now, now the real truth comes out. Now the truth comes out. This is not an issue on behalf of the Liberal Party about quality of health care; this is money for nurses, more money.

In fact the letter which the hon. member sent over to me ends up by saying, "Why should we stay here for (2, 2, and 2) per cent?" Nowhere in this letter is there a question of the quality of health care. Forget about the letter. I don't want to involve these people in it. They . . . (inaudible) . . . their decisions. But that's a Liberal position.

Money — 22 per cent. Defy the law. Tell us where you're going to get that 22 per cent from. Tell us what you're going to do with SEIU. Tell us what you're going to do with CUPE. Tell us what you're going to do with SGEU.

Tell the people of Saskatchewan why the cat stole your tongue and you are not able to tell the federal . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order, order. Now the . . . Order, order. Order. Order. Order. The Chair . . . Order. The Chair asks . . . Order. I ask the hon. member from Wood River . . . Order, order. Order. Members on both sides of the House . . .

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, it's . . . There he goes again. There he goes again. I'm not . . . I've given the answer. And I'm not going to be in a House, with the greatest of respect to Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. The Chair has just asked for co-operation on both sides of the House from all hon. members. The Chair has been having some difficulty being able to hear the Premier put his response to the question. And I ask for the respect for the House to allow all to . . . for all hon. members to allow the answer to be heard.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — It shouldn't surprise me, Mr. Speaker, that member's lawlessness in this House. His leader, his party, advocates lawlessness. I'm not therefore surprised that he tries to shout me down.

I repeat again — we have \$7.4 million committed in the MOU to quality of health care, retention and recruitment of nurses. That is a very positive step . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . There he goes again; yelling at me again.

Mr. Speaker, I've given the answer. Obviously this person does not respect the rules of this House, nor does he respect the rules of the law of the land either.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

#### Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance Payments to Farmers

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question's for the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, once again I want to ask you about your failure to stand up for Saskatchewan farmers.

According to parliamentary secretary to the federal Agriculture minister, farmers in Eastern Canada are doing very well under the AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance) program. The average cheque being sent out — and listen to this, Mr. Minister — to Ontario farmers is \$25,000. The average cheque being sent out to Prince Edward Island farmers — \$38,000. And what's the average cheque in Saskatchewan? Zero.

Mr. Minister, nice program you negotiated. Oh, but I forgot — you didn't go to the negotiations. You declared the farm crisis over and took a trip to Mexico. Mr. Minister, can you explain why farmers in Eastern Canada are getting huge payouts while Saskatchewan farmers are getting nothing?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well he's resorting to the gutter, Mr. Speaker, and that's fine.

I want to say one thing about this program. We have called upon the federal government to administer this program so that we wouldn't have to spend more money duplicating. Ontario decided to administer their own. But let's do the math.

Sixty-six thousand, five hundred farmers in Ontario times . . . he says 25,000 a farmer — that's \$1.7 billion. That's more than all the federal government money and all the provinces' money. And then to stand up . . . and then to add 38,000 in Prince Edward Island.



Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member, the program is not a good program, not the best program. I agree that the administration has not been a shining example of how to administer a program. We are putting pressure on the federal government. I called on the federal minister to extend the deadline. They've extended the deadline to July 30. And I'll tell you, the best thing that he can do is encourage farmers to try to fill out the forms so that we can show the federal government what is wrong with this program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill No. 213 — The Health Districts Amendment Act, 1999 (Block Funding)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill, No. 213, The Health Districts Amendment Act, 1999 (Block Funding).

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

##### Bill No. 216 — The Saskatchewan Health Ombudsman Act

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill, No. 216, The Saskatchewan Health Ombudsman Act.

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

##### Bill No. 29 — The Health Information Protection Act

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 29, The Health Information Protection Act now be introduced and read the first time.

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

#### BILL WITHDRAWN

Mr. Boyd: — Before orders of the day, by leave of the Assembly, that the order for a second reading of Bill 219, The Crown Corporations Disclosure Act, be discharged and that the said Bill be withdrawn. Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave for that. Apparently there was a printing error in that piece of legislation.

Leave granted.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 22

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Crofford that Bill No. 22 — The Special Payment (Dependent Spouses)

Act be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill that's before the Assembly is a Bill that's supposed to address some of the concerns that have been raised over the past number of years in regards to the disenfranchised widows of this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that this Bill is a long time coming. Since April 17, 1995 when discrimination on the grounds of marital status was enshrined by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, there has definitely been an unfairness in our province with regards to those people who lost their spouses in work-related accidents and then subsequently remarried.

Mr. Speaker, all members of this Assembly have certainly been contacted by individuals who are affected by the circumstances that this piece of legislation is attempting to address. And, Mr. Speaker, it's hard not to have some compassion for the individuals. You see, every one has a different story. Every one has a different need. And there's no doubt they have been significantly affected by the move to take away their pension benefits as a result of remarriage.

And for individuals who have remarried since April 1985, they haven't had that factor to deal with. And it certainly has been a lot ... it made it a lot easier for them in moving ahead with their lives.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the legislation, there's certainly some areas that we have some major concerns with. Mr. Speaker, we realize that it's time the issue was dealt with; it's time that the disenfranchised widows at least had an understanding of where they may be going or what they could expect from the government. It's time that this Assembly dealt with the issue.

And through the legislation the government is attempting to finally deal with the issue and sweep it under the rug or, if you will, Mr. Speaker, say that it's now completed and ended and say that everyone's received the best that they can.

We understand and realize, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, that there are still many widows who are going to actually lose under this piece of legislation.

While the legislation puts in place an \$80,000 payout to the individuals who are affected as a result of the changes made in 1985, the unfortunate part is \$80,000 to one person may not be enough for the trauma and the hurt that they have experienced over the period of years; whereas to some of the other individuals \$80,000 might be quite appropriate, maybe even a little more than would have really been necessary or even that the courts may have awarded, had the ability to go to the courts been allowed.

But we cannot ignore the fact that this is a vast improvement over the position the government took with the disenfranchised widows under the former Minister of Labour where little progress was made. And so we appreciate the work that the current minister has been doing to advance this cause to her colleagues and the fact that this needs to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, in the different roles I've held as an opposition member — and certainly the positions of Labour and as well of Justice — I can remember the debates over the past number of years in this Assembly in regards to the former minister of Justice and raising this issue year in and year out, and the ongoing

comments or the commitments by ministers of Justice through the years to address this issue. So we certainly feel that it's — and we're pleased to see — that the current Minister of Labour has finally decided it's time to do something about the issue in bringing forward the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, since 1985, and in particular the last two or three years, this group of dedicated widows have fought hard to bring this to the attention of the provincial government. People like Rose Polsom have lobbied successive Labour ministers to correct the unfairness.

And while this Bill may go some small way in addressing the unfairness, but to the disenfranchised widows group it doesn't go far enough, and I'd like to bring their concerns. And as I indicate, that \$80,000 figure is a major concern. I guess the concern that we have specifically with the Bill is the fact that the Bill limits the ability of widows to receive any compensation whatsoever if they go to the courts and the courts rule against them.

My guess is that . . . in talking with a number of the widows, in following the examples or the circumstances that have taken place in British Columbia where they've gone to the courts, where the courts have ruled in their favour, I believe there is a fine legal argument for the widows to go to the courts to seek compensation. And it would seem, Mr. Speaker, that it would be only fair that individuals in a democratic society do have that opportunity. And you'd then rely on the courts as the last judgment process, if you will, or an opportunity to hear your concerns raised before them, you rely on their good judgment. And it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, through the years, that the courts have been more than fair. And that's a fair way of addressing the concerns. And it's a fair way, I believe of addressing the concerns that the widows have got to the floor of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, while \$80,000 in most people's minds seems to be a large and a good sum of money, I would think if any logical person, even looking back to the fact of how many years some of these widows have been without a pension, regardless of how large that pension may be, if you were to add up the years that they would have been collecting the pension had the pension continued on, \$80,000 is going to be a pittance for some of these individuals who have struggled. And in many cases we have had individuals who have struggled all their lives as a result of that change.

