

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of many people in the province of Saskatchewan, and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to halt any plans it has to proceed with enforced amalgamation of municipalities in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, dozens of names appear on these sheets. They are all from the community of Invermay.

I so present.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition today to present to retain Lanigan and Watrous hospitals. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people who have signed this petition are from Lanigan, Guernsey, and Drake.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of citizens concerned about the future of their hospitals and in particular Lanigan and Watrous. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Lockwood,, Lanigan, Guernsey, and Nokomis.

I so present.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well to present a petition. Reading the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

Mr. Speaker, the petition I present is signed by people from the

communities of North Battleford, Allan, Elstow, and Bradwell.

I so present.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition to present on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens concerned about the future of the hospitals in Lanigan and Watrous. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

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

And this is signed by residents of Elstow, and Allan.

I so present. Thank you.

Mr. Addley: — I'd like to present a petition requesting that smoking be banned in all public places. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to legislate a total ban of smoking in all public places and workplaces in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

These petitions were collected by the youth of Saskatchewan.

I so present.

Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition requesting that smoking be banned in all public places. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to legislate a total ban of smoking in all public places and workplaces in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

These petitions were collected by the youth of Saskatchewan.

I so present.

Mr. Bjonerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions today to present about forced amalgamation. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to halt any plans it has to proceed with enforced amalgamation of municipalities in Saskatchewan.

The petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from Invermay . . . Invermay. These people are very concerned, Mr. Speaker, about forced amalgamation. The last sheet's all Invermay too.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition opposed to enforced municipal amalgamation.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to halt any plans it has to proceed with enforced amalgamation of municipalities in Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures here are all from Buena Vista.

I so present.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition with citizens concerned about hospital closures. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

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

The petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from Lanigan, Lockwood, and Guernsey.

I so present.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from citizens concerned with hospital closures. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

The signatures are from Allan.

I so present.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today in regards to the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good people from Elstow and Allan.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of the citizens of the community of Allan who

are concerned about the closures of the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Watrous and Lanigan hospitals remain open.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition regarding the closure of the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals.

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

And the petitioners, or the signatures on this petition are from Allan.

I so present.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the possible confiscation of municipal reserve accounts. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to abandon permanently and rule out any plans it has to confiscate municipal reserve accounts.

And this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Courval, Mortlach, and Coderre.

I so present.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great responsibility that I rise to present a petition to retain Lanigan and Watrous hospitals. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by the good citizens of Guernsey and Lanigan.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly on the following matters:

To legislate a total ban of smoking in public places and workplaces in the province;

To cause the federal and provincial governments to reduce fuel taxes;

To provide reliable cellular service in Strasbourg, Duval, Govan, and Bulyea;

And to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I will make a notice of a written question. I give notice I shall on day no. 60 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation: how much did SaskTel, SaskEnergy, SaskWater, and SaskPower spend on advertising in the last fiscal year?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, two special guests seated in your gallery. And I would ask them to stand as I introduce them, please.

His Excellency Dato Jocklin, High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, and Mrs. Datin Meliah, wife of the High Commissioner.

His Excellency is in Regina on his first official visit to our province. He is meeting with the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, the mayor of Regina, and officials of the fire management and forest protection branch of SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management).

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that you hosted the High Commissioner at a luncheon today that was attended by some members of the Legislative Assembly.

I have the honour of meeting with His Excellency and his wife this afternoon. Please join with me in welcoming His Excellency, the High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, and Mrs. Meliah.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition it is my pleasure to join with the Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development in welcoming His Excellency Dato Jocklin, the High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, and Mrs. Datin Meliah, wife of the High Commissioner.

I was one of those members that had the good fortune of meeting the High Commissioner at lunch. And while his stay in Saskatchewan this time around will be a short one, after learning about all of the wonderful golf courses in this province,

he has assured us that he will be returning to further explore some of the golfing opportunities in Saskatchewan.

Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the other members of the Assembly, a number of very special guests seated in our gallery today. I'll be telling you more about them later in my ministerial statement regarding the appointment of a Provincial Advisory Committee Of Older Persons.

Joining us today are some of the members who have been appointed to the committee and I'd ask them to stand — Don King, Frank Bellamy from Regina, Wes Ashwin from Saskatoon, Doreen Mowers from Moose Jaw, and Frank Mirasty from Meadow Lake.

Please join me in welcoming those guests to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Junor: — While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, there's a second group of special guests here today, the Last Mountain Seniors' Education Committee are visiting the legislature today.

This group is part of the outreach program of the Seniors' Education Centre at the University of Regina and is joined today by Don King, who I just introduced to you and who is director of the education centre.

This group works with older adults to foster active living, lifelong learning, and healthy lifestyles. For the past nine years they have planned and delivered programs to over a thousand registrants in the Last Mountain area. They do prove that there is lifelong learning.

I look forward to meeting with this group later this afternoon and on behalf of the government, I would like to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the government in welcoming the Last Mountain Seniors' Education Committee. A lot of the members live in my constituency. It's great to see them here and I hope they have an enjoyable visit. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you today the kindergarten through grade 9 students from the Weyburn Christian School. Their teachers and parents are with them.

This is a wonderful school and the parents are to be commended for starting this school and through diligence and hard work keeping it going. Some of these students were frequent visitors to my campaign office last September and I think we have some

future politicians in this group. I'd like everyone in the Assembly to help me welcome them in the east gallery.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I want to join my colleague and welcome all the elders that are here today, but especially one elder — Frank Mirasty from Meadow Lake, the Flying Dust Band.

I want to point out to Mr. Mirasty that I've met many of his family and many of his grandchildren and his children over the years, and he's got an excellent family. And I know that they've had some difficult days in the past but I wanted to encourage him to continue his fine work and his fine example of what a leader should be in the Aboriginal community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Potholes Fixed on Highway No. 4 by Local Residents

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I was unable to be in the House, Mr. Speaker, because of some pressing matters related to my critic responsibilities on behalf of the official opposition.

Unfortunately while I was away I missed one of those rare occasions to introduce constituents visiting the House from Cypress Hills. Although introductions were accomplished by one of my colleagues, I wish to reiterate that the visitors were members of grade 12 class of another one of those fine schools in the constituency of Cypress Hills — Eastend School. And this class gave me an hour of their time to answer questions a few weeks ago, and I regret having missed the chance to introduce them to you personally, Mr. Speaker.

And in case there was any confusion or problem with mistaken identity, it was my brother Dennis who accompanied that group here, in addition to their teacher Shelley Morvik.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was, as I indicated earlier, preoccupied with helping the citizens of the Val Marie area repair potholes in Highway No. 4. Now cynics might call it old-fashioned politics, but whatever it was, I and my colleague from Cannington, were doing it by the spade full — literally and figuratively.

A group of nearly 50 individuals led by the mayor, Robert Ducan, and reeve of the RM (rural municipality) Mike Waldner, took the initiative to get something accomplished which seemed impractical or impossible maybe to those with lesser vision. With co-operation and joint effort, the volunteers dug out, cleaned, and repaired 28 kilometres of highway, which had been pockmarked with potholes since earlier this spring.

I salute the effort of the people involved, Mr. Speaker, and thank them for showing what can be accomplished with determination.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

People of Val Marie

Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker. I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that different people can draw different conclusions from the events of yesterday in Val Marie. That of course is our right.

But there is one inescapable fact on which we can all agree, and it is this: the people of Val Marie saw a problem; they acted to correct it. For this act of community determination, they deserve our respect and they have earned our admiration. It can be put no more simply than that.

As Mayor Ducan said: "the work bee has been a positive event." Positive I would suggest in at least two ways. One, the people of Val Marie, crew members of the Highway department, and a couple of itinerant workers from the Sask Party showing their usual expertise with a shovel, patched a significant stretch of Highway 4. They got the job done.

Two, and more significantly: they provided a living demonstration of one of the fundamental principles of living in a democratic society. We all have individual rights that are protected by the instrument of the individual, the government. Those rights are best guaranteed by active participation in society, by the vigorous exercise of our responsibilities to our communities and our fellow citizens.

The people of Val Marie gave us all an excellent lesson in the balance between rights and responsibilities, and we thank them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Val Marie Residents Pave Highway

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to send my salutes to the people of Val Marie. To Mike Ducan, the mayor; and Mike . . . Robert Ducan, the mayor; and Mike Waldner, the reeve, and to the 50 people that showed up to shovel asphalt and clean out the potholes, Mr. Speaker. They did an excellent job.

And fact is, Mr. Speaker, this event I found on the Internet under SASKABUSH. And they wrote a very interesting little article about this and I would like to quote from it, Mr. Speaker. I quote:

Tired of waiting for the government to get off its red-taped . . . (backside) and repair the horribly neglected highways, the desperados bravely walked into a department of highways compound, swiped the equipment and the materials and paved a . . . stretch of highway near the small town in southwest Saskatchewan.

That small town, Mr. Speaker, being Val Marie. The article goes on to say, and I quote:

"We can't have this kind of thing going on," said the outraged Premier of Saskatchewan, "The next thing you know, people are going to expect to have safe, drivable highways. Those standards are just too high to be realistically maintained" (Mr. Speaker).

The Premier added that he was content with the current state of highways, pronounced recently as merely “hazardous” . . .

Mr. Speaker, the people of Val Marie and community took back into their own hands, control of their own lives, which had been taken away by this government. I congratulate them again, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Tourism Awareness Week in Saskatchewan

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, the week of June 4 to June 10 is Tourism Awareness Week as we promote and celebrate Saskatchewan as well as increase the awareness of tourism’s benefit to the entire population of Saskatchewan.

Tourism generates \$1.14 billion in revenue for Saskatchewan each year and employs about 42,000 people. That’s one of every 11 workers in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Tourism is Saskatchewan’s fastest growing industry. In fact, in 1998-99 Saskatchewan enjoyed the highest visitation numbers in over a decade. And this year tourism inquiries in the first quarter of the year have nearly doubled over the numbers of inquiries from the same period last year.

More than 30 events have been planned to celebrate Saskatchewan’s Tourism Awareness Week. Everything from agricultural fairs and rodeos to musical festivals, fishing tournaments, and community sports days will take place across Saskatchewan to kick off the new tourist season. I’m sure in the days to come members will be speaking in the House about some of those events.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan’s a wonderful place to live and a fantastic place to visit and the people of this province are great ambassadors. We look forward to sharing our province with the many visitors that will arrive over the next few months.

I want to thank Tourism Saskatchewan for getting all of us to think about the importance of tourism to this province, and for also reminding us of one more reason in a long list of reasons why our province is the best place in which to live in Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Prince Albert 4-H Beef Cattle Show and Sale

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it’s an honour today to rise so that I might bring mention to our Assembly of an event that took place in Prince Albert. This event was so huge that it took two days . . . it required two days in order to complete the event. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it was almost midnight of the second day before completion was realized.

Mr. Speaker, I’m referring to the Prince Albert and area 4-H beef cattle annual show and sale. And the two days of Sunday, June 4, and Monday, June 5 were jam-packed with competitions

as youths from seven different clubs demonstrated their skills in judging, grooming, and showing their calves as they highlighted the Saskatchewan beef industry.

Mr. Speaker, the Prince Albert 4-H beef show and sale is arguably the largest in Saskatchewan, and attracts some of the most aggressive bidding as buyers try to outbid each other for the honour of supporting tomorrow’s beef producers.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan’s beef industry is the least supported by government of all agricultural sectors and yet we are constantly reminded that it is the most viable in today’s agricultural economy.

These young people from the surrounding district of Prince Albert have clearly indicated that Saskatchewan beef industry is a proud choice for their future. Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure to have participated in the Monday night sale and proudly purchased one of the 120 finished steers offered for auction.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly in joining me in congratulating the 4-H’ers in the Prince Albert district. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Real Carriere wins Scholarship to Lester B. Pearson College

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to tell my colleagues about a young man from my constituency who has won a tremendous scholarship to a prestigious school.

Real Carriere from Cumberland House has been awarded a \$50,000 scholarship to the Lester B. Pearson United World College of the Pacific in Victoria, BC (British Columbia). Lester B. Pearson has an enrolment of 200 students representing each Canadian province, territory, as well as students from 83 other countries.

Real will attend the college for two years. And in addition to academics, Real will be able to partake in such courses as kayaking, mountaineering, and photography.

I might add that Real’s experience, background, and identity will stand him in good stead. His grandfather, my late uncle, Bill Carriere, was a world’s championship dog derby winner in 1961. His father, Solomon Carriere, is three time world marathon canoe champion, triple crown winner in New York, Shawinigan Falls, and Minneapolis. His mother, Rene, is an excellent teacher, outdoor educational enthusiast, and an eco-tourism practitioner.

As the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) of Cumberland, as the Minister of Northern Affairs, and as an uncle, I offer my congratulations to Real Carriere — ki geechi gus keetan. You have done well. The family and the people of Cumberland House are proud of your accomplishment.

