

The Assembly met at 10:00.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. Mr. Speaker, the people of Richmond, Saskatchewan are concerned about the possible loss of their ambulance service if the consolidation and recommendations contained in the EMS (emergency medical services) report goes ahead. They will be about 50 miles from their nearest ambulance service and that will leave them in very desperate straits. They have signed a petition that 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 work to improve community-based ambulance services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by residents of the community of Richmond. I so present.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to present today on the EMS.

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.

The people that have signed this petition are from Rose Valley and Nora, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here from some concerned citizens of Saskatchewan who have expressed interest in the maintenance and upgrading of our Saskatchewan road network. And the prayer goes:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to ask the Government of Saskatchewan to continue with its foresight and vision of increasing the funding to \$900 million over the next three years to maintain and upgrade our thoroughfares of commerce.

And this petition is signed by the good citizens of Pelly, Sturgis, Canora, and Amsterdam.

I so submit.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well to present a petition, this one is dealing with health care. And I'll read 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 the users from our district, southeast Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba, and beyond.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition I present is signed by people from the communities of Redvers, Parkman, and Bellegarde.

I so present.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the possible conversion of some paved highways to gravel. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to set aside any plans to revert Saskatchewan highways back to gravel, commit that the government will not download responsibility for current numbered highways onto local governments, and to consult with local residents, and to co-operate in finding and implementing other alternatives.

And this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Rouleau, Avonlea, Prince Albert, Briercrest, Regina, and Moose Jaw.

I so present.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about the 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 actions to ensure that, at the very least, current levels of services and care are maintained at Pioneer Lodge in Assiniboia.

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

And this signed by the good people from Assiniboia, Scout Lake, Willow Bunch, and Coronach.

I so present. Thank you.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I rise again on behalf of the people from the city of Swift Current and surrounding area that are concerned with the state of the hospital. And the prayer of the petition that I read today is as follow, Mr. Speaker:

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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by residents of the city of Swift Current, and also from the surrounding communities of Success, Consul, and Wymark.

I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are concerned about drug and alcohol abuse in our area. And the Weyburn Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, a charitable, non-profit organization has submitted this proposal for an in-patient treatment centre to the Government of Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to support this in-patient treatment centre and provide funding for the same.

And it's signed by citizens of the city of Weyburn.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here, citizens concerned with the high cost of natural gas. 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Craik, Girvin, Outlook, Moose Jaw, Aylesbury, and Regina.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition regarding citizens that are concerned about the energy rate rebate program.

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.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Chitek Lake, Leoville, Spiritwood.

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 services and care are maintained at Pioneer Lodge in Assiniboia.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks of Assiniboia and Lafleche.

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.

The first petition is:

To cause the government to continue to increase the foundation operating grants to school divisions.

Other petitions are addendums to previously presented sessional papers nos. 3, 4, 10, 58, 110, and 136.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 40 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Highways: for the 2000-2001 fiscal year, what arrangements or agreements through special permits from your department did the Saskatchewan Valley Potato Corporation receive to move potatoes to primary highways in Saskatchewan; and what were the terms of these arrangements or agreements; and what are the details of any financial agreement surrounding this?

While I'm on my feet, I'd like to . . . another question:

To the Minister of Highways: so far in the current fiscal year, what arrangements or agreements through special permits from your department did the Saskatchewan Valley Potato Corporation receive to move potatoes to primary highways in Saskatchewan; and what were the terms of these agreements or arrangements; and what are the details of any financial agreements surrounding this?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today on behalf of my colleague, the member for Regina Lakeview, to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, a group of visitors from Athabasca School in the constituency of Regina Lakeview.

These are grade 7 and 8 students, there's 27 of them in total — so I'm informed, I didn't check — and they're accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Aaron Anderson. They're here to watch the

proceedings, to tour the Legislative Assembly, and I'm looking forward to a visit with them later in the day.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in extending them a warm welcome. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a group of 27 students travelling from quite a distance, from Fairview Montana Jr. High School. These are students from grade 6 to grade 8 and they're accompanied by their teachers, Tim Johnson and Karen Shaide; chaperons, Vicki Cayko, Kelly Sloan; and their bus driver, Dennis Duda.

Mr. Speaker, I have relatives in Montana and I've visited there on a number of occasions and I've always been welcomed by the good folks of Montana, and so I think it fitting that we welcome them here to Canada, to Saskatchewan, and to our legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly, a most distinguished guest, Professor Jack Vicq of the University of Saskatchewan, College of Commerce, who is seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, along with the deputy minister of Finance, Dr. Paul Boothe.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to announce to this Assembly that effective June 1 of this year, Professor Vicq will be assuming the role of A.W. Johnson Distinguished Chair in Public Policy. Members will recall that this position was created last year fulfilling a commitment by our government to improve our research capability by attracting recognized authorities in specific fields.

Professor Vicq, as members will know, is a highly respected professional with expertise in government policy and specifically in the administration of tax and revenue measures. His background encompasses a notable career with both the federal government and the Government of Saskatchewan, a tenure of several years with the University of Saskatchewan, which he now serves as Professor Emeritus and a variety of professional and volunteer activities in the private sector.

He has published a number of articles on public policy and tax compliance and has served on several boards and committees. Most notably for members here, Mr. Speaker, Professor Vicq chaired the provincial Personal Income Tax Review Committee which provided our government with an excellent proposal for personal tax reform implemented in last year's budget.

Mr. Speaker, in the last year, all Canadian provinces have established their own income tax rules, separate from the federal income tax rules. At the same time, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency has become more independent in its dealings with provincial governments as well as the federal government.

These changes and others have created significant pressure on

both orders of government to redesign and rework our federal provincial tax collection agreements. There's a very big job to be done here, Mr. Speaker, and Professor Vicq's expertise and experience will be a tremendous asset to Saskatchewan as we work to negotiate a favourable arrangement for our province and the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the A.W. Johnson Distinguished Chair in Public Policy provides a vehicle for the Government of Saskatchewan to access the knowledge and research of leading Canadian professionals in academia and business.

So on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I extend my sincere congratulations to Professor Vicq and I ask all members to join me in welcoming him to the Assembly and the public service. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to other members of the Assembly, a gentleman seated in the west gallery, a long-time friend of mine and many members on certainly this side of the legislature, Bob Ivanochko.

Mr. Ivanochko is a librarian working at the Provincial Library. In addition to that and many, many other things, I'd like to single out Bob's long-time activity with the Regina and District Labour Council.