And, Mr. Speaker, why have they struggled? They've struggled because a very dear person to them was killed in an accident. And I believe just recently we recognized individuals hurt, injured, or died in the workplace.

And we're talking about individuals who have lost spouses who were the main wage earner in that home, in the workplace. And that spouse, when that spouse was taken from them, who had looked to and thought they had a fair and equitable pension plan and compensation through the Workers' Compensation Board, and then found out when they remarried and tried to get their lives back together and situations where maybe even the income in the home wasn't that large, that this spousal benefit would certainly be added to that income. And then all of a sudden it's taken away from them.

Mr. Speaker, while we have a number of reservations, we continue to ask . . . and I think the widows have some fine points as well. We just noticed the other day in the Regina *Leader-Post* the

Workers' Compensation Board is handing out rebates to firms. Last year it had a larger than expected \$52.4 million surplus in their accounts, so now they're returning some of that back to employers.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at that, and when you see how the board has run over the past number of years, you see the surpluses they have created, one begins to wonder exactly what the role of the board is.

I think it's . . . I believe, Mr. Speaker, workers expect that the board will be there to meet and to protect them as a result of injury. And we recognize the fact that the business community pays for the operations of the boards. And so the fact that they're paying some of the surplus back to the boards . . . or to the business community, their partners, is appropriate. There's no reason they should be building a big surplus and just raising the surplus and keeping the rates high if indeed the number of injuries are down. I think the business community should certainly benefit from that.

But on the other hand, we hope that while the refunds are going to the boards, that there aren't more and more individual workers, injured workers who are suffering as a result of the board's handling of some of the circumstances such as the disenfranchised widows.

And that's . . . well I guess one of the concerns we have originally is why is the government legislating something that . . . when they should be standing up for injured workers and for the spouses of the injured or in this case deceased workers.

(1100)

So, Mr. Speaker, while we have some reservations with this Bill, in particular we're concerned that the government is using this method to further erode the rights of individuals by bringing in specifically this clause about access to the courts. And that's an area that we certainly would like to and are looking forward to addressing with the minister when we get into Committee of the Whole.

So while I've raised and my colleagues and other colleagues have raised some of the issues, raised some of the concerns, Mr. Speaker, we believe that through the years we have indeed tried to be objective. We've tried to be very truthful and honest. We've tried to listen very carefully to the disenfranchised widows as well as the board — Workers' Comp — and we understand some of the complexities of this program and why this Bill is coming forward.

However we feel that it would be more appropriate for us to be able to get down to some of the real questions and to raise those questions with the minister in Committee of the Whole so that we can begin to understand a little more clearly rather than just debating it in second readings.

So, Mr. Speaker, having said that, we would allow this Bill now to move to Committee of the Whole and address our significant concerns in committee. Thank you.

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

## Bill No. 21 — The Coroners Act, 1999

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm please to have with me today: Dr. John Nyssen, who is the chief coroner and pathologist at Royal University Hospital; Roger Pick, who is the administrator of coroner services in the Department of Justice; and Madeleine Robertson, who is Crown counsel of the legislative services of the Department of Justice.

## Clause 1

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Chair, and welcome to the Minister of Justice and his officials this afternoon.

Mr. Minister, as was stated previously by myself I'm very really relieved and happy to know that this Act is coming into play, because as I've stated in the previous years we've had some major problems with deaths of children in this province and certainly not enough review or mechanisms in place to review the circumstances surrounding those deaths. There is no possible way we can know how to prevent deaths of especially our children if in fact we don't have a comprehensive review and reporting program in place.

In respect to this particular Bill, Mr. Minister, I note that part I, section 3, subparagraph (e) of the Act — I'll just repeat that — part I, section 3, subparagraph (e) of the Act states that the coroner system: "publicizes, and maintains records of and the circumstances surrounding, causes of death."

In respect to that clause, I'm concerned not so much with the fact that there's a statement here that will say that the coroner will publicize and maintain the records — that is really very good. What my concern is, is how in fact the coroner will access information surrounding the circumstances of a child's death. Because it seems to me that the coroner will have to have information at hand in order to maintain a record in order to come to some determination of whether that death was necessary or how to classify that death.

Mr. Minister, for instance caseworkers in this province, child protection workers, are stating already that they have caseloads which are much, much too heavy. If it's up to the child protection workers or the social worker of any kind to maintain or to document circumstances about a child and their care, especially those that are in the care of Social Services, and in fact they don't seem to have time right now to even follow up on the placement that they have done of children in foster homes, etc., if they don't have time to follow up, it stands to reason that they won't have time or they won't be able or there won't be any documentation of what is happening in that child's life.

So if it is not up to the child protection workers to document what kind of care that child is getting by the social worker doing repeated visits, who is it up to, and how will the coroner ever possibly get into their hands any information about what's happening in those children's lives?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think part of the answer to your question is part (a) of that same section 3 which talks about the investigations that are done by the coroners and the coroner's

office. And so there is a process of investigation, an interview of people to get the kind of information that you're talking about.

There's also an obligation under section X where thereby the social workers are obliged to advise the coroner about these kinds of situations. And so I think that practically when there has been a death that requires an investigation, then the people within the coroner's office do the investigation.

And then a further part of that is, if there are circumstances which require an inquest, then you have the whole inquest process as well to gather the kind of information that you're talking about.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I hear what you're saying. My concern is that a proper investigation or even an inquest, by the time it comes to pass, would be incumbent upon having material information from someone that was monitoring the life of the child. If social workers right now, and they have told me that they are so worn thin because of the lack of numbers that they need to have to effect their job properly, how are they possibly . . . if they're worn that thin that they're not even doing follow-ups many of them, on children that are placed in — under the care of Social Services — in foster homes or whatever, how can they possibly document what's happening?

And how can there be a meaningful investigation or inquest if there's no information to access to assist them in making a determination? How can they possibly do that without information coming in from those people that work or are supposed to be working closely with those children? They don't have time to document. They don't have time for follow-up visits. Where's the information going to come from to have a meaningful inquest?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the member's question is based on some sense that there isn't a concern within the Department of Social Services about incidents that happen where a child dies.

I think what we know is that in the Quill report there were many recommendations which have been implemented and others that are being worked through to try to deal with some of the concerns around how you look at some of these cases.

One of the advantages of this new Coroners Act, and the whole coroners' process, is that it does allow for the investigation of deaths of children — and others as well obviously — but specifically in this area of children. It does provide information that is part of some statistical record which can be analyzed. It also does investigate specific deaths and the circumstances. And ultimately if there's an inquest — which often there is when a child dies — there are recommendations that come from the jury in the inquest, and those things can then be used to address what may have been a problem in that particular circumstance to help us create a better system.

But I think what I would say very clearly is that I don't think either one of us would want to say that social workers aren't concerned when a child died. I think that they work to prevent that in every situation that they can. And that what we need to do is help them further identify the problems or areas where there's concern.

And so, so that's what this process is all about.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, the recommendations in the Quill report are good recommendations — absolutely. The intent of child protection workers and social workers throughout the province, the intent is admirable. The lack of numbers in those areas of social workers and child protection workers, the lack of numbers to do the job efficiently and effectively with high morale — those numbers are lacking. If those numbers are not in place there's no way, I don't believe, that the recommendations can be followed through in a very effective and meaningful manner.

So I guess what this is coming to is that I see that there's a process put in place but I don't see that we have got the avenues out there to make sure that the process can effectively work. We do not have the workers in place and we need to have that.

We have to have reporting mechanisms coming from day one when a child is placed and those reporting mechanisms would come from child protection workers that have to follow up. And in order for that to happen, we have to have workers in place to do it. Because if they are . . . if the numbers are insufficient, our workers' numbers are insufficient and they feel like they are strained, there is not a possibility that they can possibly even get to those homes for follow-up, and they wouldn't be reporting on it.