I ask my colleagues of the legislature to extend a very special congratulations to this outstanding young man — Real.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Canadian Environment Week

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House today to further raise awareness of Canadian Environment Week. Here in Saskatchewan we are fortunate to have an abundance of resources all contributing to our rich and diverse environment. From the quiet beauty of the Far North to the sweeping vast expanse of the southern grasslands, it's ours to enjoy. We must ensure that we do all we can to protect it. Not only for our enjoyment, but also for the generations to come.

From industries to interest groups, I'm encouraged by the many partnerships that have evolved over the years, all attesting to the level of commitment that exist in protecting our environment.

I've seen first-hand how a responsible approach can impact not only the environment, but also on society as well. As past president of SARC (Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres) SARCAN, I know the benefits to the environment are obvious is the hundreds of thousands of containers that are recycled at SARCAN depots throughout the province each year. But I've also seen the positive social value that's felt by SARCAN's employment of citizens with disabilities.

This is just one of the many partnerships that are in place here in Saskatchewan, further proof of our commitment to making the environment sustainable for future generations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Funding of Highway Maintenance

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday a couple of Saskatchewan Party members were out fixing the potholes on an NDP (New Democratic Party) highway. Today we're going to fix some potholes in the NDP's math.

For the past few days the NDP have been saying 87 per cent of highway-related revenue goes back into highway construction and maintenance. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have the NDP's own budget estimates — got them right here — and the government collects \$348 million in fuel tax. They collect another \$112 million in motor vehicle fees. That's a total of \$460 million.

Now the government spends \$110 million in highway maintenance and just \$61 million on highway construction. That's a total of \$171 million. Mr. Speaker, that's not 87 per cent of revenues; that's 37 per cent of revenue.

To the Premier: Mr. Premier, why are your ministers saying you spend 87 per cent of highway revenues fixing highways when the real number is just 37 per cent?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, whatever else one can say about Conservatives in Saskatchewan we know one thing — arithmetic is not their strong point.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — What the Leader of the Opposition is saying today as usual, Mr. Speaker, is not factual. The total fuel tax revenues we collect, Mr. Speaker, are \$348 million. That's what we collect, Mr. Speaker.

I don't hear the Leader of the Opposition talking about the farm fuel rebate, Mr. Speaker, because the Leader of the Opposition doesn't say for example that up to \$50 million is going to be rebated back to the farmers. And I say to the Leader of the Opposition, how do you rebate the fuel tax back to the farmers as the opposition believes we should and we are doing, and spend it on the roads, Mr. Speaker? How do you do both at the same time?

And I can report to the House, Mr. Speaker, that we're spending 87 per cent of the net revenue on the roads. And that's what we're doing — never mind the arithmetic from the Tories, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP would rather make up numbers than fix the highways, and they're not very good at either actually. Mr. Premier, here is the numbers right out of your budget.

Your budget for highway construction actually decreased this year from \$64 million in 1999 down to \$61 million in the year 2000. However, some budget items in the Highway's department did increase. The administration budget increased by nearly 6 per cent — that doesn't fix roads. And the accommodation and central services budget increased by over 7 per cent — that doesn't fix roads either.

Unfortunately none of that money goes to actually fixing highways. Mr. Premier, you take in \$460 million a year in fuel taxes and licence fees and just 37 per cent of that money goes back into highways.

My question is to the Premier. Instead of making up phony numbers, why don't you just fix the highways?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well we don't need any lectures from the Leader of the Opposition when it comes to phony numbers, Mr. Speaker, because that's where the phony numbers are coming from.

I notice, Mr. Speaker, not only does the Leader of the Opposition refuse to acknowledge that \$50 million of road tax revenue is going to be rebated back to the farmers, he refuses to mention, Mr. Speaker, the \$21 million of fuel tax revenue that goes to the rural municipalities to fix the grid roads, Mr. Speaker. And he doesn't mention the \$5 million centenary fund money that goes into highways and roads, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't mention the \$15 million going into the provincial municipal infrastructure fund, Mr. Speaker.

He doesn't mention any of those figures. And he doesn't mention the 13 cents on the dollar which goes to pay the

interest on the debt run up by those people in the 1980s, Mr. Speaker. And when you add all of that up, Mr. Speaker, and those numbers, unlike the numbers from the Leader of the Opposition, do add up, we're spending 87 per cent of the net revenue on fixing the roads and highways. More than we've ever done before, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier promised the people of Saskatchewan that he would spend \$250 million a year for 10 years on highways. Had he kept that promise, the people of Val Marie would not have been out filling potholes yesterday.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the NDP government was embarrassed yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, they should have listened to the Saskatchewan Party and our platform which called for spending an additional \$50 million on road construction, on highway construction. Not administration services, not central services — highway construction; that's what this province needs.

Mr. Speaker, that's a real commitment to highways in this province and would have nearly doubled the highway construction budget this year. That's our plan. What's your plan, Mr. Premier? Make up numbers and gravel the highways?

Mr. Premier, highways in this province are an absolute disaster. It is a botch on your record. Why are you spending 37 per cent of highway revenue at fixing highways? Why aren't you spending more?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — You know, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition tries to be Mr. All-things-to-all-people. He comes into this House day after day, and he says we should reduce the tax . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — He says, Mr. Speaker, that we should reduce the taxes in this province. He says we should not collect any gas tax in this province and then, Mr. Speaker, he has the audacity at the same time to come into the House and tell people he's going to spend more. He's going to tax them less but he's going to spend more.

And the problem here, Mr. Speaker, is that it's the same old Tory story that we saw in the 1980s when Grant Devine told people that you could have no gas tax and you could spend more money on the roads. And it wasn't true then and it's not true now; and it didn't add up then and it doesn't add up now, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Three times the minister has tried to answer my question, and the only thing

he's said that's right is that we're prepared to do something and he's prepared to do absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP have a few potholes in their own platform. In fact, the Premier recently put his old friend — his old friend, Ned Shillington — in charge of renewing the NDP Party. Ned took one look at the NDP platform and what did he do? He moved to Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, people in rural Saskatchewan are tired of being treated like second-class citizens, treated like peasants by this government.

Yesterday the Minister of Highways confirmed that he would turn the highways back to gravel. But he doesn't think that's so bad. In fact he says, and I quote:

You don't have to go back that many years when there was no pavement in the province.

Mr. Speaker, that quote speaks volumes about the NDP arrogance and their attitude to people in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Premier, why is your government treating rural people like second-class citizens? Why are you doing that? Would the Premier answer the question?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite and in particular to the member from Cypress who was in Val Marie yesterday working with the mayor and the reeve from the area, unlike other members of the former Conservative government who should have been down there fixing potholes because they're the ones responsible for the huge debt and I would argue, I would argue when it comes to potholes that Leader of the Opposition . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order, please. I ask all hon. members to kindly come to order.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the member from Cypress and the people who came out to fix roads at Val Marie, I think they deserve a big thank you from all the people of the province.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would say to the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Opposition who while he was in Ottawa argued to get rid of rail lines, end the Crow rate, he should apologize to the people and he should take his Tory friends, Eric Berntson, Colin Thatcher, and the rest of them down and fill some potholes and help that member out because he caused the problem by running the debt up and urging the federal government to abandon rail lines in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, I've only been an MLA for a short time but I think yesterday was one of the most rewarding days I've had as a representative of the people.

Yesterday in Val Marie I saw that nine years of neglect and mistreatment by the NDP government had not broken the spirit of Saskatchewan people. This morning I learned that Val Marie was actually the second example of volunteer highway repair

crews.

Last Saturday there was a similar crew at work out fixing provincial access roads near Atwater. Those people were given coal patch and a truck to use by the Department of Highways. My question is to the minister today. What exactly is your government's policy on this kind of activity? What services are you willing to provide other communities who want to fix their highways?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, again I say to the member from Cypress, it's interesting that he takes this position of who's responsible for the breakup of the highways as large quantities of grain come off the Val Marie line, run on the road, No. 4 Highway to Swift Current to the inland terminals, when back in 1995 on March 30 in the Common's debate, the Leader of the Opposition said this, and I quote: "For years farmers have been saying they do not mind doing their share and (losing the rail subsidy) . . . lose the rail subsidy . . ."

And went on to argue about the Crow Rate which has led directly to the abandonment of the rail lines and elevators that put the grain onto the highway he's now arguing about.

I say to the member . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I'll say it out there. I'll say it anywhere. Can you imagine the irony of an individual who sanctimoniously argues about the breakup of the highways when he personally argued and urged the federal government to abandon rail lines in this province. How smart is that? How smart is it . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, this morning on CKRM, the Deputy Premier said he was willing to look at other volunteer projects. And now that the government has completely abandoned its responsibility, I'm sure there's lots of communities thinking about doing the exact same thing as done in Val Marie yesterday.

So how does this work exactly? Who are the people of these communities going to call at the Department of Highways?

Mr. Minister, will you supply the coal patch, will you supply the trucks, will you supply the flag crews now that your government has endorsed this policy of do-it-yourself road repair? And what services are you willing to provide other communities who want to fix their roads?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the members opposite, I have a book here that lists out all of the work that's being done in various constituencies around the province, which would include the member from Cypress, but also many, many other constituencies.

For example, I want to talk to the members opposite about the work that's being done, for example, in the member for Souris-Cannington. And I want to list out the projects that are being done this year: No. 8 Highway south of Carievale, 4

kilometres for a price of \$400,000.

Another project . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the members opposite, the total for his constituency alone is over three and a half million dollars — three and a half million dollars.

Now some would argue why you would spend any money in that individual's riding given how negative he is when he comes here. He argues every day that no money is going into his constituency. The taxpayers of the province are putting 3.5 million into his riding.

And I say to the members opposite, the total amount being paid and put into roads in this province is at a record level of \$250 million. That's far beyond anything when the Tories, you members, were in government, put into roads.

And I'll tell you this. In 1982 when you campaigned to get rid of rail lines and the Crow rate, you were the architects of the destruction of the highways in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, for most of the communities affected, \$250 million is too little too late. The people of Val Marie felt a tremendous sense of pride in what they accomplished yesterday, but even as they were completing their work, the people of Climax and Bracken were hit with the news of turning their road back to gravel. Highway 18 will be reverted to gravel.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Climax and that area are simply not willing to let this happen. Since the news broke I have spoken with several area residents who say that they are prepared to maintain that road themselves. They will provide the labour. They will provide the equipment. All they need from the Department of Highways is some co-operation and a commitment from your government not to turn Highway No. 18 back to gravel.

Mr. Minister, will you cancel your plan to gravel Highway 18 and talk first to local residents about other possible solutions?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, to the member from Cypress who indicates that the stretch of road I believe he's talking about, between Bracken and Climax, and No. 18 Highway, that the community has come forward and said look, what we want to do is have the ability to discuss with you the care of this road and the responsibility for this road.

I have talked to the officials in Highways and they are at present time contacting the people in Climax. And if an arrangement can be made where the responsibility for this road will be taken up by the municipal government . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well this is what he's asking for, this is what he's asking. Within a spirit of co-operation that can be worked on.

But I say to the member opposite . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the Leader of the Opposition does not like the approach being taken by the member from Cypress, who I think in a reasonable way, brings to this House some alternatives that the people of Climax are talking about with highways.

And I say as it relates to your question — if the leader cares to listen rather than yell and bellow from his seat which he is well-known for — I would say this is the spirit of co-operation that we should have, of working with communities, and I would take your idea as a positive move.

And again, to the Leader of the Opposition who continues to yell from his seat, if you've got a question stand up, stand up and ask.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP plans to gravel at least five highways in the province of Saskatchewan. As we were alluding to a few moments ago, Highway 18 is one of those. But there is a section on Highway 42, Highway No. 8, 47, and Highway 308 — they're all being turned back to gravel, according to department plans.

Now the minister says that he will accommodate some efforts to negotiate or look at alternatives for Highway No. 18, but is there a similar plan for the other highways?

If we were talking about gravelling 8th Street in Saskatoon or Albert Street in Regina, what would be the outrage, and what would be the response of this government?

Mr. Speaker, as the people of Val Marie showed yesterday, local residents aren't just complaining, they are willing to do something about the problem. And so too are the people of the communities that we've mentioned along these other highways.

Immediately after question period, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving an emergency motion to halt all highway gravelling projects and instead asking the government to consult local residents to consider other alternatives. Mr. Premier, will your government support this emergency motion?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I have to apologize to the member from Cypress that your leader and other members were yelling so loud while you were asking the question, it was difficult to hear the question.

But what I can say is this: that the history of highways in this province is a very interesting one. I remember while we were in opposition on that side of the House, there was a government being run by Grant Devine who in 1984 auctioned off 400 pieces of highway equipment — a two-day sale. And then he argued to get . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — He sold off 400 pieces of highway equipment at fire-sale prices. Then he argued to get rid of the branch lines, and convinced the Mulroney government to get rid of branch lines.

