

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of citizens surrounding Cudworth and area that are concerned about the loss of their community-based ambulance services. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and to affirm its intent to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from St. Benedict, Cudworth, Prud'homme, Wakaw, and the surrounding area.

I so present.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm presenting a petition regarding two of the government's Crown corporations, SaskPower and SaskEnergy. Both recently announced significant rate increases for residential and business customers. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to use a portion of its windfall oil and gas revenues to provide a more substantial energy rate rebate to Saskatchewan consumers.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitioners come from Elrose, Rosetown, Harris, Wiseton, and Perdue. I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to present today on behalf of people from the Archerwill area who are concerned about the EMS report.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and affirm its intent to improve community-based ambulance services.

I present this on their behalf, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of citizens concerned about the high energy rates. The prayer reads as follows:

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

portion of its windfall oil and gas revenues to provide a more substantial energy rate rebate to Saskatchewan consumers.

Signatures on this petition, in addition to my home community of Melfort, are from Tisdale, Mistatim, and Bjorkdale, as well as Gronlid.

I so present.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well presenting petitions referring to health care in this province. And reading the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Redvers Health Centre be maintained at its current level of service, at minimum, with 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctoral services available, as well as laboratory, physiotherapy, public health, home care, and long-term care services available to users from our district, southeast Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Wauchope, Redvers, and Kipling.

I so present.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens deeply concerned about ambulance services. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and affirm its intent to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

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

And this is signed by citizens of Rose Valley.

I so present. Thank you.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have each day of this session I rise again on behalf of people in the southwest concerned about the Swift Current hospital. And the prayer of this petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to carefully consider Swift Current's request for a new hospital.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by residents of Swift Current, of Gull Lake, Admiral, Waldeck, Stewart Valley, and Ponteix.

I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the good citizens of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are concerned about their ambulance service. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and affirm its intent to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

And this is signed by the residents of Ceylon, Radville, and Pangman.

I so present.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present petitions on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan regarding the EMS (emergency medical services) service. And the petition reads . . . or the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners may pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and affirm its intent to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition is signed by people from the Redvers, Storthoaks, and Carlyle area.

I so present.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present dealing with the Redvers Health Centre. The petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Redvers Health Centre be maintained at its current level of service, at minimum, with 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctoral services available, as well as laboratory, physiotherapy, public health, home care, and long-term care services available to the users from our district, southeast Saskatchewan, and southwest Manitoba and beyond.

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

These petitions come from the good people of Bellegarde, and Redvers, and Antler areas.

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition to retain the Hafford Hospital. The prayer

reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take necessary steps to ensure the Hafford Hospital remains open.

Signed by the good citizens of Speers, Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here signed by the good citizens of Davidson worried about the rate increases of SaskPower, SaskEnergy:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to use a portion of its windfall oil and gas revenues to provide a more substantial energy rate rebate to Saskatchewan consumers.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

As I said before, the signatures are all from the town of Davidson.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens concerned with the centralization of ambulance services. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and to affirm its intent to improve community-based ambulance services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And signatures to this petition come from the communities of Mozart and Wynyard.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition regarding the EMS report. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and to affirm its intent to improve community-based ambulance services.

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

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Wynyard and Foam Lake.

I so present.

Mr. Peters: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan concerned with the Pioneer Lodge in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that, at the very least, current levels of service and care are maintained at Pioneer Lodge in Assiniboia.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by folks from Assiniboia.

I so present.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise again with a petition to stop further cuts at Assiniboia Pioneer Lodge. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that, at the very least, current levels of service and care are maintained at Pioneer Lodge in Assiniboia.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the signators on this are from Assiniboia, Wood Mountain, Mossbank, Willow Bunch, Limerick, Coronach, and Bethune.

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.

These are petitions of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly on the following matters:

- The centralization of ambulance services;
- Swift Current's request for a new hospital;
- Reverting highways to gravel;
- Level of services at Pioneer Lodge in Assiniboia;
- Protection of children from tobacco use;
- An energy rebate to consumers; and
- Ensuring Redvers Health Centre be maintained.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 32 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for the Information Services Corporation: how much was spent on travel outside of

Saskatchewan but inside Canada by officials of ISC to investigate investments made or under consideration in the year 2000?

With parallel questions for 1999 and proposed 2001.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I shall on day no. 32 ask parallel questions as to:

How much was spent on travel by officials of ISC outside of Canada?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce through you and to my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly, a group of 50 grade 4 and 5 students from Henry Janzen School in my area and I'm very pleased to have them here this afternoon. They're accompanied by their teachers Mrs. Taylor, nice to see you again; Mrs. Desrosiers; and by a parent volunteer, Mrs. Rakochoy.

So please join with me in welcoming these grade 4 and 5 students from my constituency.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The grandpa member from Melfort-Tisdale and the grandma member from Kelvington-Wadena tossed a coin, and as a result it is my pleasure to introduce to you first of all, my best friend and wife, Carole, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker; also our daughter, Patti; and one-half of our grandson, Grant Michael, Mr. Speaker. Please welcome them warmly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to introduce guests in the legislature today. You can see I did lose the coin toss so I have to go second. I'd like to introduce to you my oldest son, Timothy. He works in Doepker Industries. The other half of the baby, Grant Michael, the dry half, that's my grandson.

And I'd also like to introduce to the members of the legislature my uncle, Leonard Francis, from Guisborough, England. He came over yesterday into Saskatchewan. And just so everyone in the legislature knows, he doesn't watch *Coronation Street* and he believes that wine would be a great addition to the cafeteria in the House.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, 59 students from the Shaunavon High School, sitting in the east gallery. Mr. Speaker, they are accompanied by teachers, Shaun Penner, Shelley Wickham, Owen Sebastian, Tim Miller.

I hope you enjoy the proceedings here this afternoon and I look forward to getting together with you as soon as question period is over. And we can have a little discussion about what went on in question period.

Please join me in welcoming the students from Shaunavon to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member from Wood River in welcoming the students from the Shaunavon High School to the Assembly today. Even though Shaunavon is technically just outside of my constituency and just barely into Wood River, a number of the students there, I'm sure, are represented by myself, and their parents as well. And so I'd like to welcome them warmly here.

As you may recall, Mr. Speaker, the Shaunavon High School was one of the schools in this province that showed great leadership in cancelling their trip to England when the hoof-and-mouth outbreak was of such great concern. And I'm not sure if any of these students were part of that group or not but if they are represented here today, I'd like to express my personal appreciation for the leadership that they showed in that regard.

And I hope that they'll ask the member from Wood River to treat them to something special when they meet with him a little later this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you, two constituents of mine, Esther and George Haas. Esther and George farm right along the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border and due to the amount of water we have in our constituency they don't have to hurry home to seed.

I would ask everyone here to join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to all members of the legislature two former Transportation ministers in the province of Saskatchewan. They're joining us behind the bar on the government side today. The former member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, Bob Long, Transportation minister of the province in the late '70s, early '80s. And Andy Renaud, the former member from Carrot River, Transportation minister in the mid-1990s.

So I'd all members to join me in welcoming these two people to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce guests. There are three friends who are up in the west gallery: Sarah McQuarrie and Melissa McDowell and Sabrina Cataldo who take a great deal of interest in the happenings in this legislature.

And I would like all to join with me in welcoming them to this

session.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mayworks

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about a celebration of Mayworks. Today, May 1, is the international day to celebrate workers' rights and struggles. This is only one aspect of the overall celebrations here in Regina, as events are scheduled to take place starting April 28 through May 5.

Mayworks began over 15 years ago with the first festival held in Toronto. Now, Mr. Speaker, this festival takes place throughout all the borders of Canada. Mayworks festivals are generally organized by volunteers of the labour movement, arts groups, and community organizations. After all, these are the people being celebrated.

Modern celebrations of May Day as a working class struggle evolved with a fight for an eight-hour workday called by the Knights of Labour in 1886. May 1, 1886 saw national strikes in both Canada and the United States that ended in tragedy for six workers in Chicago.

Today, Mr. Speaker, this day is when we celebrate and thank those workers who went on strike and risked their lives to achieve what we now experience as labour rights. In commemoration of the violence in Chicago, the International Working Men's Association of Paris declared May 1 as an international working class holiday.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the unions and the union activists past and present. They're responsible for bringing Mayworks celebrations to Regina and throughout the world. I encourage all members and all people of Saskatchewan to attend some Mayworks festivals in the next few days and join in the celebrations of working class culture and arts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Child Find Month

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise in the Assembly today in recognition of Child Find Month.

Mr. Speaker, the month of May has been declared Green Ribbon of Hope Month, and I cannot think of a more important cause than efforts to reunite thousands of children that go missing every year with their families.

Mr. Speaker, last year in Canada thousands of children were reported missing but the number is growing around the world. Many children go missing because they are trapped and sold and enslaved in the international child sex trade. Some children are kidnapped by non-custodial and custodial parents. Some are runaways. Some are lured into cults.

Mr. Speaker, the green ribbon is a symbol of many things. We wear the ribbon to raise awareness of the growing problem of

missing children. We wear them as a symbol of hope for those whose precious children are missing. And finally, because green is the colour of hope and it symbolizes our light in the darkness and is a symbol of hope for the safe return of all missing children.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to commend Child Find Saskatchewan on all of their hard work and dedication to assist families in finding their missing children. Without the commitment from members of this organization, many of our missing children would be forgotten about and just become a statistic.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hog Producers Form Co-operative

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's more good news for rural Saskatchewan. Ivan Stomp, the largest independent hog producer in Saskatchewan, who saw his operation hit hard by fire on February 22 is back on top with a little help from his friends.

Mr. Stomp has joined forces with a hundred other farmers in the Leroy area to form a new generation co-op to build new hog barns. Stomp, along with the new co-op, will spend around \$40 million to build the new hog production facilities, as well as a feed mill in the Leroy area. The project is estimated to create 50 full-time jobs, Mr. Speaker, and produce 200,000 pigs annually upon its completion.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the new feed mill will buy up to 3 million bushels of wheat and barley produced by members of this new generation co-op. The farmers belonging to the co-op represent 32 per cent of the total grain acreage in the Leroy area, meaning a large number of these people can now sell their crops locally, rather than nationally or internationally.

Stomp says his new agreement is likely the first new generation co-op to get involved in the pork production in Western Canada, and an expert in new generation co-ops agrees.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great example of how innovation and teamwork can establish a community, giving it a solid footing for the future.

On behalf of all the hon. members, I would like to congratulate Mr. Stomp, the members of the new generation co-op, and the community of Leroy on their exciting future in this province of Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

RCMP Graduation

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I had the privilege of attending ceremonies for the 32nd division's graduation at the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) depot here in Regina. I'd like to congratulate the 30 men and

women who graduated, especially my nephew, Cst. David Knibbs of North Battleford.

This has been a dream of David's since he was a little boy, and what made the ceremony even more special was that his father, Cpl. Alvin Knibbs was on hand to present him with his badge.

The RCMP have always held a special place in my heart as my grandfather, Cpl. H.E.P. Mann, was a member of the original Northwest Mounted Police. He graduated in Regina in 1920 and now 81 years later his grandson is following in his footsteps.

I wish the very best to David as he prepares to report for duty in the RCMP detachment of Fort St. John, BC (British Columbia). Also warm congratulations and best wishes to all the new graduates as they work to uphold the laws of the land and continue to bring pride and honour to our great nation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Provincial Parks System Marks 70th Anniversary

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, today marks a special occasion for the provincial parks system, its 70th anniversary. That's 70 years of protecting natural and cultural features, 70 years of providing recreational and educational experiences, and 70 years of tradition that SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management), and the Saskatchewan government are proud to continue to provide to the people of Saskatchewan, as well as visitors to our province.

As someone who worked several summers at Makwa Lake Provincial Park and Pike Lake Provincial Park while attending university, I'm pleased to highlight this anniversary today.

The Provincial Parks and Protected Areas Act, 1931, which established the provincial parks programs, was assented to on March 11, 1931 and was proclaimed May 1, 1931.

To quote directly from the Act, it states that, quote:

Parkland is dedicated to the people of Saskatchewan and visitors of Saskatchewan for their enjoyment and education. And the natural prehistoric and historic resources of parkland are to be maintained for the benefit of future generations.

The original six provincial parks designated in 1931 included Moose Mountain, Duck Mountain, Good Spirit Lake, Cypress Hills, Katepwa Point, and Little Manitou.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the provincial government and minister of SERM, I'd like to offer my congratulations and best wishes to the provincial park system for a prosperous future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Volunteers Recognized

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon in our honoured Assembly, I'd like to bring attention to all members of the legislature, an event that took place Sunday evening,

April 29.

Mr. Speaker, on said evening, the North Central Regional Recreational Association held its annual banquet to honour those persons who go above and beyond for their home communities. This banquet was held in recognition of volunteers whom communities firmly believe have done an outstanding job of giving of themselves so that their communities are a little bit better place to live.

Fourteen people from the north central region were honoured for their volunteerism, Mr. Speaker. And I'm delighted to report that three of those honourees come from the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers: Louis Hradecki of Meath Park, William Ludnicki of Weirdale, and Rosemarie Mitchell of Candle Lake were presented with many awards on Sunday in remembrance of this special evening.

Mr. Speaker, it is with pride I bring recognition to these constituents of Saskatchewan Rivers, and I ask that all members join me in congratulating these and all other volunteers for their exemplary efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Prince of Wales Visit

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment of the Assembly's time to say how proud I am that the Prince of Wales took time while in Saskatchewan to visit Scott Collegiate, which is in the heart of Regina Elphinstone.

I am also very pleased that he stepped next door to meet the volunteers and the kids at the Chili for Children program at the Albert-Scott Community Centre. I know I speak for the staff, students, and parents at both school and community centre when I say that the prince's visit was as much an honour for us as it was a revelation for him. The event, I dare say, was mutually enjoyable and educational.