I ask all members to join with me in welcoming my friend, Bob Ivanochko.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(10:15)

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

March of Dimes Mothers

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year on Mother's Day we pay tribute to our mothers and to mothers everywhere, as well we should. This year, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Assembly, I want to comment on a particularly special group of mothers and a couple of events to recognize them.

This weekend, polio survivors from throughout the province will be honouring Saskatchewan's Marching Mothers of the 1950s. These were mothers involved with the March of Dimes campaign to raise funds for the treatment of polio victims and for research. As we know, this ultimately led to the discovery of the Salk vaccine and to the defeat of polio.

This horrible disease struck mainly children, as its medical term, infantile paralysis, suggests. Mr. Speaker, as someone whose childhood was in the '50s, I remember the dread with which mothers faced each summer. They warned us about playing in the dirt. They shivered with dread about the daily counts on the news of how many cases of polio had been reported. They worried about their children in iron lungs.

Tomorrow in Saskatoon, Sask Abilities will hold a reception to honour the Marching Mothers. And today plaques will be placed on two flower beds in front of the legislature which will read, quote:

We proudly honour Saskatchewan mothers who marched for dimes 50 years ago to raise funds for the medical treatment of people struck down by polio in the 1950s. Their tremendous effort saved hundreds of lives.

We all pay tribute, Mr. Speaker, to those Marching Mothers who dedicated themselves to eliminating this disease from our lives. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

International Nurses Day

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House to raise awareness of International Nurses Day celebrated every year on May 12, which is the birthdate of Florence Nightingale, founder of the first school for nurses.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow will mark the 30th anniversary of International Nurses Day, and all members on this side of the House would like to take this opportunity to personally recognize all nurses involved in the health care profession, not only in our own communities but all across our province. Their hard work, dedication, and commitment have been defining measures of health care in Saskatchewan. This group of talented and hard-working professionals deserve our utmost respect and sincere thanks.

We must also remember that nurses across the country have spoken out about their concerns regarding health care and overall working conditions. It's shocking to hear that 44 per cent of nurses believe the quality of care in their workplace has deteriorated in the last year.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is facing a severe and critical nursing shortage. Much more must be done to recruit and retain these important members of the health care team.

Once again, in celebration of International Nurses Day tomorrow and on behalf of all members on this side of the House, our thanks and appreciation to nurses across the province for a job well done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Partners in Motion Win Awards

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, on this beautiful, sunny Saskatchewan day I bring tidings of a good bit of sunny news for the province of Saskatchewan. Partners in Motion, a Regina production company has received seven awards at the 2001 Worldfest International Film Festival in Houston, Texas. This year, Houston, Mr. Speaker; next year, Cannes.

Two of the company's productions, *Disaster of the Century* and *Men of Valour — Heros of the Victoria Cross*, took platinum, the highest award given, for best reality-based and biographical/autobiographical documentary programs.

Disaster of the Century was produced by Nova Herman, and was directed by Chris Triffo — and it had nothing to do with Stockwell Day — with Ron Goetz as executive producer.

Men of Valour — Heros of the Victoria Cross was produced by Paul Millar and directed by Chris Triffo, with Ron Goetz as executive producer.

13 Seconds, The Kent State Shootings received a bronze award for the best documentary. A commercial for SGI, *Santa's Little Helpers*, took bronze in the public service category.

A video for the city of Regina called *Climate Change* took bronze in the educational/instructional category.

And finally, closing out the seven winners, was a print advertisement for Saskferco called *Total Quality-Total Commitment*. This production was awarded silver in the newspaper campaign category.

The people responsible for these productions, Mr. Speaker, truly represent the spirit of Saskatchewan. I would like all the members of the House to join with me in congratulating, in particular, the Regina-based production company, Partners in Motion and on all the winners in the festival.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

School Bus Driver Disappointed with Question Period Conduct

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I received a faxed letter from a constituent and I'd like to share portions of it with the House.

As a parent and a bus driver, I offered my services to transport over 60 high school students on a four-hour trip from Shaunavon to Regina, to tour the legislature on May 1. I was impressed with the tour . . . However, we had the misfortune of having to sit through an hour of Question Period. We as visitors were instructed to be quiet at all times, however the only thing we could hear were the insults, the cat calls, and general confusion on the floor . . . We could (only) . . . pick up bits and pieces of petitions that were being read.

Mr. Speaker, the writer compares it to a wrestling match where individuals are posturing for the camera, the chaos, the name-calling, and the insults.

Mr. Speaker, the writer goes on to say:

As a taxpayer, I am not amused at this shallow performance and the waste of time and money . . . I was ashamed and embarrassed that the formative minds of our kids had to see this disgusting performance, for what was supposed to be an educational field trip.

Mr. Speaker, the writer also goes on to say:

If you are concerned about your image as politicians, please break with tradition and change the situation. I want to see

order in the legislature, sincere, honest, hard working people. A legislature I would be proud to take our children to see.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table this letter if anybody is interested in it.

Mental Health Week

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand before the House today to recognize this week as Mental Health Week. The theme of this year's week is Emerging Into the Light. That theme is very significant as there is often a stigma attached to discussing mental health.

Our challenge is to strive to increase awareness in order to understand the factors contributing to good mental health. One organization that does much work in Saskatchewan on this issue is the Mental Health Association.

The Mental Health Association has been providing services for Saskatchewan residents for 50 years. And on behalf of my colleagues I would like to offer congratulations for the very meaningful work that has been accomplished by this association, its staff, and volunteers.

In Saskatchewan the Mental Health Association provides direct services in the areas of day programs for people with long-term psychiatric problems, in a number of districts. They are also involved with public education and advocacy. One very tangible example of the Mental Health Association's effort to create public awareness of this issue is their sponsoring of Mental Health Week.

We must not lose sight about one of our society's most important principles — that our health system should support those who are most vulnerable. With the help of the organizations like the Mental Health Association, we can work together to address the challenges facing many members of our society by offering practical solutions and hope to those who are in need.

Again, congratulations to the Mental Health Association. We are grateful for the valuable contributions you make towards bettering the lives of Saskatchewan people. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Swift Current — A Caring Community

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Swift Current is a city known for its heart. We have a proud track record of coming together as a community to help those when they need it the most. On April 28 friends, families, and total strangers to four-month-old Clark Anderson gathered together and added to that great tradition.

Mr. Speaker, Clark is the son of Adam and Rebecca Anderson of Swift Current and he needs open-heart surgery. He and his parents will have to travel to Edmonton for the surgery. And so the staff of the Aquatic Centre where Rebecca worked organized and hosted a chili supper and auction on April 28 to raise funds to help meet the cost of the trip.