And then he ran up the debt to 15 billion . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I'm going to ask the hon. member for Rosthern to kindly allow the Deputy Premier to respond to the question.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — So, Mr. Speaker, they sold off the highway equipment. They argued Ottawa to abandon the branch lines. They ran up the debt to \$15 billion. And then they have the audacity to come here and say, why are the roads in bad shape?

I would urge the members opposite to look in the mirror, to look in the mirror. We'll take our share of responsibility, but I would urge you in all honesty to think about what your history is as it relates to highways.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — My question is also about the state of our provincial highways. My question deals with the 21st century, not the 19th, so I hope I get a 21st century answer.

Mr. Speaker, I have a letter from Tom Jukes, the general manager of the Harbour Golf Club and Resort at Elbow. He says Highways 19 and 42 are the lifelines for tourism and business in the Lake Diefenbaker and Elbow area. And I quote:

The condition of these highways are deplorable and unsafe for normal travel. There are numerous areas to these highways which have holes at least 2 feet in diameter, 6 inches deep. The Highways department as of June 6 has not even attempted to fill in these craters.

This shows the Government of Saskatchewan's lack of concern for the safety of the people who have to use the highways, and the total lack of concern for the economic impact on the business community of this area.

Mr. Minister, why have no highway crews visited this section of highway this spring even for maintenance? Why has this man also forced to go out and patch a road out of his own pocket, using his own money into . . . the road into his golf course? Because the province has neglected it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member indicates that the debt and the history of the Conservative Party was a 20th century issue and we should deal with the 21st. But I want to say that the interest on that debt is a problem in the 21st century. That's how it is. It's a problem to the tune of \$680 million a year — \$680 million a year.

Now I would say to the members opposite what they should be doing . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I would ask the Hon. Leader of the

Opposition to kindly allow the answer to be heard.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the Leader of the Opposition, the way he bellows from his seat: maybe it's not by accident that he's lost the last two elections he's run in; maybe you should act like a leader if you want to be the Premier — maybe you should act like a Premier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I say to the member opposite as it relates to highways, I say to the member opposite as it relates to highways, think for a moment what you could do with the \$680 million we are paying in interest this year on the Grant Devine debt in terms of building roads.

We would have the most magnificent roads in the world if it weren't for the biggest pothole in this province, that is the Grant Devine debt which was struck by you people. Take your responsibility and do something about it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — I didn't want to talk about it, considering we got more of the popular vote than they did. And I believe some of that debt was brought on by the province in the '70s under Blakeney, if I'm not mistaken.

But getting back to the question, the Harbour Golf Club and Resort estimates they will lose in excess of \$100,000 in revenues, directly related to customers not returning for a second trip. He says tourists compliment them on their golf course and their other great facilities all the time in that area, but then they say they just won't come back because of the roads they have to take to get there.

He says, and I quote:

... the development of a multi-million dollar resort here has been put on hold until the road conditions have been improved.

It seems like job loss, not job creation, is the norm for this government. The damage to cars, trucks, RVs, boats, trailers occur almost on a daily basis. We as taxpayers have the right to safe, reliable highways and the province has the responsibility and the legal obligation to ensure that these safe, reliable conditions are maintained.

Mr. Speaker, how do you explain your priorities given that hundreds of thousands of dollars are at risk and future economic development in this province is put on hold due to your failure at regular road maintenance?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting these people across the way just cannot stand good news. In private members statements today there was a statement made in terms of appreciation for the people who invest in tourism in this province, but this year tourism will generate a record \$1.1 billion in revenue. A record number.

And what he says . . . what he argues, incorrectly, is that tourism is doing badly in this province. Now I know that would make them happy if tourism was doing badly, or if agriculture was doing badly, because the Leader of the Opposition believes that if the economy is bad he might end up winning an election in his third try.

Well good luck to you, sir, but the economy is doing extremely well — extremely well — no thanks to you, no thanks to your buddies, and no thanks to Grant Devine. You can change your name, you're still Tories, and you still have bad time with the numbers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan who in his normally sanctimonious fashion is trying desperately to kick-start or re-kick-start his desperate bid to lead the NDP in the next election campaign. He better check with the Premier next to him to find out if he's going to move over for you first before you want to start it off again.

Mr. Deputy Premier, the fact of the matter is, the people of this province are sick and tired of your kind of sanctimonious answers. They're sick and tired of your arrogant government. They're sick and tired of everything about you. And that's the reason why, that's the reason why in the by-election that's held on June 26 down in Wood River you're going to get the thrashing of your lives, the thrashing you deserve, and the thrashing the people of Saskatchewan want to give you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Deputy Premier, the fact of the matter is the highways of this province are in desperate shape, the people of Saskatchewan are very angry at you, and they're taking the matters into their own hands just as they did down . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Hon. member, kindly go directly to your question.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Deputy Premier, will you finally admit to the people of Saskatchewan that you have failed desperately to provide highway transportation for the people of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, speaking of leadership campaigns . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — But I say to the member opposite, I say to the member opposite, last time you ran for the leadership, I helped; I spoke positively of you. And I will this time — I will this time.

I have a quote here, the headline from the Estevan eagle says, "Crow benefit payout draws criticism". Provincial PC Leader . . . the Rosetown, *Rosetown Eagle*.

Now listen to this though, "The provincial Progressive

Conservative Leader . . .”

An Hon. Member: — Who? Who?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Bill Boyd. In Rosetown for a constituency association founding meeting went on to talk about changes to the Crow rate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. I must . . . Order. I feel it's . . . Order. Hon. member from Kindersley please come to order. I'm asking once more for the hon. member from Kindersley to please come to order. I'm asking all hon. members to come to order.

The debates going across the floor are not allowing people to be heard and I believe that it's necessary to remind hon. members this is not Friday yet.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Appointment of Advisory Committee of Older Persons

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here in Saskatchewan we recognize the important place seniors hold, not only in our history and in our hearts, but in our present and in our future. Indeed Saskatchewan has one of the highest percentages of seniors in Canada. One of every seven people in our province is over age 65. It is within this context that as Minister responsible for Seniors, I am pleased today to announce the appointment of a Provincial Advisory Committee of Older Persons.

This committee comes in direct response to the final report of the 1999 Provincial Advisory Committee for the International Year of Older Persons . You should all receive a copy of that report which I am releasing today.

It's important for government to talk with the people it serves, and I believe that this forum will ensure that I hear the views and concerns of older persons in Saskatchewan. Together we will develop solutions to help meet their needs, whether it be health care, housing, transportation, education, or any other concern.

I am very pleased that Don King has agreed to take on the chairmanship of this advisory committee of older persons. Don King, I introduced earlier on in the gallery. Don is director of the Seniors Education Centre at the University of Regina. I'm also pleased to appoint Wes Ashvan as vice-chair of the committee. Wes most recently served in 1999 as chairperson of the Provincial Advisory Committee for the International Year of Older Persons.

I've also appointed 11 additional committee members representing senior's organizations including the Fransaskois seniors community, indigenous groups, and others who are familiar with the concerns of seniors such as SWAN (Saskatchewan Women's Agricultural Network).

They are Jean Nahachewsky and Bubs Coleman from Saskatoon; Marj Beament from La Ronge; Margaret Cline from Zelma; Lucie de Montarnal from Debden; Frank Mirasty from

Meadow Lake; Ed Leson from Prince Albert; Doreen Mowers from Moose Jaw; and Frank Bellamy, Dr. Patricia Hutchison, and Trevor Quinn from Regina.

I am truly excited about this new initiative. Based on the success of Saskatchewan's International Year of Older Persons, I'm confident that this committee will be effective in helping to deal with issues affecting older persons and I look forward to working with them in the year to come. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To ask leave to respond to the ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's with pleasure that I join in adding my comments to the minister's statement about the appointment of a Provincial Advisory Committee for Older Persons.

Mr. Speaker, I think that people often refer to a certain a time of your life as the golden years. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that that is a very appropriate way of describing the years we associate with seniors because they are very precious years and quite appropriately are called golden.

Mr. Speaker, those years mark a time of everyone's life where they have much to contribute to our province, to our society, to the people of this province. I think of seniors as the people that . . . are really the people that have so much wisdom to contribute. They have so much to offer in terms of mentoring to their children and grandchildren, and to the communities around them. And they certainly are the core of much of the volunteer work that goes on in our communities across this province.

I'm always amazed when I hear people who retire say that they've never been busier in their lives. That's because they've become the backbones of community projects and have so much to contribute.

(1430)

But it's also important as well, Mr. Speaker, that as the minister said that we have to talk to our seniors. I think we need more than that — we have to listen to them because they also do have needs that we as a society have to address.

We have to listen to their concerns about the delivery of health care and the reality that they will need special health care considerations. We need to listen to their needs about housing and transportation and many other issues.

And so, Madam Minister, and colleagues in the House, I think to have a provincial advisory committee is a great vehicle to allow not only that talking process to occur, but very much a listening process. And I congratulate the minister and look forward to as well hearing from this committee.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order.

The Speaker: — Kindly proceed with your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under clause 495 of Beauchesne's, I quote:

A Minister is not at liberty to read or quote from a despatch or other state paper not before the House without being prepared to lay it on the table.

I would ask that the Deputy Premier table the documents he was reading from during question period.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the point of order, I think that it's acceptable for ministers to make reference to briefing notes. I think the reference in Beauchesne's that the member refers to are quotations taken from letters that are communicated to the minister.

And this point of order is not an acceptable point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Hon. members, I will take the opportunity to review both what was quoted and what was said in the House, and return with a decision on the point of order raised by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise now to ask leave to move an emergency motion under rule 46.

The Speaker: — I would ask the hon. member to briefly explain to the House the urgency of the motion.

MOTION UNDER RULE 46

Saskatchewan Highways

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday when my colleague from Cannington and I were in the Val Marie area working on the highway project, Highway No. 4, it gave us mixed emotions I suppose. We were exhilarated to be part of an event that actually was producing some positive results.

But we also had at that same time a delegation from a community not far from Val Marie approach us about some concerns that had come to their attention. They had just been made aware of the fact that a contract had been let to return Highway No. 18 to gravel. And their concerns are of a great immediacy, because I understand the contract was let recently and the contractor is already mobilizing to move into the area to return the stretch in question to gravel. So we don't have a lot of time to review this matter.

And not only is it Highway No. 18 near Climax that is at issue here, Mr. Speaker, there are several other highways around the province that are already targeted for similar action. And I think that that needs to be addressed in this particular debate.

And so I would move as member of Cypress Hills seconded by

the member from Cannington:

That this Assembly urge the government to set aside any plans to revert Saskatchewan highways back to gravel; commit that the government will not download responsibility for current numbered highways onto local governments; and to consult with local residents and to co-operate in finding and implementing other alternatives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Leave not granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being an open and accountable government, we are pleased to table the answer to no. 162, and we're also extremely happy to do so, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Answer to question 162 is tabled.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being an open and accountable government, we are extremely happy to table the response to question 163.

The Speaker: — The answer to question 163 is tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 79 — The Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts Act, 2000

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts Act, 2000. The existing Centre of the Arts Act has remained largely unchanged for 30 years while its management and operating practices have evolved over time to keep pace with changes in the centre's business climate.

And, Mr. Speaker, this Bill will bring the Centre of the Arts legislation into line with modern governance and business practices and will enable the centre to pursue opportunities which will ensure it remains a showcase for all of Saskatchewan.

The initiative for this legislation comes primarily from the centre's board of directors. The board and management of the centre have done an outstanding job of stabilizing the operation of the facility during a time when all cultural-based facilities are facing tremendous pressures. And it's certain, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill will enable the centre to continue to operate into the future with more financial independence.

The legislative renewal initiatives in this Bill can be summarized in four categories. The first, refocusing the centre's mandate; second, improved governance and accountability; the third, providing new business tools for the centre to become financially self-sufficient; and fourth, standardizing provisions related to the centre's status as an agent of the Crown.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill acknowledges that convention and catering is a necessary part of the centre's business to support programming; and this Bill streamlines the wording of the centre's general powers allowing for a broader interpretation.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation implements a number of improved governance practices. The size of the board will be reduced from 50 directors to a more manageable 12; the tenure of board appointments will be increased from four one-year terms to three three-year terms, allowing for better continuity; and the board will now have the authority to create bylaws as a means of implementing policy decisions; and the board's responsibility and authority for hiring and supervising the centre's executive director and staff will be strengthened.

Mr. Speaker, over the past decade government has encouraged the Centre of the Arts to become as self-sustaining as possible. And this Bill includes a number of provisions which will enable the board to continue the good work it has done.

It clarifies that the board may seek financial support from a number of sources; it provides the board with authority to make investments subject to the same rules as executive government; and it creates two new restricted funds, one for capital improvements and one for programming. This latter feature is intended to assure private sponsors that their contributions are being used for specific purposes.