The Prince of Wales has often expressed his interest in the lives of inner city residents, and before this trip, he also said that he wanted to learn more about Canada's First Nations people and culture.

I think that his meeting with the students at Scott, his introduction to elder Willie Peigen and the four generations of his family, his first attempt at playing a First Nations hand game — though no dancing on this occasion, Mr. Speaker — and a look at Scott's computer lab all combined to serve the Prince with a unique look into life in inner city Regina and into the lives of urban First Nations people.

I also want to mention how appropriate to the Prince's visit was the announcement of the Prince of Wales scholarships of which we will certainly hear more in the future.

To close I want to thank all of the people who worked very hard to make the Prince's visit to Scott such a great success: Principal Johns Simpson, Vice-principal Boldt, hosts Chantal Dustyhorn, Justin Toto, the Peigan Family, Ovide Bighetti, Keith Buffalo, Dakota McFadzaen, the Scott Improv Group, the Drum Group, Tim Molnar, Barry McKay, Constables Pratt and

Keiser, Lisa Pratt, Senator Theresa Stevenson and Robert Stevenson, Shelley Lavallee and Keith Pratt. You and everyone who took part in the Prince's visit did the neighbourhood and the whole province very proud. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Allegation by Member of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, this morning's paper contained extremely serious allegations against officials with this government. The headline reads, and I quote:

Hillson alleges bribe to shut up. Claims CIC offered world excursion . . . in exchange for silence.

Mr. Speaker, the member for North Battleford said that he and his wife were offered a trip around the world in exchange for his silence on certain CIC investments. Mr. Speaker, this is an extremely serious allegation. What is the Premier doing to investigate the matter?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The question from the member opposite is one of a very serious nature. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, we take his question very seriously.

The opposition has asked you today to rule in regards to whether or not a breach of privilege has occurred in this House and I want to say as Government House Leader that members on this side of the House very much respect your independence. You've been duly elected by members of this Legislative Assembly to fill the very important role and we are confident in your ability and the counsel that you have to review this serious allegation and to make the correct ruling. Our government, Mr. Speaker, will respect that ruling and abide by your decision.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, we do, do recognize that you will play a very important role in this matter. But I want to bring to the House's attention rule no. 102 of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly* which reads and I quote:

The offer of any money or (any) other advantage to any Member of the Assembly, for the promotion of any matter whatsoever pending or to be transacted in the Legislature, is a high crime and misdemeanour, and tends to be a subversion of the Constitution.

The House of Commons has a similar rule dating back to confederation, 1867, and the British Parliament has a similar rule dating back to 1695.

Bribery is one of the most serious offences in our parliamentary

system and the member for North Battleford has made an allegation of bribery. Now we know the Speaker has a role, but as leader of the government the Premier has an obligation to investigate these allegations.

Again I ask the Premier, what does he intend to do to investigate these serious allegations made by the member from North Battleford?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, it's quite clear in the paper that there appears to be a dispute between a senior official and a member of this legislature.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, there are some processes that take place with respect to decision making and with respect to travel and I want to clarify a couple of points. First of all, that there is no official of this government that can authorize out-of-province travel. That is done by the chief of staff and the Premier, and there's a process that takes place for an application and an approval or a disapproval with respect to travel outside of the province.

Mr. Speaker, the date of departure is on that document, the date of return, the nature of the business, who accompanies, what the cost of accommodation, what the cost of travel is, and the nature of the travel, Mr. Speaker.

This government has very much put in place a process of accountability and no travel out of the province occurs without the Premier's approval.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think from the minister's answer, he recognizes that there's some blanks that need to be filled in. It's kind of hard to know exactly took place. The member for North Battleford said CIC attempted to buy his silence with a trip around the world. The president of CIC denies it.

However a serious allegation is now out there and this Assembly has an obligation to get to the bottom of this matter. The appropriate forum for this investigation is the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. That committee has the power to call witnesses and require them to testify under oath and with the full protection of parliamentary immunity.

Mr. Speaker, the official opposition believe that these allegations should be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for a full investigation. Will the Premier support our call for that investigation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I want to again answer that question. And I've said earlier that there was a request in a letter and documents forwarded to you this morning that request of you a decision, and I have a copy of it here.

I've indicated that members of this legislature on this side of the

House very much support the process that has been put in place. It's part of British parliamentary tradition, and it's part of, I believe, of good decision making. And I say again, that members on this side of the House will support your ruling on the issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Information Services Corporation

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Information Services Corporation. Yesterday the minister told this Assembly that he is satisfied with the performance of ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan) that basically just lost \$11 million. This from a Crown corporation that hasn't even completed its original mandate of automating the province's land title system. And despite this, officials today said they're now focused on risking taxpayers' dollars to sell this non-functioning technology to Third World and developing nations around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, ISC has lost \$11 million. Its overall budget has bloomed to \$58 million and, Mr. Speaker, so far they have one signed contract from Ukraine worth a paltry \$150,000.

The question to the minister is this: is that it? Will the minister table all the other contracts that he's inked while spending \$58 million taxpayer dollars?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, the answer to the member's question is, first of all, to indicate that ISC is seeking contracts overseas not just in developing countries, as the member says, but in developed countries too.

I know the member likes to say that we are . . . likes to besmirch Crown corporations, but this is a Crown corporation which is seeking ventures everywhere, Mr. Speaker. This is a \$50 million investment that we can ensure brings significant benefits back to this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, the members over there will know that you can't market a sophisticated high-tech project without advertising that project, without selling that project, without going to customers, and without going to find out what those customers need.

Mr. Speaker, the activities of the corporation at the present time has been precisely that — to get the LAND (Land Titles Automated Network Development Project) project up and running and to market that and other high-tech projects around the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, if the minister is saying that the opposition is concerned whenever Crown corporations stray from their core mandate and start risking taxpayers' money around the world with respect to this government, he's dead right, Mr. Speaker. He's dead right because the parade of losers gets longer every day — SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato

Utility Development Company), Guyana, Channel Lake, NST (NST Network Services of Chicago), clickabid, IQ&A, SecurTek, SaskPower International, Sask Valley Potato Corporation, and now Information Services Corporation. Each one lost millions of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP (New Democratic Party) say they learn from their mistakes; they get smarter each time they make a mistake. Mr. Speaker, given this list, by now they're all candidates for Mensa, I'd say, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the question to the minister is this: have they learned anything from IQ&A? Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP risking millions of taxpayer dollars without signed contracts?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, the mandate of ISC is to carry on the business of re-evaluation, design, and automation of Saskatchewan's land titles system, to integrate that into a whole range of other activities in the province, to investigate and develop potential markets for the use of those systems, to operate inter-provincially, Mr. Speaker. And indeed what this shows, Mr. Speaker, is that this corporation is precisely fulfilling its mandate by exploring opportunities to sell the system we're developing.

The member knows how business works. This is the way business works.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, to make a huge investment of millions of taxpayers' dollars and make no sales, maybe that's how NDP businesses work but that's not how they work in the real world, Mr. Speaker. I can assure you of that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I want to read a quote from Daryl Silzer, he is the former Chair of . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I want to read a quote from Mr. Daryl Silzer. He's the former Chair of IQ&A who . . . That company lost two million taxpayer dollars because they didn't have any signed contracts. Here's what he had to say, and I quote:

I would have made sure that letter of intent was in fact a contract rather than a letter of intent.

He admits it was a huge mistake and now what are we hearing from the minister? A lot of Third World and developing countries and nations around the world may be interested in ISC Services — no contracts, just services. Mr. Speaker, these guys haven't learned anything. Once again they're gambling and losing millions of taxpayers' dollars based on the same vague commitments they had for IQ&A.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will he rein in this company and tell them to stick to their original mandate of automating land

titles and geomatics?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — I gave the member the mandate. He can find that by looking at the Crown corporation's annual reports. He knows the mandate is broader than the land project. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the majority of ISC's activities are in the province. In fact the huge majority of activities are here in the province.

But the issue here is, Mr. Speaker, is how do you bring resources money back to the people of Saskatchewan for their investment in this land corporation, Mr. Speaker. And what we're doing here, Mr. Speaker, is ensuring that the people of this province benefit from this investment, which is the most sophisticated land titles operation in this country.

We were last to get into this but, Mr. Speaker, this is the best in the country and it will be something which repays the investment of this province significantly.

The member knows that; the member just doesn't like that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, what the member doesn't like and more importantly what the taxpayers don't like is the waste of money in things like SPUDCO, Guyana, Channel Lake, NST, clickabid, IQ&A. That's what we don't like on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps saying that everything is fine. Well ISC had to go back to CIC for a \$5 million grant. That doesn't sound like everything is fine. The former minister of Economic Development had major concerns. Doesn't sound like everything is fine. The fact is that everything is not fine.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Premier. In light of the fact that his Crown Investments Corporation minister and now the Justice minister refused to rein in these Crown corporations and wild investments, the question to the Premier is this: will he stand in his place today and commit to this legislature to rein in both his ministers and these Crown corporations?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I sit here quietly listening to the member recite off some of the losses. Mr. Speaker, I hope they quietly sit and listen as I recite some of the profits that they've made as well, Mr. Speaker.

Leicester cable, Mr. Speaker, made \$100 million for the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, Saturn/Austar made \$37 million for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Regional Cable made \$8 million for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Alouette made 6 million, Mr. Speaker; and ISM Westbridge made \$23 million, Mr. Speaker.

The member neglects to talk about the good things that our Crowns are doing for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Funding for Post-Secondary Education

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education.

The University of Saskatchewan Council recently passed a motion which states in part, and I quote:

Be it resolved that the University Council convey to the legislature of Saskatchewan that the teaching, research, and public service obligations of the university to the people of Saskatchewan cannot be met at current levels of public funding.

The council states that human resources, both faculty and non-faculty, have been eroded to the breaking point. They cannot replace equipment and the deficit in capital maintenance is growing. They state the accumulated underfunding to the university over the last 10 years has created a sequence of crisis situations with regards to buildings and programs.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Speaker, pardon me, what are the minister's plans to deal with the serious funding issues facing the University of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's taken some 25, 26 days to get the — 27 days — to get the opposition to ask a question about post-secondary education. And I welcome that, Mr. Speaker, because there is a difference between this side of the House and that side of the House when it comes to commitment to post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, over the last three years over \$100 million in capital expenditures to our universities alone, Mr. Speaker — over the last three years. And let me point out a distinct difference, Mr. Speaker, because it is stark.

If this side of the House was to implement SP (Saskatchewan Party) policy in funding for post-secondary education, universities this year, Mr. Speaker, would have \$17 million less than in the budget. I repeat: \$17 million less if we were to use SP policy.

Why do I say that, Mr. Speaker? Because on this side of the House over the last three years an increase of over 15 per cent to universities. If we were to follow their policy less than 6 per cent, less than inflation. That's their story. They're sticking to it. We ain't going there, Mr. Speaker. We're in support of the universities of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Post-Secondary Education said recently that operating grants to universities would keep up with inflation. Well they certainly — at 3.5 per cent — certainly don't keep up to the increases in utilities, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the University of Saskatchewan Council believes

the lack of government funding has undermined the overall quality of education they can provide and that the university is underperforming in areas of research. They correctly state that the university is an engine of social progress, economic development, and improved well-being. But they all say that support resources haven't been there for those essential purposes.

This motion they have passed is a cry for help and it's a warning for this NDP government, Mr. Speaker. The province's operating grant to the university has decreased by some 10 per cent since 1987 and they may be faced with increasing tuition fees from anywhere from 25 to 100 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to review the budgeted operating grant to the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) and to commit to working with the institution to avoid these massive increases in tuition fees?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I note with interest that the universities have said that they have been affected by the decisions and funding related to the recovery in this province from the Devine deficit and also from the recovery across the nation, Mr. Speaker, to the CHST (Canada Health and Social Transfer) cutbacks from the federal government.

But the hon. member raises the matter. He says very proudly that their position is to fund according to increased inflation. Mr. Speaker, in the last three years inflation in this province has been less than 6 per cent. And, Mr. Speaker, in the last three years in this province funding to our universities, I repeat once again, has gone up by over 15 per cent and if you were to look at the difference, it would be, and I repeat, \$17 million less to our universities if you were to use SP policy in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, it seems whenever this government hasn't got an answer they revert back to what went on in the '80s and the people of this province are getting tired of that . . .

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

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan ranks last in the country when it comes to the amount of public funding spent on each full-time student. And the U of S is considering major tuition increases this year because of cuts to operating grants by this NDP government.

While tuition fees have risen dramatically, family incomes have not. So you have the issue of reduced accessibility for students — something that this government should know about since they spoke about it in the last provincial election.

Those students who cannot afford to attend university will be faced with huge student loans when they graduate, Mr. Speaker. This is what 10 years of NDP government have done to the U of

S — last in the *Maclean's* ranking and now they cannot fulfill their mandate to the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, how does the minister explain the NDP government's lack of commitment to the University of Saskatchewan and to publicly funded post-secondary education?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member was to have his way and follow SP policy, he would be introducing a \$17 million cutback this year. That's the fact of the matter.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget . . .

The Speaker: — The minister will continue.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I point out to the hon. member and to families and students across the province of Saskatchewan: in this budget this year, a scholarship program; in this budget this year, a student employment program, a centennial employment program; in this budget this year, a doubling of education tax credits. Mr. Speaker, the list goes on and on.

But when the hon. member stands and he wants to talk about commitment and percentage increases for funding to our universities, there is no denying he is . . . you notice very carefully he did not deny the SP policy for funding in the province of Saskatchewan is to increase by inflation. That means ripping \$17 million out of the University of Saskatchewan. We're not going there, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Valley Potato Corporation

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of CIC. The Saskatchewan Valley Potato Corporation owns potato storage facilities in the RM (rural municipality) of Rudy near the town of Broderick. Last fall the RM sent a grant in lieu notice to the corporation for the land and facilities they own in the RM. The notice amounted to just over \$155,000.