About a hundred people from Swift Current and surrounding area turned out for the event, Mr. Speaker, and raised over \$3,700 to help meet those costs.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to the generous work of the organizers, those who donated items for the auction and the chili supper, including the co-op, Wal-Mart, Thrifty Foods, Shaw Cable, Coca Cola, just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, there was also a quarter of beef that was donated for the event. And a special thanks to Mr. Chandler Powell who filled in as the auctioneer at the last minute to make the event a success.

Congratulations again to Danielle Poole, who's the manager at the aquatic centre; to her staff; to all of the volunteers and those who participated in the event. And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, best wishes to little Clark as he heads for Edmonton for his surgery.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Emergency Preparedness Week

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week has been proclaimed Emergency Preparedness Week across Canada. The theme for this year is Reducing the Risk Towards Safer Communities in the 21st Century.

During this week, communities across Canada will be participating in activities aimed at increasing awareness of what each individual community and each individual person should do to reduce the risk of emergencies.

Those who work in the field of emergency preparedness must have an odd feeling about what they do because their job is to see that their expertise is never called into action. Ninety-nine per cent of the time our communities are safe and our lives are secure. But we live in a world where there's always the possibility of fire, flood, blizzard, chemical spill, crash, or other natural or person-made disasters. We hope they never happen. We must be prepared in case they do. That is the paradox of emergency preparedness.

I am pleased to note that this year seven communities in Saskatchewan will receive over \$500,000 under the joint emergency preparedness program, a joint effort of federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Saskatchewan governments will provide over 300,000 for the projects, which involve purchases or upgrades to rescue equipment and emergency communication systems, as well as for provincially delivered training programs.

Since this program began in 1980, over \$10 million has come to Saskatchewan for emergency preparedness projects. Money well spent for a use we hope we never see.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Funding for Communities with Water Quality Problems

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Environment minister. Yesterday we asked the minister for a list of the 121 communities with water treatment deficiencies. It turns out now that this is not a new list. The Saskatchewan Party has obtained a copy of the detailed analysis of the cabinet decision item we released yesterday.

It says the government conducted a drinking water safety assessment back in 1992 and identified 130 communities with deficient treatment systems that required upgrading. Since 1992, only nine have been upgraded. This means, and I'm quoting from the document now, "121 communities still have water treatment deficiencies."

Mr. Speaker, the NDP (New Democratic Party) has known about this problem since 1992. Why are there still 121 communities with deficient water treatment facilities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, as I've indicated time and time again that we're going to be open, honest, and accountable on some of the strategies that are required to address the water quality problems of Saskatchewan.

And I pointed out, Mr. Speaker, some of the things that we initiated as a government. And this morning I'm very happy to announce that my colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, committed to \$19.4 million to fund infrastructure projects, Mr. Speaker. The majority, the huge amount of that money is spent for water quality — \$8.2 million to upgrade water services, and \$6.6 million to upgrade waste water plants, Mr. Speaker.

We put a plan in action. The cabinet knew of this challenge four months ago, approximately four months ago, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the House, we're putting our money where our mouth is, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting to note that the minister indicates that they're going to be open and transparent on some of their communication strategies, and I'm wondering which of those they might be.

Mr. Speaker, back in 1992 the government identified 130 communities with deficient water treatment systems. Since then, only nine — nine — have been fixed. That's one per year. At this rate, with the old funding in place, it will only take . . . it'll take the NDP 121 years to fix the problem.

Mr. Speaker, this document estimates it would cost about \$30 million to upgrade these systems. And while that's a lot of money, surely your government could have found \$30 million in your budget over the course of the last nine years to ensure safe drinking water in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, safe drinking water is a fundamental responsibility

of government. The NDP has millions of dollars to invest in places like Guyana. Mr. Speaker, why has the NDP been ignoring its responsibility since 1992?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I sense that the member opposite is virtually attacking small-town Saskatchewan. He's attacking local governments, municipalities, who were made aware of problems and recognize those problems and were working towards correcting those problems, Mr. Speaker.

(10:30)

The government on this side, two years ago committed \$10 million to infrastructure programs for two years running to work with local governments. And this morning, the announcement underlined how serious the situation all levels of government see good quality drinking water for their citizens.

The federal government has recognized that, hence the announcement this morning. And, Mr. Speaker, I will send over this document to the opposition — the number of communities that have upgraded their water treatment plants, Mr. Speaker; that have upgraded their waste water projects, Mr. Speaker; that have upgraded their rural roads projects, Mr. Speaker. And the monies that are committed over the next five years — \$170,000 million.

I'm not sure what the members opposite expect more can be done. I wish they would not attack those small communities that have been working to improve the quality of life.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Environment very proudly announced that North Battleford isn't one of the 121 communities on this list. That's even more frightening. If North Battleford isn't on this list, how many more communities have deficient treatment systems.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is this is an old list. It dates back to 1992. How many more water treatment systems have deteriorated since then, to the point that they can no longer guarantee a safe water supply.

Mr. Speaker, the cabinet decision item said Sask Water would evaluate the current state of all water treatment systems in the province of Saskatchewan in every single municipality and report back to the government by March 2001. Will the minister release that report?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just go back to . . . the mention of North Battleford was there. North Battleford applied. They took their own initiative and they applied for a program where they felt they needed some help. And, Mr. Speaker, they were approved.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to say something else. Both SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities)

representatives at the announcement this morning, appreciated the efforts of the Saskatchewan government, the coalition government, and the federal government in offering assistance to all the communities throughout the province to take care of these very important issues — places like the RM (rural municipality) of Bjorkdale, village of Broderick, RM of Buchanan. The list goes on and on. I shared it with the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

There is attention being paid to this situation by all levels of government, and there is co-operation. There is not insults and attacks on one another. It's a co-operative effort to deal with a serious issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister keeps telling us everything's fine. The problem is, no one believes him. No one believes him because they have a communication strategy that says to assure the public that everything is fine. And the Minister of Municipal Affairs is following those very same marching orders right now.

No matter how bad the situation is, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve the truth. We deserve a straight answer, and we know we're not getting it from the minister.

The only way to clear the air is for the minister to release the information he's hiding; release the list of the 121 communities with deficient systems; release the Sask Water report on the state of water treatment systems; release the Sask Health report on enhanced testing and communication.

Stop hiding behind their phoney-baloney, don't worry, be happy communications strategy, and tell the truth.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — I can't believe, Mr. Speaker, the continued attack on small communities in rural Saskatchewan and the efforts of good people that are working across departments to address the concerns that people have.

