

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our petition today is to do with agriculture in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to demand 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 ever pray.

The communities involved with the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Langenburg and Churchbridge.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition today for disenfranchised widows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to have the Workers' Compensation Board Act amended whereby benefits and pensions are reinstated to disenfranchised widows and whereby all revoked pensions are reimbursed to them retroactively with interest to April 17, 1985.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people who have signed this petition are from Saskatoon and Regina.

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I bring a petition forward from the good residents of Saskatchewan. Prayer reads:

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 for 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.

The signatures are from Ituna, Lestock, Goodeve, Grenfell, Indian Head, Wolseley, and many other small communities from this great province of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I join with my colleague in bringing forward petitions regarding fuel taxes. The prayer reads:

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 fuel tax revenues toward road maintenance and construction so Saskatchewan residents may have a safe highway system that meets their needs.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed these petitions are from the Coronach, Rockglen, Assiniboia, Limerick, Saskatoon, Yorkton, Regina, Climax, Val Marie, Mankota areas of the province.

I so present.

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens that are concerned about the state of our highway system. 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 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 Gravelbourg, Herbert, Rouleau, and many other centres across this province.

I so present.

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

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 fuel tax revenues toward road maintenance and construction so that Saskatchewan residents may have a safe highway system that meets their needs.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions have been signed by the good folks from the Humboldt, Lanigan, Watrous area. And I so present.

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about children with learning disabilities. And I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide essential funding and ensure the delivery of scientifically proven, diagnostic assessment and programming for children with learning disabilities in order that they have an access to an education that meets their needs and allows them to reach their full potential.

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

All of the people who have signed this petition today, Mr. Speaker, are from Prince Albert, and Tway, Saskatchewan. And I present it on their behalf with pleasure.

### 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.

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 31 ask the government the following question:

How many full-time, part-time, and casual registered nurses were employed in each of the health districts on the following dates: December 1, 1998; January 1, 1999; February 1, 1999; March 1, 1999; and April 1, 1999;

By district, how many full-time registered nurses had been hired in the following months: December 1998; January 1999; February 1999; March 1999; and April 1999;

By district, how many registered nurses had quit during the following months: December 1998; January 1999; February 1999; March 1999; and April 1999;

And by district, how many registered nurses that were employed full time had requested to be casual employees during the following months: December 1998; January 1999; February 1999; March 1999; and April 1999.

Thank you.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Wednesday next move the first reading of a Bill, The Children's Law Amendment Act, 1999.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mrs. Teichrob:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to members in the House my husband Dan who is making a very rare appearance in the west gallery today. It's been suggested to me by some of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that anyone who can endure living with me for 42 years deserves a very warm welcome to this place.

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

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

#### Recreation Association Awards Banquet in Prince Albert

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a couple of volunteers from my constituency, Marj and Dwayne Biccum. The Biccums were two of eleven volunteers recognized at the North Central Regional Recreation Association awards banquet held in Prince Albert. They received the 1999 volunteer recognition for their contribution to special services.

Dwayne and Marj own and operate the Wakaw *Recorder*, a weekly newspaper. They are and have been two of the most involved people in Wakaw. Together they have been active in the church choir, parish council, and board of trade. They also work together for minor sports and the arena association.

Marj's other involvements include past president of the Wakaw Ukrainian Dancing Association, figure skating club, and ladies curling club. She was also actively involved in pastoral care, the Catholic Women's League, the hospital auxiliary, and the Girl Guide movement. Marj is presently involved on the Wakaw town council, P.A. (Prince Albert) and district victim services, and coordinator of the Heart Beat Tour.

Dwayne is a 24-year member of the Wakaw Lions Club and is past-president and present secretary. He has chaired the Wakaw Housing Authority and is past mayor of Wakaw.

Dwayne has served on the volunteer fire department, the Sage Hill Economic Development Corporation, the curling club, the arena committee, the school board, and the coordinator of Donor's Choice.

Currently Dwayne is involved with the Knights of Columbus, the parish finance committee, Wakaw Farmers' Market Committee, and takes his turn with Meals on Wheels.

Dwayne and Marj's countless hours of volunteering have contributed greatly towards a caring community in Wakaw. Congratulations to both of them on receiving this very deserving award.

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

#### Nurses' Watch Program

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that today the Liberal caucus will begin its nurses' watch program.

Mr. Speaker, the watch has long been associated with the nursing profession as a common part of the uniform. The word, however, has taken on a whole new meaning. The people of Saskatchewan have been watching nurses get fewer in number since the NDP (New Democratic Party) came to power.

The deplorable working conditions that have resulted from the NDP's decision to cut 600 nurses, close hospitals, and slash acute services are forcing nurses to leave the profession and sometimes the province.

It's time this government was held accountable for the number of nurses leaving. We intend to hold the NDP accountable for the nursing shortage. Under our nurses' watch program, we will ask for regular updates on the numbers of nurses quitting, leaving, and being hired in each district.

Only by holding the NDP accountable can we hope to reverse the trend so we no longer have to watch our nurses leaving. Thank you.

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

### Mitchell's Gourmet Foods of Saskatoon

**Hon. Mrs. Teichrob:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak about yet another example of jobs being created in Saskatchewan and yet another example of local businesses achieving success in Saskatchewan.

Recently Mitchell's Gourmet Foods of Saskatoon announced an agreement with the Schneider corporation. The two companies have formed an alliance which will allow Mitchell's to remain an independent food processor, but also allow them to expand with the financial backing of Schneiders. What this means for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is 150 new jobs at Mitchell's bringing full-time total employment at the Saskatoon plant to 1,450 people.

Mitchell's will be spending \$50 million on the expansion and hopes to improve on last year's sales of \$300 million. Mitchell's is now Canada's third largest processor of value-added pork and pork products.

I'd like to extend my congratulations to Mitchell's Gourmet Foods, and in particular to the chairperson, LuAnne Mitchell. Thank you, LuAnne, for continuing to invest in Saskatchewan and best of luck in the future.

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

### Eyehill Rural Development Corporation in Macklin

**Ms. Murrell:** — Mr. Speaker, again today I would like to discuss what the Small Business Loans Association is doing for rural Saskatchewan.

We've heard about what the SBLA (Small Business Loans Association) has done for Wilkie, Glaslyn, Medstead, Canwood, Shell Lake, and Spiritwood. And today I have the pleasure of telling members about what it has done for the Macklin area.

I was honoured to present a job creation certificate to the Eyehill Rural Development Corporation in Macklin on behalf of our Economic and Co-operative Development minister. Kim Gartner, the Chairperson of Macmillan's SBLA accepted the award for the corporation.

The corporation has created 37 full-time and two part-time jobs while maintaining eight more jobs. Help from the Small Business Loans Association made this possible and has aided many other businesses at the community level. The SBLA is a positive initiative promoting entrepreneurship and full-time employment.

I'm happy to see that these partnerships are paying off for rural residents and businesses while also making our economy stronger. For small and new business, it is often difficult to get loans from banks and other agencies. It's encouraging that these businesses are now being given a fair chance at success with the help SBLA.

Thus far the Small Business Loans Association has helped create and maintain 12,800 jobs.

Please join me in congratulating Eyehill Rural Development Corporation and its staff for doing their best to keep our economy healthy and strong.

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

### Saskatchewan Party Candidate for Saskatoon Riversdale

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. April 26 was a momentous day in Saskatchewan. This day, 17 years ago, was the day Joanne Zazelenchuk was elected to this Assembly. Joanne was a university student working part time as a gas jockey at a service station and she was a very able representative for her constituents, Mr. Speaker.

She was young and had only a part-time job, unskilled and low-wage position — very similar, Mr. Speaker, to a good many of her constituents. Joanne could empathize with a good many of her constituents.

I believe it's important, Mr. Speaker, to recognize that people from all walks of life can and do serve in this Assembly. And it's important that the representative, to represent a constituency, you must know and understand the people you serve.

Joanne Zazelenchuk was an able representative for the constituency of Riversdale. I look forward to an equally good, if not better representative in the future, in the Saskatchewan Party's candidate Jessie McGhee. I'm not sure anyone remembers the current MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Riversdale, but I'm sure that Jessie McGhee will soon be known and loved in Riversdale. Thank you.

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

### Estevan Bruins win Anavet Cup

**Mr. Ward:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First let me congratulate the Regina Pat Canadians for winning the Air Canada Cup in Prince Albert last night. I'm told it was an exciting overtime win.

Of course the real hockey news this weekend came out of The Pas, Manitoba. My Estevan Bruins also won an overtime game, and in the process took the Anavet Cup over the Manitoba champions — the OCN (Opaskwayak Cree Nation) Blizzard. The score was 3:2. The Bruins won the series 4 games to 2. The Blizzard was considered to be one of the top teams in the country. Saturday night's loss was only their second at home all season.

First, Mr. Speaker, we saddled the Broncos from Humboldt. Then we melted the Blizzard from The Pas. Now we move on to the nationals next week, the Royal Bank Cup in Yorkton, where I'm sorry to say to the member from Yorkton, we will devour his puppy dogs and any other teams that dare to show up.

My congratulations once again to coach Glen Watson; to John Wood, who scored the winning goal; to goalie David Guerrero, who made 40 saves; and to all the Bruins who have brought so much excitement to Estevan this season.

See you in Yorkton, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Swift Current Girl Plays in National Ringette Championship

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to tell everyone about a very driven and talented young lady from my constituency. Her name is Caila Horne and she lives on her family's farm outside of Swift Current.

Caila's passion is ringette. She has been playing the sport locally for some time and gets younger fans of the game involved by coaching. Caila's parents, Cathy and Garnie Horne have been supporting her interest in the sport. They've been driving her to Regina this winter to try out for more competitive teams in between looking after the family farm and running Horne's Electric in town.

Caila joined a team here in Regina which went on to represent Saskatchewan at the Canadian ringette championship. The tournament was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, from April 5 to 10. The girls played hard all week, and Caila scored 15 goals on her own. The team ended up winning the bronze medal in the 18 and under category.

Please join me in congratulating Caila Horne on her ringette season and encouraging her to continue in the sport that she is obviously so talented in. Thank you.

### Block Parents Mark 15th Anniversary

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently I was privileged to attend the national Block Parent annual general meeting and awards night hosted here in Regina. This meeting marked the 15th anniversary for the Block Parent program here in Saskatchewan. In April of 1984, when the provincial organization was founded, 22 communities were represented. Now I am happy to report that there are 70 Saskatchewan Block Parent communities. In these 70 communities there are more than 10,000 Block Parent homes. Most of the homes will probably never need to be used for their intended purpose of shelter or refuge for a lost or threatened child, however, Mr. Speaker, the Block Parent sign in the window is a beacon of safety and assurance for our children.

Mr. Speaker, Block Parents are also volunteers. Almost half of the population in Saskatchewan over the age of 15 volunteers in some capacity, and we shouldn't exclude the kids from under 15 who do their fair share as well. The Block Parent program is one such activity and I congratulate those who participate.

In particular I'd like to recognize two members from my constituency of Regina Sherwood, who serve as police liaisons to the Saskatchewan Block Parent Advisory Committee. They are Constable Ray Van Dusen of the Regina Police Service and Sergeant Rick Wychreschuk of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police).

And finally to another constituent, Mr. Bill O'Donavon of BBS (Baton Broadcasting Services) sports, I want to say what a good job he did as MC (master of ceremonies) on this night.

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Extra Billing for Days in Hospital

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, your government's disastrous management of the health care system is taking its toll on families across Saskatchewan. Lois Francis is a senior citizen who was hospitalized on March 6th after she fell and broke her hip. Lois was admitted to Regina General Hospital for treatment and then flown to Minot during the nurses' strike. Lois was then returned to Regina Wednesday and readmitted to the Regina General Hospital.

Madam Minister, Lois Francis was in hospital under doctor's orders and yet on March 31, Lois was informed she would be extra billed for any day she was in the hospital after April 6.

Can you explain that, Madam Minister, if Lois Francis was hospitalized under doctor's orders and flown to Minot during the nurses' strike, why is she being extra billed by the NDP for her days in the hospital?

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly can't comment on individual cases, but we'll look into that if the member would share the details with me after the House sits.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, perhaps you can answer in a general way the policy because Lois Francis was hospitalized because of a serious injury. She was flown to Minot during the strike because she needed hospital care.

She was readmitted to hospital when she got back because she still needed hospital care. Her doctor kept her in the hospital because that is where he thought she should be. But your government, the NDP government obviously thinks differently.

Madam Minister, Lois Francis was in the hospital because that's where her doctor said she should be. But the NDP have sent her a bill for almost \$700.