Mr. Speaker, this Crown corporation decided they didn't have to pay any business or commercial taxes on this property, and they paid the RM just \$795 as agriculture property. Mr. Speaker, no other business in Saskatchewan gets to revert their taxes in this way. How is that fair, Mr. Speaker?

To the Minister of CIC: why is the Saskatchewan Valley Potato Corporation exempt from paying the commercial taxes to the RM?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the member asks a very legitimate and serious question. It's my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that our officials in the corporation are working with the RM to try and find a resolution that is mutually agreeable on this particular issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, they've been working, I believe, for over a year. The RM of Rudy is expected to supply the same services to facilities as any other business in the RM. They have to make sure there are good roads to storage buildings; they also provide snow removal. Yet for all this, the NDP government thinks \$795 in tax is enough compensation.

Meanwhile private and agriculture businesses in that same RM pay thousands and thousands of dollars in taxes. Any private person or business who doesn't agree with their assessment or their tax rate can enter an appeal process. But this RM received no notification that the potato facility wished to appeal their grant in lieu of notice. All the RM got back from Saskatchewan Party . . . or from the Saskatchewan Potato Corporation was a letter saying all they would pay was the tax owed on the agriculture land, nothing on the commercial buildings.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Why did SPVC not go through this appeal process with the RM? And who in this corporation decided that they didn't have to pay the commercial and business tax?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Well thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I don't think I can do much more than repeat the answer that I just gave, Mr. Speaker.

We have an industry out there that is, I think, doing very well right now. We're certainly exporting potatoes to Prince Edward Island, as I said.

But on this particular issue, the member raises a legitimate concern that I think needs to be dealt with. And it's my understanding that the officials within the corporation, Mr. Speaker, are working with the RM and the RMs to try and find resolution to this issue that I know that there is disagreement on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, over the last few weeks, we've heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs brag about grants in lieu of taxes that his department is supplying to municipalities. Well here we have a government Crown corporation, a business enterprise, telling an RM they don't have to pay grant in lieu of taxes that have been assessed.

Mr. Speaker, this property was assessed by SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency), the government's own assessment agency, yet this potato facility just decided to change the amount it owed.

Every other private agriculture business must pay commercial taxes, but the government somehow thinks it's exempt. Now all other ratepayers in the RM are going to have to compensate for this Crown corporation's arrogance.

Mr. Speaker, why should every other business and local ratepayer in this RM have to pay their taxes at assessed values, but this Crown corporation thinks they are somehow exempt?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not the minister responsible, but I think I'm going to make one slight correction. SAMA is not a government agency, just for clarification for the member, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you know, for days we listen to criticisms, Mr. Speaker, about investments that our Crown corporations have made outside of the province. Well here we are with an investment in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, investment in Saskatchewan and they're critical of that as well.

We create jobs out in that area, Mr. Speaker. There's many jobs there and I think we have an industry that is going to grow into the future. We have an industry that we should be proud of out there, Mr. Speaker. We have an infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, that is an investment of some \$120 million that I think is only logical that we add value to.

Again though, I want to repeat that it is my understanding that our officials are currently working with the RMs to try and find resolution to the problem as correctly identified by the member opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 216 — The Crown Corporations Disclosure Act

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to move first reading of Bill No. 216, The Crown Corporations Disclosure Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Convert, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Item 113 will be converted to orders for returns (debatable).

Mr. Yates: — Convert.

The Speaker: — Item no. 114 converted.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table a response to question no. 115.

The Speaker: — The answer to question 115 is tabled.

Mr. Yates: — Convert.

The Speaker: — Item no. 116 is converted.

Mr. Yates: — Convert.

The Speaker: — Item 117 is converted.

Mr. Yates: — I'm pleased to table a response on behalf of the government.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip is tabling the response to question no. 118.

Mr. Yates: — Table responses to questions 119 through 124 inclusive.

The Speaker: — The responses to items 120, 121, 122, 123, and 124 are hereby tabled.

Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of privilege.

The Speaker: — Could you state your point of privilege please.

PRIVILEGE

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today according to the proper procedures I sent you a letter detailing my point of privilege that would deal with the article in today's newspaper which the headline read, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "Hillson alleges bribe to shut up."

Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious charge and I believe needs to be referred to the Committee of Privileges and Elections to make this determination. This type of an accusation, Mr. Speaker, sheds a cloud of question over this entire Assembly, every member in it. As well, Mr. Speaker, due to the nature of the accusation, over every one of our Crown corporations and the Crown officials that deal therein.

Mr. Speaker, I do have a motion to make and I would ask that you rule and allow this to proceed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — I wish to speak to the motion. I wish to speak to the request made of Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from North Battleford is requesting to make a statement. Is leave granted? With respect to this same issue I presume?

Leave granted.

(14:30)

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was asked by a reporter if I'd ever been offered a trip, and I replied yes. I might say that the word bribe never crossed my lips, but was added by the media.

However, I do wish to say earlier last year I was approached by a senior official of CIC and offered a trip to Australia as part of my, quote, "professional development." I had been critical of CIC investment decisions and was told that this would help me to understand the province's investment strategy.

Later in December, after a government caucus meeting at which

I was critical of CIC investment plans, the same official telephoned me. He again repeated that I should go to Australia with my wife. He said that as long as I was going that far they may as well make it a 'round the world ticket. I could stop in Zurich, London, and wherever else I wanted. There would be, quote, "the usual political cover for the trip."

I was shocked, but made no response. I concluded that the NDP had little respect for me or my motives for being in the coalition.

I reported the incident to a few people. I note that the, quote, "denial" issued by Mr. Hart is technical and does not refute my statement. He says that no specific trip was offered to me, and that is correct. He also says that no travel arrangements were made for me, and that is also correct.

The question has been raised as to whether my parliamentary privilege has been violated and whether I wish a special meeting of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections to investigate. While I am certainly prepared to repeat under oath what I have said, I do not request an investigation. If one is ordered by Mr. Speaker, I will of course be happy to co-operate fully. But I know what was said to me.

It seems to me that all of us, whether elected officials or not, are afforded opportunities every day of our lives to make the wrong decision. It is no one else's fault if we take advantage of such opportunities. In my case, I did not take the trip. I decided I could not remain in a coalition in which my partners apparently held me in low regard.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. I want to thank the member from Cannington and the member from North Battleford for their input. This is a very serious matter that the members have brought, and the members have brought information that needs to be very carefully considered, some of the information which I have just received within the last half hour. Therefore I reserve my ruling at this time.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Protection of Children and Youth from Sexual Exploitation

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to move an extremely important motion that has been near and dear to me . . .

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

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my pleasure to rise today to move an extremely important motion that has been near and dear to my heart since I was elected to the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, there is a growing problem in our province. The problem, Mr. Speaker, surrounds the grooming of and the sexual exploitation, the commercial exploitation of children in our province — the exploitation that they experience through the sex trades on our streets in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this very, very harmful activity damages our children beyond measure. It damages them emotionally,

psychologically, and physically.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, there is no worse crime — no worse crime — than the exploitation of children through the sex trade. There is no worse crime than adults knowingly and purposely hurting our children, using children for their own selfish gratification. And there is no worse crime than those who would exploit children because they want to ensure their financial means are achieved through this heinous activity.

Mr. Speaker, on the average, children that are pulled into the sex trade and involved in the sex trade die within seven years of their initial involvement on the streets. This is a matter not only of children's health — it is a matter of their dignity, it is a matter of their rights to live safely and successfully. All of these rights that they should enjoy are being exploited and stripped from them by the sexual abuse that they encounter on the streets.

Mr. Speaker, there have been countless media reports done on this issue, but one cover story that stands out in particular was a cover story in *The StarPhoenix* in 1995. And the headline that day in *The StarPhoenix* sums up how I feel about this very, very horrendous activity. And, Mr. Speaker, that headline was shocking — "So many, so young."

Mr. Speaker, in a series of reports done by one of our great media people here in Saskatchewan, I also read a story of a young 11-year-old girl, Dawn May Davidson. As I read through that report, Mr. Speaker, I just simply could not believe it, that so much . . . such horrific activity was happening to this very young Aboriginal girl to the point where she was completely debilitated, not only because drugs were forced upon her but through malnourishment and through a situation that she could not seem to fight. She was being placed on the streets and groomed by her peers and she knew no better. However, the end result was a near-death experience for this young woman.

Mr. Speaker, many of our most vulnerable members of society are young children, are on the streets late at night, being forced to sell their bodies for a few measly dollars, for a pack of cigarettes, for diapers for their siblings, for money that support a drug and alcohol habit, a habit that their pimps have.

Mr. Speaker, according to the World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, it has indicated that each year, over one million children are forced into prostitution, trafficked, and sold for sexual purposes or used in child pornography worldwide.

And, Mr. Speaker, there is this really sick view by some men whom we call johns, that younger individuals on the streets who sell themselves are not children or persons, but rather objects or products who are willing to provide a service.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no truth to that sort of an attitude. And on the part of these perpetrators, Mr. Speaker, there seems to be absolutely no indication, no element of emotional association, or no indication of an intellectual realization of what is actually taking place, of what they are doing to these children.

Mr. Speaker, in many instances those that abuse our children do

not realize the personal psychological cause and effect that sexual molestation has on the lives of children, that sexual molestation has on children who go through experience after experience of horror and pain. It is viewed by these johns as simply supply and demand.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a very insensitive and unfeeling lack of understanding point of view. And this is where the problem seems to lie. This is the problem with years of learned behaviour by johns. This is the problem with years of myth and fantasy. And that's what continually causes the most damage.

Mr. Speaker, irresponsible behaviour on the part of johns and pimps and those who would perpetuate the activity of selling our children on the streets, persons who have such a disrespect for children and for human life, it is because of those kinds of attitudes, Mr. Speaker, that we have come to a time in our history, a time that has been created, an activity that is almost accepted, and it is what we know as child prostitution.

Mr. Speaker, it perhaps can be said that the selling of children's bodies into the sex trade is the worst type of sexism and abuse that we have created as a society.

Since I became familiar with this issue, Mr. Speaker, it has been a challenge, a challenge to place criminalization of this activity where it belongs — with the criminals, with johns and pimps, and all those who would perpetrate this very horrendous crime. And it has been a challenge also, Mr. Speaker, to bring awareness, to point out the need for comprehensive services to aid in the healing and recovery of child victims whose lives are almost devastated by this crime.

It has been a challenge to find out what the root cause of the problem is, since we all know that no one in society is safe from sexual predators. And one root cause, Mr. Speaker, that has been pointed out to our committee time and time again, is poverty.

Many children enter willingly, and some unwillingly — mostly unwillingly — into the sex trade. But those that do it willingly do so to improve their life or to obtain material goods, or sometimes as a means to escape an abusive situation, only to be lured into a world that is very, very difficult to escape.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, there are many media reports that can be referred to that paint a very sad picture for these children that are exploited through the sex trade. Many of these children's lives and their futures are put into serious jeopardy. Many of them are forced to sell themselves at such young ages as seven or eight. These children are often not in school. They do not learn basic social skills that would help them become productive members of society.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are also many other negative things that happen to these children when they are out on the streets. They are coerced and manipulated into involvement with drugs and alcohol. Oftentimes they use these substances to suppress the pain of what they're going through in their lives.

One very sad story was brought to my attention by a young lady that was forced into working on the streets at the age of 13 and then tried straightening out her life. But, Mr. Speaker, just three

days before her 16th birthday, she overdosed on drugs. She died.

Mr. Speaker, children exploited through the sex trade is nothing more than paid rape. Looking at children as a means of sexual pleasure is strictly criminal. But, unfortunately, it is practically treated as though rape is legal.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important to look at the other side of this issue, and that is the side of those individuals that are buying sex from children. They appear to be some . . . there appears to be some need on their part for power, either to prove one's sense of self or have power over those that are not as powerful.

It is no doubt that in our society those with the least influence and power tend to be children. Every person in our province has a responsibility to ensure that our children and youth are protected not only from sexual predators, but also from the other ills of society that can come along to steal away our children.

Our children become perfect victims of abuse by those that seek to buy sex, but we need to educate everyone on the consequences of those actions. Continuing to ignore the problem, Mr. Speaker, will not make it go away. Life for these children involved in the sex trade can sometimes be a nightmare. In fact, almost all of the time it is a nightmare.

(14:45)

One young lady that was forced into the sex trade by her cousin said that her biggest fear was getting killed. Now that is a very telling statement, Mr. Speaker. Our children should not have to fear for their lives. Adults should be protecting them when they speak of these fears.

Not only are these children afraid that someone may physically hurt them, Mr. Speaker, there's a major concern about disease, and with a growing number of AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) cases these children are a major target.

Our children need help now. The world sex market is a multi-billion dollar industry, and when children are lured or coerced into this life they are denied their rights, their dignity, and their childhood. The activity of exploitation subjects our children to diseases, and most importantly it impedes their mental and physical health, undermining their development. Robbing a youth of their childhood is one of the most criminal acts any one person could do to another.

Mr. Speaker, studies have shown that the majority of children exploited through the sex trade are girls; however there are growing numbers of boys. Many of these children come from poor families, urban and rural areas, and are between the ages of 7 and 18. Many of these children are runaways and they turn to prostitution on their own to survive. But the vast majority are coerced into it.

One of the best ways in addressing the child sex trade is prevention. The causes of sexual exploitation of children are diverse. And although it may be easy to place blame on many, many criminal syndicates to reduce exploiters to pimps and pervers, to disparage the children themselves as promiscuous

or sexually irresponsible, no social sector can escape responsibility for the sexual exploitation of children.

Unfortunately there is no magic cure that can effectively address this problem, but one tool certainly can be put into place that can help. And that is effective provincial legislation. It is our duty to ensure that children are protected. And there is no better way to do that than to pass legislation that helps our children stay safe and sends a message to those that abuse our children, that it will not be tolerated.