So in the event that a child died in one of those foster homes, it seems to me that here we are with a gap trying to determine what the circumstances were surrounding that child's death. We'd have a big gap, and to do a proper investigation would seem almost minimal to me.

Mr. Minister, I just wanted to ask you another question surrounding the publicizing and maintaining of records. Who would have access to those records, and is this determined by the coroner? Who is able to get access to those records?

(1115)

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I'll answer your question. First the family always has access to that and the Chief Coroner. It's determined by the Chief Coroner. That's who has access to these records.

But I'd like to correct a couple of comments that you've made previously about the Department of Social Services and social workers. In response to some of the recommendations in the Quill report, 50 more staff were hired in the child protection area and the caseloads are coming down as they work in that area.

I think the member also knows that more money has gone to the child's advocate so that they can have a process of examining children's deaths and so that this work is continuing.

But I would suggest, Mr. Chair, that the questions in that area may be better held for the estimates for the Department of Social Services because I think that's what it's for. But I also understand your concern and how it relates to this.

But practically I think what we should see here is that this Act and the procedures set out in this Act is another part of making sure that we can identify — if a child unfortunately does die — why that happens and how can we prevent it from happening again. But it doesn't in any way diminish the necessity of also

doing all the other things that we do to protect our children.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I won't go on at length about this Bill any further because I recognize that, you know, everything is set out in this Bill to meaningfully effect ensuring that children's deaths are prevented in the future and that there is a process whereby the coroner can investigate.

But my concern is still the same. We need to make sure that there is enough information for the coroner to do a good assessment on. We need to make sure that at ground level we have child protection workers in place that will in fact document the ongoing care of a child in a foster home or otherwise, and I don't believe that we have enough child protection workers in at this time.

I have received — like I've mentioned to you before — a call from child protection workers that are certainly of the belief that of the 50 child protection workers that you added, many of those went into the young offender system. And I know that you've stated in this House that that is simply not true, but child protection workers are out there in the field and they seem to have to a different understanding of that.

So I would just fully recommend to the minister that we make sure that we have the people at ground level, out there in the field, the numbers of people that we need so that proper reporting can be done on a continual basis.

I thank you, Mr. Minister, and I thank your officials.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 71 inclusive agreed to.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm very pleased to make that recommendation but first I would like to make a special point of thanking the officials who are here but also others who work with them, as well as the whole of Saskatchewan who's participated in the consultation around the changes to this Act over the past couple of years. I think we all are pleased that this can proceed and provide new rules as we go into the next century.

And with that I would move that we report this Bill without amendment.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

#### **Bill No. 5 — The Municipal Hail Insurance Amendment Act, 1999**

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to have with me Brent Prenevost from Department of Justice, legal services; and also Mr. Jim Hall who is the Superintendent of Insurance. And we're ready for questions on this Bill.

#### **Clause 1**

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker; and I just

want to welcome your officials here this morning, Mr. Minister. Maybe to start with, Mr. Minister, could you kind of give us overview of what you are trying to accomplish with the amendments in the . . . that you came out with.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — This is quite a simple Bill. These were changes identified by Municipal Hail Insurance — the organization itself — and they're fairly technical and simple that modernized the Bill and actually sort of raised some of the amounts that are required for the reserves and things like that.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, so I guess what you're saying is the municipal hail association actually had input and took part in these changes that you have made here?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I think the simplest way to say that is that it was a specific request from them that we do this.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Mr. Minister, I guess if I'm always been cautious when I hear of things going into regulations rather than being up front. And if I understand, what you're changing here is the amount that can be invested by the association with two-thirds vote of the members. It is actually being removed from the legislation and put into regulations. Why is this happening?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The answer to that relates to the fact that as hail companies expand — they're in the insurance business — they write more and more insurance, then the reserves that they have to meet the work that they're doing have to increase. And what's happening I guess is that some of these businesses are doing quite well and so they're expanding their book faster than we can change the legislation, and so if we have it in the regulations and they have a big jump in one year, well we can move that up so that they're in compliance with rules around insurance.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and that's what I thought probably we were doing here. I guess the only other question I would have then — and I think I very much agree with what you're doing here — what amount do you feel might be put in then now to start off with in regulations? Do we have a number in mind at the present time?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — This year the amount will increase from 2 million to 3 million, which is the amount that goes into their subsidiary.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and that's really all the questions we have on this Bill. I think we're in agreeance with what you're doing here and want to thank you for your answer.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you. I'd just like to thank Mr. Jim Hall, who's the superintendent of insurance for his work in this area, and I'll save my thanks for Mr. Prenevost until we're finished with the next Bill.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

## Bill No. 20 — The Business Corporations Amendment Act, 1999

**The Chair:** — One new official that I'll ask the minister to introduce, please.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to have with me Mr. Phil Flory, the director of the corporations branch, along with Mr. Brent Prenevost of legislative services.

### Clause 1

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and welcome to the new official, Minister.

Minister, would you briefly give us an overview of the changes that are being contemplated and the reason in this Bill, please?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — This Bill and the changes are more in the nature of law reform, catching up with a few different things that have been identified by different lawyers or different people running corporations who say, this is a problem for us; can you fix it? And we had a few of those items and we decided we'd bring those forward this year because they were irritating people.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. And certainly we're in favour of removing irritants except for the government. You understand that of course.

Minister, I assume that in addition to consulting with lawyers specializing in matters relating to corporations, have you also consulted with corporations themselves?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Chair, I think the simple answer to that one is all of these problems have arisen from the corporations. It's just that they use their lawyers to identify the problem and forward suggestions on how to correct it to the corporations branch. So I think practically every particular, everything that we're dealing with here arises from the corporations.

(1130)

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. Minister, has there been, in your review resulting from these irritants, has there been any consultation with neighbouring provinces? Do these kinds of suggested changes bring our corporation regulations more in line with other provinces, or is this pretty much a local set of issues?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The answer to that is yes, because we always do that. And when a particular problem arises, we look to other provinces or to the federal legislation to see if they have a solution. And so practically all of these changes have been vetted and compared to what happens in other provinces.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. Certainly the comments we've received from the corporation sector has been very supportive of the changes you make and we are pleased to support them as well.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 13 inclusive agreed to.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just before I do that I'd like to thank Mr. Phil Flory and all of his staff in the corporations branch for the work that they do.

And I also would like to thank the business community in Saskatchewan for bringing forward concerns that they have in a timely way so that we can correct them. Because that's what we want this legislation to do is to be friendly to the people who use it to provide a better economy for this province.

I'd also like to thank Mr. Brent Prenevost for his work in quite a number of areas around the various corporations legislation.

And with that I would move that we report this Bill without amendment.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

### **Bill No. 2 — The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 1999**

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. With me is Brian Smith, who is the director of the Public Employees Benefits Agency in the Department of Finance.

#### **Clause 1**

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Welcome, Minister, and welcome, Mr. Smith.

Minister, in reviewing Bill 2 and Bill 19, there seems to be a lot of similarities in terms of the reasons and rationale in these two Bills. So I don't know if it's totally acceptable but I will certainly accept answers that will overlap and, you know, may result in not having duplications.

Can you briefly outline the major changes and the rationale for proposing them, Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Yes. Mainly the changes in both Bills are of a technical nature. They are designed to update the statutes to ensure that they are consistent with other statutes that operate in the same area.

They're designed in some cases to make housekeeping amendments to correct names where the wrong name appears in the Bill or the name has changed.

They are designed to comply with the Income Tax Act of Canada. The reason being that generally speaking for a pension to be registered as a registered pension plan and to allow therefore the employees to deduct from their income tax the monies that are paid on their behalf for pension contributions out of their wages, you must be registered with the income tax people in Ottawa.