Now why, Madam Minister, would anyone in the hospital be receiving bills, extra billing? Since Lois Francis was in the hospital on orders for her doctor, why are you charging her almost \$700 to stay in the hospital under doctor's orders?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — As I said before, the details, if the member would share them with me, we will answer those questions looking into them. The policy is not to bill anybody who has need of services in this province or out of the province during the special circumstances that we were in during the nurses' strike.

So if the details are shared with me, we will be looking into that.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Madam Minister, surely you know the reasons. You're the Minister of Health. In a general policy sense, why would you be charging extra billing to any patient in the hospital under the doctor's orders?

Madam Minister, this patient was sick enough to be flown to Minot and back again after the strike was over. Now why are you charging her extra billing for being in the hospital under doctor's orders?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. The same answer. As the details are shared with us, we will look into those details.

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

### Child Sex Trade

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Minister, last week we saw further evidence of how your government's lack of attention to the child sex trade is putting children at risk. A pimp visited a girl at a Saskatoon safe house for over an hour. I'm sure he wasn't there just to visit, Mr. Minister. He was there to threaten and intimidate this girl and get her to return to her life on the street.

Mr. Minister, this would not have happened under the legislation that the Saskatchewan Party tabled this sitting entitled The Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act which provides for full assessment services and protective security measures for those trying to end the cycle of child prostitution.

Mr. Minister, this so-called safe house in Saskatoon is funded by your department. How could this happen? How could you let a pimp enter a safe house and visit a girl who is obviously looking for protection?

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question and to make some comments in this matter. The member is correct that this did happen on one occasion. This safe house has been operating for a short period of time. Their staff are new.

The staff are only now beginning to develop the protocols that they should be to ensure that this kind of thing doesn't happen again. It's my understanding that following this incident there have been meetings between my department and the operators of the safe house to in fact to ensure that this will never happen again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, today we will be discussing your new legislation in Committee of the Whole. This legislation is about three years too late and the Saskatchewan Party doesn't believe it goes far enough, as is evidenced by the situation in Saskatoon.

The legislation that you have on the table called for fines of up to \$25,000 — up to \$25,000 for people who buy sex from children. I will be introducing an amendment calling for a

mandatory fine of \$25,000 for those convicted of buying sex from children. And we would like to see that money dedicated to victims' services and child protection.

Mr. Minister, will you support this amendment?

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, we'll certainly entertain that question during Committee of the Whole when we examine this Bill in detail and that particular clause, and be prepared to provide a response to the member at that time.

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

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, some people may wonder why myself, a MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from rural Saskatchewan, is so concerned about the urban problem of child prostitution.

Mr. Minister, it's because the sexual abuse of children can and does happen anywhere and everywhere in this province. Just last week, a man from my constituency was sentenced for sexually abusing 13 different children over two decades.

This is a crime that scars and debilitates children physically, psychologically, spiritually, and emotionally for life. And most of them are forced to deal with it on their own because they don't know where to turn for help and healing.

Mr. Minister, will you look at increasing fines for all persons convicted of child sexual abuse and will you dedicate this money to helping those who have been victims of this terrible crime?

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

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to let the member know and the House know that this government is also very concerned about some of the social conditions in Saskatchewan, and in addition to concern I think has acted demonstratively to deal with some of these issues. We have, since 1991 when we were elected, put into place the children's action plan to deal very specifically with some of the needs of children in Saskatchewan.

We have also redesigned our social assistance program, Mr. Speaker, to put more money in the hands of people who find themselves in poverty to ensure that more money is available to those families to help raise their children.

Mr. Speaker, we don't talk about doing these things, we act on these things and will continue to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Milgaard Settlement

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

Mr. Minister, David Milgaard was convicted in 1970 for a murder he did not commit. It took 23 years for Mr. Milgaard's family to prove his innocence. Now three years after being released from prison David Milgaard and his family are still waiting for justice. They are waiting, Mr. Minister, on your

government.

According to a news release this morning from the Justice department, the government remains committed to a fair settlement with the Milgaard family. Mr. Minister, what is the status of those negotiations and when can the Milgaard family expect to have this ordeal put behind them?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This matter is a tragedy for Saskatchewan and we know that, and we've made a commitment in 1997 to deal with the compensation issues and also to have an inquiry at the appropriate time, and that will happen.

What I will say is that this is an extremely complex and lengthy file. The lawyers have been — for the Milgaard family — have been working very diligently on their side. Also so have our lawyers. They've been working at this a great length of time and we are committed to working through the lawyers, through the spokespeople that we have to deal with this, and not through the public and not through the media.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Minister, it truly has been a lengthy affair. And it appears that negotiations between the Milgaard family and the Department of Justice are being handled by retired Quebec Judge Alan Gold. But the Milgaard family is not satisfied with the progress of the negotiations. Now the government of Saskatchewan is making another \$150,000 payment to David Milgaard.

Mr. Minister, does that signal that the government believes a final settlement is still a long way off? What is Judge Gold's role in these negotiations? Is he the NDP's chief negotiator? And how much money has the government spent on paying Alan Gold to negotiate the settlement? And how much more time will it take to negotiate a fair settlement?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The former Justice Gold, Mr. Gold, is retained by the Department of Justice to work with us in resolving this matter. He has been dealing directly with the lawyers for the Milgaards and progress is continuing to be made. We're working on this matter but we will not be discussing it or solving it through the public or through the media.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Minister, there's a couple of questions you didn't answer and we'll repeat those. First of all, is Judge Gold the NDP's chief negotiator — we need to know that — or is someone else negotiating behind the scenes that we're not aware of. We also want to know how much is Judge Gold being paid for negotiations that he's doing.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Justice Gold is on our legal team as the negotiator and he is, he is working with us and providing advice to us. And he is basically billing us at the rates that he charges in his normal practice, and he's continuing to do that.

We are working with him. We're listening carefully to his advice. We're also doing research and looking at the matter and we intend to resolve this matter in the negotiations rather than through the public.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Well I guess we have to repeat a few of these questions. The question was, one of them, how much is he being paid. You haven't answered that.

We're also asking how much has the government spent paying Alan Gold to negotiate that settlement. What's the total bill that has been supplied so far? You say in your answer that he's continuing to bill you. We're asking how much.

And we also want to know who is the chief negotiator. Is he totally in charge and is his decision final on what takes place?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a team of lawyers working and part of that team is Mr. Justice Gold. As it is with any legal problem you all work together and I don't think there's one person who has a say over what anybody else has to say. We know that this is a very complex problem. We have been waiting a long time for the information. We're now getting most of that information and we're dealing with it.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — It has been decades since this story started, Mr. Minister, and it seems like you want to carry this on for decades more. And it's time that you and your government get this thing going; you negotiate and expedite this thing as quickly as possible.

So the question is: how long do you intend to have this last? And is he the chief negotiator? Now you're telling us there's a team negotiating. Who has the final say on that team? And we still haven't been told how much Judge Gold is being paid for his work.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The simple answer is that Mr. Justice Gold is the chief negotiator. He's working with us as a team. And practically we're continuing to deal with this.

We know that the best solution will come if we can resolve this matter with the Milgaards' lawyers. If there's some other process that ultimately arises, well we'll deal with that. But at this time we're working with Mr. Justice Gold. My understanding is that Mr. Justice Gold's bills to date are less than \$50,000.

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

#### Retention of Nurses in Province

**Mr. McLane:** — Mr. Speaker, what does the Premier of this province have against nurses? It's as if the Premier believes he can win the next election if he can just get every nurse out of the province before June.

Mr. Speaker, Joanne Sinclair is a maternity nurse here in Regina with over 20 years experience, and she will likely be

leaving in June. North Carolina is where she'll be, Mr. Speaker. They have offered Joanne a full-time position at over \$22 an hour US (United States), paid housing, and of course all her moving expenses.

Mr. Speaker, nurses like Joanne don't want to move but they tell us they won't stay here in a system that won't respect them. You forced them, Mr. Premier. Every time you messed up, you packed another set of nurse's bags.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier apologize to nurses and tell us what he's going to do so that Joanne and nurses like her can choose to stay here in Saskatchewan and work?

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — In the memorandum of understanding that was signed between all three parties — the Premier and SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations) and SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses) — there was an extensive package proposed for recruitment and retention, including \$7.4 million which would be jointly administered by SUN, and SAHO, and the government. Many of the things that are needed to recruit nurses to this province and to retain them here could be included in that package and that's why we're hoping that the parties get back together and we can more on with this process.

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

**Mr. McLane:** — Mr. Speaker, it's just not one nurse here, one nurse there. Soon there'll be enough — you'll have a ward in every state called a Saskatchewan wing. Mr. Speaker, the Premier has got to know that laying off over 600 nurses and treating them like medical waste is not the way to build better health care in this province.

While Joanne heads for North Carolina, Kathy Stednyk is looking at either Phoenix or Florida. It'll be \$25 an hour US, subsidized housing, and flights home for two weeks every six months plus of course an all expense paid move.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier just admit he has a problem with nurses? They say that's the most important step.

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — I think as everyone is aware, the nursing shortage is not particular to Saskatchewan. It is across the country, and indeed the world. We have had some recent success in Regina that shows that we can do this and we can attract people to Saskatchewan — 88 nurses have been hired into Regina; some of them from outside of Canada including Australia, several from the United States and from all the other provinces in Canada.

So we do have a very attractive climate here for nurses to come here and we're working on it to make it better.

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

**Mr. McLane:** — Mr. Speaker, I would invite the minister to table those documents that she has so the rest of the House . . .

(inaudible) . . . Mr. Minister, it's not just nurses leaving, it's nurses quitting. Debbie Steven is a nurse from Moose Jaw with 19 years of experience and she is likely going to call it quits. For her there is no full-time work and she has to work five out of six weekends.

So, Mr. Speaker, Debbie is hoping that either her husband gets transferred out of province so that she can continue nursing, or is she going back to school and learn another profession.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier please tell the nurses like Joanne and Kathy and Debbie and all the rest, what are you going to do to change their minds, to bring them back to the jobs that they once loved here in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said before there are many things on the table that can be put into the newest collective agreement for SUN, many of the things that nurses have worked for for many years. These things are there. We need to see the language. We need to see the people get back to the table and put that language into place so we can get on with what we actually can do with this new agreement.

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

**Mr. McLane:** — Mr. Speaker, last week Steve Kelleher, the facilitator for the SUN and SAHO dispute, urged a cooling off period for both sides. He felt such a period would allow cooler heads on both sides of the dispute to rethink their positions and perhaps start to move towards an agreement.

The Premier agreed with that report and the call for a cooling off period. However, tomorrow the courts will hear the injunction brought by SAHO against SUN, with SAHO asking for hefty fines. Surely, Mr. Premier, this is not conducive to allowing cooler heads to prevail.

If the Premier is serious about cooling off this dispute, instead of throwing gasoline on the fire, will he call off his dogs and drop the injunction and repeal Bill 23 to allow for a civilized collective bargaining to resume?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, this matter is before the courts so I can't comment specifically about it. But what I can say is that one of the roles that we have as legislators is to uphold the rule of law. And it's a very important fact that we as legislators have a role, along with the executive branch and the judiciary, to create a democracy.

And it's important that when some of these rules are challenged that appropriate arguments are made to the courts so that decisions can be made.

Unfortunately this is one of those situations. And I think it behooves all of us who are members of this legislature to be very cognizant of the fact that it's important to watch and support the rule of law because that's how we organize our democracy.

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

**Mr. McLane:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Associate Minister of Health, the former president of SUN. Madam Minister, if you were still the president of SUN what would your advice be to your membership tomorrow?

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

**The Speaker:** — Now the hon. member recognizes of course that in question period it is necessary to put questions to ministers in the context of their responsibilities as members of Executive Council and that the question just put clearly is beyond that scope.

The question must be ruled out of order. Next question.

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Associate Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, what will your advice be to the president of SUN and her membership tomorrow?

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not here to advise SUN — that is not my job. I think that the leadership of SUN and the legal process will proceed as it will.

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

### Farm Aid Program

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture or his designate. Mr. Speaker, for months the Saskatchewan Party has been calling for an acreage-based farm aid program. Meanwhile the minister wanted an income-tested program and in the end he got his way. Then when it finally came time to work out the details of the program, he declared the farm crisis over and went to Mexico.

Now the minister finally realizes the program doesn't work. And what's his latest brainstorm, Mr. Speaker? He wants farmers to spend hundreds of dollars filling out forms even if they don't qualify for aid, so he can show Ottawa his program isn't working.

Mr. Minister, if you had been doing your job in the first place, Ottawa would know the AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance) program will not work in Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, why weren't you at the table when you could have made a difference and why are you calling on farmers to bail you out now at their cost?

**Hon. Mrs. Teichrob:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad for the opportunity to answer that question.