We must never forget that our children are our most valued treasures. They are not to be used, and need to be loved and nurtured.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my comments by quoting Nelson Mandela:

In days gone by, and possibly even today, in many instances the view has prevailed that children should be seen and not heard. The time has come for our children to be seen and to be very closely heard. The cries of our abused and exploited children must no longer fall on deaf ears.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move the following motion, seconded by my colleague from Kelvington-Wadena:

That this Assembly urges the provincial government to introduce legislation to protect youth in our province from those involved in the child sex trade before the end of the current session of the legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have had the honour of being on the committee that is trying to protect our children from sexual exploitation. The committee has been meeting since January of the year 2000. We've met with over 200 witnesses and each one of them is involved or is concerned about our children on the street.

Mr. Speaker, we have an order of reference and a mandate that our committee has been working under for the last year and a number of months. The first one is: we are to consult with stakeholders that have an interest in this issue to determine the work that has been done to date by community representatives and service providers and seek their input of the next steps to be taken by the community and the government.

Our second mandate: is to check the strategies employed by other jurisdictions and the effectiveness of their approaches.

Our third reason, and the one that maybe is taking the longest for our committee and the one that's maybe the hardest to listen to in our committee meetings is: the reasons why children end up on the street in the first place and supports that may be necessary to help communities effectively deal with the sexual exploitation of children.

And finally: other such consultations that may be germane.

Mr. Speaker, when we initially started this committee we knew . . . all of us recognized there was a large concern out there. The number of children that were on the street was a number that was variable — we couldn't get any concise number, any firm numbers on it — but we knew that even one child was too many.

And all committee members work together and knew that there was something that this province could do if we were going to make zero tolerance the word that we wanted to be known for across this great land.

I remember so many of the testimonies that we heard and they all had a huge impact on us as it did with other committee members. One of the young girls that spoke to us had been on the street since she was 12 years old. In fact, she was the oldest of three children that had been in the house for a number of days with no adult around. She remembers there being no food in the house and no one to look after the young children, and she didn't know where to turn. So do you know what she did? She did the only thing that she knew how to do. She went out on the street and she sold her body and she sold her soul and she sold her mind. She did that, Mr. Speaker, for \$20.

She went back in the house and put her siblings in a wagon and pulled them down to the Mac's store or 7 Eleven and bought milk, and bread, and diapers, and treats for those children. Mr. Speaker, that child was never a child again.

Mr. Speaker, this is an example of the horror stories that we've heard over and over again from our committee. Everyone on our committee, every single member of our committee, and I believe everyone in this Assembly wants those stories to be a thing of the past.

They really do want zero tolerance to be the goal of our committee. We are united in our desire to totally eliminate the involvement of children in the sex trade in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, some of the reasons children are on the streets will not surprise any of the members in this House. The economic conditions of many children is very, very low. Over 85 per cent of the children that are on the street are of Aboriginal descent. Witness upon witness talked about the racism that is felt amongst Native people. The poverty that we have witnessed firsthand as we travelled around this province is hard to believe, Mr. Speaker, and not just on a reserve — off the reserve, in our cities. Right here in our province, in this beautiful province that we're all proud of there are many children living in absolutely abhorrent conditions.

Alcohol and drug abuse is a huge factor. Many of the young people we talked to stated clearly that they never knew a home life free from alcohol. Many of them had never knew what it was like to live a life away from physical and mental abuse that came from the abuse of alcohol and drugs.

One thing I believe many members should know is something that I learned during our committee members . . . our committee meetings. I believe that many of the girls, the children on the street were there to pay for their drug habit. But, Mr. Speaker, I was very, very wrong. In fact, it's the other way around.

Children that use drugs, help them . . . use them to help them forget what they have seen, what they are doing on the streets, and what they are doing to their bodies. They need the drugs to take them away from the real world that they are living in — the physical and mental and emotional abuse that comes from selling your body. They are using drugs for that reason, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other issues that we heard about, very loudly, from a number of members . . . witnesses, was the truancy that there is in our cities — in Saskatoon especially. We've heard numbers of anywhere from 600 to 1,500 children that are not going to school. They are called hidden children, not only by the witnesses that met with our committee but by the witnesses from the Role of the School report that was presented to the legislature not long ago.

Mr. Speaker, these children that are not in school are living lives that are . . . probably they don't even know that they should be in school. They have no one there at home to encourage them to go to school. They don't know what the life is where education is part of their well-being.

On Friday evening, I had an opportunity to ride along with the city police in Saskatoon and, Mr. Speaker, that was an eye-opener. We were on the street to witness first-hand what johns do, how they pick up the children, how these children are standing there helpless and not knowing where they are going to.

And, Mr. Speaker, at 3 o'clock in the morning we ran into a group of young people, 15 or 20 children that are between 10 and 12 years old that weren't at home. And when we asked them why aren't you at home, they seemed surprised that we didn't know. They didn't think of home as you and I know it — as a loving place where somebody cares about us. There was no one there to give them a curfew. There was no one there to ask them why they didn't come home at night. There was no one there to put their arm around and tell them that they loved them. They didn't understand what we know as a home life. And, Mr. Speaker, that's something that many of us cannot possibly relate to.

And these children, Mr. Speaker, that are, that are truant are the ripe candidates for being on the street for children that will be abused. Many of the children that we have talked to through our committee meeting have lived such a life.

Mr. Speaker, the stories that we have heard over and over again have one common theme. We hear that the children should no longer be penalized. It is not the children's fault. Why should we punish them over and over again?

The second thing that we heard about is that johns should not only be discouraged, they should be shamed and scared and totally embarrassed and know that they are not permitted to deal with our children in Saskatchewan the way they have been.

Mr. Speaker, that is the goal of all of the committee members.

The people that we have met with have said let's not study it any longer. Let's not talk about it any longer. Let's get on with making a difference. One of the mothers that we talked to last

year came back to our committee again this year and said, I believed in your committee. I know what you . . . I know you're all trying to do the right thing. But it's been a full year and my daughter is still out on the street and she is still lost and I can't get to her. And I'm banking on you to help me.

Mr. Speaker, that's a huge responsibility and one that everyone in this Assembly should be taking very seriously.

I have the greatest respect for the members opposite's desire to make changes that will have a positive effect on our exploited children. I know that we are united in our desire to stop this exploitation.

Mr. Speaker, it is no longer just enough to talk about it and to plan for a future change. It has to happen right now. We might not get the legislation right the very first time. We may have to amend it; we know Alberta amended their legislation. But anything that we can do now will protect some child, even if it's just for a short time, even if it's just for tonight.

And you know what this is going to do? It's going to send a very strong message that we are very sincere and determined in this respect — that we mean business, that we're willing to take a chance and maybe have a word wrong in some legislation and maybe have to make changes. But we will start getting the message out, educating the people of this province that Saskatchewan has zero tolerance for abusing children.

Mr. Speaker, that is the message that we want to send. As a united Assembly, that's what we want to do. So I will second the motion put forward by the member from Humboldt, and hope that all members in this House will join us in this desire to stop the exploitation of our children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the members opposite in talking about this very serious issue. At the conclusion of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving an amendment, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Meewasin, that I think all members of this Assembly will be able to support.

Mr. Speaker, as the members opposite have said, this is a very, very serious issue. And the two members that have spoken to this issue have sat with myself and members on this side, and the member from Moosomin as well, listening for hundreds of hours to those who have a great deal of concern about this issue in our communities.

Now we started this endeavour, as the member spoke of, well over a year ago. And I do believe that we have listened with respect to every single person who would like to speak to us, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that the time has been well spent. It has taken time for many of the stakeholders to this problem in our communities to come forward and be part of the solutions, Mr. Speaker. It has been recently that members of the First Nations community have come forward and wanted to be helpers and solvers of this problem as well, Mr. Speaker.

We started this committee and moving down the road to resolution of this problem with some very, very strong

principles, Mr. Speaker. And those principles include that every child is everybody's responsibility.

And we've heard throughout the province as we've gone about and talked to people and talked to the children, the parents, the teachers, the community service providers in our communities across the province, that this is everyone's problem and that it will take everyone to find a solution. And, Mr. Speaker, I agree with that.

(15:00)

This problem isn't one that we can't turn our backs on, we can't run from and we can't hide from. We have heard, the members of this committee, from too many children who are depending upon us to make a difference. And, Mr. Speaker, that is what we are going to attempt to do.

But we alone cannot make a difference. Until society views this heinous crime against children for what it really is, there will always be those who take advantage of our children in our society. And, Mr. Speaker, awareness in our discussions about this, helping to raise awareness, will turn more people's eyes towards this heinous crime and make it more and more socially unacceptable. And, Mr. Speaker, until every single person in our communities believes that the protection of our children is everybody's responsibility, we won't make the type of significant difference that we need to make.

Mr. Speaker, we also very clearly outlined our position that the involvement of children in the sex trade is child abuse. It is not prostitution. It is not any other event but simple child abuse, Mr. Speaker. Anybody that would abuse a child is the lowest form of individual in our society, Mr. Speaker.

And we must recognize this for what it is — child abuse. We can no longer put names on it that people are willing to accept or no longer look at it in a way that people can avoid dealing with this crime for what it is — it's simple child abuse, Mr. Speaker.

We also developed a goal, Mr. Speaker, that zero tolerance is where we want to be. There's not a single member of our committee, or do I believe a single member of this legislature, that does not want to see a goal of zero tolerance for any form of abuse of our children on the streets. And to that end, we've been working. The members of the committee have worked hard to listen to the people who are most involved in these issues on the street, who have worked most closely with the children who are involved on the streets, with their families, their parents and their communities.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have to act to protect our children and I believe the members opposite also very strongly believe that we must act to protect our children. We have heard many things and many comments from children and their parents that shake the very foundations of what you believe.

Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to have a 9- or 10-year-old child come before you in hearings and tell you about how they were first involved in the sex trade at eight and how it impacted their lives, how their parents and others were impacted by their involvement, and how their community is affected.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot have spent a year listening to all the things that we have and not have a significant dedication to moving this issue forward.

And, Mr. Speaker, this issue is one that our communities need to be part of the solution. Yes, we in the legislature must lead, and once the all-party committee brings forward its recommendations we must act.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard and researched the methods that other jurisdictions are trying to deal with this problem. We've looked from British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario. We've talked to officials in those provinces. We've talked to police officers from those provinces and we've talked to our own people within the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we have seen what has worked and reviewed what has worked in other jurisdictions. We've looked at other provinces and other states in the United States and some of the methods that they're using to tackle this problem.

But we've also looked at the root causes of this problem, Mr. Speaker, because without some of the social problems that we still have in our society that make this issue and problem much more relevant to those young children. Those young children are involved in the streets for a number of reasons — poverty, education — things that we as a government must also seek to address the root causes of why they're involved.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we must act as one to solve this problem. This is not one that has partisan politics involved. It's one that must stretch across the breadth of our communities; it's one that can only be tackled by total co-operation of all involved.

I must say that this committee, all-party committee, that I've been a part of, has worked towards that goal. I don't think there's a single member of the committee that doesn't work with the greatest relentlessness towards resolving this problem. It is one that has many dimensions. It's not simple; it's a very complex problem. It is one that many would just as soon sweep under the carpet, Mr. Speaker, and not want to deal with. If it's not in my neighbourhood, it's not my problem. Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that the people of this province view it as everybody's problem.

Mr. Speaker, we must deal with both the children that are exploited on the streets and we must deal with those who exploit them. We must be willing to deal with them in a manner that sends a message to the public that this will not be tolerated. And, Mr. Speaker, we must give the tools, knowledge, and expertise to those in our communities who work with these children to make them more able to deal with the pressures in our society and deal with the facts that they must deal with in their lives in order to become more rounded, more knowledgeable, and more able participants within our society.

Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to find any fault in these children. These are children. They are the ones being abused within our society.

Mr. Speaker, but we also have to deal with the families and the communities that have allowed this to be a silent crime, for there hasn't been a public outcry. We must deal with our First Nations communities to help them develop training mechanisms

and treatment facilities to deal with Aboriginal youth.

We must work with our cities and our departments in government to enhance our treatment facilities and capabilities to deal with these children.

And, Mr. Speaker, we must do something within a timely manner. And I think it's very important to the members opposite and to the members on this side that we do this within a timely manner. And to that end, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move an amendment, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Meewasin:

That all the words after Assembly be deleted and substituted with the following:

encourage the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade to present its report to the Legislative Assembly by the end of May, 2001, so that speedy and appropriate action based on the recommendations of the committee may be taken to protect the youth in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to second the motion made by my colleague and to enter into the general debate on this topic.

And I know that there has been a great deal of unanimity in this committee, and I know that there's also a good deal of frustration. You cannot sit and listen to the horrific stories that we have sat and listened to for the last almost 18 months and not be moved to want to deal with this problem in the speediest possible way.

I would also say, though, that being on the government side of the House, I am very cognizant of the need to craft our legislation, if indeed legislation is what the committee recommends, in the most careful manner, with great attention to detail so that we can get it right.

And it's easy to say we will make some mistakes. And I think that it's easy to say that even with very careful consideration, Mr. Speaker, that we will still make mistakes. But I don't want to give the perpetrators of this abuse of children on the street any opportunity to have more time to perfect ways to get around laws that we may be able to bring into force as soon as possible.

All members have spoken quite eloquently about the problem that these children are facing; about the stories that we heard; the very young children that are out there; the very helpless feeling that they have. And we've talked about the guiding principles of our committee — that every child is everyone's responsibility. And I'm proud of that guiding principle. And part of our mandate, I believe, is to spread that message into the general public and make sure that we all share that common goal that every child is every person's responsibility.

There are those who would, as my colleague across the way said, who would think that it's a victimless crime; that the ones

who are engaging in this practice are willing victims; that if they get some money for it, what's the harm. And the harm, Mr. Chairman, is absolutely immeasurable. It cannot be measured in any human terms that we know of. These people are left shattered. Their lives are for the most part destroyed. And it will take years and years of nurturing to put them back on any sort of a path.