Mr. Speaker, the village of Broderick is going to upgrade their water treatment plant. The village of Benson is going to upgrade their water treatment plant. The RM of Flett's Springs, upgrade water treatment plant. Village of Gladmar, chlorine injector plant. RM of Golden West, filtration system. RM of Hudson Bay, upgrade water treatment plants. Town of Imperial, develop well and pipeline. Town of Kipling, upgrade water treatment plant.

The list goes on and on and on. And, Mr. Speaker, we add up the money, and there's a great deal of investment by the federal government, by the provincial government, and the local communities who work together to solve any problems that may be there.

And the inquiry, Mr. Speaker, will also produce the information that the opposition continues to ask, immediately.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Department Responsible for Water Quality

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. Who is responsible for water quality generally and waterworks specifically in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Number one is SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) is going to help all the municipalities worry about waste water and water treatment throughout the province. Very important for people to understand that the roles and the responsibility of all the players are something that people have to take seriously.

SERM certainly helps regulate and also helps monitor and certainly will help inspections of these plants if that is necessary.

And certainly what we do is make sure that some of the communities that are having challenges and problems with their water treatment plant or sewer, then they certainly contact SERM and we'll make the appropriate calls and we'll make sure we have assistance there.

Mr. Speaker, we are responding to this challenge as a province. There's no question about it in my mind. One year, 10 million; the next year, 10 million; this year, 19 million. Mr. Speaker, we have put our money where our mouth is and we will continue being diligent in this challenge that all the people of Saskatchewan face.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That particular cabinet decision item that was released yesterday, on page 9, and the minister should have read this — the Saskatchewan Justice review of the legislative mandate of the Minister of SERM. And it says, Mr. Speaker:

SERM has been assigned regulatory and supervisory control over water quality generally and waterworks specifically.

It states that the minister has general supervision, control, and regulation of all matters concerning water quality and its impairment by pollution.

That document, Mr. Speaker, was prepared for cabinet by the minister's own environmental staff, explains exactly the minister's responsibility for the water in the province, and what needs to be done to improve the water quality across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister ignore his responsibility by not implementing the recommendations of that report?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — That is a draft document. That document was prepared in September. The cabinet did not see

any documentation on this until late winter — November to be exact, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the most important things that I want to point as well, is that we have a three- or four-pronged approach in this government to make sure that we stay on top of this challenge.

Number one, Health is also involved. District health boards have a very crucial role to play. Sask Water is also involved; we're involved as SERM. A lot of the villages and towns across the province are also involved. So there's a lot of people that are involved, Mr. Speaker.

And we are not going to shrink away from the responsibility as a government to make sure the message is out there that we all have to be diligent. And we will our do our part, Mr. Speaker, as a government. This is very important.

And what I would also say to the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, all the improvements we've made over the last number of years, they all voted against it. And secondly, is why don't you take the advice from the leadership of the people of North Battleford instead and what they say — let's get on with life and let's build more for the future. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, wrong answer. He tried to drag in the health departments and everything else. He's responsible. Wrong answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — It's time the Premier removed the weakest link.

Mr. Speaker, some of the most shocking information in this whole CDI (cabinet document item) has to do with Justice's recommendations for SERM. It goes on to say that Saskatchewan Justice suggested three ways in which potential liability can be reduced or eliminated, three ways.

One, to amend or repeal SERM legislation to relieve SERM of supervisory and regulatory responsibilities.

Two, Mr. Speaker, to provide sufficient funding to enable SERM to perform its legislative responsibilities.

Three, Mr. Speaker, make a decision at the cabinet level to reduce SERM's budget, which the government could then argue was a policy decision.

Mr. Speaker, the question is, the question is, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: which option did the cabinet or SERM choose to approve?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — The option from the final CDI — not the draft copy that those members have — the option that this government done, Mr. Speaker, is in year one they put \$10 million into infrastructure. Year two, they put \$10 million into infrastructure. Year three, they put \$19.4 million into

infrastructure, the majority of which is being spent on waste water and water treatment plant upgrades.

The option that this government took, Mr. Speaker, is they put 10.5 additional water quality staff members in place to support all the people operating water treatment plants across this province.

The option that this government done, Mr. Speaker, is they increased staff at the provincial lab by four and a half staff members, \$500,000 to help with water quality testing.

The option that this government done, Mr. Speaker, was to not to stick their head in the sand and pretend that this problem did not exist. The option on this side, Mr. Speaker, was not to play doom and gloom, to play politics with a very important issue, Mr. Speaker.

On this side, the option was leadership; that side voted against the budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely amazing that one of those three options presented by the Justice to this document basically admits that SERM is underfunded to the point where it can't carry out its legislative responsibilities.

But it's even more amazing that the other two options were to reduce the provincial government's responsibilities for providing safe drinking water to Saskatchewan residents. And it's very clear after the spring budget that SERM or cabinet chose to go with option three, Mr. Speaker, which is reducing SERM's budget and downloading responsibilities onto the province's municipalities, Mr. Speaker. Because in this year's budget SERM's environmental protection grants received less funding, and we all know how the municipalities across this province feel about the lack of any increase to their municipal revenue-sharing grants.

To the minister: is SERM preparing to amend existing legislation or enact new legislation to absolve themselves of the responsibility for provincial drinking water?

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — The weakest link in this Assembly was the days that the Tory government was in power and that member was part, that member was part of that particular movement, Mr. Speaker.

Now I want to clarify as well, Mr. Speaker, to answer his question. To answer his question is that SERM certainly has increased their budget, Mr. Speaker. We have increased our budget. We're going to respond to this challenge. We're going to put our money where our mouth is. They voted against it.

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, the review that's going to be happening, the inquiry — we asked for the inquiry. We're asking people, ask the questions of SERM and we'll give you the answers, Mr. Speaker. We have nothing to hide. We want to be open, honest and accountable, as we've said 10,000 times in this Assembly.

Now what I would suggest to that member is clear as day. North

Battleford people are saying can you guys please fix our water supply and stop playing politics with our lives. And that's the message we heard in spades.

And I would ask the Sask Party guys to not play politics with this and to point out that SERM is going to take a strong role; we're going to continue playing a strong role in water quality in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Review of Water Quality Issues

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are again for the Minister of Environment — the very same minister who just refused to release the Sask Health and Sask Water reports as required by his own cabinet document.

This morning the Saskatchewan Party released the detailed communications plan presented to cabinet in November 2000 to deal with the drinking water crisis. One of the objectives of the government's communication plan, and I quote:

... was to avoid criticism of former cuts to programs and lack of provincial action.