Mr. Speaker, this new Act also brings a number of legislated features into line with standards that have been adopted in other public agencies. It clarifies the centre's power and responsibilities with respect to contracts and liability; it makes clear that the centre's fiscal year is the same as the province's; and it provides for standard public employee benefits.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move forward second reading of The Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts Act, 2000.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just a few comments before I move to adjourn debate on this Bill No. 79.

Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt over the past number of years — 30 years to be exact — the Centre of the Arts has certainly provided a location for many worthwhile opportunities, an area where people can gather to . . . whether it's a performance in the arts, whether it's groups coming to perform in the city or the southern part of the province of Saskatchewan.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that certainly from the area I represent, people have taken the time to come to different presentations. And without a facility like the Centre of the Arts, some of the attractions that we've had in the past like *Beauty and the Beast* and *Fiddler on the Roof* would not have possibly been possible because we wouldn't have had the venue in which to present those types of performances.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's quite obvious that the centre does play an important role. I appreciate the fact that . . . what the minister is saying. And I think where we're heading here is working towards building a relationship and allowing the centre to

become more self-sufficient. And I think that's important. I believe people certainly believe in that.

And the reduction of the board from 50 to 12, I think on many occasions when you have so many people on a board, Mr. Speaker, very seldom do you have all 50 members together. And sometimes it's very hard to get a board meeting when you have that large a group to work with, trying to coordinate their schedules with the timing for meetings. So I think that's probably a good move and a move that is more manageable.

It's also, as the minister indicated, the Bill is giving forward . . . or bringing forward some areas to address the avenue of fundraising to maintain the current facility and allow it to continue to grow and to expand.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, just from my involvement in some of the activities, and certainly with the Saskatchewan prayer breakfast committee has been really pleased that the Centre of the Arts has made itself available for the prayer breakfast. And the manager and certainly the chef in the centre has been doing an excellent job.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, what we have seen from the services that we have received, that there's more to the centre than just a place to go and view an artist, whether it's a group of singers or whether it's some entertainers. But the centre does a lot to create a venue for meetings such as SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and other organizations.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think what the minister, and I believe what the minister is saying today, it was time to take a look at the Bill. I believe she indicated it was . . . the minister indicated it was over 30 years since they've reviewed the Bill. And this legislation that is coming forward should create an avenue that allows the centre to progress and proceed into the year 2000 and beyond, Mr. Speaker, so that it can continue to be the location and the centre that many ongoing concerts and areas of . . . items of entertainment will be available for the public of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the minister did mention a number of changes and updates that they are proposing in the legislation and we want to take the time just to review those to find out exactly what all is involved in regards to those changes.

And having said that, Mr. Speaker, I believe I should adjourn debate at this time so that we can do that — give that appropriate review to this piece of legislation before we move forward.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 80 — The Court of Appeal Act, 2000/
Loi de 2000 sur la Cour d'appel**

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Court of Appeal Act, 2000. Mr. Speaker, The Court of Appeal Act was first passed when the court was created in 1915, and a number of provisions in the Act have remained unchanged since that time. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, there's a need to update and clarify some of these

provisions.

The present section of the Act relating to jurisdiction is incomprehensible to anyone other than a legal historian. The Bill before the House doesn't change the jurisdiction of the Court of Appeal in any way, it simply restates the historical jurisdiction of the court in a way that can be understood by users of the Act.

The legislature will be asked to approve the re-enactment of The Court of Appeal Act in both French and English. This Act has been identified by the French community in Saskatchewan as one that should be translated . . . as one that should be translated because of its importance and usefulness to that community.

Mr. Speaker, the English version of this Bill required revision for clarification purposes before the French translation could go forward. As well as adopting gender-neutral language, this update of The Court of Appeal Act substantially improves the law by making it clear and more understandable, even to my own colleagues, Mr. Speaker.

The Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal also asked that a few changes of substance be made at the same time the Act is re-enacted in French and English. These changes clarify the powers and procedures of judges and the court under the Act. And, Mr. Speaker, they are as follows.

First, the Bill clarifies the powers of the Chief Justice. It states that the Chief Justice is the presiding judge and the administrative head of the court and that he or she has general supervision over court matters.

(1445)

Second, the Bill clarifies the powers of the court. It states that the court may make any order that could have been made by the body appealed from, can impose reasonable terms and conditions in an order, and can make any additional order that he considers just. As well, in setting aside damages assessed by a jury, the court may assess any damages the jury could have assessed.

Third, the Bill clarifies the procedure respecting rehearings. It states that the court shall rehear an appeal if due to death or resignation, only one judge who heard the appeal remains. As well, if the number of judges is reduced to an even number that is deeply divided on a matter, a party to the appeal may apply for a rehearing.

Fourth, the Bill now includes provisions respecting appeal periods that were for money in the Court of Appeal rules. This will make the Act more user-friendly as it will provide one-stop shopping for users.

Finally, the Bill eliminates the ability of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to decrease the size of the court by leaving this important function to the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of An Act respecting a Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan and making consequential amendments to other Acts.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to the Act that's being presented, and I understand that a fair portion of the Act is going to be taken up in regards to the French translation of the Act in a number of areas of concern and responsibility in regards to the Court of Appeal.

There's one question I have in regards to the Court of Appeal though. I'm not exactly sure if this is a question that we might be able to get into and discuss a little more when we get into the Act.

While the Act, because of the bringing it up to date in regards to French translation they've added to the Act, made some changes to the Act, but sometimes some of the questions that are raised when it comes to appeal, the appeal process in the province of Saskatchewan — and it's not just this province, it's right across the country — the question can be asked whether or not the appeal process is as independent as one might feel or believe.

I think when people are asking for . . . appealing a decision, the feeling is that if a decision has been made by a court and by a justice of the legal community and then you're going back to the legal community for an appeal, you begin to ask yourself whether or not the appeal process is just verifying the facts of the information presented, or whether the appellant is getting the fair consideration. I know that's a question that's been raised and certainly something we can raise with the minister.

But in regards to what the Act presented by the minister today, it appears to be a fairly straightforward piece of legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, however, my French isn't very good and I want to take the time to review the Act just a little more carefully as well, and give my colleague that opportunity so that when we've finished debating this Act, we will feel comfortable that the Act is indeed done and reached the purposes that the minister has talked about. And having said that, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 35

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 35 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2000** be now read a second time.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak on Bill 35 and the several amendments that the government is proposing. To begin with, I want to address the issue of high-speed chases.

There is very little doubt that they are a danger to motoring public, to the police officers involved, sometimes even to pedestrians. Therefore for SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) to deny coverage to someone who's initiated a high-speed chase is a logical conclusion.

But surprisingly though, not two years ago our party brought a private members' Bill proposing just this type of action. I don't know why it took this government so long to act on it, even though I'm finally pleased they are. It seems like when this government runs out of ideas, when you lose touch with people you come to the side of the House that are in touch with the people to get the ideas.

Other amendments, such as giving power to SGI to go after people for recovery of damages and to suspend licences of uninsured drivers, follows in most respects what Saskatchewan people have considered long overdue changes to this Act. Something else that we've talked about in our campaign and a lot the things we were getting at the doorstep when we went around.

Another thing that I believe an amendment looks at is a proposed cap that SGI is putting on aftermarket installed electronic equipment. There are a few points I'd like to make on that. There's little doubt that electronic equipment such as stereos installed after vehicle purchase are becoming more and more expensive. A limit of \$1,500 coverage may or may not cover some, and there probably will be appeals to that.

But I'd like to make another point that one of my other colleagues had that some of these aftermarket additions, are they just electronics or are they other things such as special wheels, special tires, spoilers, special paint jobs, various modifications, motors, transmissions, etc.? I'm wondering like if the minister has taken that into consideration, if that is part of the Act that I'm not sure on.

But I see in another step, on another amendment, the radar detectors will not be covered at all. I don't know why is this particular item excluded. I know some Saskatchewan drivers will be unhappy that money they've invested in such equipment will be unprotected.

I see cellphones will be included in your insurance coverage where they were not before. And I would agree with this opinion, that with the many cellphones that are out there; in fact some cellphones are being built into vehicles right now.

Another step on the radar detectors. Does that mean eventually you're going to ban them, to make them against the law? Considering right now they are legal in Saskatchewan, why wouldn't they be covered under your insurance plan?

It seems like that kind of just falls into the pick and choose frame of mind that this government always does when it implements something. It seems to pick and choose here and there. It doesn't follow through with a lot of things, just goes right . . . just picks and chooses.

I've only touched lightly like on some of the amendments, but I want to address with this legislation what I can't see what it does not do.

There is currently no amendment whatsoever to the no-fault insurance system we have here in Saskatchewan. We'd hoped amendments could have been made to ensure that the mandate of the review committee was more in tune with the concerns of the no-fault victims.

This did not happen even though a party has a private member's Bill on the order paper that would go a long way towards making the review mandate wide open. Clearly this is what the people of Saskatchewan want, as is witnessed by the numerous phone calls from the many people who want this government to make improvements to no-fault system, as well as have a fair and open review process which can be well documented.

All the meetings have gone through, all through this province; and all the numerous calls that have been made to offices, our offices, and I know numerous calls made to your offices on this.

You know unfortunately, we cannot talk about a free and open process when we consider the mandate of the current no-fault committee. Victims want to see a fair, comprehensive review with open comparisons and a committee that did not have to worry about the shadow of this government looming over the committee table. Not surprisingly, the victims' groups are not happy.

The Law Society people are not happy. And, in fact, it appears that even Judge Wakeling himself was not happy. That this highly respected man would resign should have been indication enough to cause this government to rethink its policy on no fault and to perhaps bring something positive back in the process way of an amendment in this Bill.

But I see that didn't happen. But what has happened so far is an exercise in just how far this government would go in terms of restricting its so-called review process, much to the dismay of the many people whose lives it adversely affect.

I've addressed some of the issues of this Bill here today, and I know there are many others.

There's also about commercial trailers and providing licences for them as it happens in other jurisdictions. The trucking industry, I believe, should have some input into this, and hopefully, the minister has been in consultation with them and have the opportunity to have some input with them. I hope that the things he's bringing in are they favourable of.

Another thing the minister has talked about rates appeal, the surcharges that are applied to licences. This is extremely important, Mr. Speaker, because SGI, even though they may not have been a charge . . . There may have been a conviction that the court decided person A responsible for the accident over person B. SGI in a lot of cases makes that determination internally and assigns a fault to a driver. That driver's insurance is then correspondingly increased even though the driver may or may not have been at fault.

In conclusion, I cannot stress enough how disappointed I am that one of the major concerns of this Bill has not been addressed, which is no fault. It should be addressed in a more open and honest way to ensure that only victims' rights are upheld, but the very essence of our democracy and our freedom is maintained.

So with that note I move adjournment on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 36

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 36 — The Motor Carrier Amendment Act, 2000** be now read a second time.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand this amending Act, Mr. Speaker, it puts a safety program in place for commercial trucks and buses based on the National Safety Code and enforced by the Highway Traffic Board of this province. I also understand the Highway Traffic Board will have the power to enforce further safety regulations and requirements.

It's also my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that all carriers will have to be in possession of a National Safety Code certificate in order to operate in Saskatchewan. This prompts questions about the requirements to obtain such a certificate and under what circumstances, if any, a certificate could be revoked.

At first blush at least, Mr. Speaker, it would seem to be a positive thing that there would be more or less consistent safety standards from province to province throughout this country. However, I wonder, Mr. Speaker, how many of Canada's provinces and territories are entering into this National Safety Code program.

I see advantages in having uniform safety standards from coast to coast in this country, but this is precious little advantage if at least the vast majority of other provinces and territories in this country do not enter into the program.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, how compatible our trucking safety rules and regulations will be with those of our neighbours to the South. Since there is more and more trade conducted in Western Canada from north to south and less and less trade from east to west, it seems that this may be an important matter for consideration now and a matter that will likely become more and more important as time goes by.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems incredible to attempt to make the trucking industry safer by changing the rules, regulations, and enforcement procedures that govern them while at the same time allowing the highways of this province to fall into such a state of disrepair as to be unsafe for even pickup trucks.

Mr. Speaker, we are horrified by stories of school buses driving on the wrong side of our secondary highways in order to avoid potholes, and ambulance drivers avoiding entire sections of our secondary highways in favour of grid roads to give their patients a smoother, safer, and faster ride.

All of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, brings into question the true commitment of this government to safety on our highways. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is one thing to impose more onerous rules on the trucking industry, but it seems to be another matter for this government to hold up its end when it comes to keeping our roads safer for the public — roads, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which are by necessity shared by cars, school buses, ambulances, and commercial trucks.

As I understand it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill will also amend the insurance requirements of carriers. Under the

amendments in this Bill, truckers hauling what are considered to be low-value loads can be exempted from carrying any cargo insurance. But as I understand it, liability requirements are to remain unchanged.