And so I think in having zero tolerance as our goal, it's the noblest of goals, and we all have to work toward it. And we will have to educate people. Because children are very much left and thought of in many parts of our society as chattels, as objects to be put on the street for either the exploitation of those who would use them to bring money into the home, to bring drugs or alcohol or other things that they consider necessities of life into the home, and by those who would use them for their own personal gratification, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And it's near and dear to every member on this committee, it's near and dear to our heart to make sure that we get it right.

The behaviour by johns, we have found, can be addressed in some ways by john schools. And we find that the stories we hear from people who give those schools is that they have no idea of the effect that they're having on the people that they're abusing. But certainly that is not enough, to just send them off to a john school.

But there is some learned behaviour, and it's not going to be easy to knock that out of their system, if you will.

We understand on this side of the House, and every member of this committee understands that these children need help now. And we are as anxious as anyone to make sure that that gets done.

We know that legislation can be an effective tool, or we hope that legislation can be an effective tool. And as stated, one of the mandates of our committee was to review legislation that's been enacted in other jurisdictions.

Unfortunately from what I recall of most of that, the Manitoba legislation I think can be a useful piece of legislation in seizing the vehicles of johns and abusers. The Alberta legislation has met with a great deal of critique here in Saskatchewan, mostly from the victims of child sexual abuse on the streets who feel that it would be another form of victimization.

But I think that there needs to be some way that we can save these children from themselves if you will, some way to rescue them when they're in peril and in harm and get them to a safe place where we can begin to address the issues that face them.

(15:15)

However, the prospect of locking children into a secure system and having to deal with the possibility of chaining them if they refuse to co-operate is one that I'm not very anxious to think about.

And I think that, therefore, one of the problems that we face is that the devil is indeed in the detail of anything that we may propose to deal with this problem. And I would suggest that that

is why we must look extremely carefully at what we're going to do in taking measures to address this rather horrific and indeed heinous problem that we have.

One child wasted on the streets of our cities or our small towns is too much — one is too many. And I want to deal with it in the best way I can, but the devil is in the detail.

And so I am hopeful, with the help of my colleagues and the help of all of the resources of the legislature, that when we get our report written, that we will be able to bring forth measures to deal with this problem as quickly as possible. I'm looking forward to having our report concluded by May 30, as may be passed with this amended motion that is being proposed, and looking forward to getting this job done.

But I don't believe it will ever be done. I believe that the committee will report, measures will be taken, but I think that the invaluable experience that this committee has gained can serve as a resource to people who will be left to deal with the problem in the future.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's my pleasure to second the motion posed by my colleague. And I hope that it can meet the unanimous agreement of all members of this committee . . . of this legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And to save getting a twist in my tongue, probably the last time I'll use that term, deputy deputy.

But it's a pleasure to join in the Assembly and the debate this afternoon in regards to the motion presented to us and the amendment. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly I agree wholeheartedly with the motion and I can agree with the amendment. I think the amendment goes a long ways too in dealing with the concerns that are raised out there.

I do have one question with the amendment. I hope to address that in my remarks over the next few minutes as I speak to this motion before us.

Mr. Speaker, this whole question is a question that I think if all members and all people in our society had an opportunity to really sit down, as a number of the members in this Chamber have already indicated — the members from the opposition side and the government members — there's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that if you were to sit in on any of the consultations we had with groups across this province, and certainly with young women who some are involved in the sex trade, some who were involved in the sex trade as children, I would have to suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd find it very difficult to think that there'd be anyone who would not have a real tug in their hearts and a real sense of the deplorable state we're in when we prey on young children on the street.

This question has been raised for a number of years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's time we dealt with it. And certainly the all-party committee, which I have a privilege of being a part of, and at times, I think, we've all felt the same way, we've felt at times like we're spinning our wheels in trying to address the

questions and trying to come up with some suggestions that we would ask the government to look at and to implement very quickly.

We realize that there are some restrictive elements when it comes to bringing forward legislation. But at the same time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to take a serious look and we need to ask ourselves, are we serious about the question of whether we're not going to begin to address the question of young children on the streets. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, maybe we need to look beyond that, but our mandate was to really address the child sex trade or children in prostitution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, through our debate, we've talked to individuals, we've talked to groups, we've talked to law enforcement officers, we've talked to other provinces. And a number of issues have been raised with us, from issues of poverty and the reason that children are on the streets.

For example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one young girl mentioned that there was no food in the house and she had siblings that were younger than her. And she was told that, you know, if you just went out on the streets someone might buy sex from you and you could use that money then to buy some food for your . . . and feed your siblings.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was abhorred at that. One, it's hard to believe that in the province of Saskatchewan, in this country which we say is one of the greatest places to live, that we have young people, are placed in the situation and in home environments where there just isn't the food available, and they're prepared to sell themselves — their most precious resource if you will, the most intimate part of themselves — in order to provide for their young siblings.

And I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that certainly gripped my heart. And I believe every member on the committee was gripped by the testimonies that were raised through the numerous meetings that we held. And it didn't matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what part of the province we were in; it didn't matter where we were, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we heard the same thing.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a serious, a very serious matter, and one that needs to be dealt with. And I think you can appreciate the fact that all members have been struggling and grappling with the ways in which we can bring forward suggestions that we believe the government could act immediately to begin to address the concerns of child sex . . . or child prostitution.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the element of dealing with child sex prostitution is not just getting the children off the streets or not just dealing with those who would prey on these young children, but it's a matter as well of building some pride and letting these young people know that they are very important and very special people and they are valued as citizens of this province.

And rather than tearing their lives apart, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want to encourage and help them build their lives so they can build for their future and become active participants in our communities and in our society and, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

actually be very able-bodied participants, and providing for not only themselves but their families, and for, hopefully, down the road, their children, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So this whole question, as we've been talking about it, is there obviously is no easy, fast answer. And as my colleagues have already mentioned, the committee has met for a period of months endeavouring to come up with some suggestions.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think you will find that when the committee reports, that we will have some recommendations. We're going to come forward with some recommendations; we've committed ourselves.

There isn't a member on the committee that isn't prepared to come up with some serious recommendations, asking the government to take these recommendations seriously, and having reviewed them, to then — as a committee we've been reviewing them very carefully — we then want the government and the ministers responsible then to react quickly and very efficiently to begin to deal with the issues. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would actually like to see the government come forward with some legislation, even in this session if at all possible.

And I think while the member from Regina Dewdney's amendment is suggesting that the committee report by the end of May, my hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we are able to even beat that deadline. I know the committee members are committed to working diligently to even come forward with some recommendations before the deadline.

But I think the suggestion that's been brought forward giving us a time period to come up with recommendations is certainly, probably has given us more of an incentive to sit down and come up with some recommendations.

And while we are aiming for a time period of bringing forward these recommendations, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't want to just bring recommendations, Mr. Deputy Speaker, hoping that sometime in the distant future we're going to address this question or legislation is going to be brought forward. We would like to see, or I believe many of the committee members would like to see that the government act immediately to begin to address the questions.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they may not be able to act on every issue, because I believe you're going to see a number of recommendations coming forward and it may not be possible to move immediately on every recommendation. But I believe that we want to see the government begin to move and certainly within this session to address, begin to address some of the concerns, to show a commitment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to take the recommendations that the committee will be coming forward with very seriously.

And so having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want to take seriously the concerns that have been raised by every individual, every presenter, every police officer, every resource person, every group that has been out there working with children. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want people to take these seriously.

I believe there isn't a member in this Assembly when they hear the report brought forward by the committee, will not begin to acknowledge that this is a serious matter and that it's one that we have to move on very quickly.

And so while I certainly agree with the motion, and I appreciate the amendment and I can agree with the amendment, but I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the amendment needs to go a little further. And I would like to therefore move a following amendment, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly:

That the following words be added after the word "province":

and that the government act on these recommendations including introducing appropriate legislation prior to the end of this session.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased to enter into this debate. This is one of the most important issues that we face in this province, the question of how to stop the sexual exploitation of our children.

And in fact the child sex trade is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the problem that we face in this province with respect to the sexual exploitation of our children. Because as our special committee has gone around the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've in effect realized how large scale a problem this question of sexual exploitation of our children is — in our homes, in our communities, and on the street.

And in fact a lot of the children who are being sexually exploited on the street — most of the children who are being sexually exploited on the street by johns and pimps, by the predators of the street, in effect have first been sexually exploited in other settings in their community or at home.

Now I do want to point out that our government has already taken a number of actions with respect to try to curb the exploitation of children in the sex trade. Members opposite haven't made reference to any of those actions but I would like to do that now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Let's not forget that the province of Saskatchewan already funds street outreach agencies in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, and North Battleford to work with children who are being sexually exploited on the street.

Let's also not forget that the province funds a safe house in Saskatoon that's run by the Saskatoon Tribal Council. Both the Department of Justice and the Department of Social Services provide about \$180,000 of funding a year to that safe house as a place of security for children who are either at risk of becoming involved in the sex trade or are already in some way involved in the sex trade in Saskatoon. And I might add that Saskatoon District Health also provides funding to that initiative.

(15:30)

Let's not forget that the province has just announced a \$10 million initiative to try to curb, among other things, domestic abuse in the home, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have announced that we are going to invest money in communities where children are particularly at risk and in neighbourhoods where children are particularly at risk and we're going to try to set up home visitation support services to high-risk families. Now this initiative has been undertaken by a number of US (United States) states and the results have been very good, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of reducing domestic abuse in the home.

So obviously our government is very concerned about all of these issues and the whole purpose for setting up the special committee was to receive recommendations on an action plan for how to stop children being exploited on the street. And our government I know will move forward with many of the recommendations that are contained in the report.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about some of the issues that we're currently looking at in the report. We're looking at ways of addressing the problem of children not in school, because many of the children who are involved in the sex trade are also not in school. And we're looking at what sort of supports we could give to those children to get them back into school, because once kids are not in school they're at much higher risk of becoming involved in the sex trade.

I think that one of the important preventive measures we can take is ensuring that we sharply reduce the number of children under 16 who are not in school in our major cities, and we're looking very seriously at that.

We're looking seriously at the idea of a network of safe houses across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that would be a place of safety for children in high-risk neighbourhoods, and particularly children who are already involved in some way in the sex trade, as the starting point for trying to pull them off the street on a permanent basis.

We are looking at the potential for expanding significantly alcohol and drug treatment facilities for children who've been sexually exploited and putting in place appropriate counselling services not only for the children themselves, but also for their families, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We are looking at questions of providing adequate housing for children who are currently on the street, particularly if they can't stay safely with an extended family member.

We are looking at the potential for other ways of children who are being sexually exploited but have turned to the street as a way of earning money. We're looking at other ways for them to be provided with employment opportunities and a source of revenue.

So we're looking at a number of issues — and I've just given these as examples, Mr. Deputy Speaker — that are not related to legislation but are good, sound policy measures and budget measures that need to be discussed and introduced in this Assembly.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, finally, we are looking at a legislative package, and we're going to be, in fact, discussing a

potential legislative package when the special committee meets an hour and a half from now. We'll be meeting between 5:15 and 8 p.m. tonight and what we're going to be discussing is a package of legislation that we might be able to recommend to the Assembly.

So clearly all members of the committee and both government and opposition in this House are committed to moving forward with this agenda.

Now I just want to say a word about the question of legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am absolutely committed to seeing legislation introduced as quickly as possible to both deter johns and protect children. Whether a full package of legislation can be introduced during this session, Mr. Deputy Speaker, remains to be seen. I think we should see first what the final report of the committee is.

And I just want to comment on both legislation that — and I'm speaking personally now and not on behalf of the government in any way, but speaking personally — I think there are some Bills that we could look at introducing in this session, because the framework for the Bills has been worked on by other provinces to some degree already.

And I use as an example the legislation that we are currently looking at to seize the vehicles of johns. We've got this legislation operating in Manitoba already. And if the committee decides to recommend to the legislature that we adopt similar legislation, it would be possible, I think, to get this legislation through in this session as long as the official opposition are willing to agree.

But there's a lot of other legislative instruments we're looking at, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that really will have to be built from the ground up.

For instance we're looking at the concept of children who have been sexually abused on the street being able to launch a civil suit against the john who abused them or against the pimp who abused them. No other jurisdiction in the world has ever undertaken such legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it won't be possible to introduce it between the time the committee reports at the end of May and the end of this legislative session in June.

We are looking at the idea of high surveillance areas, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Areas in the ... that would essentially represent the stroll areas of our city ... of our cities. In Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert, in particularly ... in particular, there's certain blocks that are known to be the stroll. And on those blocks men regularly pick up children, seeking sexual services.

And it's my view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the police need to be given additional powers in those neighbourhoods to fully investigate the nature of the relationship between the man who picks a child up in a car, and the child. And it's my view that if the man can't demonstrate a natural relationship between himself and the child in the car, that a full investigation of what is happening should take place.

But there are significant issues to look at here with respect to

the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, with respect to encroachment on the Criminal Code. And I just want to say to all members of the Assembly, in all sincerity, that these are not questions that are going to be resolved in a matter of four weeks after the committee reports.

So there is some legislation I believe we can do in this session and there is some legislation that is going to need to wait until the next session, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's why I support the amendment that's being put forward by my colleague, the member for Regina Dewdney.

Thank you so much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wartman: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a question of the mover of the amendment, if I may?

The Deputy Speaker: — . . . a few seconds left in the . . . Does the member wish to speak to the motion?

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's usually a pleasure to rise and to speak in this House, but on this occasion I'm . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. I would like to thank the hon. member for Regina Northeast, however the time for the 65-minute debate portion has expired. We are now going into the 10-minute portion for questions and answers of members.

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the mover of the amendment, from my perspective it is clear that everyone in this legislature, those of us who have been listening to our colleagues, who have heard those colleagues who are on the special committee report, it is clear that everyone in this legislature is committed to doing what we can as soon as we are able to, to try and put an end to this heinous, heinous activity that's going on out in the community.