And in order to remain registered, you must comply with the Income Tax Act and the provisions of your legislation must be consistent with the Income Tax Act. And generally speaking in both cases what we're trying to do is update, do housekeeping amendments, make the legislation comply with the Income Tax Act so that there's no danger that these plans will be deregistered.

And this seems to be something that we do on an ongoing basis in the legislature. I suspect that this has been true for many years, that as the Income Tax Act changes or interpretations of it change, that we update the pension legislation on a regular basis to ensure that we're in full compliance with the federal law and that our plans are, you know, in accordance with the Income Tax Act. So generally speaking that is the purpose of both of these Bills.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. That certainly is very much consistent with the information that we received back, and we certainly support making sure that our pensions and those technical details of the legislation in this province are in keeping with the federal Act. And so therefore we are pleased to support the amendments proposed in both of these pieces of legislation.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 11 inclusive agreed to.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Before doing that I'd like to thank Mr. Smith for his assistance here today, and also the member opposite for his question and also co-operation in moving the Bill through the House and with respect to the next Bill. And with that I move that the Bill be reported without amendment.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

### **Bill No. 19 — The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 1999**

Clauses 1 to 10 inclusive agreed to.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Yes, once again, Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank Mr. Smith for his assistance, and I'd like to thank the members opposite for their co-operation. And with that I move that the Bill be reported without amendment.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

#### **THIRD READINGS**

### **Bill No. 21 — The Coroners Act, 1999**

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

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

### **Bill No. 5 — The Municipal Hail Insurance Amendment Act, 1999**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now

read the third time and passed under its title.

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

**Bill No. 20 — The Business Corporations  
Amendment Act, 1999**

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

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

**Bill No. 2 — The Municipal Employees' Pension  
Amendment Act, 1999**

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

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

**Bill No. 19 — The Superannuation  
(Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 1999**

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

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

(1145)

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

**General Revenue Fund  
Highways and Transportation  
Vote 16**

**The Deputy Chair:** — I will invite the minister to introduce her officials.

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I want to introduce right now my official that's here with me is Barry Martin, the assistant deputy minister of operations division is on my left. And other officials are just joining me now. On my right is Brian King, the deputy minister of the department; just right behind me is Bernie Churko, to my right, senior executive director of policy and administration division; and George Stamatinos is just directly behind, as director of business service branch.

**Subvote (HI01)**

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. It's certainly a welcome to the officials and to the minister, and the opportunity to debate issues surrounding Highways in the province of Saskatchewan the first time this spring of 1999.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think it would be possible for the opposition just to agree to everything that we see out in front of us without raising some major concerns, and possibly identifying some roadblocks that we keep seeing appearing in

front of us when it comes to highway, highway maintenance in the province of Saskatchewan.

And madam minister is quite well aware of the contest we've had going for quite a while, and we're still waiting for a response from the madam minister in regards to being a judge on the worst highway program in the province of Saskatchewan. And that's a question we hope to have addressed before we end the debate in Highways estimates this year.

Mr. Deputy Chair, when we look at highway construction and we look at highway maintenance, if we look at the Highway budget in the province of Saskatchewan . . . and while the madam minister is correct and the Premier is correct in talking about the fact that this province, as a result of its geography, has the largest ribbon of highways in all I believe in all of Canada, and certainly it's an interesting challenge to maintain those highways, maintain a quality to the highways, and identifying the high throughput roads, and finding the dollars that are necessary.

And I certainly can appreciate where officials are at times when they, when they have people calling the department and suggesting we've got a problem over here. We've got a road breaking up over here and it needs some desperate work, and we've got another road over here to maintain.

And they look at their budget, and they probably had the minister, different ministers over the past number of years coming to them and saying we've got to cut some more dollars out of our budget to address this so-called long-term deficit program.

But I think, Mr. Deputy Chair, when it comes to Saskatchewan, the public of Saskatchewan look at highways as being a very integral part of the ability to commute from point A to point B. And it's unfortunate that over the period of years since the NDP have formed government we've actually seen a major reduction on highway spending and now the current minister is left with trying to bring back some of the spending to address the issues, very serious problems that have arisen.

Madam Minister, I believe it was two years ago the then minister of Finance indicated that the province was going to inject \$2.5 billion over 10 years into a highway reconstruction program in the province of Saskatchewan to address some very serious concerns that had arisen, and ongoing concerns including completion of the twinning of the No. 1. And we've seen in the past two or three years specifically some major accidents, tragedies that have resulted in areas of single lane traffic and also the Yellowhead.

However, Madam Minister, what we see in your budget even this year, we are still well behind that commitment. In three years now I believe we're something in the neighbourhood of 80-some million dollars shortfall in that long-term projection.

Madam Minister, I'm wondering if we could begin to say today . . . if you can indicate to us how you intend to achieve a \$2.5 billion injection into highway construction, maintenance, and repair in 10 years when you're already almost a hundred million dollars behind in that projection.

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — Thank you for those questions. And when we made the commitment two years ago on the \$2.5 billion, we made that commitment for over 10 years. And it's one of these things that we've been steadily working towards.

In our first budget after that year's commitment was made, we added \$20 million to our budget. And actually in that budget year we added an extra \$10 million during the construction season. So there was \$30 million added in that first year of our commitment.

The next year, to the bottom line of the next year's budget we again added an additional \$20 million. Again last fall we were able to inject an additional \$10 million into the budget, so we actually had added then \$60 million over two years. In this year's budget, we've again increased from last year's budget line an additional \$15 million.

So each year, in a sustainable manner, we have been adding dollars to our provincial budget in Highways and Transportation.

The commitment was over 10 years. There was never ever said that we would go up to 250 and keep it straight flat and freeze the spending on Highways spending for 10 years. What we're doing is going up in a gradual, sustainable way of adding dollars into our Highways budget. We're into three years so we've now added, I guess when we put all of those dollars together, it has been \$85 million added into that budget since that commitment.

And I think that's an increase from two years ago of over 14 per cent. And actually since 1995 we recognized we needed more dollars in our budget, we've had an increase of over 40 per cent in our Highways budget.

So when we put together a plan, which we also released two years ago which was more dollars into our budget but also good planning, we had a strategy that we are implementing in this province. We recognize we need more dollars in Highways spending and that's what we are going to achieve. We're going to live up to the \$2.5 billion commitment.

We are not behind. Actually if we took an average, if you took the 10 years and averaged it out and you'd get a line like this on a graph, we're going right above what that average line would be if you're adding 2.5, if you just took it in division, divided it by 10.

So our commitment is to spend 2.5 billion; that's the minimum of our commitment over the next 10 years. We're certainly asking for the federal government to participate in funding in our transportation system and we will live up to our commitment.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, the figures I have in front of us would be indicating to me that you're still way behind. Well you've indicated you've injected more and as a result of some of the construction phase you've been able to inject more.

In '97-98 we have an expenditure of 212. That would be — if I've got my math correct — about 212 ... 28, 38 million

shortfall on the 250. And in '98-99 — 218; another 32. We start adding up fairly quickly. And then of course this year.

Now you say you've actually put more money in than what you had originally projected. And certainly I think when we look at that, Madam Minister, what we see there, if you put more money, and some of that has come as a result of if it happened to be a good construction year you were able to then take advantage of the construction year and then add a few more dollars.

However, you have a long ways to go. And while you can say yes, it's a long-term average, just by throwing a little more every year as you get into the construction phases, I think you're going to have a difficult time achieving that 2.5 billion.

I think, Madam Minister, you have to look at the long term and say, this is exactly where we're going to be, and make that commitment rather than looking at a construction year and saying, well we'll do an extra two miles on this project because the weather's holding out and we've got some money we've found in the ... we've gone to the Finance minister who said, we found a few more dollars for you to work with.

(1200)

So when it comes to construction, Madam Minister, we see a few miles here and a few miles there. The public in general who are having to travel these roads really are asking themselves, what are we going to see at the end of the day? Is it achievable? Right now we have to just believe the fact that you're telling us, yes it is achievable, and I guess your actions are going to be speaking ... your actions are going to be what the public are going to be judging by.