I think the members opposite heard the other day the Minister of Agriculture for our province urging farmers to complete the forms to the best of their ability, even though they are complex, because the federal government has indicated that if what we've been saying all along is true and that there will be minimum payouts here based on the current criteria, that they are prepared

and willing to consider some enhancements to the program, Mr. Speaker. But nobody will ever know the truth until the forms are filled out.

And in the meantime, we might not be in this position if your leader hadn't been in Ottawa undermining our negotiations last fall. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of funny. The Minister of Agriculture spends a week in Mexico and it's the farmers of Saskatchewan that get burnt.

Mr. Minister, instead of forcing every farmer to spend hundreds of dollars filling out these forms, why haven't you figured it out yet? Does your department have any kind of an estimate? How many Saskatchewan farmers do you expect to qualify for AIDA and what will the average amount of the cheques be?

**Hon. Mrs. Teichrob:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows that until the information is in that no such estimates could possibly be made with any accuracy.

But it's interesting to hear him say, at last, that what they're advocating, Mr. Speaker, is an acreage payment. Well tell me how much . . . how much would the acreage payment be — \$20 an acre for \$80 million? Where would that come from? Where would you get it from?

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very interesting that the truth finally comes out and we now have the basis for what their farm program would be, except they don't have the money to pay for it.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite in the NDP government were paying attention, we were saying there should be an acreage payment. It would be simple; it would be easily . . . a program to put in place. Had they been listening, they would also know that every farmer in Saskatchewan wanted an acreage payment. Every farmer in Saskatchewan is not happy with what's going on there.

Madam Minister, will you re-look at this program? Will you lobby Mr. Vanclief, try and get the rules changed so that we're not stuck in a two-year program; at worst we only have one year under this idiotic AIDA program that you helped design?

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

**Hon. Mrs. Teichrob:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, while the member opposite is summerfallowing through a whole bunch of grey areas here, he very well knows that there isn't a way. And farmers will tell him this — and I'm sure they have but I'm not sure he's been listening — that an acreage payment is not necessarily the most fair way to distribute aid either because there is a great variety of conditions in the province, Mr. Speaker. There's the northwest that suffered a four or five year drought. There's some parts of the province . . . some parts of



the province and some crops where the commodity prices are better, where farmers are doing very well, thank you.

An acreage payment doesn't address those differences, Mr. Speaker, and the member opposite knows that.

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave to make a somewhat extended ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Announcement of Job Development in the Forestry Industry

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a great pleasure to be part of history in the making in Saskatoon this morning. Today's announcement is the biggest single jobs announcement in the history of the province of Saskatchewan.

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Today we are announcing 10,000 new jobs, well over half a billion dollars in private-sector investment, and exciting new partnerships. Our forestry strategy represents perhaps the most thorough and forward-looking economic development plan ever undertaken for a sector of our economy.

Our first concern throughout has been for the environment. Our goal is to create jobs and opportunities for Saskatchewan people at the same time as we develop our force in a sustainable way.

We are able to create so many more jobs from this sector because we are more fully utilizing every part and particle of the wood supply, including scrap fibres and waste wood because we're doing more value added and processing of the wood right here in Saskatchewan; because we are applying innovation and technology — for example, using new glues and resins to bind scrap wood fibres into marketable products; and because we're expanding the role of small business, the sector of our economy which creates the most jobs for every dollar of investment.

We are making better and smarter use of our forestry resource so that we can create thousands of new jobs and opportunities while still preserving our precious forests.

We are transforming our forestry sector. Years ago we transformed agriculture. We expanded a traditional industry to include such value-added activities as food processing and such high-tech sectors as biotechnology. We intend to do exactly the same thing with our forest industry.

Today's announcement also reflects our commitment to a full participation economy, an economy where all people — First Nations, Metis, and Northerners — can share fully in the benefits of our economic success. Today's announcements represent new partnerships with the private sector, with First

Nations, with Metis, and with local communities.

In closing, let me note that the level of investment — \$850 million in investment — is much more than a huge dramatic number. It is an expression of confidence by the private sector and by communities in the Saskatchewan economy. It is a clear demonstration by industry in this province's business climate, a clear demonstration that Saskatchewan is a good place in which to do business.

We're proud and excited by this expression of confidence by industry in our future. And we look forward to working with our forest industry partners to build a new Saskatchewan — a Saskatchewan whose economy is dynamic and diversified; a Saskatchewan which is confident, innovative, and outward-looking; a Saskatchewan which has the best quality of life of any place in the world.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party would like to take this opportunity to applaud the many players involved in the forestry industry as well as the provincial government for whatever role it has played in this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, generally speaking, it's our feeling that industry players, if liberated from excessive government interference and regulation, will come to the fore and create opportunities for the people of this province. And certainly it seems as if in this instance government respectfully took the back seat and let the industry develop its natural advantages.

Private-sector investment and subsequent job creation has always been encouraged by the Saskatchewan Party, and its potential to create jobs in manufacturing, agri-forest research and development is commendable. And equally important is the fact that in this whole announcement it seems as if there has been reasonable consideration for the environmental and long-term sustainability of the ecosystem as well, and we applaud that consideration as well.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that all of the people of our province are given the opportunity to participate in our economy. And certainly the potential of utilizing the northern forests to their utmost potential creates opportunity for our northern citizens that have been sorely lacking under this government's administration.

Mr. Speaker, it is not often where we can encourage this kind of activity to happen. I got a little nervous when the minister said that they're going to redesign forestry as they've redesigned agriculture. And I think many of our farmers are shuddering at the fact that what has been in store for them may also be in store for the forestry industry.

But insofar as this announcement creates the opportunity for private sector development and initiative that recognizes the opportunity for Aboriginal and northern people, we think that this is very much an important initiative for people to participate in this economy and we congratulate all those

involved.

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

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development has come to us today with what she terms a good news announcement for our forest sector and the manufacturing and service industries involved with its day-to-day work.

Jobs for our economy are extremely important, Mr. Speaker, and the Liberal caucus welcomes — genuinely welcomes — any announcement of new employment like the one today which is so important to this great province.

Mr. Speaker, while we welcome news of jobs, there are still priorities of people of Saskatchewan in several areas that unfortunately are not being addressed by the government. Jobs are needed and welcomed in all sectors. Yet the people of this province are wondering where the full-time nursing positions are to attract nurses and other health workers to this province.

While people welcoming and welcome the efforts of private companies and community groups to use a Crown resource to create jobs in the forest sector, they also want to see this government create more road building jobs to stop our highways, streets, and rural roads from falling apart.

Mr. Speaker, they also want to know what this government is doing to preserve jobs in the 170 communities where bulldozers are scheduled to knock down the elevators.

While the minister devotes great effort to a good news announcement, many of my constituents want to know what the government is going to do to ensure that they don't lose their farms.

Mr. Speaker, what is this government's plan to preserve Saskatchewan's farms and farm jobs? We haven't heard any.

We wish our forest industry great success in managing this precious resource, Mr. Speaker, and we hope that this government will focus more of its effort on dealing with the priorities of Saskatchewan people and less on making electioneering announcements like the one today.

Thank you.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 30 — The Cemeteries Act, 1999

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 30, The Cemeteries Act, 1999 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

### Bill No. 31 — The Funeral and Cremation Services Act

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 31, The Funeral and Cremation Services Act be now introduced and read a first time.

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

## TABLING OF REPORTS

**The Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, the Chair has two reports to table. First of all, the *Report of the Provincial Auditor* to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan on the final . . . financial statement of Crown agencies for years ending in the period April 1, 1997 to December 31, 1998. And secondly, the *Report of the Provincial Auditor* to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan on the 1998 financial statements of CIC subsidiary Crown corporations.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mr. Ward:** — Convert for motion debatable, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Item no. 1, question no. 64 is converted to notice of motions for returns (debatable).

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 25 — The Education Amendment Act, 1999/ Loi de 1999 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to outline the nature and purpose of these amendments to The Education Act, 1995. As members will know, this statute provides the primary legislation framework for our province's kindergarten to grade 12 school system. The Act covers a wide range of topics and requires amendments on a regular basis to deal with emerging issues and to respond to evolving needs and circumstances of our schools.

Mr. Speaker, as the . . . Mr. Speaker, the present Bill includes amendments dealing with three quite different but equally important topics. The topics are as follows: (1) First Nations representation on boards of education; (2) the operating grant entitlement period and payment schedule for school divisions; and (3) deals with the correct administration of existing law respecting payments of taxes to public and separate school divisions. I will speak about each of these three topics individually.

First, in respect to the First Nations representation. Some First Nations operate their own schools for students who live on the reserve. In other cases, First Nations have entered into tuition fee agreements with the neighbouring school divisions whereby students from the reserve attend the public school. In these latter cases, the First Nations clearly have an interest in the governance of the school division from both the program and from the financial perspective.

For this purpose the legislation currently authorized the Minister of Education to establish the reserve as a separate subdivision within the school division. Residents of the reserve can then elect a representative to sit as a full voting trustee on the board of education of the school division. Mr. Speaker, the

Saskatchewan Rivers School Division and the Muskoday First Nations have a tuition agreement such as I've just described.

The board of education and the band council have jointly requested that the Act be amended to create the second option for the participation of reserve residents in the governance of the school division. The second option would allow for the Minister of Education to incorporate the Indian reserve within the boundaries of the school division and would enable reserve residents to vote in the school board election in the same basis as all other residents in the school division.

We have accepted this joint request from Saskatchewan Rivers and Muskoday and are proposing an amendment to make it possible.

I want to emphasize the three key points about the amendment, Mr. Speaker. First, the legislation deals only with those cases which a First Nation is paying a school division to have reserve students to attend the public school. It does not apply for First Nations who operate their own school boards.

Second, the amendment does not eliminate the existing provision for the creation of an Indian reserve as a subdivision for electoral purposes. It simply creates a second option.

And third, the minister will be authorized to implement this new option only where the First Nations and the board of education wish to use it. The option cannot be imposed against the wishes of either the First Nations or that of the school board.

Mr. Speaker, effective mechanisms for First Nations representation in our provincial school system are important as we work together to address challenges of our growing Aboriginal student population. The amendment in this Bill represents a local request from a board of education and a First Nation who wants their affairs in the new way that they feel will meet their needs more efficiently and effectively.

(1430)

Let me now turn to the second issue — the school grant entitlement period and payment schedule. Mr. Speaker, annual provincial grants are paid to school divisions through the foundation operating grant program. The money available for distribution through the grant program each year forms part of the provincial annual budget and is announced on budget day.

However, the period of time in which the grants apply is not the provincial government's fiscal year — from April 1 to March 31. Rather, grants apply to the calendar year because the legislation says that each school division is entitled to an operating grant in each calendar year.

This entitlement period and the associated grant payment regime are awkward in a number of ways. First, a few years ago the provincial government moved to an actuarial accounting system. This means that grants included in the provincial budget from the upcoming fiscal year actually cover part of two fiscal years. They apply to the last three months of the previous fiscal year, i.e., January to March, and the first nine months of the new fiscal year, April to December.

Second, the payment schedule associated with the current grant regime means that boards receive no grant payment in January, February, or March. They have to wait until the budget is announced and then receive payments retroactive for those three months. As well, the current regime means that by the time the school boards . . . by the time the school boards learn of their new grant levels, three of the twelve months of which the grant applies have already gone by. This makes it difficult for boards to plan ahead effectively and to respond to the changes in their grant from one year to the next.

Mr. Speaker, we are proposing an amendment which will address these various problems by changing the grant entitlement period for the calendar year to that of the government fiscal year. There will be a number of benefits, not only to the government from the accounting perspective, but also to school divisions from the perspective of cash flow and planning. So in future, when school boards learn of their annual grant on budget day, that grant will apply to the following 12-month period from April to March. In other words, the grant will be fully perspective rather than partially retroactive.

Each year boards will learn of their grant level from the January-March period almost a year in advance, at the time of the previous year's provincial budget, rather than learning of it only when the three-month period has just been over.

With the changes in the entitlement period, we'll also be changing the payment schedule. Boards will now receive one-twelfth of the annual grant entitlement during the months of April to June and September to March. In other words, the amendment will entitle the current situation and these boards receive no payments to January to March and must borrow for this period. We estimate that on a provincial basis the new payment schedule will save boards about \$1.5 million in interest costs every year, and this is money that they'll be able to relocate to program expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, I should indicate that this amendment will not affect school operating grants for 1999, and the intention is to pass the amendment now in order that it will be in place for the government's 2000-2001 fiscal year. In the meantime, the grant entitlement period and payment schedule for 1999 will be the same as it was for 1998, based on the existing legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the third topic covered by the amendment of the Bill is the allocation of the education portion of property taxes to those communities that have both a public and a separate school division. In accordance with the Constitution of Canada, the legal requirements for this allocation are clearly set out in the statute already. Where a public and a separate school division exist together the rules are as follows: all property owners who are of the minority faith that is established in the separate school division must pay their taxes to the separate school division; all other property owners must pay their taxes to the public school division.