I note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that highway traffic officers will have discretion as to whether or not cargo insurance requirements will be waived. I wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the interests of treating everyone equally, why wouldn't there be specific parameters laid out in the Bill that would also give truckers entering this province a more clear understanding of the rules and standardize interpretation of the rules.

I also wonder which commodities will be considered low value, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Will grain, for instance, be considered low value because of the low commodity prices that we are all living with these days? And if so, will all grains be considered on the same basis since a semi-load of oats may be worth \$2,000 while a super B load of lentils or chickpeas may be worth \$30,000. And how capable are highway traffic officers to make these judgments?

(1500)

We are all interested in safety on our roads, and the trucking industry is a part of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and a very responsible part of it as well.

In my consultations with members of the industry, they tell me that they don't mind more stringent rules within reason. But they know very little about this Bill or the ramifications of it. However, they all echo the sentiment that the government of this province has a responsibility to maintain safe roads as well.

All in all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while we support the principles of uniformity of standards for the trucking industry, the devil may be in the details and we will want to consult further with the industry on these details. And accordingly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on this Bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I wonder if the hon. member for Thunder Creek would indicate to me his motion once again, please.

Mr. Stewart: — I move that we adjourn debate on this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 47

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 47 — The Power Corporation Superannuation Amendment Act, 2000** be now read a second time.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bill No. 47 is a very interesting Bill. The amendments are very short, very concise, and I won't take long. But I have a couple of thoughts that I would like to put forward, and a couple of concerns as well.

One of the first things that I think is important to understand

when we're dealing with any kind of a superannuation fund is that we do in fact have adequate representation on any of the board that is in control or in charge of that particular fund. And the amendments precisely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, address the representation on this board.

And I think it's a good amendment in that there is some additions to the board. I noticed from the minister's statements when the Bill was being read for the second time that there is a disproportionate representation now on this board. There is the five-member board currently, representing the two unions that in fact represent the Saskatchewan Power Corporation plus management.

Now I noticed also from his remarks that there is in fact 718 active members in this plan. There is 22 deferred members; I'm not sure what that category refers to. But I notice that there is 1,685 retired members that are partaking of this particular fund.

So I can see the need for changing the representation on the board because the number of retired members that will be in fact affected by this superannuation Act will be increasing as time goes along, and that representation, I think, is going to be very critical.

I noticed from the minister's remarks as well that they have already had representation, but as an observer status only. And I assume that this is trying to catch up with what is in place already.

The question I would have of the minister presenting these amendments would be why was the natural reaction to expand the board from five to seven? It would seem to me that the fund is the same, the number of people involved are the same, maybe slightly increasing more toward the retired side. My question is five members, I think, is a good number on the board — why was not the board considered for restructuring? Why was not one of the other members replaced by a superannuee for instance?

It just seems that the natural reaction is to make things larger, make it bigger, more appointed people. And I have some problem with that aspect of it.

It specifically mentions in the amendment that one of the appointees would be from the group of retired people or superannuees. I think that is good. I would hope that the search and selection of that particular member will be certainly a member that will be representative of that large 1,685-member group of retirees and not somebody that will be tending to represent one of the other aspects.

The seventh member that will be appointed to this board from these amendments is in fact from the SaskEnergy management. That is an interesting one. I really had to look at that a second time because representation from SaskEnergy seemed to be not in that same category. But on further review I realize that the SaskEnergy/SaskPower connection had been made into two groups and the SaskEnergy . . . people in the SaskEnergy had already been represented in this superannuation fund and so that does make sense.

I do notice though that there is no mention of somebody from

particularly the SaskEnergy in the amendments in the Act, only referred to in the minister's notes. I would have felt that if that is in fact the direction that the minister wanted to go, that he would have put something into the Act stating that they wanted a representative not just solely from the superannuees but also from SaskEnergy. I don't see it there.

I guess the other aspect that I would have is to make sure that the fund is doing what it is supposed to do. And I would have hoped to have seen some direction from this fund in terms of the division that this fund and the board was directed. The viability of the fund is very critical.

I've had several calls from retirees of SaskEnergy and SaskPower. One of the questions that I had asked earlier was about the indexed pension for retirees in this fund and I was given the response from the Minister of Finance which I passed along.

But that is some of the questions and concerns that should be directed to this board and that's why it is so critical to have a superannuee or a retiree that understands the current conditions and will in fact be able to direct the board or help the board in direction toward some of those areas.

There's an increasing number of people, as I mentioned, moving into the retiree part of this fund. And the question I would have — and I'm hoping that when we get into the next phase of this legislation, into committee — we'll be able to find some of these answers as to how the viability of this fund is going to be directed; if in fact there is a working plan or a vision for the sustainability of this fund because there is a number of people that depend very heavily on this particular fund.

As I mentioned the amendment is very straightforward, it's very short. I was hoping that there might have been more to it, but again maybe we'll have some of these answers when we get into committee. And I don't have any other comments and I would be prepared at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to move this on to committee at this stage.

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

Bill No. 54

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 54 — The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2000 (No. 2)** be now read a second time.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand today to speak to The Vehicle Administration Act. We never know for sure what the Bill is going to bring forward when we see it in the Assembly. It's always a rather a small looking, innocuous Bill and when we see something that has anything to do with vehicles in Saskatchewan, we're always a little worried. We rely on vehicle travel so much in this province, probably more than any other place in Canada, because you've got to get into a vehicle to travel any place, especially in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, driving a vehicle in Saskatchewan is quite a feat usually when you have . . . if you're living in rural Saskatchewan and you have to dodge the potholes and the conditions on many of the roads in our province.

In fact when the Bill was presented I quickly looked through it to see if we'd have to take another test out in rural Saskatchewan to see if you could actually drive on our roads. And I was quite delighted to see that we wouldn't have to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's kind of entertaining to think of the scenario that instead of driving . . . of having people train to drive with those pylons in the middle of a parking lot, instead we take them out to Highway 349 in my constituency and get them to drive around the potholes, and if they pass then they can get their driver's licence. It would be good for business in our area, especially the garages that rely on wheel alignments.

Mr. Speaker, the changes from The Vehicle Administration Act will affect everyone in this province, especially the one on mandatory photo ID (identification). People in the hospitality industry, especially bar owners have been asking for this change for many years. In fact it's one of the Bills that the Saskatchewan Party has been asking for for a number of years. I'm glad that the government is finally looking at it and realizing the importance of it.

Too often hotel owners are held responsible for the sale to underage youth, even though they've been as diligent as they possibly can be in trying to determine the age of youth.

The use of photo ID and the photo ID itself makes it virtually impossible for someone under the age of 19 to purchase alcohol. And I believe that's the kind of reassurance that a number of hospitality industry people are looking for. And as we move to even greater sanctions against those who sell cigarettes to minors, it's probably even more important that we have this ID in place.

If we're going to ask business owners to be part of the solution to keeping our youth away from underage drinking and smoking, this is going to be a very important tool. That's why the Saskatchewan Party proposed photo ID in the private members' legislation.

One concern that we do have here is what the cost is going to be to drivers to have the mandatory ID licences. How much money does it actually cost SGI to have a photo ID made?

And when you think about it, how many drivers are there in this province, and if SGI makes a dollar or two on every one of these licences, that's going to be considerable funds for the coffers of the province again.

We're wondering if the government is going to use this opportunity to ding the driver with excess fees for the new photo ID. And if they set the price unjustifiably high just because they can, I don't think it's going to surprise anybody if the people retaliate again.

One of the major features of this legislation is the call for tougher drinking and driving regulations. It should be noted that changes here are being made as a result of federal legislation.

I think it's a point of shame for many of us in Saskatchewan that our province has the distinction of having one of the worst records when it comes to impaired driving, and I know that every member in this House wants to combat that.

The first thing I want to point to is the new zero tolerance policy for new drivers. I think this is a very good idea and I believe many members who were in the House in 1995 would know why I thought this was a very good idea.

In 1996 I proposed an amendment to the zero tolerance, to the Bill that was brought forward that year. In fact I remember sitting in the House, being on the opposition side with some different faces — and I remember there wasn't as many of us at that time — and we brought forward this amendment because we said, Mr. Speaker, why does it make any sense that a young driver could have any alcohol in their blood at all at any time?

They're not allowed to drink, they're not allowed to purchase alcohol, and yet we do allow them to have some blood alcohol in their bodies when they're driving. It didn't make any sense to us then and it doesn't make any sense to us now. So we did bring forward that motion.

And I was absolutely surprised at that time that the government thought it wasn't a good idea and they defeated the amendment.

Now four years later, all of a sudden it's a good idea. I think that it's kind of a shame that you think that we have to wait for four years and risk accidents, we risked all kinds of traumas that could have happened, because the government thinks that anything that isn't their idea isn't right.

(1515)

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very much in favour of this amendment. I'm just a little, I guess, I'm a little taken back that it's taken the government this long to figure out that a good idea can come from this side of the House as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill also brings in tougher, more immediate, penalties against adults who continue to be careless about their own safety and other's, by continuing to drink and drive. A new immediate 90-day suspension for those charged with impaired driving or failure to submit to a breath or blood sample is quite in departure with what is going on up to this point. While some may see this as punishment before conviction, I think most of us see it as a reasonable measure to protect the rest of us against those foolish enough to get behind a vehicle when consuming too much alcohol.

Too often those charged with drunk driving have used tactics to delay and delay their court appearances putting off the loss of licences for months or even longer. Of course, another thing the government may want to try to do is clear up the clogged justice system we have that causes delays for people trying to find their day . . . have their day in court.

I'm wondering about those who are charged with drunk driving and having their licences suspended immediately and then cleared of charges. Will this open up for SGI to . . . for calls for compensation for those who have suffered financial losses due to having their licence suspended, but are eventually cleared

up? Like most legislation, I'm sure they have granted themselves full immunity but this is something that we will want to have cleared up before the legislation passes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another concern that I have with the . . . with legislation, period, is in this province is that . . . we find that the tougher or the more convictions you have against your licence, the higher the cost of the licence. And that probably is some type of deterrent in a way, but it also means that if you have enough money it doesn't matter how bad a driver you are, you can get yourself a licence in Saskatchewan.

I really do think it's offensive that if you have enough money, it doesn't matter how bad a driver you are, you can afford to buy your driver's licence. I don't think that money should have anything to do with your ability to drive and how well you do drive, but this is what is happening in our province today.

This Bill also puts more restrictions on new inexperienced drivers to allow them to gain ability and confidence on the road. However, I think it's important that we recognize that many of our youth do hold down jobs and have other activities or responsibilities that make it necessary for them to drive at night. I would hope that the government would recognize these cases as situations where there might be exceptions made.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also note there's an ability to grant such exceptions in the legislation, and I hope that they take these cases seriously.

This amendment also gives SGI a little for . . . little for authority in suspending or downgrading licences when they fail to meet the necessary requirements to operate a vehicle; namely, that you can't drive in a safe manner. People whose skills have deteriorated sometimes don't realize this until it's too late.

I can certainly see that some people will not be happy about re-testing or being restricted in their ability to drive. But if the new power is used properly, I believe it could go a long way into making our roads safer.

There are several other changes in this Bill that we'll also be speaking on. But right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move:

That this Assembly now go to second readings, item no. 6, Bill No. 232, The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2000.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I'd like to ask the hon. member to repeat her motion because the Bill under consideration is The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2000 (No. 2). Is she proposing to approve second reading or is she moving a superseding motion?

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'm moving a . . . I move a superseding motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — Could the member for Kelvington-Wadena state her superseding motion again please?

Ms. Draude: — I move:

That this Assembly now go to second readings, item no. 6, Bill No. 232, The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2000.

The motion is seconded by the member from Cannington.

The division bells rang from 3:21 p.m. until 3:31 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 19

Hermanson	Elhard	Heppner
Krawetz	Draude	Boyd
Gantfoer	Toth	Eagles
Bakken	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
Brkich	Wakefield	Wiberg
Hart	Allchurch	Stewart
Kwiatkowski		

Nays — 28

Romanow	Trew	Hagel
Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Lingenfelter
Melenchuk	Cline	Atkinson
Goulet	Lautermilch	Thomson
Lorje	Belanger	Crofford
Hillson	Kowalsky	Hamilton
Prebble	Jones	Higgins
Yates	Harper	Axworthy
Junor	Kasperski	Wartman
Addley		

The Speaker: — The motion is lost, continue with business — Bill No. 54, The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2000 (No. 2).

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the comments made by the member for Kelvington I wasn't sure if I'd missed them or not.

But we had brought numbers forward today about the . . . And we were talking about the terrible state of highways in this province, and that the government has been saying they've been spending \$250 million on highways, Mr. Speaker. And actually it's a way, way lower than that, Mr. Speaker; it actually comes out to about 170 million that actually is spent on capital costs, capital expenditures, and maintenance — a far cry from the 250 million.