And how was the NDP advised to achieve that lofty goal? Well according to the communications plan the NDP was advised to tell the public, and again I quote, Mr. Speaker, "... the systems currently in place are effective."

(10:45)

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister cover up serious threats to the health of the people of Saskatchewan by telling them that the systems currently in place are effective when he knew that was not the truth?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Once again, that draft that he has of the final CDI that was presented to cabinet several months later is incorrect. There's a lot of things in there that change over the course of several months.

And I want to point out the review indicated that the drinking water quality program was as good as any in Canada but there were areas that we could improve.

The goal of the final — not the draft — communication strategy was to, quote:

reassure the public that provincial drinking water is a priority.

The key message of the final — not the draft — communication strategy said, quote:

The current system is effective but improvements are being made.

The communities with known risk were communicated with immediately through drinking water advisories and through

personal contact of SERM field staff, Mr. Speaker.

And once again, our plan sees increase in funding. Our plan sees increase in communication. Our plan sees increase in staff. Our plan should be proactive.

And, Mr. Speaker, that CDI was passed four months ago — four months ago. We responded. What would you have done? Nothing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I would just ask the minister in his total response to continue all of his remarks through the Chair, please.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Mr. Speaker, last fall, the minister was presented with overwhelming evidence that Saskatchewan's crumbling water infrastructure was a significant threat to public health. And yet, the NDP continued to tell people everything was okay.

Mr. Speaker, one of the fundamental responsibilities of government is to take every possible step to protect public health. People expect their government to provide safe drinking water and to tell the truth about it.

But the documents we have released over the past two days clearly show the NDP knew there was a serious problem with Saskatchewan's drinking water. The NDP knew that public health was at risk, and yet they chose to cover it up.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister tell the people of Saskatchewan that the drinking water systems currently in place are effective when he knew that was not the truth?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, we issued boil-water advisories and that is not a government that's sitting on their hands hoping that this problem is not noticed.

We took the proactive step in saying to these communities: we have come in; we have determined that you have a variety of water quality problems and challenges. We want you to be on the safe side; boil your water. We've told them that. And we have documented that information. That information has been readily available over a number of months.

And the opposition, Mr. Speaker, never even bothered to check with that list. But now all of a sudden there's a crisis and challenge; all of a sudden, they're the champions of change in this area. Mr. Speaker, they are not the champions of change, they are the doom and gloomers, and they're political opportunists.

And I say to you again, take the leadership in the city of North Battleford and its residents when they say, don't fearmonger with our community and our lives. Let's fix the problem, and get on with our lives, and let us build a system that works.

Mr. Speaker, we take our role very seriously. That's why we issued boil-water advisories on a steady basis. Thank you very

much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Mr. Speaker, it's bad enough that government officials recommended the minister mislead the public in this document, but it's even worse that the NDP government decided to take that advice.

We also know the NDP went so far as to seek advice from its own Department of Justice about how to avoid legal liability for drinking water systems that they knew posed a serious threat to the health of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has failed in one of its most fundamental responsibilities — to take every single possible step to protect the health of its citizens. For that fundamental failure, Mr. Speaker, the whole NDP cabinet should be fired, or at the very least, the Environment minister should be tendering his resignation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Will the Premier ask the Environment minister for his resignation, and if the minister refuses, will the Premier fire him immediately?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, once again this is a feeble attempt by the opposition to find a smoking gun by referring to a draft document that is at least a year old.

Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 2000, SERM developed a new protocol to allow quicker response and action when water samples with bacteriological contamination were found.

November 2000, drinking water CDI was delivered to the cabinet. December 2000, SERM issued the boil-water advisories to 28 towns and their waterworks, which do not possess minimum treatment operations. There were six to nine precautionary drinking water advisories and 10 emergency boil-water orders that were issued SERM, Health, in the year of 2000.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are not hiding anything. We're taking a very proactive step, everything from infrastructure money and on. We have proven our value, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier.

We have a minister here who has clearly indicated this morning that he's going to pick and choose when he is going to be open and transparent with the public. We have a minister who was very well aware of the serious threat posed to the public health and safety of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Premier, will you ask that minister to tender his resignation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Would the member please rephrase his question through the Chair?

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: will the Premier ask that minister to tender his resignation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Premier, when it came to the attention of this minister and other ministers that we had concerns and issues around water quality in Saskatchewan last fall, this minister, his leadership, and other ministers put together a package of action, Mr. Speaker. A package of action that has been talked about today in terms of municipal infrastructure programs leading the nation. A package of action which immediately, publicly — publicly — went to communities who had problems and issued drinking water advisories and boiled drinking water advisories.

When members over there talk about hiding information, I don't know how they figure that out when this very minister has gone to those communities and issued those advisories very, very publicly.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to ask for that minister's resignation or any minister's resignation. I'm going to ask them to keep up the very good work that they are doing with the communities of Saskatchewan. That's what . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 29 — The Student Assistance and Student Aid Fund Amendment Act, 2001

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 29, The Student Assistance and Student Aid Fund Amendment Act, 2001 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

The Speaker: — Why is the Opposition Whip on his feet?

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, with a point of order.

The Speaker: — Would you state your point of order, please.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, during question period, the Minister of Environment and Resource Management quoted from a cabinet document. He had stated that we were using a preliminary document, a draft document, and he quoted from a cabinet document, which has not been laid on the Table of this House.

And when you look in Beauchesne's, page 151, rule 495.1, it says that it must be tabled if he's quoting from a cabinet document. So I'd like you to check into that, please.

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, it's a well-established . . . I would recognize, first of all, the Deputy House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. In response to the member's point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that the Minister of the Environment was quoting from his own notes and he was not quoting from the actual cabinet decision item, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, it's a . . . members of the Assembly . . . Order, order.

It's a well-established practice that any documents that the minister may be quoting from should be tabled, if it is a direct quote. And I will have to depend on the minister's judgment whether this or not was a direct quote.

We will look at the record, but I would say that if it is a direct quote, the minister is required to table the document.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely happy to stand and table responses to questions 171, 172, and 173.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 171, 172, and 173 are tabled.

Mr. Yates: — Convert.

The Speaker: — Item 174 is converted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 14

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 14 — The Provincial Auditor Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to add one or two comments, if I could, regarding The Provincial Auditor Act that is before the House at this time.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important Act that is coming before the House for a number of reasons. It is a particular function of this legislature to make sure that there is a Provincial Auditor in place and that a Provincial Auditor has the independence needed to do his job on behalf of the legislature and on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that I was part of the Public Accounts Committee that looked at the amendments as they were being put forward. The independence of the Provincial Auditor was a very important part of the discussion in that

committee. And part of that . . . an essential part of that decision was to ensure that the Provincial Auditor's independence was ensured now that we had the opportunity to debate that issue in a new . . . in a new amended Act. So that was the first criteria we looked at in that committee. And I'm pleased to say that that was addressed in that committee.