These provisions based in the Constitution make it clear that the allocation of taxes is based exclusively on the faith of the property owner. It is not a matter of personal choice or preference, nor is it affected by the school that the students attend. Mr. Speaker, although the legal requirements are already clear, we do not have an effective process for ensuring the

property owners know the rules for ensuring that they are a designate . . . where they may designate their taxes to the correct school divisions.

Owners are often asked simply to indicate whether they are supporters of the public or the separate school division. Parents might well consider themselves to be supporters of the school division where their children attend school and designate their taxes in that way without realizing the designation may be contrary to the Act.

Mr. Speaker, the solution in appropriate forms to be used where both the public and the separate school division exists. These forms would require the property owner to declare either that the owner is of the minority faith or is a . . . pays taxes to the separate school division, or that the owner is not of the minority faith and is to pay taxes to the public school division.

In this respect, the forms will be similar to those already in use for the school board elections where electors are required to declare that they are of the minority faith in order to vote for the separate school board.

This Bill will replace the ambiguous term, supporter, with the more accurate term, taxpayer. Further it will authorize the creation of tax declaration forms that all affected municipalities will be required to use.

Mr. Speaker, I have to emphasize that the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, including the Catholic section of the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), are in full agreement with the correct interpretation of the law. They are strongly supportive of the measures to ensure that the law is administered accurately and consistently across the province. Both the SSTA and the Catholic section support the proposed amendment.

I also want to indicate that trustees and other affected groups will be consulted fully in the development in the forms themselves.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to advise all members that the provisions of this Bill have been discussed with the partners in education. These specific amendments are of particular interest to school trustees and the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association has indicated its support for them.

These amendments will address a variety of needs and interests of the education system and will help keep the statute up to date.

I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, to move therefore, Bill No. 25, An Act to amend The Education Act, 1995, will now be read a second time.

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've had the opportunity to look at The Education Act, 1995 and its many changes. And I want to first, I guess, begin maybe in the reverse order almost in what the minister has indicated in terms of the three items that this Bill highlights.

No question, the first item that has been of concern to many taxpayers in the province has been the distinguishing the religious faith of a taxpayer. That has been a dilemma in school divisions that have coterminous boundaries — that is, both those in the public and those of the Catholic faith.

What has further clouded this, Mr. Speaker, is most recently of course we had the creation of the first separate school division that was non-Catholic. It was the Protestant school divisions in Englefeld.

And I think the interpretations by both administrators of school divisions as well as the administrators of the many different municipalities that are involved has come into question — the fact that a prescribed form, as is indicated in the Act right now, is up to the individual municipality to enable to create. And what happens is we have a various number of forms that are created to try to help the administrators determine exactly which level of school system the tax should be contributed to.

So we have had, as the minister has indicated, I've had the opportunity to talk with the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association. But we have had some response from individual boards of education that have asked a number of questions that I have been unable to answer. And I want to be able to assure all of those people that call myself or the minister, that indeed the interpretation that the minister has indicated today is the correct one.

So we're going to, we're going to have to spend a little time on this one to determine exactly the reasons why the term, supporter, has been changed to taxpayer, and how it will affect the Englefeld Protestant system.

The second point that the minister brought up was around the Aboriginal representation on school boards. No question, the population, the Aboriginal population in many parts of Saskatchewan is increasing and there is a need to ensure that there is representation on the public board of education. There are many Aboriginal students that are attending off-reserve schools and there needs to be a representative elected by that system.

And I think from the brief time that we've had comments from other people on that particular section, this section appears to be something that will serve everyone.

The final point is in regard to the budget year. This has been a sore point, Mr. Speaker, with boards of education for many, many years. And I think people in Saskatchewan must recognize the conflicts that exist.

We have a school year that normally operates between September 1 and June 30. That's where the bulk of expenses occur for a division board. They plan for the school year. The board's fiscal year is of course the calendar year. It runs from January 1 to December 31. And then finally we have the government's fiscal year which is April 1 to March 31.

The tremendous differences that occurs between those years in terms of the finances available to school divisions causes a great amount of concern to board members. As the minister has indicated and I've indicated in this House before many times,

the boards of education, because the grants payable by the government to boards of education do not occur until sometimes as late as April or May where they will get their first one-twelfth, that puts boards of education into a huge borrowing position.

Many school boards, because of tax arrears, because of the fact that in rural Saskatchewan a lot of the taxes are not paid until later on in the year — in fact not only rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but urban Saskatchewan as well. Many incentives are there to pay taxes in June or in early part of July, so as a result, the income that boards of education would receive from taxes is limited.

The income from the grant is non-existent for January, for February and March so the boards of education have had to rely on financial institutions to provide lines of credit. As a result, large costs have been borne by the taxpayers in the various school divisions to pick up that extra interest.

The concern that we have to flag for the Minister of Education is the transition time. The minister has indicated that the current change proposed to The Education Act, 1995 will not affect this current fiscal year but will take into effect for 2000 and 2001.

The concern, I guess, that many people are expressing — and I've talked to a number of individual trustees on this particular section — deals with next January, February, March. Will there be additional monies provided by the government upfront to deal with those three months? Or will the grant that is currently allocated, the current operating grant of 397 million, will that be divided up and moved, a portion of it moved back into January, February, and March?

Tremendous concerns by school boards because, if indeed there isn't additional monies put into the entire grant system to be able to pay those additional amounts in the first three months, boards of education will be no better off because they'll only be getting their monies just slightly in advance but they'll be losing at the other end.

So those are the concerns that have been raised by individuals, Mr. Speaker, by boards of education, and of course in discussion with the school trustees association we want, we want to ensure that all three major sections of this Act are the things that the people of Saskatchewan want to indeed improve the system.

So with those necessary changes, Mr. Speaker, that I've outlined with the kinds of things that we need to hear from taxpayers, I move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Health Information Protection Act. Mr. Speaker, the protection of personal health information is important to every citizen in this province. Personal privacy is something we all expect from the health system. Historically people gave private information to health providers because they trusted those providers to keep the information private and

to use it only when appropriate to provide care.

The people of Saskatchewan trust their health professional to protect their personal health information. They trust their doctors and nurses to use the information wisely. They trust hospital staff to use only . . . to only use personal information for reasonable purposes associated with care. They trust laboratory technicians to keep the results of lab tests private. They trust dentists and pharmacists, health records technicians, and all in the health system to protect the records of their personal health.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan trust their health professionals to handle their personal health information with respect for their right to personal privacy. The people of Saskatchewan deserve no less.

However, Mr. Speaker, the demand for information needed to provide health services is growing. As the volume of information about us grows, as we ask for more tests and additional treatments, as the demands on the health system continue to increase, so too does the demand for information exchange. With increased demands for information comes an increased risk to the privacy of the individual. And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan demand that their personal health information continue to receive the protection they expect.

(1445)

That is why, Mr. Speaker, The Health Information Protection Act is so important. It ensures that even in the fast moving health system of today the tradition of respecting individual privacy will continue into the future. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we believe that this new important legislation adds significantly to the protection we have all come to expect from the health system.

Mr. Speaker, The Health Information Protection Act is about the rights of individuals to protect their personal health information. The Act enshrines in legislation certain rights that every person in this province has in regard to their personal health information.

The Act then sets out the duties and responsibilities of government and the health system to ensure that those rights are respected. Mr. Speaker, The Health Information Protection Act will ensure that people's privacy rights are protected.

Mr. Speaker, I want to explain why this important new legislation is needed. In Saskatchewan today personal health information is regulated by a number of statutes, by professional ethics and bylaws, and in some few instances it is not regulated at all.

Personal health information held by the Department of Health and district health boards is regulated by the freedom of information, protection of privacy statutes, and several program specific statutes such as The Hospital Standards Act. Personal health information is also regulated by professional bylaws and professional ethics. Personal health information is regulated by policy of institutions and health care providers.

This patchwork of legislation, regulation, and bylaws reflects the health service structure of the past — programs operating in relative isolation from one another. It does not support the health information needs of Saskatchewan people today.

Since 1995, the Department of Health has worked to develop a comprehensive framework of health information management principles and broad policies within the public sector. These principles, Mr. Speaker, are consistent with the best national and international information management principles in the world today.

These principles include: accountability to the individual; collection, use, and disclosure of personal health information only for legitimate health purposes; the right of individuals to access their own information; and that health professionals hold personal health information in trust for individuals, and manage it accordingly.

But, Mr. Speaker, that was not enough. It is not enough to have legislation and policy that only applies to government institutions and district health boards. There are many partners in the health system who share information and who require information to provide the very best care to Saskatchewan people. In the past each of these partners has managed information with the utmost respect for the individual.

In Saskatchewan we can proudly cite a solid record of protecting health information. But as demands for information to provide care increase, everyone involved in the health system has to be confident that personal health information is protected no matter where it is held. The rules need to be the same for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, when the government announced the creation of the Saskatchewan Health Information Network or SHIN, we made a commitment to consult with the public about privacy and confidentiality of personal health information. Mr. Speaker, this legislation has been the focus of very intense consultation over the past year and a half. There have been several major steps in our consultation on this matter.

In October 1997, we began a province-wide consultation on key health issues that sets the stage for the legislation we have before us today.

In December 1997, we began consultations on the preliminary draft of The Health Information Protection Act. We circulated that draft to over 200 stakeholder groups. We listened to what they had to say.

In June 1998 we took a revised draft of the Act back to the stakeholders for additional consultation. In the summer and fall of 1998 we conducted meetings throughout the province to receive comments on that draft. Finally, Mr. Speaker, in February 1999 we distributed a third draft to major stakeholder groups throughout Saskatchewan.

Throughout it all we have met with individuals and organizations across the province to listen to their concerns, to understand their needs, and to learn from the people who provide the services, and from those who receive the services.

Mr. Speaker, we have learned much from these consultations. We have learned that the people of Saskatchewan care passionately about their personal privacy. We learned that health providers want to be able to serve the public while respecting that need for privacy.

We learned that people want an Act to protect their personal health information in this ever changing world. We learned that people want an Act that focuses on their rights and not who can get access to their information.

We learned that people want to ensure that their records are safely stored and are only used when needed. We learned that people want to have access to information when it is needed, but not if it risks abuse of their personal privacy.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you some examples of how the Act responds to the voice of the people. The people of Saskatchewan have told us that they are concerned about who has control over their personal health information; that the government should not control health records on a computerized network.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation ensures that even on a computerized network such as SHIN (Saskatchewan Health Information Network), it is the individual and their health provider who control what happens to the record. The people of Saskatchewan have told us that they are concerned about unauthorized access to personal information if their complete health record is on a computer network.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation clearly states that access can only be given to those who need to know the information to provide a service. Even then, Mr. Speaker, there must be consent from the individual in most circumstances before access can be given. Mr. Speaker, there will be surfing of records on SHIN.

Saskatchewan people told us that health information must be secure. It must be protected from unwanted access and it must be accurate and available when it is needed.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will require all health providers, the government, SHIN, and anyone identified in the legislation as a trustee to have security in place. We will be able to perform audit trails. For example, it could be possible on SHIN to keep track of all who use the system and track what an individual looked at while using the system.

Over the past 18 months we've been discussing this draft legislation with the public and with stakeholders throughout the health system. Hundreds of individuals and organizations have been consulted.

Mr. Speaker, the Act you have before you is the result of these consultations. The Health Information Protection Act will do many things for the people of Saskatchewan. It puts into law a number of critical rights that individuals have with regard to their personal health information.

Mr. Speaker, The Health Information Protection Act states clearly: individuals have the right to consent to the collection, use, or disclosure of their personal health information, and that trustees of that information must protect that right; individuals

have the right to revoke their consent and trustees in the system must comply; individuals have the right to prevent records of their personal health information from being on SHIN or any other electronic system if that is their desire; individuals have a right to be informed about why their personal information is needed and how it will be used or disclosed; individuals have a right to limit the collection of their health services number from their health card, especially where requested for a non-health service.

Individuals have the right to access their own personal health records held by any trustee in the system and to request amendments to those records if needed; individuals have the right to an appeal to an independent third-party arbitrator if they believe their personal health information is not being treated properly; individuals have the right to designate others to make decisions about their personal health information.

Mr. Speaker, The Health Information Protection Act will put into statute these important rights to protect every person's personal health information. In addition to identifying these important rights, The Health Information Protection Act sets out the duties and responsibilities of all parties to respect those rights.

It will require appropriate security measures to be taken to protect personal health information. It will limit the collection, use, and disclosure of personal health information to reasonable purposes required to provide health services to individuals and to support the system. It will ensure the protection of personal health information within electronic systems. It will require legally binding agreements between trustees and information-management service providers, like SHIN, to ensure that the rights of individuals are protected. It will clearly state that SHIN, as an information management service provider, cannot make decisions about personal health information on the network. Those decisions are left to the health professional and the individual.