By the way, the first year the \$250 million has actually been in place of about four years of committing \$250 million, but having a way short . . . it would be a way short of that number.

They actually take in, Mr. Speaker, about \$460 million, and the breakdown on that is: 347.6 million in a fuel tax that the member of the Liberal Party in the last campaign, the Leader of the Liberal Party, had stated that he would put all that money into highways, and for some reason seems to have had a complete turnaround on that, Mr. Speaker.

And I don't know why because the condition of the highways right now, people all over this province are pleading for that member and the member from North Battleford to step forward,

hold this government accountable, and spend that same money that they promised during the election on the highways that's in so bad a need of that money, Mr. Speaker.

Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. I heard a member say, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Liberal Party has turned around so many times in this session that's he's actually dizzy.

Mr. Speaker, also in motor vehicle fees that the government takes in, it works out to \$112.4 million. And when you total the gas tax up and the licensing fees up, it comes out to around \$460 million. When you only put 170 million back in, that works out to about a total of 35 per cent of the tax that you take in that is associated with vehicles — a far cry from the 87 per cent that the government is trying to spin with the people of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will have a number of comments to make on this Bill as we look through it and hear from people out there in the public. And at this point, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 59

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Crofford that **Bill No. 59 — The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2000** be now read a second time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think there is one word that describes Bill No. 59, The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act, 1992 and to make related amendments to The Trade Union Act. Mr. Speaker, that word is draconian.

Mr. Speaker, it's taken from the name of the tyrant of Athens, Draco, who simply decreed what the laws would be and woe betide anyone who opposed him. And that is exactly the way this government operates, Mr. Speaker. They will decree what will happen.

The fact is though, Mr. Speaker, they don't use the word decree. The tradition has been amongst the NDP in their nine years of mismanagement of this province to use the term, deem. We have deemed it to have happened. Even though, Mr. Speaker, no such event occurred, they will pick a point in time and say, this will be the law as of that date even though no law was actually in place, Mr. Speaker.

This is another one of their examples, Mr. Speaker, of heavy-handed government control, even though, Mr. Speaker, the people in no way, no shape, or no form want this legislation passed either in this legislature or in this province, Mr. Speaker.

This Bill is strictly about forced unionization of workers. The government opposite says, oh no, oh no, we're not doing that, Mr. Speaker; we're not forcing people into unions. And yet, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what they are doing. They have been angry, Mr. Speaker, at corporations in this province, they have been angry in particular at the construction corporations in this province, ever since they were defeated in 1982.

The main purpose of this Act, though, Mr. Speaker, really has nothing to do with workers. This government was first elected in 1991, was re-elected in 1995, and in that eight-year period, Mr. Speaker, they could have brought forward legislation of this type had they wanted to. But they didn't.

What changed in that time, Mr. Speaker? What change happened in this province that necessitated this government to bring forward this draconian legislation? Well I think we found out last week, Mr. Speaker, what happened. We saw layoffs, Mr. Speaker, layoffs of workers last week that indicates to us the reason why this particular Bill has come forward at this time.

Those layoffs, Mr. Speaker, didn't happen in the carpentry industry, they didn't happen to the electricians, they didn't happen to the plumbers — no, Mr. Speaker, they didn't even happen in the construction industry at all.

Where did those layoffs take place? Those layoffs, Mr. Speaker, took place at Tommy Douglas House, the NDP's election-machinery office. Why did that happen? Well gee whiz it might have something to do with the fact that their fundraising is drying up in this province because nobody wants this government in place.

But there is one group, Mr. Speaker, that has traditionally, day after day, month after month, year after year pumped money as the lifeblood of the NDP Party into those old and withered veins. That group has been the union organizations. They pumped \$300,000 in, Mr. Speaker, for the last election.

But again, that NDP machine isn't happy with that much money. They needed more, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we have Bill 59 before us. They needed more money going into the union coffers so the unions in turn would pass more money on to the NDP coffers, so they wouldn't have to lay off the rest of the staff of Tommy Douglas House — the place the NDP use to funnel their money through for elections, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, how is that going to work? Well what happens, Mr. Speaker, is when an employee is working for a company that may be unionized or may not be unionized, if they're laid off and the company happens to have a union contract some place within their entire organization . . . What happens in other areas is you can have a company operating in residential construction, you can have company operating in commercial construction, in heavy construction, and while they may have the same ownership at the top, they are indeed separately registered companies.

If one of those companies has a union contract when an employee is laid off and rehired under this Act, in any one of, let's say, those three companies, they will now be automatically unionized. There's no vote, Mr. Speaker, in asking the employee or any of the employees at those locations do you want to belong to a union? No. The government simply decrees that all of those workers that have been laid off and rehired will now be unionized. And that's why this is a draconian Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the government opposite has been very, very opposed to what it calls double breasting. That means an

organization — a company — could have, say, a sector or a subsidiary operating in the residential area and they could have a subsidiary operating in the heavy construction area. One of those might be unionized. They insist that both of those be unionized, Mr. Speaker. So they rewrote the Act back in 1992 but they didn't force those two entities to become one or to become unionized.

Because at that time, Mr. Speaker, the NDP's coffers were flush. They didn't need the money. But they certainly do now, Mr. Speaker. And that's why this entire effort is taking place today rather than in the previous eight years.

Mr. Speaker, the minister states that the reason this Bill needs to come in place now is to bring in labour harmony in the construction sector. Labour harmony, Mr. Speaker.

So I have to ask the minister: in the eight years that they have been in government — nine years almost now — when was there a labour strike within the construction industry? There wasn't any, Mr. Speaker. So where was the disharmony under the previous legislation? It wasn't there.

But the disharmony, Mr. Speaker, that has taken place is with the NDP coffers and the people making the donations. That's where the problem has come in, Mr. Speaker, for the government opposite. And that's why they insist on this draconian legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the construction association are not in favour of this. But certainly the unions are. And the fact is the carpenters' union sent out a letter to its members. And I'd like to quote from it. And it says:

After much lobbying by the building trades . . . has finally announced (they're talking about the government here) has finally announced proposed amendments to the CILRA that will get rid of the grandfathering provision and allow us to force several large general contractors to work totally union. This will add hundreds of employees. But we may have to force them to co-operate through the Labour Relations Board.

So they're going to use another one of the government's entities to which they have appointed virtually the entire board, Mr. Speaker. And that board simply kowtows to the government's and the NDP's wishes.

And the fact is, Mr. Speaker, whenever an employee brings forward a concern before the Labour Relations Board, it's heard almost immediately. Whenever an industry or a corporation or a company brings forward a concern before the Labour Relations Board, it takes months if not years for a hearing to take place.

(1545)

And the fact is, Mr. Speaker, we know of a number of circumstances where it's been more than two years that a company has had a complaint before the Labour Relations Board, and nothing has been heard of that complaint, Mr. Speaker. They simply refuse to meet to deal with the circumstances, Mr. Speaker.

But if an employee brings forward a complaint, it happens very, very quickly, Mr. Speaker. And it also almost unanimously happens in favour of the union against the company, Mr. Speaker. Again much to the satisfaction of the minister opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the letter from the carpenters union goes on to say: "of our organizing efforts, both top down, by bringing the spin-offs under control." They have wanted to gain control of those employees, Mr. Speaker, involved in other sectors of the construction industry that they have not been able to get control over.

Why have they not got control over them, Mr. Speaker? Because the people working in those areas were not interested in being unionized. All they have to do is go and ask them if they want to be unionized, and if they do, you get a union. We have seen that happen just recently within the last few weeks, Mr. Speaker. But it hasn't been happening in the construction industry, Mr. Speaker, because the people involved are not interested in belonging to a union.

The letter goes on to say:

In preparation, the members have amended the trade rules and bylaws to include a requirement for members to sign support cards when requested, and to report when they are working non-union.

So, Mr. Speaker, they will have a list of people who are prepared to accept employment outside of the union. Now I wonder why they really need that, Mr. Speaker. What difference does it make?

Mr. Speaker, before this House we have another Bill that deals with the human rights. No place under Saskatchewan's Human Rights Code are people's employment protected if they're not in a union, Mr. Speaker — if they're not in a union.

They can be discriminated against as much as possible; they can have all sorts of statements made about them that would be against the law if you said those very same words in relationship to someone who is protected under the human rights law. But if it deals with labour or not being in a union in this province, then those people have no protection under this socialist government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's not only just the employees and the employers in the construction industry that are opposed to this particular piece of legislation, but it's also the editorial writers of this province. And I quote from the Regina *Leader-Post*, Mr. Speaker:

The effects will be to create new union shops even if workers in these firms would rather remain independent of union status. As a result, many will become union members by decree instead of having the right to vote for union status.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite like to brag about how democratic they are. In fact it's even part of their party name. But when it comes to action, Mr. Speaker, there isn't a member on the opposite side who believes in democracy in their heart.

They believe only, Mr. Speaker, in control and power of the state and the exercise of that power, Mr. Speaker. They don't believe in democracy, Mr. Speaker. They don't believe in allowing workers to have a choice. They only believe in taking control of workers and their lives so that they serve the interests of the NDP and not of the worker as an individual, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* goes on to say:

As inflammatory as forced unionization characterization is, it is difficult to see the Bill as anything but that.

And I have to agree, Mr. Speaker. This is nothing but forced unionization. It's nothing than the heavy hand of government again taking control of people's lives.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that's going to happen — one of the things that's going to happen, Mr. Speaker — here, once this takes place, is that construction companies, the construction industry outside of this province, will benefit dramatically, Mr. Speaker, because they will be able to enter this province and tender on construction projects and be successful.

The local guys won't be able to do that because they'll be forced to live under this government's draconian legislation. They will be put at a serious impediment which is actually, Mr. Speaker, they're already at a serious impediment because of the heavy tax burden placed on them by this government.

The chamber of commerce, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce is opposed to this particular piece of legislation. And it states in a letter that was sent to the minister:

The Government of Saskatchewan should not amend The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act in any way that would eliminate the grandfathering rights of unionized contractors to continue to operate their non-union subsidiaries.

It goes on further, Mr. Speaker, and I think this is an important point. Again it addresses the rhetoric of the members opposite. A rhetoric they fail to live up to though, Mr. Speaker.

Given the demographics of the province, the provincial chamber is also very concerned with the impact of your amendments on companies who have joint-ventured with First Nations organizations. In our meetings with First Nations representatives they have related strong opposition to organized labour workplaces.

And, Mr. Speaker, we saw that happen not that long ago with the unionization of the Regina casino which is operated by the First Nations gaming. They did not want that organization coming into their workplace. They felt that if a union was to be formed it should be formed under their jurisdiction.

Again, that was not the case. This government intervened, Mr. Speaker, and allowed the unionization to take place within those organizations, Mr. Speaker, against the wishes of the First Nations.

Mr. Speaker, again I'd like to quote from some of the editorials. This is from earlier this year. It talks about the harmonization,

the harmony within the work industry that the minister talks about the need for and the fact that there was no harmony.

It goes on to say:

The Act is no more than a sop to the province's trade unions. The effect will be to create new union shops even if the workers in these firms would rather remain independent of union status. As a result many will become union members by decree.

This initiative is aimed at putting an end to the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement which has had the effect of driving up the cost of major Crown construction projects.

Mr. Speaker, I was out on the highways yesterday helping repair the potholes. And people asked, where did the money go? Where did the money go, Mr. Speaker? Well there's one of the examples where the money went. The Crown Construction Tendering Agreement meant that construction projects of our Crown corporations were dramatically increased with no added benefit to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The estimate done in British Columbia under this same kind of legislation is that it adds a 30 per cent additional cost. And we saw those examples, Mr. Speaker. We saw an example in Regina of a SaskTel construction project that on a \$200,000 project added roughly \$60,000 initially over the tenders of the non-unionized contractors who were not allowed to participate, Mr. Speaker, in that tendering, but tendered nevertheless.

That is the kind of operation, the kind of government these people are running. They have to pay off, Mr. Speaker, their debts — their debts from the past election. And one of the ways of paying that off, Mr. Speaker, is this kind of draconian legislation.

Now there are other people in this province that . . . in this country that practice draconian legislation. We have seen that in the selection of candidates by the Liberal Party where no matter what the local people want in a nomination meeting, the leader simply says this will be who you get.

This is a similar type of legislation, Mr. Speaker, as that Liberal practice. They simply decree who and what will happen regardless of what the people's concerns and the interest they have in that area, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Brian Barber the vice-president of Dominion Construction in Regina has said, Barber added:

The owners of Dominion Construction may reconsider operating in Saskatchewan under the new legislation. It's a real concern, it limits our ability to work here.

And the minister opposite says they'll have to move their equipment and their operation. Mr. Speaker, it's not that hard to pack up and move and a good many people in the construction industry in this province have done exactly that. They continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, we talked the other day with the roadbuilders

association. Over half of the equipment they had in this province 10 years ago is gone. They've moved it out or sold it out of the province.