So, Madam Minister, I think you need to begin to project even further, higher. You need to begin to look at projects and adding actual construction before the fact rather than after the fact.

And I think one of the problems we have here too is contractors endeavouring ... A number of years ago, when the contractors ... I believe when you announced the 2.5 billion commitment, contractors had looked at expanding and in fact bringing more equipment or adding more equipment to their operations so that they could ... expecting that there'd be more highway construction really entered into, and a commitment to more highway construction before the fact rather than after the fact.

And when you say you added an extra 14 million or you added an extra 10 million in the budget year, it's difficult for contractors all of a sudden to be there. I think most contractors would like to see the contracts being let in the beginning of the year and know where they are, and then they can bid on projects and see where they're going to be.

So the concern we have and the concern the public has is, how are you going to really achieve this? When are you going to begin to start sitting down and realistically projecting ahead rather than adding monies after the fact — you said we were able to do this, and as a result of whether it's the construction you were able to add an extra 10 million. That's how we're achieving our goals.



I think you need to really set out a long-term goal, and I think, Madam Minister, that's one of the issues the auditor has talking about for a long time, too. Not just saying 10 years from now we will have achieved this, but saying, this is what you indicated three years ago, this is what we intend to achieve, and then projecting it and here's where we're going. We need to see some kind of a line that says exactly where we plan on being two years from now.

Madam Minister, that's what the public are looking for, and what is your commitment? Where are we going to be in next year's budget? I believe this year's budget you've indicated you've increased from 218 to roughly 234 — that's what you plan on spending. Where do you plan on being tomorrow? Where do you plan on being two years from now if you still are in the position of being able to give directions?

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — Well thank you. It's very interesting I think on this question because again we have put out a plan. It is a 10-year plan. We've made a commitment on dollars, and we will also put the plan together on how we think that we need to develop a good transportation system in the province with the planning issues on area planning and all these other areas too.

Now when we talk again about the commitment, and if we're living up to it like I had said before . . . And actually we actually shared a graph, and we do with people, showing how the graph would look if you just had constant increases, and the green line on that graph just goes up. And where we are right now is above that green line. Because if you took the 2.5 billion, divided it by 10 and just did each year that incremental increase, if we want to talk about the incremental increases we are actually above the \$2.5 billion commitment right now in our commitment.

When you commit 2.5 billion, knowing that you're a business person and a farmer and so on, in your business you make projections for the 10 year and you increase your budget accordingly to meet that commitment.

So a commitment of 2.5 billion does not mean in the first year you hit 250 million and stay flat for the next 10 years. Our commitment will continue to increase the budget to Highways and Transportation, and if you do it over a period of time you'll end up at a higher level to get that average at the end of 10 years a higher level than \$250 million per year. We'll end up at a level maybe at 260, 270, 280 depending how big those increments are each year.

So I think it's again, it's sustainable type of growth that we have to put into our Highways and Transportation budget which is part of our whole balanced budget approach. And we're working very closely when you say with the road builders, with our department, to maintain the best possible transportation system that we can.

Now if you're saying during a year in which we have an extremely good fall and so on that the road builders aren't really pleased to have those extra dollars go into our budget in which they can continue projects or plan projects and so on, I think that they have been extremely pleased that we've been able to at times being able to add those extra injections of \$10 million in the previous two years to continue work on our transportation

system. We are working closely with the road builders as we work closely with the department to provide the best transportation system we can in this province.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, I didn't say the road builders don't appreciate the fact that they may be able to continue construction if indeed the conditions are right, and to see the funding there. So I just want to make that correction.

Madam Minister, as well, you're talking about a graph. I wonder if it would be possible for us to get a copy of that graph so we can . . . We're trying to figure out how in the world you can be above 250 when your figures are still well below the \$250,000. In fact I can see why you're rising a little bit because you dropped it to such a low, that the graph obviously had to have a major dip in there and therefore there should be an increase in there. But when we look at the numbers in front of us, nothing is even close to \$250 million yet. And I'm not exactly sure where your budget is, where your graph is showing you about how you can be above it.

Madam Minister, we would be pleased if you could send us a copy of the graph that you're indicating to us that you have in front of you so we can get an idea of exactly where you're going and how you are arriving at the . . . or how you are making the comments you're making, that you're bringing forward, and suggesting that you're well ahead of that budget projection. So if it's possible we'd be pleased to have a copy of that graph sent to us.

Madam Minister, there are a number of issues in regards to the department that we would like to raise as well. There are a number of issues, some specific issues, that we would like to raise in regards to highway maintenance and repair.

I know my colleagues have some questions, and I would like to give them an opportunity to bring some direct questions to some issues that they have in their area. And so at this time I am going to take my place and give the member from Saltcoats the opportunity to respond and to raise some direct concerns after the minister responds, if she wishes, to the questions and concerns I've raised.

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — There's one quick response that I would get you. I'll get a copy of this graph. The graph I'm talking about is a graph that would show constant growth from the budget level that we would have determined when we made our commitment for 2.5 billion and how that would go if you divided it by 10, each year if you went on an incremental constant growth, how you'd reach 2.5 billion. So the lines on that graph go up at a steady increase.

Right now because we've added above what that constant growth would be, we actually would be ahead of the dollars put in. We're not talking about a graph that would add 250 million the first year and go flat. That's what you have been saying is that's how you can get a 10-year commitment of 2.5 billion. But that's not the case. I mean in most cases the 2.5 billion, you add it up over the 10 years, see if you've spent the \$2.5 billion on your transportation system, and that would be the constant growth that you would need in your budget to achieve that. So I know that these math things are a little difficult over there, but I

will give you a copy of the graph to show how we can achieve that.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair, and welcome to your officials this morning, Madam Minister. And also as the member from Moosomin has said, not yet, Minister, but very shortly will be. We have a number of concerns in each of our constituencies I believe in this province, but the highway problem that we have out there is all over this province. Everywhere we turn.

I happened to be on a highway the other day, Madam Minister, that I'd been on about five years ago. I believe it was from Raymore west, I don't even know the number of the highway. And the one thing that intrigued me about that highway is that every so far I went it said, broken pieces of pavement, 3 kilometres. You'd go 3 kilometres and then you'd get another sign would say, pavement broken next 6 kilometres.

Madam Minister, that highway was in that condition six years ago and it's actually even worse than it was at that point. So I don't think we're gaining on our highway system; in fact we're losing.

Madam Minister, in my constituency along the Manitoba border I have a number of concerns — 8 and 80. I guess the first one I'd like to ask you about is the highway from Spy Hill to Langenburg. That highway is actually unsafe to drive on at any speed at all. And I was wondering if there's any chance that we're going to get any work done this year or possibly in the near future on that highway.

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — Okay, thank you. I hope I've got the right section here. Actually I was out and had met with people in that area about some of the roads in that area. I had a meeting at MacNutt.

Now from Spy Hill to Junction 22 west, that's the paved surface, now what we've got here is in pretty good condition but it does need . . . it's going to have . . . some major spot improvements in 1998 were done and there will be overall again some more strengthening work to be done this year.

Langenburg to the Junction 10 is 44 kilometres of gravel surface. And again some of that is getting some spot regravelling and that is . . . part of that whole section in there too under area planning has been one of the highways and one of the routes that have been discussed.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well thank you, Madam Minister. And yes I realize that you were out in our area and talking about roads, and that brings up another concern that I was going to get to later but I might as well bring it up now.

Madam Minister, I understand that your department is talking to the RM (rural municipality) of Churchbridge and coming to an agreement with the RM of Churchbridge to pay X number of dollars to have them take over this highway for the summer. And I believe that's the one north, Langenburg north, the one you were talking about, the gravel surface. I just wonder if you could give me a quick explanation of what point you've got to with the RM of Churchbridge, because I have some very grave concerns of what I see happening here.