To deter abuse of personal health information, the Act will contain very significant penalties for violations. In short, Mr. Speaker, this legislation will enshrine in law the rights of the individual to protect their personal health information and it will ensure that all trustees follow the same rules to ensure those rights are fulfilled.

Mr. Speaker, it's also important to consider what The Health Information Protection Act will not do. It will not require anyone to disclose personal health information if they would not do so today. It will not require anyone to reveal personal health information to the government or to SHIN. It will not tell health providers what they can and cannot collect. It will not interfere with professional ethics or practice. It will not dictate specific detail for managing information. It will not add any rights of access to information that do not exist today.

Mr. Speaker, The Health Information Protection Act is the result of many years of work and of extensive consultation. It is an important piece of legislation that will take health information practices forward into the next century. It protects the privacy of individuals while at the same time providing enough flexibility to ensure information is available when needed. And finally it will make our health information more

secure than it is now in our present system.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of this Bill, The Health Information Protection Act.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a fairly substantial Bill. In fact it's one that I believe the government wanted to introduce last year but for some reason did not do so; I think perhaps because the Saskatchewan Medical Association had a considerable number of concerns about this Bill, and hopefully the government has addressed them. I have calls in to the SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association) to find out indeed whether or not the government has addressed the concerns that the Saskatchewan Medical Association was raising last year.

What this Bill is all about, Mr. Speaker, is about everybody's health care records — whether or not you had an appendix operation, or whether or not you're getting Tylenol by prescription, or whatever the case may be, Mr. Speaker — and it deals with a large number of medical practitioners, not just doctors but all of the people within the health care system that we may interact with from time to time, Mr. Speaker. All of those kind of records would be now lumped together in one location.

And I guess one of the most pertinent questions is, Mr. Speaker, who does the information belong to? Does it belong to the patient? Does it belong to the government? Does it belong to the individual medical practitioner that collected the information? To whom does that information belong?

Mr. Speaker, the minister says that the individual patient will have the right to deny the collection of that information into one central location, that they can put a stop to it. Well I think that's good. Some individuals, Mr. Speaker, do not want to have their information scattered hither and yon, and they wish to know who has access to their information at all times. Therefore for those people I think it's well and good that they should be able to restrict the collection of that information, Mr. Speaker, to the people that they interact with directly.

There is some value though, Mr. Speaker, to the patients and to the medical providers to have access to a broad based collection of information. The patient who ends up in the hospital for whatever medical distress may not be in a position to be able to communicate to the emergency people what their problem is, or what their past history has been with medical services.

Therefore to be able to access those kinds of records for the medical practitioners at that time would be of value to the medical practitioners, but particularly of value to the patient who will receive the benefit of whatever services. If they're allergic to something, then that would be information that would be contained in those records and would prevent that medical practitioner from using that particular prescription or drug on the person. And that would be certainly of benefit.

One of the areas though, Mr. Speaker, that I do have a great deal of concern in this is that the government will be able to de-identify the medical information. Well what that means, Mr.

Speaker, is that they would pull a person's name and address off, but all of the rest of the information would remain.

Now I have to ask, for what purpose? Why does the government want to be able to disclose the information without a person's name and address included? To what benefit would this be used, Mr. Speaker? And again it relates back to who's information is this?

Does this information belong to the government, does it belong to the doctors, or the medical practitioners that collected it, or does it belong to the patient? I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that this information belongs to the patient because it's about them and their conditions. Therefore if that information is going to be released to other parties that are not directly related to that patient's health and health services, that the information would have to be released only, Mr. Speaker, only with the consent of the patient involved.

So if for some reason the government wanted to release all of the records dealing with heart conditions in this province to someone in a study let's say, that they would have to approach all the people whose information they were about to release to provide that information. Because, Mr. Speaker, and my belief is that information belongs to the patient, not to the government.

One of the concerns that a good many people will have, Mr. Speaker, because this information is being collected and stored on computer systems, is how secure is this. We hear fables, Mr. Speaker, that even the Pentagon's computers are not secure from hackers who try and try and try and finally manage to break into certain areas with discoveries of the codes that are necessary to enter there.

(1500)

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very incumbent on the government to ensure that once this system is up and running and the medical information is being gathered, that it is indeed secure, that no one is going to be able to access the system without permission, without the permission from the patients.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's incumbent on the government to ensure that the information even stored on the computer is further encrypted so that while you may have access to a certain patient's information by having the proper password or code to enter into the computer system to access certain information on one individual but you can't in turn access the information on the next individual on the list. I think it's very important, Mr. Speaker, that all those kind of safeguards be built into this system.

When you look at the formation of SHIN and who was in charge of it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think questions on security of the computers are very valid. Because after all, the man who was put in charge of SHIN last year was the person who didn't want to run the computers at STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) because they weren't working properly, because they weren't sending out the bills that were needed to be collected from STC. And yet that same person is shifted over to the SHIN computer system to collect the medical information on every person in this province.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's of great deal of concern, valid concern, by the people of Saskatchewan that the security of the SHIN system be ensured by this government before that information is collected and before that information is made available to the medical practitioners of this province and the various medical organizations and whoever else may be entitled to receive this information, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The other concern I have, Mr. Speaker, is as I mentioned earlier, the availability of de-identified information. Is this information going to be placed for sale, so that someone can access all of the medical records of Saskatchewan while not identifying the individuals but using the people of Saskatchewan for studies on whatever reasons; and that the Government of Saskatchewan would financially benefit from the sale of those lists.

Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said earlier that information should belong to the patients, not to the government and not to the medical system. If anyone is to benefit financially from it, then it should be the patients themselves directly.

The minister has said the information health cards, our health card numbers, do not have to be given out or used in non-medical areas. Well I have a question, Mr. Deputy Speaker: what are they going to do with hunting licenses? Because our medical . . . our health card number is used in the province of Saskatchewan to identify Saskatchewan residents on their hunting licenses.

So I would hope that by this fall, this being the case, Mr. Speaker, that the government has changed their hunting licenses so that the people of Saskatchewan no longer have to provide their health card number, because that health card number will gain access to your personal information, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So the government is going to have take a very serious look at all of the areas in which that health card number is used and ensure that it's only used as it's related to medical services, and no other service in Saskatchewan, including hunting licenses.

When a person tries to access the system, Mr. Speaker, to access their own information, will there be a cost? Will the government be using this as another method of tax collection when a person is trying to access their own record, Mr. Deputy Speaker? This government has a clear record that it charges access fees on everything that moves; any opportunity that arises, this government slaps a fee on it and taxes you. And this surely will be another area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in which this government will be taxing. I'm sure that they will try, at the end of the day, to pay for the SHIN system, perhaps from people who access the system by forcing them to pay for their own information, Mr. Speaker.

In a lot of ways, George Orwell in his book, *Nineteen Eighty-four*, could envision this program where the government is collecting all of the information from everyone in the province. And if a person was a conspiracy theorist, they would wonder why that information is being collected and for what ends and what means would it be collected, Mr. Speaker.

I think though at the end of the day, having access to this information when a person is in an emergency ward, will be



valuable. It will also be valuable, Mr. Speaker, to check up on people who may wish to double-doctor, who may wish to access various doctors to gain access to prescription drugs. In those areas, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this may very well prove to be an invaluable resource and aid the people of Saskatchewan in the long run.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, while we do have some questions and some concerns about this particular Bill, these questions and concerns can only be answered in Committee of the Whole.

Thank you.

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just a few brief comments on this piece of legislation. It's been about seven long years, Mr. Speaker, since this government started working on the Saskatchewan Health Information Network. And it's really quite ironic, Mr. Speaker, that at this point in time they only choose to bring forward the piece of legislation that respects the patients and the people of this province's rights.

You would have thought as they did have in many other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, that they would think of the people's rights first before they start an information system. But not this government, Mr. Speaker. No, that's the last thing they speak of and think of, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing is as well, Mr. Speaker, that this government has already wasted \$30 million on the Health Information Network, Mr. Speaker — \$30 million not knowing where they're headed with it, not knowing what kind of a program they're going to have. And then today, Mr. Speaker, they bring in legislation to try and protect the patient's rights.

Mr. Speaker, I can only hope that this piece of legislation hasn't been bungled as has the Saskatchewan Health Information Network system been bungled over the last seven or eight years — blown millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker.

And needless to say, that we'll have many more questions to ask about this piece of legislation as it moves through the process. Thank you.

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

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

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

##### Bill No. 1 — The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 1999

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

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Seated beside me is Bonnie Durnford, who is the assistant deputy minister responsible for policy in the department, and seated behind Ms. Durnford is John Labatt, who is the director of community youth services.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

#### Clause 3

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Welcome to the minister today and to his officials. I'm pleased to see the officials here for this very important Act.

Mr. Minister, in subclause . . . it states here that:

Subclause 11(a)(iii) is amended by adding "including involvement in prostitution and" after (the word) "purpose,".

Could the minister please give the public and myself an indication of what the existing subclause 11(a)(iii) contained? What the statement was in the previous Act?

(1515)

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Chairman, the current clause 11 of The Child and Family Services Act states:

A child is in need of protection where:

(a) as a result of action or omission by the child's parent:

And then sub-sub (iii):

the child has been or is likely to be exposed to harmful interaction for a sexual purpose, including conduct that may amount to an offence within the meaning of the *Criminal Code*.

So the amendment is to clarify that when we talk about harmful interaction for a sexual purpose, that it very clearly means including involvement in prostitution. We have always taken that clause to mean that, but just to be very crystal clear about it we're proposing to amend it to include that specific provision.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I think it's interesting that you have included that clause then in that statement. However when I reviewed the existing Act, it was clear to me that that the department would come into play to assist children that were in fact being subject to any sexual abuse within their home by their parent, guardian or so on.

Now this extra wording including involvement in prostitution would imply that parents or guardians that are seen . . . or involved in perpetuating or adding to the danger of children being exposed to child prostitution would in fact then be . . . the children would be, would be able I guess to get help from Social Services if that was found that their parent or guardian was engaging them in the child prostitution activity.

However for me, that means that children within a home that have a guardian are those children who this is . . . who are getting this help. This does not do anything to assist or to include children on the streets.

So I just wanted to make that comment that I, even though those words are there, I don't think it's going to be an addition that will assist children in any way or form in the protection that

they need — and I'm referring to those children on the streets.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Chair, the amendment is intended to clarify that as we indicated under sub (a), that as a result of action or omission by the child's parent, there may well be circumstances where it's not a question of direct action by parents where a child becomes involved in prostitution, but there also may be omission by the parents. That is to say the parent is not providing the proper supervision or the parent is unaware or the parent isn't attending to where their child may be at some point.

And we also wanted to clarify that it's not a question of parents being . . . or the parents guiding a child in a certain way, the parents acting in a certain way to lead the child in a certain direction, but that children may act because their parents aren't attending to those children. That is to say there's an omission by the child's parent. And we also wanted to make sure that we're in a position to deal with that.

**Ms. Julé:** — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. I just want to make one more comment before going to the next clause, and that's that many times we're implying that there's a parent or a guardian in place. Oftentimes children come into the cities with absolutely no assistance and no guidance by anyone.

And so those children are simply there and they are on the streets with no one to assist or to protect them, with no one to go back to . . . for the authorities to go back to or for Social Services to go back to saying there has been an omission or there has been misguidance here.

So I know there's a group of young people that often end up on our city streets that have come from situations that are intolerable for them already, end up on the streets and don't seem to have anyone there to protect them in any way or form.

So I just wanted to make that mention. And I thank you for clarifying the part about the omission. It's important for the public to know that, but it's also important for all of us to realize that many children do not have any guidance. And the act of them being on the streets is simply because they are desperate and they need to have . . . they need to have money for one thing or the other.

So I'm going to sit down with that, and allow for the further clauses to come forward.

Clause 3 agreed to.

#### Clause 4

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Chair, I was standing I think when you were talking about clause 4 and I didn't know if you missed me.

**The Deputy Chair:** — Yes, I apologize to the hon. member for Humboldt. I did not see you standing.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, in clause 4 and right under that, the "Duty to investigate," it says:

13 Where a report is made pursuant to subsection 12(1) or (4), an officer or peace officer shall investigate the

information set out in the report . . .

Now this statement implies that there is a written report that must go forward before a police officer or a peace officer can investigate. Could you give me an example of who might have issued a written report to a police officer?

And my concern with this clause, Mr. Minister, is that oftentimes on the streets when children are being subjected to being picked up by a john or being subjected to danger of child sexual abuse, there isn't really a great deal of time for written reports to go in. Otherwise, if we wait for all of that to happen, the child may already have been solicited and have been subject to child sexual abuse.