There is a job that needs to be done. We asked this committee to go out and to investigate the problems, to come back with clear and responsible recommendations for this legislature. And, Mr. Speaker, we want the legislation that we make here to be effective. In order to do that, I believe we need to have an effective, responsible report. And so I ask, is it your intention that the government should take action beyond what is currently being done before the special committee presents its recommendations? It seems a little to me like, what I believe it was Steven Laycock said, getting on his horse and riding . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Would the member please . . . Question.

Mr. Wartman: — Do you want this action to be taken before the committee presents its recommendations?

The Deputy Speaker: — I will let the member from Humboldt respond. I just remind the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley to direct the questions through the Chair, please.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy

Speaker, through you to the member, it has been certainly indicated a number of times by people prior to committee meetings as well as during committee hearings that there was a requirement or a request rather for legislation that would deter johns.

The committee had, as part of its mandate and its guiding principles, one of zero tolerance. Zero tolerance is a phrase that is pointed towards zero tolerance for offences committed against children as well as zero tolerance by society for continuing and allowing the abuse of children on the streets.

So within that context, I do believe that in looking at zero tolerance, that the people of Saskatchewan want us very quickly and expediently to look at the recommendations for legislation that have been put before us and to make sure that that happens for the sake of the children. We need to, and I think everyone would . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order.

Mr. Prebble: — I have a question for the mover of the motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and through you my question is that will the mover of the motion acknowledge that while there is some legislation that we may be able to implement quite speedily in this Assembly, and I use as an example the seizure of vehicles driven by johns, because this legislation is already being developed by Manitoba; that a lot of the legislation we're looking at is essentially cutting-edge legislation that in many cases no other jurisdiction has implemented. And I use as an example legislation that we're looking at with respect to children being able to launch a civil suit against their john, legislation around giving police additional investigative powers in high surveillance areas around the stroll.

Will the member acknowledge that there are significant issues around the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and around the potential encroachment on the Criminal Code that have to be looked at with care? And that that may be a reason why that legislation would have to be delayed until another session and would be difficult to implement now; whereas there are some things that we can implement now and therefore ought to do.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. That was a lot that you have mentioned there. I'm speaking to the member from Greystone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there certainly was presented to our committee the Manitoba legislation, which lays out a format for legislation that's already working in Manitoba and quite successful. We also have a complete format within the parameters of the legislation that is going to be given Royal Assent, I believe, in British Columbia this fall called the Secure Care Act. We also have the complete legislation from Alberta that has been made before us.

We may be very innovative in our way of approaching things and combine components and aspects of those Acts that will contribute to one strong Act in Saskatchewan. And because those Acts are already printed, the contents are laid out before us, I don't see why we can't do that very expediently and before the end of this session.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again to the hon. member for Humboldt who I have a great deal of respect for on this issue, but I want to ask her, will the member for Humboldt acknowledge that what happened in Alberta is that before legislation was introduced, services were put in place for children. The crucial question here with respect to any legislation around, in effect holding children in closed custody and preventing them from going out on the street can't be put in place until the services are in place.

So in effect, in my judgment, will she not acknowledge that it's only the Manitoba legislation that we could really duplicate right now. And with respect to all the other legislation we're looking at, the questions . . . will she not acknowledge that the questions around Charter of Rights and Freedoms have to be looked at with great care. We urgently need to do this, but we need to do it right. Will she not acknowledge that, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Ms. Julé: — Thanks, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Number one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that in reference to your comments on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, certainly we care enough to do our very best. And in placing our very best before the children of the province to protect them, we may — we may — end up having a challenge. However other provinces have done that too. They cared enough about their children; they moved. They moved; they made some changes. And that's what's important here today in Saskatchewan.

In addition, I think that it is really very important to recognize that you yourself — through the Chair, to the member from Greystone — you yourself had indicated to the media that there would be legislation tabled in this legislature before the end of this session.

So I think that your intent at that time in saying that was very good, knowing that we have all the resources at hand. The government has financial resources, human resources, expertise, I hope, to look at all of these pieces of legislation and to put out one strong piece of legislation for this province.

And I believe it can be done if we utilize all the resources properly.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I personally favour the idea of us introducing legislation on seizure of vehicles in this session. I just want to say personally, I would support that. I want to make that very clear.

But I also want to make it clear that there are complex issues around a lot of the other legislative packages that I hope all members of this Assembly will acknowledge.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to say in asking a final question of the member for Humboldt, will she not acknowledge that in fact the Alberta legislation that she makes reference to does not address the fundamental issue that all members in this Assembly recognize needs to be addressed and that is deterrence of johns. Not a single john has been charged under the Alberta legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And what we need to do in this province is craft legislation that will truly deter johns. And will she not acknowledge that that's the fundamental task and that it's going to take some real care to craft that legislation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question of deterring johns has been quite nicely addressed by presenters from the Vancouver City Police. There is a major deterrent of johns. It's working. It's in place. It could be a part of our legislation. It is also a protective measure for children on the streets. It's a tracking system.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are also components of the Alberta legislation that we could certainly work on.

What we are saying, very clearly, to the members opposite and to the member from Greystone — because he's the one that brought this question forward — is let's get moving. Let's do something, let's do something now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will attempt to make my question longer than I did my debate in this particular motion.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the committee, I believe that the member from Humboldt would agree that we had many witnesses come forward to committee that identified that yes, there's a problem existing on the street today and that does, of course, need our attention as quickly as possible. But at the same time, many witnesses identified root causes that would continue that problem to be there unless we are able to address the root causes.

My question to the member is: what would you suggest legislation would be in place to address the root causes as causing young children to be on the streets?

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot answer the member that has presented that question because he knows very well that that is part of recommendations that will come forward.

But we have had suggestions come forward to us to address root causes as very much as we can with what we have right now. They contain recommendations for work with children that are on the streets, that are out of school, talking about poverty, talking about different cultural programs that can be put in place on- and off-reserve to deal with the Aboriginal people and their issues with children on the streets. So we have a number of recommendations to deal with that.

What I think is really important to look at and to understand that we also had the mandate to look at other jurisdictions and what they were doing. And part of those efforts that they were putting forward were pieces of legislation.

Every province that we talked to had put forward legislation. We have a template of their legislation. I have reviewed those legislations, the Secure Care Act in British Columbia, the Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act in Alberta,

and the one referring to the seizure of vehicles in Manitoba. I don't think that we need to go through those things with a fine-tooth comb; they're there for us.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The time for the 75-minute debate has now expired.

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 301 — The International Bible College Amendment Act, 2001

Ms. Higgins: — I move Bill No. 301, The International Bible College Amendment Act, 2001 be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Bill No. 302 — The Our Lady of the Prairies Foundation Act, 2001

Mr. Addley: — I move Bill No. 302, The Our Lady of the Prairies Foundation Act, 2001 be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Bill No. 303 — The Providence Hospital, Moose Jaw Repeal Act

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I stand here with somewhat mixed feelings because this Bill marks the end of a wonderful facility in Moose Jaw that served its citizens well. But it's my pleasure to move Bill No. 303, The Providence Hospital, Moose Jaw Repeal Act be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Bill No. 304 — The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities Amendment Act, 2001

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move Bill No. 304, The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities Amendment Act, 2001 be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Bill No. 305 — The St. Anthony's Home Repeal Act

Ms. Higgins: — I move Bill No. 305, The St. Anthony's Home Repeal Act be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Bill No. 306 — The St. Thomas More College Act, 2001

Mr. Addley: — I move Bill No. 306, The St. Thomas More College Act, 2001 be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 3 — Canadian Softwood Lumber Industry

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have all heard in the media and seen lately on the nightly news the on-again, off-again dispute with the United States over the softwood lumber industry in Canada, and our exports that go through to the United States.

Canada/US trade in softwood lumber has been under close scrutiny by the US softwood lumber industry for over 20 years, based on petitions filed by the United States industry and the United States government.

The United States government initiated countervailing duty investigations against softwood lumber exports from Canada in 1982 and 1986. These investigations focused on federal and provincial government programs alleged to provide subsidies to the softwood lumber sector. They feel, Mr. Speaker, that our stumpage charges for Crown land are too low, and they class these as subsidies.

In the past these investigations focused on the softwood lumber industry in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec. The Atlantic provinces were excluded from these investigations on the basis that the majority of the timber harvested in these provinces is taken from private rather than Crown land.

Mr. Speaker, this can be a confusing and maybe somewhat boring issue, but I would like to give the House just a bit of an explanation of what has taken place.

In countervailance cases, the US Department of Commerce determines where there are countervailable subsidies provided by governments that provide benefits in specific industries. In anti-dumping cases, the US Department of Commerce determines whether foreign producers are exporting products to the US that are either below price in the exporting country or below the cost of production.

In both countervailing duty and anti-dumping cases, the International Trade Commission determines whether US domestic industry is materially injured by either or both subsidized or dumped imports. If both agencies agree at affirmative rulings, then the countervailing and/or anti-dumping duties can be imposed.

In 1982, Mr. Speaker, it was ruled that provincial stumpage systems were generally available and therefore not countervailable government programs. In 1986, it was concluded that the stumpage programs of the four provinces were specific and conferred a benefit on the softwood lumber sector.

(16:00)

The International Trade Commission determined that the subsidized imports were causing injury to the US domestic softwood lumber industry. Even though the investigation examined the measures of four provinces, duties were applied on exports from all, except the Atlantic provinces, including our province of Saskatchewan.

Now prior to these duties being levied in 1986, Canada and the US entered into an agreement under which Canada collected a 15 per cent levy on lumber exports from all provinces except the Atlantic provinces.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we continue to export softwood lumber, the Americans, as these shipments went across the border, the Americans would have levied duties which would have been collected and would have been sent to the American Treasury in Washington, DC (District of Columbia). So what the Canadians decided to do was put an export duty on those shipments before they left Canada so that the dollars could be collected in Canada and retained here in the provinces.

But in 1991 Canada terminated this memorandum of understanding. And again the United States Department of Commerce initiated a third countervailing duty investigation. This time it found that the provincial stumpage systems and BC's log export restrictions were countervailing measures. However Canada successfully challenged this ruling through the Canada/US Free Trade Agreement dispute-settlement process, and duties collected were eventually returned.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this could go on and on. This was the third time that these duties had been imposed against the Canada softwood lumber industry. And every time we won a case, the Americans just reinitiated the case. We would forever have been in court.

And rather than continue with another round of countervailing duty action, Canada and the four major lumber exporting provinces — British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec — agreed to negotiate a five-year agreement with the United States that limited the level of Canadian exports on an annual basis.

The Canada/US Softwood Lumber Agreement was implemented April 1, 1996. Softwood exports produced in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Territories, and the Atlantic provinces, faced no restrictions over the duration of this agreement.

But, Mr. Speaker, on March 31 of this year the Softwood Lumber Agreement expired. And on April 2 of this year the U.S. Coalition for Fair Lumber Imports again filed petitions requesting the US Department of Commerce to launch countervailing duty and anti-dumping investigations against softwood lumber exports from Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this is the fourth countervailing duty action taken by the United States against Canada, but it's the first anti-dumping action.

Now there's a very formal process that goes along with these

actions taken against our softwood lumber industry in Canada and they follow a legislatively based timetable. Now once a preliminary determination of subsidy and/or dumping is agreed on, bonds are required on any shipments sent to the United States. Once a final determination is made, including a ruling of injury to domestic markets, countervailing and/or anti-dumping duties are imposed and cash deposits are required on shipments.

And when we're talking about the amount of softwood lumber from Canada that goes south across the border, we're talking about a staggering amount of dollars and a big impact on the industry that we have here in Canada.

But these preliminary and final investigations are expected to conclude in the spring of 2002. If an unfavourable ruling is reached, Canada has the option of appealing under the North American Free Trade Agreement. But only the process, because for some reason, Mr. Speaker, softwood was left out of the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) agreement. We also have the ability to seek WTO (World Trade Organization) rulings but again only on process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've tried to keep the explanation short but it's a complicated situation and has gone on for a number of years. And like I said right at the beginning when we see the reports in the media and on the TV, they show the forest industry in British Columbia cutting down trees and shipping them south across the border. And we honestly don't give it a second thought.

But, Mr. Speaker, all we have to do is stop and think of the industry that is taking off in northern Saskatchewan and we have to ask ourselves what does this mean for Saskatchewan and us here in our home province.

For the first time, Saskatchewan's forest stumpage program has been included in the trade actions initiated by the United States. Saskatchewan has a relatively small, by world standards, but rapidly expanding softwood lumber industry that depends on the United States market for a significant portion of our sales.

Now Saskatchewan softwood lumber exports in 2000 account for about 2 per cent of Canada's total of \$9.2 billion worth of softwood lumber exports that go to the US. Two per cent doesn't sound like much, Mr. Speaker, but that works out to an approximate \$190 million that comes into this province and supports an industry that means a great deal.

Now the American petitions are calling for duties and anti-dumping tariffs that could severely damage the industry that is really just taking off in this province. It would effectively destroy or seriously cripple the softwood lumber industry in our province.

The Saskatchewan government is disappointed with the countervailing duty and anti-dumping cases launched by the United States against our exports of softwood lumber. And we are taking action to defend what we feel is a fair system in our province.

In the countervailing duty case, Saskatchewan will defend the forest . . . province's forest stumpage program against the

allegations of the United States industry that the Saskatchewan program provides subsidies to lumber producers. We have hired legal counsel in Washington, D.C. to assist our defence. And we will work with our counterparts in the federal government and other provinces and the industry in defending our province and our programs in our province.

Now for many of us that live in the South . . . and you can see for miles and we all know all the jokes there is about seeing your dog run away for two days. But the northern half of our province is not at all like this. And I think for any of us that have had the privilege to travel into central and northern Saskatchewan, it is a beautiful part that we need to encourage and develop but maintain also for its beauty.

In northern Saskatchewan, central to northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we have in operation over 190 sawmills. Now most of these supply to local markets within the province and within their community. But there are approximately 11 large mills in these central and northern communities that export a majority of what they cut and produce.