Half of their remaining equipment, Mr. Speaker, sits idle while our highways continue to deteriorate, while the people of communities like Val Marie have to go out themselves with their own shovels, their own rakes, their own trucks to fill in the potholes in the roads of this province because that government has abdicated its entire responsibility.

The only thing they have done, Mr. Speaker, in this last nine years of their government is blamed somebody else — anybody but them, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the form of government that we're supposed to operate under in this country, in this province is called responsible government. Well we have the most irresponsible government in the history of Saskatchewan in this province.

Mr. Speaker, there are a good many of my colleagues who wish to also address this particular Bill, this draconian Bill No. 59. I move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1600)

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, I request leave to go to subvote 10 of the *Estimates* to engage in review of Northern Affairs.

Leave granted.

General Revenue Fund Economic and Co-operative Development (Office of Northern Affairs) Vote 45

The Chair: — Before I call the subvote 10, I'm going to invite the Hon. Minister of Northern Affairs to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Yes, over here is my deputy minister, Alex Campbell, over to my left. As well, we have Brian Cousins, who is the executive director of corporate services, and also Donna Dumont, the business manager on corporate services.

Subvote (EC10)

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the minister and to his staff. I want to thank the minister and staff for being here today, and certainly for those staff members that had to come in from La Ronge today — welcome to the Assembly. And it'll be a pleasure to be able to spend an hour with you discussing the different parts of Indian and Northern Affairs that are certainly very relevant to this province.

But, Mr. Minister, to begin with, I was wondering if you could spend a few minutes just giving us on this side of the House a little bit of an overview of the department, some of the

aspirations of your department, and how your vision, as you see it, as it fits into economic development for the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Yes, for the member from Saskatchewan Rivers, we do have quite a bit of developmental work in northern Saskatchewan. And over the years, we've been moving towards evolution on greater northern control. And that northern control is taking place in the various sectors — from municipalities to education and health — but the most important area was in the economic development front.

So our primary goal and strategy is working into the economic development area, as well as to do coordination and strategic work with the other departments as well as with the people of northern Saskatchewan.

We've worked with northern leadership over the years to create a Northern Development Board, and we have an Interim Northern Development Board which is in partnership with First Nations people, with Metis people, as well as municipalities' leadership. So it's a unique concept in Canada wherein everybody's working together as a whole from the different community levels but also with different jurisdictional levels. But also with the federal government. We sit in on the board with the federal government so that we are working together on a team spirit.

Your question on the common vision is fairly straightforward. A lot of the people have done the necessary work on creating a vision statement, so I'll read you the vision statement that was done in conjunction with northern leaders.

The vision statement states that:

The people of northern Saskatchewan will possess the means to address the goals and aspirations they have for their communities, their families and themselves. With respect for northern people, their cultures and traditions, government will work as an active partner with communities, Aboriginal authorities, business and industry to promote the social and economic development of the North.

There's also a list of goals and objectives dealing with the economy, dealing with institutions, dealing with the aspect of education, and making sure that there is a balanced approach on social and economic development; but as well a strategic emphasis in regards to the key areas that people have brought together as well as a balanced approach to the environment.

We have a unique . . . environmental quality committees in the North. It's a first in Canada where there are environmental quality committees — three of them in the North — and they work together with not only governments at the federal and provincial level, but also with industry. And because they represent the communities, the community input is there.

So in a nutshell, that gives us an overview in regards to the Northern Affairs office and the northern strategy and partnership with the people of the North.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, to the minister. Mr. Minister, you spoke of the Department of Northern Affairs

being a strategic arm for the several different departments that the government has. And you spoke about Education and Health as a couple of those different arms.

I'm wondering then, we have two departments of Education in this province — which is probably about double what we really need — plus we have the Department of Northern Affairs also being involved in education as you've mentioned. How is it then you feel that we need, in this province, another arm such as, you say, the Department of Northern Affairs being a strategic arm in the development of educational benefits for northern communities?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — It's no different than in regards to the rural areas.

We have in addition to Education and Health, as you say in our rural areas, we have Agriculture and Food. It's a strategic focus in an agricultural segment in our society, a very most important segment of society.

And in regards to the North we also look at the economics of it, but we also do the coordination of it. We do not duplicate that which is already done in education. Education does that. Basically our goal and desire was to do what we have been doing in general in the South where we're trying to do an interdepartmental strategy. Rather than the departments working separately and not coordinating efforts, they wanted to coordinate things in the North. And that falls into the purview of Northern Affairs.

We provide the mechanism to do that interdepartmental work, and as such it's been quite fruitful. You know, people from the Social Services sector are working with Education, with Health, during the strategic designs that are required for more effective programming at the community level.

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, I understand very clearly what you're saying, but I still have a great deal of concern over this. In this province we have, you know, the several ministries, and you again mentioned Health and Education and Social Services, and certainly Justice would fall into the categories of the social departments that we need to be very cognizant of.

Why is it then . . . has it been felt by you and your department and your government that intergovernmental agencies that are created through the collaboration of several departments needs to be more closely established in the North than it is in the South?

Having been around education for several years of my life and trying to provide opportunities for families and children in a coordinated effort to deal with, whether it was Justice and Health and Education or whether it was Education and mental health and Social Services, whatever, there was a great deal of barriers created. So how is it then that you are able to break down these barriers so much more quickly than in the North? Or are you able to? Or are there still so many . . . quite a few barriers to be broke down that we are not able to be able to break down north of the . . . or south of the northern boundary?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Part of the idea in creating a more

flexible strategic Northern Affairs office is to try the regional focus. It's half of the province in area. We have a lot of the situations of development that are new, the new mining developments, the new forestry strategies, you know, that are taking place.

And it's important to focus in different areas. And I know that from the members from the rural areas. I watch them very carefully, and I listen to them on a daily basis, you know, talking about the need to do strategic design at the rural development areas. And you have REDAs (regional economic development authority), you know at the regional development areas, you have regional school boards, you have regional health districts, and so on. So we're doing and replicating that which we see in regards to northern development.

We were, to put it very bluntly, quite a bit behind the rest of the province in regards to developmental activity. And that's why you need a strategic focus.

But I must say that there is success. About 1991 when we come into government there was about 500 people working in the mines in regards to the North. And today I'm very happy to report that we have 1,000 people from northern Saskatchewan working in the mines.

A lot of people thought that it would not be possible in a short period of time to get that many Northerners going, but we've had excellent co-operation from the mining companies. They've been willing to co-operate with the communities. And the communities have been willing to co-operate with the business as well as government, both at the provincial and federal level, and also at the municipal, First Nations, and Metis level as well.

And that strategy of working together has proven benefits not only to the idea of getting people jobs, you know, by doubling the number of jobs in a certain period, but the business development we know that entrepreneurship is so important whether you're in the rural areas, the urban areas, or the North.

And in that regard, I might say this, that the opportunities provided by the business sector in regards to bidding for the contracts in the mining sector, we've now seen in the mining sector approximately around \$20 million worth of contracts and wages in the early '90s. We now have a couple . . . about a year and a half ago, about 180 million.

So we're seeing a major improvement of entrepreneurial strategy by northern businesses in regards to northern development. And many of them partner with people from themselves within the North. They also partner with people from Saskatoon or elsewhere in the South.

So you're seeing partnership strategies, you know within this province and sometimes, of course, some of the larger scale corporations are not only within Canada but some of them are from the international mining companies. So they do some strategic partnership there as well. So you're seeing this concept of partnership and evolution and development; seeing success stories in the training aspect, in the jobs aspect, as well as in the creation of business development.

(1615)

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, you touched a little bit on the mining sector and if your pleasure, we'll go into that for just a few minutes. You mentioned with a great deal of pride, and certainly we all feel that pride also that in the last few years the workforce in the mines has doubled and the business opportunities for northern businesses has gone up from 20 million to 180 million. That's a significant increase and certainly bodes well for the North.

We've been hearing . . . well they're not rumours, but I've certainly had quite a few phone calls from residents who have worked for several years in the mines, have recently received layoffs especially from the two big mining partners up there. I was wondering if you'd be able to make a comment as to . . . because of the success that you've mentioned, more and more people working in the mine, how come there was such a significant layoff that took place at the two new mining developments?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — The layoffs were actually the developments that were taking place at Cluff Lake. There was a phase-out on the Cluff Lake project. And of course a lot of the displacement was taking place as well in regards to the changes over the new developments that were taking place, that there ought to be milling operations for example in Key Lake. The ore had been running out for example in Rabbit Lake. And they had to make a new road system, you know, coming into the two new mines. And from there, the companies were not exactly the same companies so they made some decisions to have a transition period.

So what we saw from last year and this year, of course, there was going to be a slight dip, about 150 people, which affected Northerners, you know, quite a bit as well. Because I know my constituents, and I know the member from Athabasca's constituents particularly, these issues were raised to us.

But we said at some point there's depletion in a mine in history, and that the case is, are we able to get new ore bodies developed? And I was very pleased just a couple of weeks ago, and when you look at two most highly . . . the two largest mining companies in the world, COGEMA and Cameco, you know, had an official opening.

And so we're going across with the two new mines at McArthur and McClean. And that has provided a little bit of hope, you know, in the downturn that we had. And there is talk about another ore body as well. And I think over time as we have probably the best standards in the world in regards to environmental protection which has a double base to it from the . . . not only do we have the environmental qualities in the North, but we have the federal and the provincial regulatory standards. But that indeed, in this case, we have seen these, this downturn being affected quite positively.

There's still hope for a lot of people in the North. They understood that there was going to be a downturn. And it affected people from the South as well because half of the workforce is from the South in regards to the mines.

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, you mentioned to a small extent the environmental protections that are in place to protect the environment in the North. Certainly the two large

corporations there, COGEMA and Cameco, have tried to do their utmost in protecting the environment. Certainly uranium mining is quite an expensive and a dangerous type of operation. We're dealing with highly radioactive material.

And you mention that, of course, that the federal government has some very strict regulations in place, and the provincial government also has regulations in place.

I guess from this side of the House when we look at, you know, economic development in this country and certainly in this province and certainly in northern Saskatchewan, why it's felt that from this government that large mining corporations need to jump through two sets of hoops, so to speak.

Does the government then feel quite strongly that the regulations put in by their partners in Ottawa are that weak that we need to duplicate this, or is there some very clear reason why you have a second set of hoops for mining corporations to jump through when it comes to environmental protection?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Yes, it's straightforward in regards to the base-metal industry, but in regards to uranium it's a special case.

This is basically because during the historic basis . . . while today we recognize tremendous peaceful uses of uranium and that our energy is for lighting up homes, etc., and for other industrial developments, we also recognize that the history of the uranium also dealt with the defence side of the question. And of course, defence was a federal jurisdiction.

So in the United States and in Canada we have seen, you know, the controls on a special case scenario regarding the uranium. And that is the reason why. Historically we have moved more and more in partnership and trying to make sure that the regulatory around is indeed quite similar. There are still some things that we are working out with the federal government at the present time. So I take your question to mean that we want to make sure that there is no excessive duplication, that indeed we want to make sure that we are effectively making sure that the best levels of radiation safety for the workers.

And also in regards to the environment that the best standards are put there. But that again I understand your question to be that we have to watch out for excessive regulatory regimes.

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, I was hoping we could wrap this little piece of questioning up rather quick, but you kind of opened up a can of worms here that I'm very much concerned about. Certainly you mentioned that a great deal of regulations that need to be watched over for uranium mining and the use of radioactive material throughout the world. We need to be cognizant of this.

And I'm wondering as a Department of Northern Affairs and as a provincial government then, do you feel quite strongly that the federal government is not holding up their own weight when it comes to clarification of how the final product is being used and that it is actually being used for peaceful purposes, as you say, to light the houses of the world.

Because as you indicated also and we agree here, that certainly

radioactive material is quite a dangerous product and can certainly be used for very destructive methods. And as you indicated, those of you on that side of the House and certainly those of us on this side of the House are very much opposed to having that type of a product used for destructive purposes. And it's certainly much more beneficial to mankind having it used for peaceful purposes.

We're kind of wondering then, I would have to kind of wonder, certainly the defence of this country is the responsibility of the federal government. Does the department then feel, and your government feel that the federal government is not keeping up on their side looking after putting the proper measures in place to ensure that the product is going to be used safely. And we have to take that role on of a federal government as a . . . from a provincial aspect.

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — There is still a role for the federal government on the environmental side. We know automatically that on the international front we see in Europe interjurisdictional aspects with the European Union that have evolved over the years. And people know that there is pollutants that can go back and forth between the United States and Canada.

So once that happens it's very important for our role, and a very effective role to be played by the federal government. And we look upon that role, in particular regards to uranium development, as a positive one overall. There's always aspects to work out in regards to issues that come in from time to time. But at the present time the reason is there is a role for the federal government to play as well on the environmental front.