So this is why I have a problem with the existing legislation — and with this legislation — because it does not provide for any immediate assistance by police officers to remove the child from the street when they can see that there has been or is, rather, at hand a dangerous situation taking place.

In my Bill, or the Bill that I placed on the Table this session and last session, police officers would be provided with the authority to remove the child just because simply that they can see that there is danger at hand. If they have reasonable and very probable grounds to believe that, they could then take a child to a place, a safe place with simply a phone call to a peace officer so that the peace officer is ensuring that the police officer is accountable.

There would be different provisions that the police officers would have to be subject to, and that's what the child's name is if they can get it, it would also mean that the police officer would have to say where the child was picked up, what their reasonable and probable grounds were that the child was in danger, and some other provisions to make sure that the police are accountable.

But it would for sure end up assisting the children, in fact rescuing the children from the streets and taking them to a safe place for assessment, for some medical services and accounting — not accounting, I'm sorry, Mr. Minister — having their whole situation looked at and it would ensure that there was security for that child wherein . . . In fact in a safe house, if we're looking at a safe house, there would be a provision to make sure that there was a stay-away order, restraining anyone who would try to interfere with that child's assessment from thereon in or their healing from thereon in.

So this clause does not do that. This clause simply says when a report is made. Well that implies a written report. By that time, it's too late for the child.

If you could give me an example, for instance, Mr. Minister, of who might have the right or who might issue such a report, a written report, and why in fact you think that's going to help a child? Because by the time this has all happened, the child will have been abused by that time.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Well, Mr. Chair, item 4 of the Bill is to repeal section 13 and replace it with a new section 13. The intent is to make it more clear that an officer or peace officer can, should act in certain ways if they have reason to believe or

get a report that a child is in need of protection. But such a report need not be in writing. What we're simply doing is trying to clarify their responsibilities, but any report they act on need not be in writing.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, why then was not . . . why then did we not word this in a way that says that a police officer, with reasonable and probable grounds believing that a child is in immediate danger, could assist the child off the streets. The fact that we're . . . The way this is written, it says "an officer or peace officer shall investigate the information set out in the report" — that takes time, Mr. Minister. That takes too much time.

By the time that's done, you can be sure that there's going to have to be a place for the police officer can investigate it. He's not going to be doing that right there on the street when he sees a child's in danger. So if there are reasonable grounds for a police officer to assist a child off the streets when they see they are in immediate danger, then why is it not simply stated here that that can be done by a police officer, without adding all of these words in here about the police officer having to investigate a report?

And again I ask you the question, who might be the person that would issue such a report?

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — There are other provisions of the Act which make it very clear that a peace officer or an officer, as defined in the Act, which would be I guess one of the people from our department or one of the child and family service agencies, can act immediately where they have reason to believe that a child is in need of immediate intervention. And they will take steps to do so.

The protocols that we discuss with the police agencies, and certainly our own staff would be aware of that, is that a written report is not required for them to be able to act. Where do those reports come from? They come from doctors, could come from teachers, could come from other family members, could come from others in the community. It could come for example now from the people who are running the safe house in Saskatoon. It could come from any number of areas.

But those reports need not be in writing for an officer according to this Act, or a peace officer, to be able to act.

(1530)

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, common sense tells you that teachers and doctors and even social workers are not on the streets at night or in the afternoon when this is happening. There are some people that see that this is happening and they may then call a police officer with a verbal report. And I'm glad to hear that that verbal report may be acted on by the police.

But what you're speaking of, is speaking of social workers or for instance teachers or doctors bringing to attention of a police officer that a child is most likely in danger of sexual abuse. Those kinds of sexual abuse acts are most generally happening in a home or in some premises as such, not on the streets.

Now I've talked to a number of social workers and they just simply say to me, look I'm not even going to be on the streets where there are a lot of johns and pimps; it's dangerous. I'm not well-equipped to be able to handle that situation.

So I think we're fooling ourselves if we think that there are going to be reports from people like social workers that are on the streets at night. There are people, for instance that you mentioned, maybe at the safe house in Saskatoon, there are people like Egadz that possibly will report this. And I think that is commendable and that's a good thing for them to have a way to report this and have that report acted on immediately.

But the other situation at hand is we have a safe house in Saskatoon and we don't have measures in place right now, and those measures should have been put in place by Social Services, to ensure that there is a stay-away order; a fine in place for people that are trying to intervene with the healing process of those victims.

So I just find that this is not substantial enough. We need to be able to have a piece of legislation in place that allows police officers who are themselves on the streets and who are most likely to be the ones noticing children that are in immediate danger.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Chair, I would just point out that we do have and try to . . . or not try but are providing support for a number of community outreach measures in addition to the mobile crisis family units that do operate in our major cities. But we are assisting these outreach groups to make contact with children and then, where they see a need, to make a report of a child that in their view needs the protective intervention of our department, then we will act.

But the point is the groups are being supported by us to make the contacts with children and then, where they see the need, to report to us so that we can respond appropriately. And by we, it could be someone from my department, it could be someone in a mobile crisis unit, it could also be police officers. But that's the system that we've set up so that we can respond.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. As much as I do appreciate the work of the people with mobile vans, I know the immense amount of work they have to do at their stations and their ability to be able to be all over the city every night of the week is limited very much so. That being another reason that I believe police officers who do patrol the cities and so on should have the immediate authority to assist children who are in need of protection and assist them immediately.

The other comment I would make on the safe houses, Mr. Minister, is as I've mentioned before, we don't have proper measures or instruction or any pathways of support it seems within the safe house that is existing in Saskatoon, to ensure that there is a stay-away order for pimps. And if you are working on that, I applaud you on it. But it's needed immediately, and I think that we need to make sure that there's a fine in place that would deter them from that activity. And I also think that we have to ensure that there's proper security at those places so that this sort of a situation that happened in Saskatoon does not happen again.

I would, with that comment, invite you to continue on with the further clauses.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 10 inclusive agreed to.

### Clause 11

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, this clause does nothing at all to add to a deterrent that is so badly needed in this province. As I mentioned today in question period, Mr. Minister, there are children being sexually abused throughout our province every day. This is a major, major problem in the province and it's a major concern by many of our citizens because it deals with children whose health and well-being — the total person — is being destroyed.

Mr. Minister, we must . . . we have to enact a major deterrent within this Act if this Act is going to have any teeth at all. It is not a substantial enough measure to acknowledge that there's a problem and to put down some wording that may or may not assist children off the streets and give them the protection they needed and the healing they need.

It is not enough to acknowledge that, Mr. Minister. We must take concrete measures. We cannot wait with this any more. A number of things need to be done, a better Act needs to be enacted in this provincial legislature, a more substantive Act. But at least for the time being while this Act is on the table, I implore you to accept and support the amendment that I'm going to bring forward.

The amendment is, as you well know, to make a mandatory fine of \$25,000 for anyone that interferes in any way with children that have been subject to child sexual abuse, but interferes in any way with their healing starting from day one. A \$25,000 fine would also be given to johns or pimps that are convicted of child sexual abuse through the prostitution trade. This fine would be imposed on any person in this province who engages in child sexual abuse whether it's in the home or on the streets or anywhere.

And, Mr. Minister, I implore you to accept this amendment because I think it would in fact be the major deterrent and would provide for those children in this province that are being sexually abused an assurance and a guarantee that in fact the government is doing something to assist them in a meaningful manner.

And so at this time, Mr. Chair, I would like to propose an amendment to The Child and Family Services Act, and I propose that clause 11 of the printed Bill be considered and by striking out subclause (2)(b)(i) and substituting the following subclause:

(i) by striking out "not more than "\$5,000" and substituting "\$25,000";

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chair, we do not support the amendment. Let me make a number of points in support of that. One is that the main amendment before the House is to increase the penalties in the Act which apply to a

number of contraventions of the Act or to a number of offences.

We are proposing to increase that fine from 5,000 to a maximum of 25,000. We're doing that, in great part, because we have a concern that some of those who are involved with children who are being sexually exploited and doing it as an economic activity, may not be deterred by the fines that were in the Act. So therefore we're proposing to increase the maximum fine to 25,000. And I might say — and 24 months in jail — and I might say that those penalties are consistent if not identical to the penalties that are included in legislation in Alberta.

But again, the reason that we're proposing to increase it to 25,000 is so that it will act as a deterrent — and 24 months — so that it can act as a deterrent to pimps or others who are engaged with some of these children and are exploiting these children for sexual purposes and for economic gain, so it does stand as a significant deterrent.

I would also point out that this section of the Act also deals with a number of other offences such as neglect of a child by a parent. There may be instances where, oh, as an example, if some parents go to the bar and leave their children outside and those children are not being attended to and in a sense neglected and found to be such under the Act, that . . . you know, the member's amendment would then fix that fine for those parents also at a rate of 25,000. I don't know whether that's appropriate under the circumstances.

You may also have abandonment of children by parents. That is to say, parents who take off for an evening and leave their children at home, they believe perhaps in the care of a babysitter but it wasn't firmly fixed, we are called in because in our opinion those children are abandoned. The courts also hold that those children are abandoned. Now the member's amendment would say that the minimum fine under such circumstances would also be \$25,000. We don't necessarily see it that way, so . . .

And there are other contraventions of the Act that are also covered by this clause, so we have some concern that we fix a minimum fine in this particular instance. We believe that the \$25,000 maximum and the two years in jail that is now the new maximum for this Act will act as a significant deterrent. And I would not be surprised that if our judicial system and our department, in acting under the auspices of the Act to lay charges against pimps or others who are involved with children, that the courts would recognize that there has been an increase in penalties for this purpose and would act appropriately. Now I can't prejudice the courts, but my sense is that they would do so.

I would also point out that the number of interventions under this Act by police officers would be small compared to actions that they would take under the Criminal Code of Canada where the penalties for similar kinds of clauses and similar kinds of activities are much more severe than they are under our Act.

But again we feel that this increase from 5,000 to 25,000 and from what was six months to 24 months, and which is identical to the legislation Alberta, will serve as a deterrent or as a further deterrent to those who would contravene the Act and those who would try to exploit children for sexual purposes. But it's not our intention to make this a minimum and in that way to catch

others in a web that may not be appropriate.

(1545)

**Ms. Julé:** — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, past history has proven to us that any fines that are slated as “up to,” gives the judge in a court the discretion to put forward a fine that they believe is appropriate. We have had the public, Mr. Minister, speaking out loud and clear that these fines are not enough for a major deterrent.

Mr. Minister, would you accept this amendment, Mr. Minister, if we asked you to direct the 25,000 mandatory fine to johns alone?

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Again, Mr. Chair, we are proposing to amend this section to increase the penalties from \$5,000 up to \$25,000 and from 6 months to 24 months because we believe that the offence of engaging children in sexual exploitation or forcing them into prostitution or encouraging them in prostitution is a very severe offence. We want to ensure that the courts have that discretion to be able to exact those kinds of fines and to impose those kinds of sentences where it's appropriate for them to do so.

There's no doubt in my mind that the court makes a clear distinction between certain kinds of activities, for example, as I mentioned earlier, between those who might abandon their children in some way or those who might neglect their children in some way as opposed to this kind of activity.

I would also point out that the Criminal Code — it takes one kind of approach to adults who are involved or had some involvement in the area of prostitution. For example, the maximum penalty faced by those communicating with adult prostitutes is six months in jail. But when we come to children, sexual assault of those children under the age of 14 has a maximum penalty of 10 years in jail and engaging children under the age of 18 in prostitution can see people hit with a maximum penalty of five years in jail.

So I think the courts clearly understand the gravity and see the sign post that we put for them in terms of this maximum penalty. And I have every confidence that where we do . . . or peace officers do move under this particular Act that the courts will behave or act appropriately to punish offenders.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we have had three to four years to look at doing something, something meaningful to assist our children, to protecting our children. It is up to the purview of the public, and of course to the government of the day, where children are not in the care of responsible parents or guardians to assist those children and to make sure that they are not abused in any way or form.

The United Nations Rights of the Child states these fundamental rights. The United Nations Rights of the Child makes a statement that it is up to the public purview to make sure there are measures in place. And the public purview in my estimation in this province is the responsibility of the government of the day.

I am deeply disappointed, Mr. Chair, that we couldn't after

three to four years enact some legislation that has some real teeth in it to assist our children. Our children have no one else to go to. They expect to be protected. A natural instinct in them that they be loved and protected is there within their heart and within their soul.

Instead what we're doing is we're as much as saying that we're not going to do anything very meaningful to help you. We are just going to hope that what has happened in the past doesn't happen any more. We're going to hope that johns get a lesson, an example set by other johns that may get a slap on the wrist. We're going to hope that our children's lives are not destroyed. We're going to hope and hope, but we're not going to do anything any more that's going to . . . any more than what we're doing now, rather, that's going to assist these children.