Now these 11 mills will be drastically affected by these duties and actions if they do come to pass. And these 11 mills, Mr. Speaker, are in 11 different communities. And between the 11 of these mills they employ over 1,650 people in our province. This is an important source of jobs for northern Saskatchewan, and especially in the Aboriginal communities in these areas. How many families will be affected, Mr. Speaker?

This problem doesn't affect only British Columbia or Ontario. It affects here in our home and will affect many of our citizens.

In Saskatchewan we've produced 750 million board feet and 90 per cent of that is exported. That's very important to Saskatchewan. That's \$190 million industry.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move a motion, seconded by the member from Regina Northeast:

That this Assembly urge the federal government to do everything in its power to stop the proposed American trade sanctions against the Canadian softwood lumber industry, actions which are clearly protectionist in nature, actions which have the potential to adversely affect Saskatchewan exports of softwood lumber which were valued at \$190 million in 2000.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to second the motion moved by my colleague, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

First, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to confess that I am no expert in the softwood lumber industry. Part of that reason is because I don't think there's too many lumberjacks live in my constituency, Regina Northeast. Although, Mr. Speaker, according to my colleague, the member from Regina Coronation Park, he has suggested that there is a rumour out there that Paul Bunyan did live in Regina for a while and perhaps even lived in parts of my constituency. And I've heard that rumour before.

But I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Premier decided to

make Paul Bunyan the Minister of Health, and of course, Mr. Speaker, the opposition accused the Minister of Health on occasions of trying to hide. I find it a really tough to hide Paul Bunyan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's a big hide.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity to enter into this debate because the softwood lumber industry is a very important part of our provincial economy. As the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has already indicated, it results in about \$190 million worth of exports from Saskatchewan. Most of those exports, of course, are going into the US.

It's interesting though, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the history . . . and I, the other day, came across an article in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, April 4, by Barry McKenna, that sort of clearly outlined what the issue is in a broad term. And a bit of the history — and I found it quite interesting — that the softwood lumber fight between Canada and the United States is something that has, has been going on for some time. In fact I guess the first dispute took place in 1853. And it's always been a contentious issue between the United States and Canada.

In more recent times — and not quite recently, but I'm sure many of the members, particularly the member from Rosthern would probably remember this quite well — was that during the Great Depression when Canada was hit by the United State's first countervailing duties of \$1 per 1,000 board feet, and that has been kind of a sore spot between Canada and the United States for a number of years and has been an interesting issue. Because every time that the Americans have tried to take countervailing steps against Canada, the justice system, the judicial system, international judicial system will rule against them and they will simply accept that ruling and start the process all over again. It's been a number of occasions since the '60s and through the '80s.

But I also find it's very interesting, Mr. Speaker, that during the free trade debate that took place and negotiations that took place between the federal government — I believe it was the federal cousins of the member's opposite, the Mulroney government who was negotiating the Free Trade Agreement — and during that time they left out or made the softwood lumber industry exempt from the conditions of the Free Trade Agreement.

And I find that interesting, Mr. Speaker, that an issue that has been so contentious between the two countries for such a long period of time was so willingly overlooked by our negotiators — the Mulroney government — and you would think that if they were really serious about maintaining a fair and equitable balance of trade between . . . and fairness of trade between our two countries, they would have certainly taken into account an issue that has been, on a long term, a contentious issue between the two countries. But that unfortunately was not the case.

So as a result we find ourselves once again in a situation where we have an agreement that has expired and we are now entering into a conflict, a trade conflict, between the two countries. And on the surface the United States claim primarily, or allege, unfair Canadian subsidies. But yet when we look closely at the situation it's more the difference, I guess you would say, in governance of the issue.

(16:15)

When we look at the United States for example, the vast majority of the woodlots in the good old US of A (United States of America) are privately owned and totally different, I guess you would say, or most fundamentally different in the nature of the governance of the two countries. Whereas in Canada here, the vast majority of the wood lots or the timberland here is owned by the public sector — federal and/or provincial governments.

And I think this is an indication that United States is attempting to force upon Canadians their style of governments . . . governance, rather. They would like to see the softwood industry here moulded to reflect very much that of the US.

The United States also says that Canada is dumping or selling lumber at less than what it costs to produce in the US market. But more to the point, the US mill owners argue that the provinces from Quebec and westward through British Columbia are giving away their trees at a fraction of their true value.

And I suppose it depends on your point of view, but if you look at the governance of the forest industry, the Americans would have much of their forest industry as privately owned, and I suppose they're profit motivated to demand the highest return that the market can bear.

But the Americans are buying raw lumber, raw timber from Canada so that it can saw it into two-by-fours and take it back home.

And I find also another interesting article here, Mr. Speaker, that indicated that the US Homebuyers Association were in Washington lobbying the Washington government to not to enter into any trade-distorting arrangements with Canada, because if they were to do such, it would increase the cost of the input of lumber. It would also drive up an estimated 800 to \$1,300 more on a cost of a new house in the United States. These increases and increased prices would put nearly 300,000 families out of the reach of their lifelong dream of owning a family home.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it all boils down to the approach, the direction, and the style of governance between the two countries as far as the forest industry is concerned.

I believe that a while back the foresters . . . the forest industry in the United States presented a petition to the US State Department there. And the petition consisted of about 5,000 pages. And this was really a fight over the free-market principles. Both countries have a forest industry that employs tens of thousands of workers from one end of the country to the other, generating billions of dollars in sales.

But Canada and the United States would not be in this fight were it not for the forest ownership. That seems to be the crux of the problem is the ownership of the forest. In Canada 94 per cent of the timberland is owned by government — Crown land — whether it be federal and/or provincial. In the United States 58 per cent of the timberland is in private hands, owned by woodlot owners or lumber mills. The rest is split between . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Leave to introduce visitors.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's my pleasure indeed to introduce some visitors from northern Saskatchewan, to be more precise, from Pinehouse. These are 10 students from grade 11 and 12 from Minahik Waskahigan School, Pinehouse School. They are accompanied by their teacher Gloria Belcourt, and chaperones Neil Natomagan and Bella Pederson.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like also to give them a good northern Saskatchewan welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Ta wow mistuhi tugagenee tagun ootu e tugosinek legislature. Meschusees ku wapumitinawaw.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was just saying that it's always tremendous to welcome, you know, the people from the North and their safe arrival here, but also that I will be sitting with them in a little while and having a photograph and maybe some questions on how the House is running.

So all members, please welcome our visitors from the North.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 3 — Canadian Softwood Lumber Industry (continued)

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was just mentioning to my colleague here that I sort of lost the point I was trying to make so I guess I'll have to start all over again. But, Mr. Speaker, I won't put you through that nor the members of the Assembly.

But as I was saying, Mr. Speaker, in Canada 94 per cent of all the timberland is government owned. It's Crown land, it's on Crown land. It's either owned by the federal government or the provincial governments. That's with the exception of the Maritime provinces, Mr. Speaker, which I think the vast majority of the forest in the Maritime provinces is privately owned.

In the United States some 58 per cent of the timberland is in private hands, owned by woodlot owners and mill operators. And the rest of the . . . is split between the federal state and local governments. And increasingly, environmentalists and recreational pressures are putting federal and state lands out of the reach of the timber companies, further tilting the balance.

So as we see, Mr. Speaker, the United States is finding themselves, I think, in a situation where their traditional domestic supplies of timber are tightening up. And they are required to look outside of their boundaries and outside of their state lines to find those suppliers. And as the law of supply and demand, as the supply tightens, those holders of that supply are

demanding more in return for those goods shipped.

So I think that's really the crux of the problem here, Mr. Speaker. And the Americans, as I've already indicated, certainly note that as the supply of raw material, raw logs, raw timber to be turned into two-by-fours and to be turned into building material for building homes, as that cost rise, so rise the cost of building a new home for the average family in the US.

As I've already indicated, I believe that I noted in some of my research here that the cost of an average 1,200 square foot bungalow, the average family home in the United States is expected to rise by anywhere between 800 and \$1,300 per house. In that case, Mr. Speaker, it would put nearly 300,000 families out of reach of being able to own their own home.

The effect that the Americans' decision to introduce countervailing duties and to once again start a softwood lumber dispute between the two countries is of course going to have a dramatic effect on us here in Saskatchewan. As I've already indicated, Saskatchewan exports of soft lumber I think in the year 2000 was . . . made up nearly 2 per cent of all of the Canadian exports. But for Saskatchewan it meant \$190 million dollars worth of exports out of an industry that overall in Canada is responsible for \$9.2 billion of exports to the US.

So it does have a dramatic effect on us in Canada and on us here in Saskatchewan. I think that effect has a rippling effect because as the mills and the industry here in this province find it difficult to export the material they produce, they have then little option but to cut back their operation and perhaps in some cases even cease operation.

Well what does this mean? It means that it will affect those communities where those mills are situated. It will affect workers; it will affect workers and workers' families because a loss of job means loss of income. But it also affects the community because when that mainstay of a community — in many cases the forest industry and the mill is located in that community, is the mainstay of that community — when those jobs are lost, that income is lost, it's a loss to the main street — to the grocery store owner, to the little garage on the corner that repairs cars and fixes their automobiles, and so on and so forth. So it has quite a dramatic effect on not only the community, but a rippling effect through our entire economy.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I do believe there is a great deal of need to impress upon the federal government to move with haste to resolve the dispute, but not at the expense of giving away our ability to govern our own resource.

We have experienced that in the past, Mr. Speaker, with the Mulroney government, the federal cousins of the members opposite here, when they have entered into a negotiation with the federal . . . with the United States government, in coming up with a Free Trade Agreement that really had a negative effect upon Saskatchewan, a negative effect on Canada, our resources, and our ability to continue to govern those resources.

And I would encourage through this debate, I would encourage the federal government to move with haste, move with haste, but at the same time do it right, do it right — don't give away

the farm. We experienced that, Mr. Speaker . . . northern wood . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well of course if it's a wood farm I guess you could do that, but northern wood.

But we experienced that in the past, Mr. Speaker, and I think that we have a duty, I think we have a duty to Canadian citizens today and the Canadian citizens of the future, to guard against that type of governance that is so misguided.

We've seen that by the provincial cousins and the members opposite during the '80s here, when they gave away this province at every opportunity they could. We've seen that same experience federally when the federal cousins were in power, giving away the natural resources.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite will on occasion say that, leave it up to them and they would make our taxes go down. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have given a lot of thought about that, I've given a lot of thought about that, and they may be correct, Mr. Speaker — and you may be surprised to hear me say this — but they may be correct. If they were ever the government of this province, I'm afraid our taxes would go down — our tax dollars would be going down to Dallas, our tax dollars would be going down to Seattle, our tax dollars would be going down to New York. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe our tax dollars would be staying in this province to work for the people of this province.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude my remarks. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Minister. I want to add one or two comments if I could with regards to the motion brought forward by the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow. Actually what was said by the mover of this motion was very important and I appreciated the background that was covered. I think it was very extensive, very thorough, and I think it was right on the money.

I think the fact is that this is a very important aspect, Mr. Deputy Chair, of the industry. It is very critical to us. We're very concerned about all the industries in the Saskatchewan economy and particularly this one because of its . . . it has a lot of jobs in the North. And in the north part of Saskatchewan not only will it be a detriment by the economy, but certainly a detriment for those people that are working in that industry.

So what I wanted to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to actually indicate my support for this motion because I think it is a very, a very critical issue and I think there is a function that the federal government can play in this kind of dispute.

From my . . . some of my earlier life, I was involved in other kinds of disputes in the grain industry and certainly these disputes can be detrimental if they carry on for a long time. And one of the opportunities that maybe we bypassed in the past, but one of the opportunities that we should be certainly encouraging is looking at these situations and trying to eliminate some of the problems. And the reason that we can do that would be if we included those kinds of agreements under the trade agreements that we have been negotiating in the past.

(16:30)

Because under those trade agreements there are mechanisms to address disagreements and uncertainties such as this.

The amount of free trade that goes on between Canada and the United States has been going on for some time and it's been increasing now. And I think from the polls that we have seen recently, there's a great deal of support for this kind of free trade, even though when it was negotiated in the first place there was a great deal of concern about it, certainly expressed by the NDP government both provincially and federally.

But in supporting this motion I'd like to really endorse it in such a way that we should be moving even further into the direction of asking for the federal government to become involved in, and in fact, essentially endorsing the whole aspect of free trade. Because when you get into free trade, those are the mechanisms that I referred to earlier.

Those mechanisms can in fact be worked out beforehand, and when it becomes to a critical state like we are now, it is the federal government as part of their role to become involved and make sure that the mechanisms that are negotiated in that agreement come into play, and try and sort this out before it gets any further . . . any more serious and damaging to our particular industry.

One of the problems that I've had with this whole free trade issue though, Mr. Speaker, is that the federal government seems to be very reluctant at times to get involved. And unfortunately in this situation, the agreement that was negotiated, as was described by the members opposite, this agreement did in fact run out. And currently there is going to be, I'm afraid, some time before it can be sorted out properly.

I would like to recognize that under free trade, the barriers that are in place are considered in the bigger picture. And protectionism in an individual situation such as the softwood dispute that we're now presently addressing — earlier in the grain industry, in several different grain, barley, wheat; in the beef industry from time to time; hog industry; and earlier in the auto industry — those kinds of protectionisms are just very detrimental to our economy.

And so it's very important that we become further involved in the free trade agreements as they are being negotiated.

And I noticed last week when we were talking about the . . . when there was an assembly in Quebec City, the assembly of Americas discussing the Free Trade Agreement for the Americas, there was again a lot of protestors out. And I noticed that the leader of the national NDP was one of the leading protestors, protesting against such things as free trade.

Well without the free trade conditions in place we can expect to have a lot of punitive actions against us and protectionisms put in place. And I think it's very important.