(1215)

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — Okay. Actually I had again the opportunity to meet with the RM of Churchbridge at SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) on that. And I think again we're still in discussions with them, and we're certainly just willing to work with the RM to do what they feel is in the best interest for the roads in that area. So at this point in time we're still in discussion and we're doing the maintenance work on that road.

Now you also mentioned earlier I think, Highway No. 15 from Raymore to Junction No. 20, and that highway is again one of the thin-surfaced highways. But that is a highway that we're doing some major work on this year and it's under the CAIP (Canada/Saskatchewan Agri-Infrastructure Program) program. There will be upgrading to a structural pavement is planned for 13 kilometres from Raymore to Semans, and that's a total of \$2.6 million is going to be spent on that piece.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'm glad to hear that and I'm sure the people that live in the Raymore area will be ecstatic, because I know that highway's been in poor condition for a number of years.

I'd like to go back to the gravel surfaced highway north of Langenburg, Madam Minister. I have a lot of concerns here with what I think I see happening. My concern is that I see father government passing the buck once again to the RMs. And I guess my next question would be, how many other RMs in the province are you in negotiations with to take over maybe even just the maintenance of these roads?

But what I can see, this is the start of something down the road that may develop into something further where we may see your department handing full responsibility for these roads back over to the RMs. And I would caution RMs to be out there to be very cautious of what they see happening now and do not jump into these agreements because it sounds good right now. In five years from now, it may be fully their responsibility.

So, Madam Minister, are there a number of other areas in the province that you're also in negotiations with other than the RM of Churchbridge, even if it's just for the sake of taking over the maintenance of highways such as this at this point?

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — In response to that answer, I think again when we've talked about good planning and working with municipalities, that's what it is about. And actually the department has told me also that over a number of years, we've had a number of these kinds of agreements way in the past that have worked very successfully.

But I think what is here is talking about partnerships. And sometimes there's various different ways in which we can work with RMs and we know the kinds of changes that are happening in transportation. And sometimes it's to their best benefit that they do some of the maintenance and we do the funding for that, or we work out different types of agreements right across the province. In northern Saskatchewan, we've looked at different kinds of partnerships there also for the maintenance of our road system.

And so again I don't think it's any kind of plan that we're trying to off-load. What we're trying to do is actually work together to make sure that we can build a system between RMs, provincial highways, that meets the new changes, some of the challenges that we're facing, especially in rural Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well thank you, Madam Minister, but forgive me if I'm somewhat suspicious. Because I've been involved in RMs and I've saw the downloading that's came in the last number of years under your government. And a number of . . . many RMs are down under 50 per cent of the funding they were at before. And I'd hate to see this continue in a way by dumping the responsibility for certain highways out there back to the RMs.

The highway in question, Madam Minister, from Langenburg north, is there anything in your plans — in your five-year plan, whatever it is — to hard-surface or pave that highway?

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — At this point in time there isn't any plan to put a hard surface on that highway.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, another highway that keeps coming up . . . and actually last year your department did repair I believe about half of it, from the Wroxton corner at No. 10 Highway north towards Kamsack. And I commend you for that. That road was in terrible shape.

I'm wondering, is the other half of that highway in the plans to be repaired? Because the other half of that highway, really, in my estimation — I travel it quite often because that's part of my constituency — the safety factor comes up, especially after a rain, Madam Minister. And you may have saw this happen in other areas, where the highway is dished out in spots.

That fills up with rain . . . or with water after it rains. And you get on there and it's just like your vehicle planes on it, and all of a sudden you're not sure of where you're going. Even in the wintertime when it's storming and that, that road is very dangerous.

So I commend you for fixing the first half of that road to the Togo corner. Is the other half of that road on the slate to be fixed in the near future?

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — On the rest of that piece of highway, there'd just be the regular kind of preservation and maintenance work. There's not major improvements scheduled for this year.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — That's what I understood, Madam Minister. And I guess my other question then would be, my next question, is it on the program for the next . . . do you have a program or it could be on for the next five years?

The part that you had fixed, to me is just a vast improvement. The only concern I might have is it looks to me on the part that you've repaired, it looks like about 3:1 slopes, and I have a bit of concern on how steep the ditches are in some of those areas. But having said that, it's a vast improvement over what we had before.

What we've done is fixed half of the problem now. But it goes to the old saying that, you know, the weakest link in the chain is the one that breaks first. And I guess because half of it's still in bad condition, a lot of people are avoiding that highway. And there's a lot of traffic on that highway, as I'm sure your department is well aware of.

So is that, you know, in your five-year plan, your 10-year plan? Do you have a plan to put that back . . . to fix the other half of that highway?

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — On this particular highway that you've identified, as I said, it's not in this year's budget to be doing a major improvement there. But it's certainly one that would be considered in a five-year plan or in a five-year time period.

Now all of those aren't identified and we have to . . . we usually look at a two-year projection somewhat on major improvements. Again it depends a bit on budget level and we assess the system each year because sometimes there are other areas in the province or other highways that do come up that doing a benefit/cost kind of analysis in how we can determine those projects.

But this time it's not on the immediate future, but it certainly will be considered like you say, on a longer term, like a five-year. But again it depends on budget levels and how that will come out in comparison to a number of other highways in the province.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well thank you, Madam Minister. And once again I commend you, your department, for what you've done on the first part of that highway. I would hope you would keep it in mind down the road that, you know, that highway is good for halfway up there, and then the other half is really, really in bad shape as we know others are.

Madam Minister, the one other highway that I — and I get probably calls on all of them — but is 15 Highway from the junction of 9 to 16. And I'm sure you've had calls on this highway over the years.

I realize this highway is a very thin membraned surface and it breaks up very easy. What is in the plans to repair that road? Because I believe, Madam Minister, what we see now out there . . . And actually that's the way I go home every weekend, Madam Minister, so I'm very familiar with this road. It has gravel surface for 2 miles and then it'll be hard surface for a mile or two and then back to gravel. And that alone is actually a hazard for the driving public out there.

Is there anything in the works to repair this highway to any degree this year?

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — On that piece of road, it is a very low volume road. It will receive the regular maintenance. I know last year it had some intensive preservation work done on it and this year what is scheduled is the kind of regular maintenance and maintaining the surfaces the best as we can.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Madam Minister, you just talked about low-volume road. Well I think there are many highways in this province that you will find low-volume

compared to what they were before because of the fact that people have diverted from travelling on those highways as a result of the conditions of the highways.

And a good example is right in our area. No 8 from Kipling east to No. 9 highway. The amount of traffic and heavy traffic going on the grid road that goes right by our community and by our farm, is unbelievable compared to what we've seen in the past number of years.

Most of the semis that move through to the East take the grid road rather than going through on No. 48 highway. In fact last fall when the pipeline was constructed, they had a truck that actually as a result of the conditions of the highway, where a truck with pipe had come . . . had slowed down to stop for something, and it actually had slid off the road and turned over. From that time on all the traffic went down the grid road.

And, Madam Minister, in that particular piece of highway, just recently there — and I think it's called the southeast regional transport authority; I'm not quite positive on that — but a meeting in Carlyle, they were talking about highways, their importance, and grading these highways as to where they might be in regards to the highway construction. I guess the factor of the traffic flows, the type of traffic that would flow by them. That portion of Highway No. 48, Kipling east to No. 9 I believe wasn't even down as a priority piece of highway.

And a number of individual RMs specifically in the Wawota area, brought it to the attention of the member I believe. And I'm not sure who was there from the department, but there was debate down at Carlyle, and the reeve from the RM of Walpole had indicated, and reeve from the RM of Wawken were indicating how the problems on that highway, and the type of conditions the highway was in, and the fact that the ambulance from Wawota would be using that highway.

And they were told, well the ambulance from Wawota actually has two other areas it could go. It could go south to Carlyle, up 33 — that is actually out — or it could go north to Whitewood and then down the No. 1.