My disappointment goes deep. As I've mentioned today — before, and many times — there are children throughout the province who are having to be subjected to sexual abuse daily. And here we have a government that will do basically nothing. There is no reason in this world that this government could not direct a \$25,000 mandatory fine at johns to ensure that we have a deterrent in place that is going to stop this activity — at least slow it down, at least make people think twice.

And I believe that that measure would in fact slow down this activity. It would send a message that this is an intolerable crime that's taking place. This is a crime that is repeated daily, over and over, a crime that is directed at the same child many times over and over. This crime is worse than murder. Murder happens once. This crime happens daily, repeatedly, to the same child many times. This child in fact is murdered day in and day out.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair, rather, I grant the government no excuse for not bringing forth meaningful legislation. There is, as I've mentioned, no reason in the world that they could have not taken one small but very meaningful step in making sure that we have a fine in place directed at johns of \$25,000 to stop this abhorrent activity.

It is well known out there on the streets, it is well known in the complete public sector, Mr. Chair, that many of the men and some women abusing our children are elites in our community. There are many people in our community who have influential positions who are perpetuating this crime. Those people have \$25,000. If in fact they have sinned accordingly — if I may use the word, sinned — or committed this crime, then the least that can be asked of them is that they take some of their riches, their money, and use it . . . have it used towards assisting children towards their healing, towards assisting them towards their education, to assisting them in whatever way is necessary to hopefully set them on a path where their well-being will be intact and their lives will eventually be enhanced.

For our government to be this uncaring, for them to continually say no to the children of the province is inexcusable and another reason why this government should not be tolerated any further. Thank you

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

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Chair, I just want to indicate

to the committee that again we are proposing to increase the fines in this case from 5,000 to 25,000, and the sentences that can be imposed from six months to 24 months.

I think this is a very clear signal for the courts and all concerned that we, as members of the Legislative Assembly and society, view this matter very seriously and that here is a new signpost for the courts to look to when it comes to imposing penalties for those who are caught and those who are charged in these circumstance. I have no doubt that this will happen.

Thank you very much.

The division bells rang from 3:55 p.m. until 3:57 p.m.

The amendment negated on the following recorded division.

**Yeas — 8**

|         |           |             |
|---------|-----------|-------------|
| Krawetz | Bjornerud | D'Autremont |
| Draude  | Julé      | Heppner     |
| Osika   | Hillson   |             |

**Nays — 22**

|              |           |              |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Flavel       | MacKinnon | Lingenfelter |
| Shillington  | Goulet    | Johnson      |
| Serby        | Cline     | Crofford     |
| Van Mulligen | Teichrob  | Sonntag      |
| Scott        | Nilson    | Langford     |
| Murray       | Hamilton  | Wall         |
| Kasperski    | Ward      | Murrell      |
| Thomson      |           |              |

Clause 11 agreed to.

Clause 12 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the minister and his officials for coming in. For whatever it was worth today, thank you.

(1600)

**Bill No. 15 — The University of Regina  
Amendment Act, 1999**

**The Chair:** — I would ask the Minister to introduce his official please.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. With me, seated to my right, is John Biss, the executive director of the universities branch.

**Clause 1**

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, welcome and to your official. A few questions on this Bill, Mr. Minister. As I indicated in our comments back in second reading that there isn't a lot of controversy regarding this Bill. I just think that we need to have a few points clarified.

The very first one is surrounding the requests of the auditor. The Provincial Auditor has indicated that there has been some conflict within the existing provisions of The University of Regina Act and now the amendments. Could you identify what the Provincial Auditor saw as the problem that needed correcting?

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, with leave of members to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you and to all members who are gathered in the House just now, I'd like to introduce a group of young people who have come today from Moose Jaw.

They are all participating in programming at the Grinning Lizard teen wellness centre, an exciting youth centre in our community, and these are some of the exciting young people from our city.

They've been over at the University of Regina. They're now doing just a real short tour of the legislature and they wanted to sit in on some of the debate this afternoon. So I would ask all members to welcome these young people from the Grinning Lizard teen wellness centre.

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

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**Bill No. 15 — The University of Regina  
Amendment Act, 1999  
(continued)**

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Yes, to the member, the issue was around purely the interpretation of the legislation. The Provincial Auditor was of the view that it required an order in council to grant approval for overdraft. And the board of governors was of the view that it simply required board approval.

In consultation with the Provincial Auditor's office, who have reviewed the legislation, and at the request of the University of Regina, we are proposing this amendment that should satisfy both parties.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, the second bit of clarification I think is around short-term and long-term borrowing. We recall a few years ago the situation that occurred at the University of Regina regarding, you know, going extremely a large amount of money over budget and that type of debt that was placed on the government.

Is there any clarification on what is meant by short-term borrowing, what is meant by long-term borrowing, and the amounts that may be put forward in those categories?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — The short-term borrowing is defined as 120 days. And our understanding is that their maximum line of credit cannot exceed \$120 million . . . (inaudible interjection). . . Sorry. I'm sorry. Let me clarify — \$10 million. We got the 120, 120 days is the definition for maximum short-term and the maximum is \$10 million.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you for clarifying that, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, you've indicated that, also at the request of the University of Regina, the board of governors, that this interpretation now that you are putting will clarify the situation.

I'm wondering: is there any comments from the board of governors regarding the kinds of things that they will be doing regarding spending and still having to send it to, of course, Cabinet for approval, because we're going to be looking at the Lieutenant Governor in Council as approving these costs. Will the recommendations still be coming from the board of governors of the University of Regina regarding any borrowing, whether that be short-term or long-term?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — The short answer is for long-term borrowing, they would come . . . yes, it would require the process through Cabinet.

I just want to clarify. The rationale for this as well is to cover off periods of time, for instance, when tuitions come in in the fall, they would obviously have a substantial amount of cash on hand. This time of the year is when their accounts are drained and when they would need these amounts of money.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Minister, I note in your explanatory notes that were circulated, you've indicated that the revisions to The University of Regina Act should bring it into line with the new University of Saskatchewan Act. Are there differences in limits or are we dealing now with two Acts that are relatively similar?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Both Acts would be relatively similar.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — One final question regarding The University of Regina Act as far as the finances are concerned. It mentions an overdraft limit. What is the amount that has been placed on that category? You mentioned 10 million as being the short-term borrowing. Is there an overdraft limit that is different from that amount?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — The maximum is \$10 million. It's actually through CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce), although my understanding is CIBC may make some exceptions, where there are receivables that are imminent, within a day or so. But that would be purely for the CIBC to decide.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — With the differences in sizes of campuses obviously, the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, you're indicating that the Bill is fairly similar, the Acts are fairly similar, I'm wondering is the 10 million suitable, if it's suitable for Regina. Is this the same figure that the University of Saskatchewan is operating on as well?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — I'm sorry, we don't have that information but we can certainly get it for you.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you. The final part of the Act deals with the Wascana Centre and the University of Regina parking. Just to clarify, Mr. Minister, under the existing conditions, before this time, where we have the Wascana Centre as the entity that makes the bylaws and puts in place the regulations, who was administering the parking tickets, the issuing of parking tickets, the collecting of them? And also where did the revenues from those fines, where did they go to?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Just as a general statement regarding this issue, the parking amendment, it's also to try and bring it in line with how the University of Saskatchewan currently functions right now as well. And all of the things that you've just described were the responsibility of the University of Regina, but the authority was designated to them by the Wascana Centre Authority which created some administration difficulties, and that's the rationale for the request for this amendment.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — So the little bit of an extra part to my first question was: did the revenues stay within the University of Regina before? And you can, you can add to that one.

The other part, Mr. Minister, is now that we're going to create the power to be held within the University of Regina, I guess they will have to create their own set of bylaws and their own regulations. Will they be duplicating the Wascana Centre's and just recreating them, or do you see a long tedious process and a lot of new regulations and new bylaws that have to be put into place?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Just in continuation of the answer to the first question. Yes, it's our understanding that the revenues did stay with the University of Regina.

And certainly there won't be any significant changes regarding parking to our knowledge anyway, and don't believe that would happen. They would be working in concert with the Wascana Centre Authority. They have a member on the board actually of the Wascana Centre Authority now. And we wouldn't anticipate any major changes at all as it pertains to parking.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — With the changes now to the University of Regina being in control of not only the actual implementation of the bylaws but actually creating the bylaws, how will this affect students? Will students see any change to how their university parking has been run before and how will it be run in the future?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — For all intents and purposes, no.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — And my final question, Mr. Minister, comes from a student who wants to know whether or not there are designated parking lots for night parking. Does that exist right now or will you have to create bylaws and regulations that will actually put that into place?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — I would have to say I'm in the dark on that one. We don't know the answer to that question. We'll surely get it for you though. Okay.

**Mr. Hillson:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister. I understand that up until this year any loans required by our

universities have been guaranteed by the province of Saskatchewan, and that practice is now going to cease so that universities have to incur loans on their own which will involve higher costs.

And I want to ask you if it is the intention with this amendment to facilitate the University of Saskatchewan borrowing money not guaranteed by the province, as is apparently being done in the University of Saskatchewan to finance the University of Saskatchewan replacing and renovating and repairing some of its older buildings that they've have had so much trouble with, and of course especially the building that collapsed on us.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — This won't have any impact on the University of Saskatchewan at all. This is The University of Regina Amendment Act. So if I've understood your question correctly, it won't have any impact on borrowing for capital at all.

**Mr. Hillson:** — I realize this is just the University of Regina not the University of Saskatchewan. But my question is, is it the intention that the University of Regina will also now start floating loans not guaranteed by the province?

(1615)

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — There won't be any changes significantly as a result of this. Any capital borrowings that would be required would still require a cabinet approval and through order in council. This amendment to The University of Regina Act wouldn't in any way affect that.

And I should say while I'm on my feet as well, that the capital requirements of the universities, we would try to keep them consistent as well with the recommendations in the DesRosiers report. And again I would say that this legislation doesn't . . . these amendments don't contemplate any change in that whatsoever.

**Mr. Hillson:** — I guess though, Mr. Chairman, my point is that we've had a very dramatic change in the case of the University of Saskatchewan. First of all because the province wasn't guaranteeing capital loans, they were forced to pay a higher rate of interest which is a direct cost to the university and ultimately to either the students or the taxpayers, one or the other or both. And secondly the University of Saskatchewan had no credit rating. And I'm told that the process alone of the university being evaluated for credit rating purposes was about \$150,000.

So it was very expensive for the University of Saskatchewan to go into the money markets themselves not guaranteed by the province of Saskatchewan. And this is something that was first done when our University of Saskatchewan was something like 100 years old — 90 years old, I mean — so we had close to a century of the province taking responsibility for our universities.

Now the province, the provincial government is apparently abrogating that responsibility in the case of U of S (University of Saskatchewan). Are they going to abrogate it in the case of the University of Regina as well? And if they do, that is a big new expenditure, a big new cost to the borrowing of money, and that . . . So it might help the province's books in the short

term because the province can say they don't have that liability on their books, but in the long term it means that the university's borrowing requirements will cost more money, and when the university's borrowing requirements cost more money, obviously either the students or the taxpayers of Saskatchewan will have to pick that up.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Well my remarks to that really . . . my answer to that question really doesn't pertain to the legislation or the proposed amendment, but I'll answer the question nonetheless.

In this past budget, there was a commitment in the budget to actually fund over the next period of years the Thorvaldson and the kinesiology building at the University of Saskatchewan. So in fact it relieved any responsibility of the University of Saskatchewan for in fact having to borrow any funds. But again I go back to the amendments as proposed under The University of Regina Amendment Act, 1999. This would not contemplate any change in what is the current practice regarding capital borrowing.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 1 — The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 1999

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — 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. 15 — The University of Regina Amendment Act, 1999

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

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

### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

#### General Revenue Fund Public Service Commission Vote 33

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

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to introduce to you, Wynne Young, who's the Chair of the Public Service Commission, and she's to the left. Immediately behind me we have Rick McKillop, executive director, employee relations of the Public Service Commission. To my right and a little bit behind is Clare Isman executive director, human



resource development division, and behind me, directly behind me, Sharon Roulston, who's the director of administrative and information services division.

#### Subvote (PS01)

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'd just like to welcome the minister's officials here this afternoon. Madam Minister, I just have a few questions to do with the Public Service Commission. Can you give us an update on the Public Service Commission's goal to implement pay equity?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you. I thank the member opposite for the question. I believe what you're asking is maybe where we're at, and what our goal is. The goal is to have a new classification plan that achieves the government's goal of jointly negotiated pay equity. When fully implemented, the plan will have achieved internal equity and removed gender discrimination in job evaluation for all SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union) employees.