The Provincial Auditor functions is a very important part . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I would ask all members to afford the member from Lloydminster the courtesy of being able to place his remarks so that everybody can hear them.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, a very important role of the auditor in this province is to make sure that he has access to all the records of the government and all the records of the Crown corporations, or at least in conjunction with other auditors of the Crown corporations.

So the independence of the auditor is a very crucial issue, and again I would like to reinforce the fact that the committee took that part of it very seriously.

(11:00)

The amendments that are being put before the House were in fact by unanimous agreement of the Public Accounts Committee, and I think it was . . . the procedure and process was done very well. There was a committee that was struck by the Minister of Finance to offer suggestions from that point of view.

We had recommendations from the auditor that was in place, and between those two entities, the Public Accounts Committee had an opportunity to look at those recommendations and come up with I think, a very positive and a responsible set of amendments that we're going to be reviewing.

Some of those amendments we're going to look at, besides the independence, would be to set a term of 10 years, or at least set a term, and we're recommending that this be a 10-year term for the auditor. That will give the auditor a period of time that he'll be able to do his job knowing that he has that period of time to get the work project together.

Also that 10-year term doesn't preclude him from reapplying for that job afterward so it can be continued on at the discretion then of the Public Accounts Committee.

The auditor will be selected by the unanimous agreement of the Public Accounts Committee, and that unanimous agreement will be put forward for the appointment of the political auditor.

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

Mr. Harper: — I ask for leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the member from Lloydminster for allowing me to intervene.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the House, Mr. Jim Jones, who's sitting in your west gallery. Mr. Jones is a long-time acquaintance of mine and Mr. Jones is a resident of Last Mountain-Touchwood constituency. I know he's very involved in the agriculture industry and I imagine he's in town today on some business.

So I ask all the members to offer him a very warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 14 — The Provincial Auditor Amendment Act, 2001 (continued)

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was a couple of other items that we looked at in the Public Accounts Committee that I think should be recognized as rather important. We set the auditor's salary; that will be tied directly to the deputy minister's. That's another improvement that wasn't in place before. That is now clarified.

Part of the amendments will be a requirement for a business plan that the auditor must put forward. That in fact was in place when the former provincial auditor, Mr. Strelloff, was in that position. It's a good function and we think that that should be carried on and we're going to be . . . that will be part of the amendment.

One of the other important things just before I close, Mr. Speaker, was that we want to reappoint an audit committee. That has been in place before. I don't think it's been used a great deal, but with discussion in the committee, the wide-ranging scope and terms for that audit committee, I think will have real value for that committee. And several of the opinions that the Public Accounts Committee will come forward with, will be on the basis of the audit committee's recommendations, I am sure.

This is a . . . putting it into the Act is somewhat of a departure from the past. What we're doing is we're conferring with other provinces that have used audit committees in the past, and we want to just take a little more time to see if we can't find their experience, and their recommendation.

And other members of our caucus would like to add their voice to this, so at this time I would move that we adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 7

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 7 — The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr.

Speaker, it's my pleasure to speak to Bill No. 7 this morning, and to identify some of our concerns and some of the conditions of the Bill that we support at this moment.

Mr. Speaker, when a revision is proposed to pension Acts, and we seem to be seeing pension Act revisions almost each and every year in this Legislative Assembly, we have to pay very special attention to the effects that this type of revision will have on everyone in the province.

You have to remember, Mr. Speaker, that there are many people in the province of Saskatchewan who belong to pension plans. And it is in those golden years that, of course, they are . . . having worked for many years, some you know in excess of 35 years, they have a great reliance on pension plans. So what this Legislative Assembly does has a great bearing on those years that people have in retirement.

Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 7 affects a number of defined benefit plans. It affects the Liquor Board Commission; it affects the Saskatchewan Power Corporation; it affects the Workers' Compensation Board pension plan, the Public Service pension plan, the Saskatchewan Transportation Corporation plan, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, it even affects the Anti-Tuberculosis League pension plan.

These plans were all closed, as been pointed out by the minister, back in 1997 — in 1977, I'm sorry — and since then of course no new membership to these plans because now, of course, we have defined contributory plans.

Mr. Speaker, one of the major changes that we see that is being proposed by this plan is that the surviving widow or widower of someone who has not reached the age of retirement and passes away, that the maximum benefit allowable under the plan will be put in place. That is to say that the person who was an employee did not have to select that option prior to his or her passing. And, Mr. Speaker, we do believe that that will be a significant change, and we think that of course most people will support that change.

But you know, Mr. Minister, Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity to meet with a number of officials from the Saskatchewan Superannuates Association and they pointed out a number of things, Mr. Speaker, that they lobby for on behalf of all of their membership.

These executive members, Mr. Speaker, pointed out a number of concerns, but they identified three that have become very problematic. And I want to share those concerns with you, Mr. Speaker.

Firstly, they said that the SGSA — which is the Saskatchewan Government Superannuates Association — pensions have fallen behind and continue to be adversely affected by inflation. That's number one concern.

The second concern, Mr. Speaker, is that on retirement all superannuates find themselves in a new financial dilemma with the complete loss of health, dental, and related benefits.

And their third concern is that the pensions of many superannuates or their surviving spouses are completely

inadequate.

So, Mr. Speaker, those three concerns were raised by the executive members. And as I've pointed out, we believe that a small step has been taken in addressing the third concern, in that the surviving widow or widower will indeed have their pension affected by the clause that is proposed in this Bill.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think of greater concern to many, many pensioners who belong to those plans that I identified, are concerns number one and number two. The second concern, I think, is one that has been raised very, very prominently by the members of the executive.

When someone retires . . . most of the employees of course have their own health, dental plans that they have while they are employed, but the moment they retire those plans are lost. They have to revert back to what is in existence for anyone who does not have a plan. And, Mr. Speaker, we are very aware that in the province of Saskatchewan the deductible for drug prescriptions is \$850 semi-annually — or in other words, \$1,700 total annual amount of money.

Mr. Speaker, many pensioners are telling us through their executive and directly to us, that this is just not affordable for them. They are on a fixed income that is not indexed, as many have pointed out. And that is as inflation continues to lower their amount of actual dollars in their pocket, they find it very difficult to be able to meet the costs of drugs and other related prescriptions.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know of course that as one ages, the possibility of having to purchase more prescriptions is there. And that type of financial burden is something that they cannot meet.