Well, Madam Minister, if an ambulance is travelling from Wawota with an emergency situation, to Whitewood and across is definitely much, much further and much more out of the way. And it would seem to me that it would be more appropriate to look at upgrading, and not just upgrading, but constructing. Because I think over the past number of years, in the last three or four years in particular, there's been some major breakouts. The Highway department's been in and they've actually dug out fair sections of the road and filled them in, but that really hasn't improved the situation. That highway is in need of major construction. I think I heard another member just a moment ago talking about that highway from Raymore indicating that it's kind of in a bog. Well 48 faces that too, and it would seem to me that we need to upgrade the whole highway, reconstruct it, and put a good solid base under that highway rather than just continue to fix. We'll be always digging out these holes trying to improve the condition of that highway and it might be better off in the long-run to finally say, let's get with it and reconstruct this piece of highway, because we've got a good chunk of highway all the way from Kipling west, the 48 west right to the No. 1. It's been upgraded back through the late '70s and '80s

and maybe it's time to complete that construction through to No. 9.

So, Madam Minister, while I see some other areas of construction in my constituency, I would have to ask: where are we as far as No. 8 from No. 9 west through to the community of Kipling in regards to a long-term commitment to finally reconstruct that road and bring it into standard that would comply with what we have west of Kipling?

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — There's just a number of things here I want to touch on because you raised a lot of issues.

First of all, I was at a meeting in Carlyle but I wasn't at a meeting where some of those things that specifically you discussed. And I also have driven Highway No. 48 on the piece that you're referring to there outside of Kipling to junction, I think Highway No. 9.

And first of all, I mean a lot of these highways, these were the thin membrane surfaces and we will be again putting a fair amount of work into the maintenance and routine preservation on this highway. This is one, I think, that definitely is identified that will need some major upgrading and paving, probably in the fairly near future. It's not scheduled for this year but it's certainly one that we have been working on, seeing it in that area as a priority for the province, but also I think also for a priority for that area.

But I want to comment on, when you talk about the traffic shifting off the roads because they're going to good roads, possibly because of the condition of the thin surfaced highways. I think there is a lot of factors here that we've got to consider.

And we're seeing with branch line abandonment, more consolidation on elevators, we're seeing also a system change in rural Saskatchewan. The thin surfaced highways were not built for the heavier type of truck traffic so we're not talking about a system that was in place that all of a sudden is getting less volume. Yes, it is getting more volumes because of the branch line changes.

If we wanted to upgrade all of our secondary system in the province, all of the thin surfaced highways, all the secondary system in the province, we're talking about probably a billion dollar expenditure in order to take primary weights.

And so when I talk about good planning, that's why we have to work with area planning, we have to work with municipalities so that all of the dollars that we're spending are being spent in the right areas on the road system. And we are going to have to organize some of our truck haul routes and so on.

Some of the ideas that are coming forward in local areas is that some of those routes may be on a different system. They can't be on the thin-surface highway. They may go on a grid system. Municipalities are getting the impact of that. Then the Highways department can work with them and help offset that cost so that you keep a good thin-surfaced highway for the school buses, for the ambulances.

(1230)

All of that is part of the kind of planning that we have to put in place. We are also in part of that planning trying to maintain more branch lines and short lines and some of those kinds of issues also, that we can keep some of that heavy volume and weight off of that road system.

And so it's a time in which the province is absolutely determined to put more dollars in at a provincial level, work closely with the municipalities so when we're spending those dollars we're spending them in the best ways possible. We're calling on the federal government to put their dollars in also which we desperately need, both for the rural infrastructure and the impacts with the Crow benefit gone and the changes there, but also the impacts on our national system in which a national government should participate in.

And so I think we've got to work together on all of these strategies. We're putting a plan together and we're going to meet those challenges.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, I do not disagree with you that we know there's a significant cost factor to bringing a number of our roads up into a condition that can handle the type of traffic that they will be experiencing.

And certainly, Madam Minister, I think you would have to agree — as you indicated you had travelled that section 48 highway — while we have patches that certainly have taken . . . removed the potholes or the breakdown of the highway, as a number of individuals who had come to a funeral recently travelling from Virden, Manitoba, they had come across. And I think, Madam Minister, if you'd followed 48 through and gone into Manitoba you would certainly notice there's a significant improvement as soon as you hit the Manitoba border on their highway. But I know the comment that was made . . . even though we may have removed the breakout areas, just the waviness of the highway and the up and down, these individuals who had attended this funeral asked me if there was a better road back, back east rather than going back on 48.

And I think that's why it's imperative, Madam Minister, and I hope I heard you right in saying that when you were at that meeting in Carlyle you heard a number of the concerns, you've been on that road, and that some specific action be taken in the very near future rather than just continuing to repair those . . . the breakout areas which had tended to be — I'm not exactly sure what the numbers were; you may have that but I'm not necessarily interested in just getting to that in the time being — the fact that we need to look at really doing something with that roadbed and I think that's important.

We also talked about some of the other highways in the area. I note in . . . south of Moosomin you've committed to construction to the Pipestone valley I believe. I'm not exactly sure on the number of kilometres that that will involve — maybe six, eight or ten, it's in that area.

And, Madam Minister, I guess the first question I would like to ask: what, to what grade would you be upgrading that highway or roadbed? I believe there'll be construction on it. I've had some concerns in regards to them. And the reason I ask that because I've already had concerns from the people in the area.

You've constructed south of the Pipestone down to Highway, Highway 48 on No. 8 right close to the terminal there, and some concerns that there's already breakup on that new section of highway, which has just been . . . I believe last year just received a surfacing on it.

And the concern is the type or the level of grade that you are . . . will be building there. And so, Madam Minister, I'd like to know exactly what level of grade, what the public can expect, and roughly what cost we're looking at for that project. And whether or not the project's already been let?

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — Okay on the piece then that will be going forward this year, it's 9.5 kilometres. And it's a value of about \$1.8 million, a little bit over that actually. It might be closer to 1.9 million that'll be spent. It will be a similar standard to what the other construction that was just done near Fairlight. It might be a wider construction near Moosomin because of the greater volumes in that area.

But there'll be major . . . like the regrading will be done, you know the sand and gravel, and then it will be a double seal coat put on top of that. So it will be brought up to a good standard.

The point that you mentioned about some of the breakouts that you're already seeing. That happens I guess quite often after new construction in the first year or two. You might find some spots that we'll need to go back and do some strengthening. And so that's one of the things that is fairly typical still of a new constructed highway.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Deputy Chair. Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, when we talk about the type of grade that will be going in, like the one that went in just at the 8 and 48 junction and north, and then what will be going in just south of Moosomin.

A number of years ago there was a grade that was — I believe it was around 1990, in the Gainsborough area, if I'm not mistaken, on No. 8 — there were a number, I believe around 26 kilometres constructed.

And I guess what I would like to ask of you, will the construction that is currently taking place on No. 8 be equivalent to the grade level in that previous construction — 8 south, in the Gainsborough area? Was that a better grade level of construction at that time? And what was the cost at that time for that construction?

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — We don't have all that specific information here, but it is my understanding that it would be a similar type of construction, a similar standard at that. And we can get details on that previous work. But it is our understanding that it would be at a similar standard as what was done at Gainsborough.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, what I would like of your department . . . because I've been handed some figures as well. And some of the figures I have — I'm not sure if we've got all the figures — and it appears that the construction is much higher today than it was. We would expect that over the period of years, it would be. But for the level of, and the grade, they just don't quite add

up.

What I would like is the cost of even the construction that currently has taken place at 8 and 48 on that piece of highway; and all the figures with regards to the base, the type of surface, the total construction for that project as well as that No. 8 south to 26 kilometres back in the 1990s period. If you could get that for me please.