There was a lot of concerns expressed by those protestors, but I really believe that the interests of Canada and its trading partner would be better preserved if in fact everything was included under the agreement.

We saw that when the negotiations completed with the United States, trade between our countries increased quite substantively. I also noticed that when the agreement was expanded to Mexico, trade again expanded. And now we're thinking of other members of North America . . . of the Americas.

We have been negotiating with Chile. Chile has become a part of these negotiations and agreements as well. And again, trade is flourishing right there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many issues that should be included in these free trades and the more free trade agreements we have, the more trading partners we have. And as we become more confident in our trading partners, we become more and more confident that we can get around these kinds of disputes even though there . . . in any perfect match, there's always some frustrations and these will have to be worked out.

But the motion that was put forward I think was trying to put the message across that there is a concern, there is a responsibility of the federal government, there is a responsibility to negotiate these kinds of things. And in fact because of that, I would like to at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, put forward . . . I would like to move an amendment to that motion, moved by myself and seconded by the member from Shellbrook-Spiritwood:

The following be added after the words "in 2000":

that this Assembly express its support for the continuation and expansion of free trade agreements with other nations in order to limit such protectionist action being taken against important Canadian industries in the future.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to talk on forestry, and also second the amendment put forth by the member from Lloydminster.

In regards to forestry, probably half of my constituency, which is Shellbrook-Spiritwood, is probably taken up by forestry and forestry in that area is a real asset to the province and to the people that live there. In fact, for the members opposite, the largest mill in Saskatchewan happens to be in my constituency. In fact, it's in Big River and it is owned by Weyerhaeuser.

Forestry is certainly an important contributor to Saskatchewan's economy and we certainly support doing all we can to ensure the industry remains healthy. This is a particularly important industry in job creation because the jobs are in the North, part of my constituency, where unemployment can be extremely, very, very high.

So we do support this motion as the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow put forth, but we believe that it has to go a step further as well. And that is why we are putting forth this amendment.

We're very pleased to see the members opposite put forth this motion that is essentially an endorsement of not only free trade but also fair trade.

I'd also like to read a comment from the Canadian Press, and it states:

Saskatchewan producers may have been exempt from softwood lumber quotas in the United States, but there is nowhere to hide if the US government applies the 80 per cent duties in industry that they are asking for.

The US lumber producers are seeking duties of 70 to 80 per cent against Canadian lumber exports. Provincial governments are subsidizing the Canadian industry, and that some companies are dumping unfairly priced wood into the US market. The possibility of high duties comes at a bad time for the industry already trying to cope with the prices at a 10-year low. If the duties are ultimately applied by the US government they could make Canadian lumber too expensive for US customers and force massive closures in the Canadian lumber industry.

A member from Weyerhaeuser, Dave Larsen, the executive president of public affairs for Weyerhaeuser Canada, the largest forestry company in Canada and in Saskatchewan, said:

Doing business during the Commerce department's investigation might be even worse than quota systems of this company. It's really disappointing that it came to this and there wasn't some resolution or negotiation process done before. It causes real upheaval and uncertainty for the market, for consumers in the States, and for employees in Canada and for our communities in Canada.

I also want to read, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a letter that was written by Weyerhaeuser Canada to Mr. George W. Bush, President George W. Bush, and also to Premier or Prime Minister Jean Chrétien requesting their support for the government's sponsored envoy process to help develop a long-term solution to the softwood lumber dispute between Canada and the United States. And it states and I quote:

(Mr.) President Bush:

Subject: Softwood Lumber Dispute.

With the expiry of the U.S./Canada Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA) last month, the United States and Canadian governments and forest products industry are now facing a protracted, expensive and uncertain legal process that, in Weyerhaeuser Company's view, is not likely to resolve the issue.

I am writing to you to respectfully recommend a government-sponsored envoy process — or some form of government-sponsored negotiations — as a concurrent and separate process from the Countervailing Duty and Anti-Dumping Petition submitted to the U.S. Department of Commerce. Weyerhaeuser Company has concluded that an envoy process is the most likely means of achieving a fair, long-term solution for all parties.

Consumers in United States depend on Canadian lumber to meet approximately one-third of their housing and repair . . . (remodelling costs and) needs. The United States does not have the softwood lumber manufacturing capacity, or

forest resources, to supply sufficient volumes to meet those needs.

With that certainty in mind, I believe it is in the best interests of all parties — on both sides of the border — to undertake a serious, and immediate, effort to reach a negotiated settlement. The principles . . . would suggest to guide an envoy process (and they) are as follows:

- Clarify what is expected of the envoys.
- Allow maximum flexibilities on how the envoys carry out their responsibilities.
- Focus on substantive options for long-term solution.
- Should not preclude existing legal/international trade dispute resolutions processes from continuing.
- Have a realistic but firm timeline.
- Have envoys report their recommendations to their respective governments for consideration.

And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe this process will lead to a solution that promotes free trade and fair trade, and is supported by a majority of the affected stakeholder groups.

I also would like to read from the Regina *Leader-Post* dated April 2, where it states:

Months, perhaps years, of costly legal fencing that could close mills across Canada is sure to follow.

The (United States) Commerce Department will likely take several months to announce their ruling, but it will almost certainly order a duty be applied to Canadian lumber (exports) . . .

That could cost Canadian lumber mills \$4 billion, Cdn, a year and drive many of . . . (our businesses right) out of business.

Softwood lumber, harvested from cone-bearing trees is used to build new homes. It's among Canada's top five exports to the United States, worth almost \$11 billion annually.

Canadian lumber producers captured 35 per cent of the U.S. softwood market . . .

The industry has been, or has seen its production double since 1996 when the SLA was imposed on four lumber-producing provinces, and that was British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec. Saskatchewan was not in that group.

According to industry sources, Saskatchewan lumber production was about 300 million board feet in 1995, prior to the agreement. Last year, production reached almost 600 million board feet, much of this going to the United States.

(16:45)

Five years ago our mills were exporting about 60 per cent of our lumber to the United States and 40 per cent to the domestic market. Mr. Brock Folkersen, executive director of the Canadian . . . or the Council of Saskatchewan Forest Industries in Saskatoon said now everything is shipping pretty much . . .

now we are shipping pretty much everything to the United States. Those organizations represent the seven largest forestry companies in the province, including Prince Albert-based Weyerhaeuser Canada.

Mr. Folkersen also went on to say that sawmills in Prince Albert, Meadow Lake, and Hudson Bay benefited from the quotas imposed by the SLA on other provinces. But the expiry of the agreement means that they will be competing with more Canadian mills for a smaller chunk of the US market.

To make the matters worse, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the slowdown in the US economy and North American overcapacity has combined to push lumber prices to the lowest levels in recent memory. The price is about the lowest that it's been in 10 years. With many Saskatchewan sawmills operating at a close to break-even point now, the additional duties would force some plants to close temporarily and lay off workers.

If you add 20 per cent duty and prices remain low, there will be many losses and many losses will be in Saskatchewan. And those duties could send the industry into one or maybe a two-year slump. Saskatchewan could not afford a two-year slump in the forestry industry. In fact, the Saskatchewan forestry industry has been slowly going downhill since last year thanks to the low prices of our forestry products.

Weyerhaeuser shut down its old oriented strand board, OSB plant at Hudson Bay and laid off 70 to 75 workers. The oldest plant may not reopen because Weyerhaeuser's OSB plant in Hudson Bay is coming on stream. That was a loss of some workers that was detrimental to that area. All because of the low prices in the forestry industry. And the company will temporarily shut down its sawmill at Big River for two weeks which has commenced already, and extend the maintenance shutdown in its pulp mill in Prince Albert as we speak.

Meanwhile voices on both sides of Canadian/US border warned that further restrictions on Canadian softwood lumber imports into American markets would hurt consumers there.

Proposed softwood lumber tariffs may signal the end of some lumber operations across the country. Only the most effective operations will be able to withstand the drawn-out legal battle, and in the case of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the operations of the . . . (inaudible) . . . facilities in the province will fair better than most. And if Saskatchewan industry begins to crumble it will create the end of our . . . (inaudible) . . . forestry nationwide.

While many of our major issues . . . there are many major issues to be discussed before any agreement is reached. At the end of the day, more free trade is better for Canada than less free trade. Not every dispute will be avoided unfortunately, but opening up trade will help avoid them more than erecting new barriers.

I urge the members opposite to support our amendment and while they're at that, to call on their federal counterparts to embark on them the wisdom of not only extended free trade but also fair trade agreements.

I support the amendment put forth by the member from Lloydminster. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Yes I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that I support the motion and amendment before us. We certainly know how vital trade is to Saskatchewan.

Might I say that it is important for us to get the message through to Americans though that this is not a dispute between Canada and the US. It is a dispute very much between the interests of US lumber companies against US consumers. They are trying to sell their Congress for nationalist reasons for being opposed to free trade. But of course if the US lumber companies get their way in this dispute, it will amount to substantially higher costs for homes to American consumers and American homebuyers.

So this is not a Canada versus the US dispute. This is a dispute between companies and consumers which is also I think what the free trade agreement is all about. It is about protecting consumers.

And I agree with the point made by the member for Shellbrook-Spiritwood. The federal NDP, I believe unlike the provincial NDP, has taken a strong stand against free trade. I believe that the dispute settlement mechanism will prove that Saskatchewan and Canada are in the right. I believe that we will find that the system will work, and it will work for American consumers and, therefore, for Canadian lumber producers.

But I would say that the federal NDP cannot at one and the same time claim the benefit of the Free Trade Agreement and the dispute settlement mechanism, while repudiating the concept of free trade. If we repudiate free trade, then we abandon our right to sell softwood lumber into the US market. And of course this is particularly devastating for a province like Saskatchewan where our primary products have such a tiny domestic market. We really have . . . Frankly there is very, very little we produce in Saskatchewan that would be of value if we did not have trade.

As I used to say, without trade every man, woman, and child in Saskatchewan would have to consume 68 loaves of bread per day, buttered with 72 litres of canola margarine, and all washed down with 68 bottles of beer. And while I promise to do my share, while I promise to do my share, I think that's a daunting task for most of the residents of our province. What we produce, we don't produce a lot of, we don't produce a lot of products, but the products we do produce we produce in vast quantity, and therefore we must be a trading province.

Now as a trading province we need access to the world market, especially the US markets. We are gaining that access through free trade.

The NDP federally say they do not want free trade. And I would encourage members of the government caucus to talk to people like Lorne Nystrom and Dick Proctor, who are in the Regina paper this week saying they do not want free trade. I've encouraged members opposite to talk to them and say, this is wrong, because if there is no free trade then the resolution put forward by the government caucus falls. We have no right to access into the US market. So we can't ride both horses.

I suppose in an absolutely perfect world, the ideal situation

would be if everybody else had open borders to our trade and we could close ours. Wouldn't that be perfect? But of course that isn't the way it works — we are either going to have open borders for trade purposes or we're going to have closed. And clearly it is to Canada's benefit to have open borders to trade into the US market simply because the American market is so much larger than ours and we do not have a large domestic market in Canada.

So while I support the motion that is before us, I think that the New Democratic Party has to work this through intellectually to see where they stand . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well they have to decide where they stand in order that they can . . .

I hear someone say about stab in the back. Now I guess they're worried about loyalty to the Liberal leader. They must have great problems with the Minister of the Environment who bailed on the Liberal leader two years before I quit.

So I don't know why they're so worried about loyalty to the Liberal leader that they're heckling me, because I think I showed a lot more loyalty to the Liberal leader than their colleague, the hon. member for Athabasca. So if they are so worried, as New Democrats, about loyalty to the Liberal leader, they better take it up with their Minister of the Environment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — However, I digress. I digress.

What are we after here? Do we want access to the US market? I think we do. If we do, we cannot condemn the Free Trade Agreement. We must strengthen it. We cannot condemn the Free Trade Agreement and ask that our softwood lumber have access into the US market.

And I think if we are going to convince the Americans of the benefits of free trade, it is those American consumers we have to speak with, because it is the American consumers, it is the American consumers who clearly will benefit from free trade. And if for nationalist reasons they close their borders to our softwood, it will penalize American homeowners and home purchasers.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that this is an example of how free trade can work for North America. And as the hon. member has pointed out, we have built a trade industry in this province. We have built a lumber industry.

But our lumber industry is frankly worthless unless we have trade. So we need to strengthen trade. We need to strengthen free trade with our American neighbours.

And the federal NDP wants to throw out the Free Trade Agreement. Now if they throw out the Free Trade Agreement, they also throw out the softwood lumber industry of Saskatchewan.

So I encourage, with all humility, I encourage my friends across the way to talk to their federal counterparts and say cancelling the Free Trade Agreement is not the way that we will be able to build a lumber industry in Saskatchewan. If we want to build a lumber industry in Saskatchewan, we need access to the US

market. And that is what the Free Trade Agreement is going to guarantee for us, and that is the way that we will be able to offer hope and jobs, especially to the Aboriginal population of the North.

And if the federal NDP were to get its way and shut down the Free Trade Agreement, that would destroy hope for the northern population. It would destroy the softwood lumber industry and it would mean that northern Aboriginal population would have no future in the economy.

So let us commit ourselves to free and fair trade, a free and fair trade that will allow the softwood lumber industry of Saskatchewan to grow and build and develop. I support both the motion and the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of aspects to this issue that I think need to be of concern to us as citizens of this province, one of them being that we really are trying to and want to develop the lumber industry in Saskatchewan.

The protectionist attitudes of the United States are destructive to many aspects of the economy for here and throughout this country. When I was down in Washington recently, we ran into a number of senators who were very clearly protectionist. We had members from Prince Edward Island who were there who were dealing with the potato dispute and were very, very concerned that the US was simply using the potato war issue as a means of protectionism. They wanted to build up the potato industry for Idaho and they didn't care what happened to Prince Edward Island and to their industry. And it was \$30 million lost — it could have been \$300 million lost.

Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to continue the remarks because protectionism is a real problem, but given the hour I must ask that we adjourn debate . . . move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.