So, Mr. Speaker, they've been lobbying very extensively for this government over the last number of years to recognize this — to recognize the fact that many employees lose those benefits and they need to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill does not address that. This Bill says nothing about the costs and the additional burden that is placed on the people that have given so much in all of their years of work to any of the plans that they belong to.

Mr. Speaker, this idea has been before the minister for a long time. And I know that . . . I'm sure he's done some calculations. We have some numbers that have been provided by the executive of the SGSA and they indicate that about 10,000 people belong to the pension plans. Some of them are in the Power corporation plan. There are others that are in the Liquor Board.

Each of those plans, Mr. Speaker, has different benefits. And they're looking for a standardization. They want to be assured that all people . . . no matter who your employer was prior to retirement, you should all be entitled to the same kind of health benefits.

We know that the prescription cost for a particular drug for someone who worked for SaskPower or someone who worked in the Public Service Commission is going to be the same cost.

So they are asking this government to meet that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the financial cost for putting in place a plan for some of these people is not super expensive. The Group Medical Services has identified that a single monthly premium for an individual for health benefit would be as little as \$55 or a little over \$600 a year.

That's for a whole year, \$600 benefit that would be able to provide someone who is having a large cost for expenditure on prescriptions of more than the deductible — which in this province is \$1,700 — that expenditure of \$600 for each of those superannuates would cover that.

And that's what this government has to look at. It has to look at a plan to be able to assist the persons that are on the current pension plan.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things that the Bill No. 7 proposes is that it must change some of the regulations to comply with the federal tax guidelines. And of course, Mr. Speaker, those are vital changes and they need to be made to ensure that the pension plans do not lose their registration. And we support those changes as do the members of the executive of the superannuation group.

One concern though, Mr. Speaker, that has been raised is that one of the clauses indicates that the plan will be able to charge fees to its members for certain services rendered. No explanation about what these fees are, no explanation about how much those fees will be, and in fact it doesn't even identify for what service there could be a fee.

So we would encourage the minister that when this Bill does move forward to Committee of the Whole, that he be able to provide . . . that the minister be able to provide a complete explanation of how those fees will be set, for what services people will now be expected to pay a fee, and the entire projected cost and how those costs will be controlled.

Mr. Speaker, these are people that will be relying on the benefits plan and the services provided by that plan. And now all of a sudden we're saying to them, well we're going to charge you a fee for asking a question or for providing you with some information. And the people in these pension plans are very, very concerned.

Mr. Speaker, we have, as I've indicated, consulted with a number of superannuates, a number of people on the executive of the SGSA, and they have indicated some concerns. And we want to continue to have that discussion with that executive to be able to determine whether or not there are other improvements that could be made to this Bill, or for that matter, what are the real identified concerns as raised by the minister.

So, Mr. Speaker, we haven't finished that review of this Bill and our consultations are ongoing, so I would ask for adjournment of debate at this time.

Debate adjourned.

(11:15)

Bill No. 17

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 17 — The Professional Corporations Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to stand in this legislature and enter the debate on Bill No. 17, The Professional Corporations Act. And, Mr. Speaker, we'll also have the opportunity later this day, I believe, to speak to Bill No. 1. And I'm appreciative for both of those opportunities because the remarks I have in the case of Bill No. 1 and 17 are very similar.

And, Mr. Speaker, they are based, they are based around a belief that I have had for some time, formerly as an economic developer, and that I maintain today, and that belief fundamentally is that there are many things that a government can do. Short of measures that actually cost the treasury, there are many things that a government can do that assist, that can assist small business — and frankly, medium-sized and large businesses as well, Mr. Speaker.

In the case of Bill No. 17, we're talking about an Act that if passed by this legislature would enable professionals in our province to incorporate. And, Mr. Speaker, no doubt government members have heard the same sort of thing that we have heard on our side of the House as it relates to this particular issue, specifically that professionals in the province of Saskatchewan have for some time wanted this opportunity.

They have noted for us other jurisdictions where it's currently allowed and have noted for us how it is working in those jurisdictions and how, if implemented here, would not come at a great cost to our treasury. And yet, Mr. Speaker, would be very important from the perspective of professionals who wish to stay in the province of Saskatchewan and who wish to compete successfully in the province of Saskatchewan and with their colleagues in other jurisdictions.

And so when the Bill was introduced by the Hon. Minister of Justice, I think there was a good deal of support for the introduction of that Bill on this side of the House. This is an element, Mr. Speaker, that was in the election platform of the Saskatchewan Party, heading into the 1999 election.

This is an issue that we spoke to as individual candidates and as a party. A measure that the government could take at no great cost to the treasury, that would be welcomed by our business community, and indeed would be an asset to one of the business . . . one of the sectors of our economy where there is great growth potential I think, that being the professional services side of our economy.

And so we have been calling for this kind of a measure for some time, and we're happy that it has finally been introduced by this government.

Mr. Speaker, as I was mentioning at the outset of my remarks, I think that members on this side of the House, and arguably the Minister of Justice who has introduced this Bill, understand clearly that there are things we can do as a government for small business, for our small business sector in this province,

that do not cost the treasury a great deal of money, and yet can have a profound effect in terms of enabling our business community to compete, both within the province and across our country.

There are other things, Mr. Speaker, that this government can do as well, I would point out, in addition to Bill 17, along those lines. And we will continue to encourage and exhort this government to do those things, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to red tape that small business faces in our province.

And I can think specifically of the lag between trying to register and incorporate your business, and when you're actually registered and incorporated in this province, which is still unfortunately measured in weeks, Mr. Speaker, while other jurisdictions are measuring that time period in days. There is another improvement that this province can strive for, and I believe it also falls under the purview of the Minister of Justice.

And so that gives us hope on this side of the House as well, that some action may occur in light of the fact that it is the Minister of Justice who has the opportunity to make this change. And so far, specifically on the Bills I'll be speaking to today, he seems to be the one that's introducing these measures into this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

I would also point out that this government can also do something else as it relates to . . . as it relates to the issue of labour regulations in our province. Mr. Speaker, we can make a great improvement in the business environment in our province, in the environment in which our business community can thrive and grow, if we make some fundamental changes to the labour laws and the labour regulations here in our province.

And like the action that has been taken in Bill No. 17, this would come at very little cost, if any, to the treasury of this province, and would represent a major change and a major improvement in the environment that business can operate in, here in the province.