A further question, Madam Minister, in regards to current construction. What is the actual cost — and I guess this would have to be based on the type of paved surface that you're putting on. Some is kind of an oil, gravel base firmed up; some is a hot pavement structure. I wonder if you could give me a cost comparison of the difference for the construction of a base and like we'll be seeing on No. 1, that level of pavement that will be going on that, per kilometre, as well as some of these thinner membrane or cold surface treatments, by kilometre.

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — Okay, I wasn't sure if you just want the total cost or if you want it split down to grading and surfacing. But on a highway that would be like a national highway, like one of the ones that we're twinning, their per kilometre would be — now this isn't the twinned section, but one . . . like just doing like a double-lane on it — per kilometre would be \$400,000 per kilometre. Grading would be around 170,000; the surfacing would be somewhere around \$230,000.

If we went back to like a secondary highway or one that's a lower volume highway, we would be in the neighbourhood of between 250,000 to \$270,000 per kilometre. That would be the cost there.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, earlier on you mentioned about the CAIP program. And if I understand that correctly, that's federal funds that are coming to the province as a result of the Crow benefit being changed. How many dollars has . . . I guess first of all, how many dollars has the province received to date; and is there a yearly commitment for so many years? How many dollars do you expect to receive? And are all those monies going directly into highway construction or is some of that shared with municipal governments?

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — The CAIP funding was funding that came back — we could call it federal funding, but it was really part of the producers' payout — it's the producers' dollars coming back to the province to try to do the impacts, I guess, from what happened with the Crow, to help build on the road system.

There was a commitment of about \$84.6 million in total for the CAIP funding. This year we are down now to only \$2.8 million being left for the province, and I think that . . . oh that's for the provincial highways — the 2.8 million.

Now the funding worked out I think to be about two-thirds/one-third of CAIP funding; two-thirds did get cost shared with municipalities; one-third could be used on the provincial system. And again when it was used on the provincial system, there was again cost sharing. Where we would use two-thirds of the federal funding, we'd have to put a third in for any projects that went on the provincial system.

That was the same with the municipalities — they would get two-thirds funding from CAIP, one-third from . . . the municipalities would have to come up with.

And then the decision-making process had both the federal government, provincial government, SARM, SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) involved on picking the projects that would be submitted to go to which municipalities would get the CAIP funding and which projects would go to the province.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, Madam Minister, if I understand you correctly you're saying that there was a commitment of 84.6 total under the CAIP program. Is that correct — 84.6? And right now there's about \$2.8 million left to come to the province — that's correct? Okay.

It would seem to me, Madam Minister, based on these numbers, that you didn't do a very good job of negotiating with the federal government. In review of the number of kilometres of road, both municipal and provincial, that are going to be left bearing the weight of the Crow benefit as it was phased out and the fact that municipalities and certainly the province are left now having to upgrade a road system . . . and that's I guess where we get into another area of debate in regards to short-line rail.

So when I look at these numbers, and based on the comment of the cost of a kilometre of road construction, those numbers aren't going to go very far. And I can appreciate some of the difficulties we're facing.

(1245)

I realize we're also running into time constraints as far as today's debate as well, and I want to get a couple of other issues brought before us that have been brought to my attention so I don't forget them down the road.

One of them comes from the town of Ponteix. And a letter that was . . . I believe you received in your office, Madam Minister, in regards to signage and the concern that the community of Ponteix — the signage on highways — there is very little to really indicate to individuals when they're travelling south of Moose Jaw where exactly Ponteix is.

And I'm wondering what has been done so far, Madam Minister, to address the concerns that have been brought to the attention of your department by the mayor in that regard.

It was a letter that was I believe sent to you. It was addressed March 31; it arrived in our office, a copy of it on April 6. And I'm wondering if your department could indicate exactly where we are, from the town of Ponteix, regarding signage.

It says:

The town feels that the request for some consideration of additional highway signage is fair and reasonable. In particular on Highway No. 4 between Swift Current and Cadillac Junction and again on Highway 2 south of Moose Jaw at the junctions of 43 and 13, other than on the

Highway 13 itself, there is virtually no signage indicating the town of Ponteix.

I'm wondering, Madam Minister, where your department is, whether you've had a chance to review the request in this letter and what you have done to date.

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — In response there was one thing I wanted to mention in the response back to the CAIP funding before too that we say those dollars are going back to municipalities two-thirds, one-third to the province. Also some of that funding has also been made available for some of the short-line initiative too.

But one thing I wanted to say about the funding that you say we didn't negotiate very well. Well it was one of those things here when we talk about the Crow benefit, is it's interesting to look at the parties opposite because it seems to me we were one of the only parties . . . government that actually fought of course the changes in the Crow benefit.

And I think one of the other points here is that the package that was put together from producers, the federal government decided to take some of those producer dollars and put it into this transportation package.

Now we have called on . . . and actually there's a letter going to Vancief from the Government of Saskatchewan, but also with SARM and SUMA, that we would like to see an extension of CAIP, that more dollars should be going into it; it's not adequate the dollars that have been put there. Certainly even though the review with Estey recommended that there should be more dollars going into our roads system, not only from provinces but they certainly mentioned that the national government, the federal government, should be involved in this. And we would concur that we should have more dollars in a CAIP-like fund in which you can get federal dollars coming. And we are working on that with the local municipalities at the federal level.

The specific question that you wanted to mention about Ponteix, yes, I remember the letter just has come in. We've had actually some discussion with the community already on acting on some additional signage. The sign that they would like to see I think on the national level highway is one in which we've got a signing policy that it would not qualify for, but we are adding more signs for the community of Ponteix.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, in regards to the CAIP program and short-line rail we'll certainly have some further questions, but there's another area I'd like to get into that's been raised and brought to my attention regarding regulations and the Highway Traffic Board. I'm not sure if we can address that.

And it comes specifically in regard to equipment dealers across the province of Saskatchewan. And as I understand it, some of the concerns they have, they're not exactly sure what the regulations mean, the way they're interpreting. At one of the dealers I talked to, he's interpreting the regulations as to read he's supposed to have a set of brakes every time he pulls a piece of equipment off his lot.

When we talk about trailers — I can see if fifth wheel trailers or trailers of that nature — but if you're pulling a trailer out to a farm that's going to be used on a farm site, his concern is that is he supposed to all of a sudden install a set of brakes on this trailer when he's pulling it down the highway delivering it? Or the other concern — anything of a trailing mode such as your cultivation equipment or things like that, if you happen to be pulling it behind a truck delivering it, would he be falling outside the regulations and face fines by the Highway Traffic Board if indeed that's what the regulations mean?

There's concerns regarding the length of trailers; there's concerns regarding the brakes when you're towing equipment down the road.

There's another issue that arises and that's . . . and I believe in reading the regulations as well. A lot of equipment has slow-moving-vehicle signs already on the equipment, and if you're towing it behind a truck there's something in regards to the 35 or so kilometres. If you're going faster than that you're supposed to remove the slow moving vehicle . . . but have the vehicle emblem off of that piece of equipment, but as well have a clear identification of the equipment.

And there's a number of issues there that especially equipment dealers or people who happen to be delivering or just using for agricultural purposes are quite concerned that they may find themselves outside of the guidelines and have had Highway Traffic Board on their case in regards to this. And I think we need a clarification as to what the regulations are really saying, Madam Minister.

**Hon. Ms. Bradley:** — Okay, on this specific question on lengths, that is under our legislation and there is no . . . Any length, I guess, can go on municipal roads but we do have the length regulation within the highways . . . within a highways Act. And so that, that's fairly clear.

Now the other questions that you're asking about brakes on these types of trailers and some of the . . . I think we need to get more specifics from you. That's under the jurisdiction of SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) and we would need to get back to you about those specific pieces on those trailers that you're talking about.

The committee reported progress.

**The Speaker:** — Wishing all hon. members an enjoyable weekend in your constituencies and with your families. We look forward to seeing you on Monday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock when this House will reconvene.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