The new plan enables any job assignment to be equitably classified through a common set of job evaluation factors worked on with the union representatives. It reduces the emphasis on supervision as the only basis for advancement and recognizes the importance of knowledge, problem resolution, and human relation skills in achieving the government's goals. As I stated it's very structural and stands us in good stead for the future.

We know that all aspects of the classification plan and all the related processes were mutually determined with representatives of the bargaining unit in accordance with established pay equity principles and practices. All employees then have the opportunity to appeal their allocation to a joint union management appeal panel and the allocation of all negatively impacted employees are then reviewed.

(1630)

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. When pay equity is fully in place somewhere in the future — and we don't know how far down the road that will be — can you give us an idea of what that will cost the cost the taxpayers? A rough guesstimate?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — At present we're working on it and we're about halfway through. We expect when it's fully implemented, it would be about 16.1 million within the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union) bargaining unit.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. That cost then, Madam Minister — correct me if I'm wrong — would be an annual cost from that point on, would it not?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Yes, Mr. Member, that's correct.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Madam Minister, I believe that Public Service Commission went through a reclassification process for government employees. How much did this reclassification process cost in terms of higher salaries for in-scope employees?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — I would inform the member that part of the pay equity initiative, because it's a structural initiative, includes sitting down with the representatives of the unions and determining what the values and the evaluations will be within their jobs and then set up a job classification plan. So they're part of the same process; job classification and evaluation is part of the pay equity initiative and so therefore that would mean that it's included in the \$16.1 million.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. The Public Service Commission has been undergoing a process for modernizing the information technology systems it uses. Can you tell us what this process was budgeted at and what the final bill will be for this information technology upgrade?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — The Internet personnel system is one that replaces the PALS (personnel attendance and leave system) network when we found that would not be Y2K (Year 2000) compatible and that there were things that we wanted to accomplish in addition to the old system. We are in the process of and I believe almost to the end of full implementation. It has been implemented now. And that would be at a final additional cost of about \$1.1 million.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, can you tell us what the management development centre is and how much it will cost?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — I thank the member opposite for providing me with an opportunity to tell you more about the management development centre. Because as anywhere else within workplaces and so on, the Saskatchewan public service has experienced a great deal of change.

They've demanded that the public service become more flexible and innovative and responsive in meeting the needs of Saskatchewan citizens. Executive and senior managers need to both be highly effective public administrators, and organizational leaders. So this is a newly established management development centre at the Public Service Commission, and it's recently completed a learning needs identification process with senior managers.

This learning needs assessment which was conducted over the past year concluded that senior managers are quite strong in the area of public administration. Something I believe we knew all along, but here we have it confirmed.

Through the same process, senior managers identified the broad area of leadership as their priority for learning and for development. This focus on leadership skills for senior managers is not confined to the Saskatchewan Public Service. The Conference Board of Canada, for example, having looked across other jurisdictions and sectors, has concluded that leadership now and in the future is a critical management competency and that managers need expertise in multiple skills including leadership, management of people, and in change.

The management development centre was established to provide training, education, and development opportunities for senior managers that addressed their high priority needs learning . . . learning needs. And it will, we believe, enhance their effectiveness as senior managers and consequently the

effectiveness of the public service overall.

With the positive results that we will have, the managers who need to face the change of the future — I believe that the cost is about \$130,000 for programming cost plus some of the staff that are involved, and I believe there are about five individuals in Clare's area.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, how then in your view will the management development centre and the costs associated with it benefit the average taxpayer in Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — I believe that there are a number of ways the taxpayer would benefit from that. If you have managers who are able to look for new ideas and innovation and able to access the expertise of their staff and the personnel around them, they can quickly formulate recommendations and ideas that can be implemented. And in many areas, that would have cost-saving implications for the taxpayers. I also believe then you have a workplace that has less stress.

It also has the ability to maintain the people that we have employed within the province and to be able to see them moving up as their skills increase and their competency levels improve. So you have a workforce that's here, that wants to stay here, and we can maintain them. And I believe that's also of benefit to the taxpayers of the province.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. And I understand what you're saying about how you're spending the money and what you feel the benefits will be. But I guess where I have some concerns is, take the nurses for an example where I believe one of the things that they would like to see is part of their training paid for also by the government. And that would I believe be of benefit to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan and the public in general, and we don't see that happening.

Madam Minister, one of the goals of the Public Service Commission equity program is to get more women, more Aboriginal people, and more handicapped people into the public service. Can you tell us what percentages these categories now make up in the public service, and compared to that the percentage they make up in the general population?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — As the member opposite would know asking that question, that we believe employment equity in government is a very important aspect of the Public Service Commission work. We have areas of representation, persons of Aboriginal ancestry. By March 31 of 1998 we believe that representation would reach 7.2 per cent, which is up from 1992: 3.1 per cent then, 7.2 per cent now.

Our desired goal and our aspiration is to reach 12.2 per cent which would be reflective of the population at large.

Persons with disabilities — again in 1992 as of March 31 — we had 2.4 per cent and we now have as of March 31, 1998 — 3.1 per cent. Our goal is 9.7 per cent. And I think we would all agree that that's one of the areas we have to look at ways that we can access those individuals who would be willing to work within government services and how we can best accommodate their needs. And we're very hopeful that the issues that . . .

disability issues directorate will be of great assistance in that way as well.

Members of visible minority groups have gone from 1.9 per cent in March 1994 to 2.5 per cent. So we're about half way there. We would want to see about 5.1 per cent if we were looking at representational workforce.

And women in management about 35.2 per cent as of March 31, 1998, and our desired representation level would be 45 per cent.

In non-traditional positions, women in non-traditional positions, is about 20.3 per cent at present. And our desired representation in the workplace would be about 45 per cent.

So again another area where we really need to do some encouraging to look at ways we can access women who are willing to be employed in the non-traditional areas of government work.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, also there was an order in council approved for \$950,000 to provide for relocation costs of the Public Service Commission's Regina offices. Can you tell us why this move is being made and why it would cost as much as a million dollars to move?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Okay. As the member would be aware, the lease expired at the Public Service Commission's current site on 11th Avenue in November of 1998. The site at 2103 11th Avenue did not meet all Public Service Commission needs due to accessibility and parking restrictions for clients.

SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) tendered for the space on behalf of the Public Service Commission in a fair and open tendering process. The Broad Street location was the most economical and most favourable location for the Public Service Commission from the results of that tender.

As we stated, the reason why we wanted to see the move was the people who have to access the Public Service Commission for a number of reasons — anything from working with our representative unions to people who are looking for employment opportunities and just people within government who need to seek the advice of the PSC (Public Service Commission). It was felt that the new location would meet those needs.

When the move is completed, it would save about \$350,000 on an annual basis. There are some renovations that are needed in the new location, but once we're up and running, totally there would be about \$350,000 annual saving.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, I just wanted to ask you a specific question in as far as gender equity is concerned. It is my understanding that in the area of SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management), that we do not have any efforts really being made. In fact we have a detraction and a dissuasion, I guess, in no uncertain terms, of women being placed as conservation officers. They apparently are directed to other jobs and so on, but they are certainly not able to be able to access the jobs of conservation officers. Could

you tell me — if you have that information with you — how many women in Saskatchewan are actually conservation officers at this time?

(1645)

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — We don't have the specific numbers for you at this time, and I'll endeavour to get that information to you. But what I can say is that there are areas like that where we really want to see movement forward and SERM is implementing a mentoring program to try and do just that.

There are as you know some times that within a workplace, for whatever the reasons, some of them may be a need to educate people both in the workplace and outside of that on what can be expected in the jobs is important, and that the programs that we put in place we're hopeful that we would eliminate any of those barriers including within the conservation area classification. SERM is moving forward on that with their mentoring program.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, it seems to me that mentoring programs, as you've stated, that are in place are an effort to be able to close this gender-equity gap as far as women being placed, for instance, in SERM as conservation officers.

But what's really happening out there on the field is women that are trying to access those jobs are feeling as though they are bullied, intimidated, and certainly given the direct message that they had better be happy with what they have or, you know, they will be without a job — amen.

So I would hope that the minister takes into consideration some of those things that are taking place, and that you pay close attention to any of the complaints that might come forward in this regard. Thank you.

Subvote (PS01) agreed to.

Subvotes (PS02), (PS06), (PS04), (PS03) agreed to.

Vote 33 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1998-99**  
**General Revenue Fund**  
**Budgetary Expense**  
**Public Service Commission**  
**Vote 33**

Subvotes (PS02), (PS03) agreed to.

Vote 33 agreed to.

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank my officials. I know that the members opposite would know that they've had quite a workload with all of the interesting bargaining processes going forward, a new Act for government employees scope review and other initiatives going forward. And they've worked very long hours and diligently so I'd like to take the opportunity to thank them at this time.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — I also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would like to join with the minister and thank the officials this afternoon.

**General Revenue Fund**  
**Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation**  
**Vote 53**

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

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have with me today, John Law, the president of SPMC, to my immediate left. Behind John, Mr. Garth Rusconi, the vice-president of accommodation services. Directly behind me, Rob Isbister, acting vice-president of finance. Just behind me and to the right, Barbara Loveridge, acting director of financial planning, finance and corporate services. And I'm looking for . . . there. Al Moffat is beside John Law, who is our vice-president of commercial services.

**Subvote (SP01)**

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

Madam Minister, I'd like to start today, this afternoon, by a few questions on the Plains hospital, the building that the Plains hospital was in, where SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) is going now. When this project was first announced, Madam Minister, what was the original completion date that was projected?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to be able to answer questions for you on a very exciting project that is part of what in the future will be known as the knowledge corridor, and that's the SIAST redevelopment project.

As the members would know, that we began taking over that project about November 30, 1998. The original completion date was scheduled to be September 2001, and it was subsequently moved ahead to September 2000.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, you said this was an exciting project. Actually I haven't found that to be the case in southern and eastern Saskatchewan. I couldn't find anybody excited about the Plains closing and I'm kind of surprised you would say it that way.

Madam Minister, what was the original budget for redoing the Plains hospital or the building that the Plains was in?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you to the member opposite for that question. The budget in total for the redevelopment of that project, which I believe a number of students from the SIAST campuses are quite excited about being located together, is about \$29 million — 28.8 to be exact.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Madam Minister, I'm sorry if I didn't quite hear you right. Was that the original budget that you had planned for or is that the actual budget that you're working on right now? Are we over budget from what we originally planned?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — That was the original figure contemplated. And my officials tell me there's no reason to believe there's a change in that budgeted amount.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. And I guess time will tell, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, those items that were not transferred to the Plains or the General Hospital — office equipment, all kinds of things, garbage disposal units, all kinds of equipment like that — if they weren't moved to those other two hospitals, can you tell me what you did with that equipment?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you for that question. The salvaging of the equipment and material from the former Plains Health Centre followed a three-part process.

Any equipment or fixtures which could be used by the Regina Health District in the General or the Pasqua hospitals or in any other facilities were taken from the building once it had been decommissioned on November 30, 1998. So the first part was to see if we could use any of those in the health facilities.

Then SPMC analyzed the remainder of the building to determine what material could be reused for the SIAST redevelopment project. And this included items such as doors, frames, hardware, kitchen equipment, walk-in freezers, countertops. Even the trees located where the industrial shop addition is being built are going to be relocated to another side of the building.

After that was done, the third part of the process was to look at any remaining material, and if it was of some value, to be turned over to the government auction. Material deemed not to have any value would be disposed of in an environmentally sensitive manner.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, so far how many firms have been given contracts to work on the new SIAST buildings, and can you name them, and what have they been hired to do?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Yes, through you, Mr. Chair, the overarching teams that are at work there would be Pattison MGM who were responsible for the design, and they're on ongoing basis looking at the design for the project. And then PCL Maxam is the construction manager.

And the way the contracts work and are let, every other contract then would be the responsibility of PCL. And there would be a number of them. Anything from, as you know, the asbestos removal work to electrical to rebuilding — any of the trades that would be there would be the responsibility of PCL.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, then would this also include the subcontractors that you're talking about here today?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Yes, that would include any of the subcontractors. Contracts are let based on the information that people who are buying for the construction manager tender would be, and then those become the responsibility of PCL Maxam.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. And you may have answered this but I'd like to ask it again. The subcontractors — how were they hired? Were they tendered by the government, were they tendered by PCL, or were they tendered . . . How did they go to get the job?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Yes. My officials inform me that every other contractor or subcontractor there, would be hired by PCL Maxam. But they would be hired subject to the terms and conditions that we set forward in the contract. So they would have to meet those terms and conditions, and then PCL would go out to a tender process to access those subcontracts.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, would it not be of a concern to the government if one or more of these contractors were not bonded?

**The Chair:** — Before the minister answers, it now being the normal time of recess, this committee stands recessed until 7 p.m. later this day.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.

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