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister. In this area of uranium development and the economic development in the North, there was a plan just a very few short years ago by one of the tribal councils and several bands in northwestern Saskatchewan to try to help alleviate some of the problems that are involved around the storage of depleted uranium fuels, and the plans seemed to end up going nowhere.

Now I guess from this side of the House when we're always looking at economic development for the province and initiatives, certainly from northern communities, I'm wondering what the position then is of the Department of Northern Affairs because of the, because of this lack of opportunity or the opportunity that was missed? If you'd be able to respond to that, please.

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — We dealt with that issue, and they dealt with that issue at that time. And the answer was no to the request.

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister. We're certainly disappointed that you couldn't come up with a little stronger answers to why there was a necessity to quash northern development.

But I want to stay in the area of economic development. In the North, of course now after this budget, we're going to end up with kind of a two-tier system for outfitters in the North, depending upon if they happen to be on a reserve or if their business is off-reserve because of this PST (provincial sales tax)

tax structure.

In many of the provinces that . . . now there is consideration in northern communities to put everyone on a level-playing field. Because as we know, Mr. Minister, many of these business developments that are on native Indian reserves are not near some of the other communities. And yet it's going to detract to some degree from the business opportunities if you happen to have a business off an Indian reserve.

Has your department started to look at this time in any way to create some sort of a level-playing field as many of the other provinces have done so that everyone in the North will be able to participate in economic development and probably more specifically the tourism industry and just general service to the people who live in the North?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Yes, we're trying to take a very positive view in regards to the tourism development. I know that, historically, I myself was involved in the tourism industry back in the mid-'50s. And we did a lot of the early developmental work.

And I see that as the development arose in the North, a lot of the new people, you know that have come in and who did the early developmental work then, and in many cases a lot of the Northerners were left out of the tourist industry except in regards to being guides and doing the necessary work that was there.

Now we're seeing a partnership idea evolve. Very similar to the idea on mining. People want to be on an equal footing on the business development. We're seeing proposals coming forward where there is equal footing on the business development side, not only on the employment side. And we're seeing some very positive work with the outfitters group in trying to do the educational development work there.

And so I'm seeing some positive lights there. I'm starting to see that talk about the partnerships. And people are talking about ecotourism, but not only the ecotourism side of the business but the regular tourism that has been there before. You know, building on the basics that are there, but also on the idea of cultural tourism.

Some of the people have said, well why don't we have a partnership so that, for example, if the Dene people in Wollaston Lake, you know, have a special way of doing and tending to the fish and how they catch them, are there some unique ways on the Crees and the Metis people from Cumberland? Those types of ideas on cultural tourism are going to be put in as part of the picture in regards to ecotourism and the regular tourism that's already there. So that has been talked about.

We had a major tourism conference last year which was attended by 150 people. It was quite a display, not only on sharing of unique ideas, but a lot of excitement, you know, being fostered and particularly on this idea of partnerships.

(1630)

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, certainly when we

talk about economic development in the North and opportunities for partnerships, we certainly want to applaud those kind of efforts.

But getting back to my original question, we're seeing an unlevel playing field developing here. And it's being applied to very small, specific areas of the North.

And we're wondering as the government and as the Minister of Northern Affairs, are you looking at opportunities then so that all areas of northern Saskatchewan will be able to continue to participate in the growth that is taking place and going to take place in tourism and in the ecotourism and traditional tourism that is taking place in the North, as you spoke of earlier — the fishing and the hunting — so that . . .

Because we know that all those communities, the reserves that are up there, they're certainly, now that they're not having to collect PST and they don't collect GST (goods and services tax) on their goods and services, is that all of a sudden we're going to have little pockets of highly developed economic opportunity and it's going to create a great deal of separation from the rest of the North who are not going to be able to benefit from those same opportunities.

So has your department been able to . . . had time yet to step back and take a look at this and how they're going to be able to address this situation so that everyone who lives in the North and not just those that have businesses on the reserves be able to participate in the continuing expansion with tourism in the North?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Yes, as regards to the taxation question on the tourist aspect that you're talking about, of course it is well known that people who do tourist development off-reserve . . . I mean most of the projects will be off-reserve; the tourist outfitting businesses are mainly off-reserve.

So obviously if the treaty Indians are off-reserve, they're paying taxes exactly the same as everybody else. There maybe some developing examples into the future wherein treaty Indians may be able to establish on-reserve. And I know of a particular example and maybe there might be some other developing examples.

And from the governmental strategy, we respect, you know, the law that exists. We had a standard of . . . that's on the same level as the GST, so that indeed people who pay the PST will have the same protection on-reserve, you know, as the GST. So it's a national basis, you know, right across Canada. So that's a standard that we're using.

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, you are starting a northern tourism task team to look at how to further expand tourism in the North. I guess we're rather curious on this side is that this is the year 2000 and it took till this long for the government of the day to grasp the concept that there is a great deal of opportunities for tourism and economic development in the North.

As you're well aware, for this side of the House we kind of have an ideology that we need to remove red tape from tourism development. And certainly, you know, I would want to have

such a blanket statement as that, you know, just override the whole issue when we want to be quite aware that when it comes to ecotourism we still need to look after protecting the environment. And certainly we have to be careful that the lakes are not overfished and we have to be very cognizant that the big game populations remain high and stable.

So I guess, you know, from my point of view here then, Mr. Minister, why is it necessary then to create a task team to look at tourism in the North when it's already fairly well widely known in this province, in the North in this province, in this country, and in Europe and in the United States that what we need to do is to get tourism up and running in this province and not create another level of bureaucracy and red tape to hold it back.

So, Mr. Minister, I guess I want to ask you, what do you hope to establish with this tourism task team?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — It's fairly similar as you will find in regards to rural development. If you're going to do rural development and you're doing, particularly . . . (inaudible) . . . for example on diversification, the new aspect, you know, from moving from the grains into the diversification areas.

There's always room, in historic terms, to have task teams to deal with particular focused strategies, because there's always new ideas, new developments that are out there.

So you always have to have faith and trust in people that there is always new ideas that they are willing to bring out. And in our task team approach, we make sure that the people are from northern Saskatchewan, they bring the ideas.

My understanding is that they recently did a first phase overview with a northern labour market committee. So that there's not only a job . . . a business strategy there, but a job strategy as well.

So I'm very . . . actually I'm waiting for, you know, the task team to do their report because I'm pretty sure that they will have exciting ideas for development. The general idea that you talk about on the need for tourism, that's already accepted. And the tourism conference said that they needed a task team to do a strategic focus and that's what they're really doing.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I'd like to ask a couple of questions with respect to representative area networks. And as you will recall, a while back there was some concern from both industry and conservation groups in terms of the process around how areas were being determined, identified, and assigned.

Now on the industry side, certainly the concern is that there are areas that may very well be off limits to them in the future, and these could be areas of high mineral potential. On the conservationist side, they are very concerned that a lot of their work and effort over the years which, as I understand it, is based almost entirely on scientific data and should reflect what it is that is attempting to be accomplished with the development of the representative area networks. So it appears that somehow the process here, Mr. Minister, has let down both industry and the conservation groups.

My question to you, sir, is how involved has your department been in the consultation process around representative area networks given that mining, exploration, certainly are large, large components of the northern economy?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Yes. Like I mentioned earlier on, on the consultation, of course the lead department on RANs (representative area network) . . . And you might want to ask more questions on RANs pertaining to the minister in charge of RANs, the member from Athabasca. But for us, we work in coordination with them to make sure that, number one, there is consultation, proper consultation, you know.

Secondly, that they have . . . that if and when something is going to be established, that the proper information is there. We want to make sure that there is always room for developments as we know on the mining sector and the forestry sector. And to make sure as well that we recognize that there are unique areas in the history of our province that need protection. So that we do this balanced approach.

And in that sense we have this . . . The key question would then have to be asked, you know, by the Minister of SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management), you know, during the question at that time.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, you indicated that you were involved in the consultation process. Can you explain to me what form of involvement that was? Were you or were any of your department officials involved in the numerous hearings that were held throughout the North? Did they make submissions to these hearings, and if so, would you be able to make copies of those submissions available to us?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — I have staff that work in conjunction with SERM, and the records of course are kept with that SERM in regards to the whole process. Now on our side we work in coordination with them and to move things along. We want to make sure that indeed established realms of what we call sustainable development, making sure that we have development in the North that does a serious look at the economic development side and also on the environmental questions.

And it's an excellent question. When we look at the development over the . . . and I reiterate this on the mining side. The mining development we've seen has gone from 500 workforce to 1,000 workers, you know, since 1991. And we've seen the development of mining from 20 million to 180 million.

So we're seeing a high level of development, you know, occurring on the mining sector but we want to as well make sure that the environment is well protected. That's why we work with SERM.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, and so specifically were you or were any of your department representatives involved in any of the hearings that were held with respect to community input for the representative area networks?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Yes, that will be an excellent question.

We're on the development stage. We're doing the development work right now. And what we're seeing is that we have on the one hand, you know, the evolution of development of land use policies. And we did that a couple of RANs, which one was Wapawekka. And there was extensive work done, and our staff worked along with SERM.

And I remember people actually going into the area in Wapawekka Hills. These hills are about 2,500 feet high. There's fairly unique areas right in there because of the long, historic . . . (inaudible) . . . that were there. There was areas in there that caribou were at. There is unique trees and vegetation on the east, northeast side, you know, the Wapawekka Hills, you know where the protection occurred.

But with the outfitter that was there, they even took them in to look at the sites. And they did . . . actual people going through the forest to look at the unique vegetation. Because when the glaciers were around, 9 million . . . 9,000 years ago, that indeed they are very similar to what happened here in Cypress Hills. You will have seen the conifers that were around on the prairies, you know, scraped off, but a lot still left off at the Cypress Hills because the Cypress Hills were way high.

And you see that type of argument that was played on in regards to Wapawekka Hills. And so that there was good solid consultation with the people that were doing the outfitting in that area, as well as the people who did the mining in that area, as well as people who are doing presently fishing in there.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — So, Mr. Minister, are you saying then that no one from your department including yourself were formally involved with any of the hearings at all that went on in the different communities with respect to community input and consulting with the various stakeholders in the North?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — No, I said earlier on to the member that my staff is always there working with SERM.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — And did your staff add any of those hearings, any of those community meetings that they participate in terms of making any formal presentations? Did they have any type of formal input at those hearings whatsoever?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — My staff basically works in terms of facilitation and when the meetings are set up with SERM; we're trying to get input for the different players, different resource users.

So the basic reason for any hearing on land use etc., is to get the players, you know, from the mining community, from the forestry community, from the fishing and trapping, as well as the outfitting industry and other users whether it is the gathering of berries etc. So you try and get the input. The main reason is to get input from the people and we play a facilitator's role.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, as I'm sure you are aware the La Ronge mineral industry group has a fair degree of difficulty with the way that the development of the RANs has been approached.

And one of their concerns is, is that the government for whatever reason has shied away, if you will, from taking

appropriate and relative amounts of area in southern Saskatchewan and putting them into the RAN system. And what they're then attempting to do is make up the shortfall in the North without adequate consultation from either the industry sector or the conservation sector.

What would you say to those individuals, Mr. Minister, who are concerned that perhaps the interests of northern Saskatchewan are not being represented by the allowing of the shortfalls in southern Saskatchewan to be made up in northern Saskatchewan?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Is the member saying that the official position that you say is that . . . Are you saying that the RANs should be more in the South? I'm trying to gauge your question. Are you saying that the RAN development should be basically in the South and not as much as the North? Is that really the question?

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — No. The question is based on a concern that was expressed to us, Mr. Minister, by the La Ronge mineral industry group and as a matter of fact I'll read the concern directly:

The RAN proposal for southern Saskatchewan will withdraw much less land than the northern RAN proposal. There is no basis to support a policy whereby shortfalls in the South can be offset by a larger land grab in the North.

It is their concern, Mr. Minister, and I'm asking you to respond to that.

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — By the way, I've actually written a letter, you know, back to the members, basically that the two points that are very important are number one, that there's going to be proper consultation, you know, and also making sure that the information is there.

And I know that the . . . you will probably be very happy to know that . . . You might want to raise the same question to the Minister of SERM, because he's the one who is actually in charge of the RANs rather than myself.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Mr. Minister. Just one more quick question.

Did your department have any role whatsoever in informing the various stakeholders of the final decisions that were made around the establishment of the RANs? Were you in any way in charge of the responsibility of meeting with the various mining and exploration companies and indicating to them what the decisions had been in terms of the various areas that had been identified and what the timetables were going to be for further identification of more RAN areas?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Yes, again it will be a question that can be tabled with the SERM minister. And I would like to be able to help you out, but the specific details, etc., in regards to process and timing and all of that will be with the SERM minister.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder if it would be all right if we rise and report progress and ask for leave to sit again, or are there urgent questions the members need to do?

Okay. Then we'll report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:50 p.m.