I think specifically of the Bills that we've introduced on this side of the House in the two sessions that I've had the honour of participating in, Mr. Speaker. The one Bill would simply bring a secret ballot to the workplace in terms of people's desire to organize or not to organize their workplace.

And the other would simply allow employers and unions to share with the employees of any particular company the reasons why they should or shouldn't organize. Very common sense measures, Mr. Speaker. Very common sense measures that would be fair to employees and employers that would improve the business climate in our province and would come at no cost to the treasury.

And it was in those terms and those parameters, Mr. Speaker, that I looked at Bill No. 17. And it's why, Mr. Speaker, I initially, on the face of it today, can tell you that I see a lot of merit in this particular Bill, in how it's been drafted and how it's been presented.

But I know, Mr. Speaker, because it has been a platform issue of our party for some time, because it's something we have called on this government to do for some time, I know my

colleagues in the legislature will also want to speak to it, because they've talked about this issue on the doorsteps in the election. They've fielded calls in their constituency offices. They've met with their business community. And I know they, like me, will want to enter this debate, Mr. Speaker.

And so, as it relates to Bill 17, at this time I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 1

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 1 — The Partnership Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my remarks on Bill 17, I would be entering the debate on this Bill as well, and it's an honour to do so.

Frankly, the remarks that I have for this Bill are very similar to the remarks that I had on Bill 17, primarily because I believe these two pieces of legislation accomplish the same thing and speak to the same principles that we have been speaking to in terms of the official opposition and the business environment in our economy.

Again, Mr. Speaker, at the risk of sounding repetitive, again I would indicate to you and through you to my colleagues in the legislature, that both of these pieces of legislation are a clear indication to this government, this government, that you can improve the business climate and the business environment in this province through measures that the government can enact at no cost to the treasury, to the taxpayers of this province.

And certainly Bill No. 1, The Partnership Amendment Act, is another example of that. If passed, this particular piece of legislation would bring us into line with legislation that's available currently in only two provinces in the Dominion — in Ontario and in Alberta. And once again, it's been introduced by the Justice minister who on many different days, Mr. Speaker, some would argue may be perhaps the only member opposite that understands what you can achieve for small business on the government side of the House through legislation without the expenditure of tax dollars, Mr. Speaker.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House have heard from professionals because primarily The Partnership Amendment Act is going to have an impact on professional services in this province. They are the ones that use the partnership structure of business more than any other.

So again we have heard from those groups on this side of the House. We have heard from them in our constituencies, we have heard from their professional associations from across the province, and they have called on this government to enact these kinds of changes.

It's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that the important balance that must be struck with respect to these two pieces of legislation, and more specifically with respect to Bill No. 1, is

the balance between providing the business community and the partnerships the protection that they should have from actions that individual partners simply had no control over. In other words they didn't contribute to any negligence or wrongdoing and there should be protection for them.

And the balance of course, Mr. Speaker, is to also enable those who were at fault or perhaps were negligent or perhaps not enabled, but at least to ensure that they can be held liable, and it appears on the surface that Bill No. 1 also is able to accomplish that, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting to note that the only two provinces that have introduced similar legislation to this, Mr. Speaker, are the provinces of Ontario and Alberta. And, Mr. Speaker, we often cite those two provinces as examples of governments that understand very clearly . . . that understand very clearly how it is you can grow an economy in this modern world. They understand clearly how to succeed in terms of governing a jurisdiction that you want to grow, that you want to create jobs, that you want to develop.

And it's interesting to note that they are the only other two jurisdictions that have implemented these changes to date and the Minister of Justice seems to be following suit.

So, Mr. Speaker, both of these Bills this morning I think they afford us all room for hope that at least one or maybe two members opposite understand fundamentally the importance of improving and maintaining a positive business climate in our province, Mr. Speaker. And for those reasons, I've been very pleased to offer my remarks to you and through you, to the members of this Assembly.

And again, as is the case with the previous Bill, these are the kinds of issues that we've heard about as an opposition from individual constituents, from firms in our ridings, and from their associations.

And for that reason, I know that many of my colleagues will want to offer their remarks and demonstrate to the government that this matter is indeed important to them as well. And so as it relates to Bill No. 1, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 3

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Lorje that **Bill No. 3 — The Historic Properties Foundations Act** be now read a second time.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak on this important piece of legislation that is before us, An Act to establish Crown Foundations for Historic Properties, Bill No. 3.

Mr. Speaker, the intent of this Bill, and I'm quoting, is to make it possible for the Lieutenant Governor to establish foundations to receive gifts to the Crown, including corporate and individual gifts, bequests, donations, and grants for the purpose of preserving, developing, and enhancing historic properties in the

province.

Mr. Speaker, when my colleague from Redberry Lake spoke about this Bill a few weeks ago, he raised a very important point of the need to protect and enhance historical sites. But recovering the costs of operating these sites for future generations must also be looked at.

Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of historic property sites all over the world including libraries, homes, and old buildings, many of which we have in Saskatchewan.

We have many historical properties which have already been preserved and many more which should be. But when an organization is attempting to restore a historical site, one of the biggest obstacles that they face is financial.

It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that one of the first foundations that will be established will be to support Government House. When the minister spoke in her second reading speech about this legislation, she spoke about the important history that Government House holds for the province of Saskatchewan.

(15:00)

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is not every day that I will agree with the members on the opposite side of the House, but in this particular instance I will agree that Government House is an important symbol to Saskatchewan and is a real showpiece for the many people that come from across Canada and visit the site, which in very recent days has been hosting royalty.

My grandfather, an RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) officer attended the Lieutenant Governor and so Government House has a special meaning to me. And I believe all people of Saskatchewan are agreed that this house should be preserved.

Mr. Speaker, the main crux of this Bill is an important one. However, the only concern that I have is ensuring that the monies collected through the foundations actually go to the organizations they are designated to rather than through the government.

Mr. Speaker, this type of legislation in its true form will assist many of the small communities that members on this side of the House represent to establish sites in their towns as historical properties.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important gifts that we can give to our children is the gift of knowledge and restoring historical sites for their future benefit. And this is very important. I always find it fascinating when we have a group . . . a school group visit the legislature and the children marvel at the structure and the historical significance of this building. And that is what is the key here, Mr. Speaker, is leaving a legacy for our children to appreciate the significance such wonderful buildings in Saskatchewan offer.

There are just a few points in the Bill that are of concern to members on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. And I would just like to outline those briefly now.

One is that the Crown agent, under Crown agent, section 5(2):

All property of a foundation, all money acquired, administered, possessed or received from any source and all profits earned by a foundation are the property of the Crown and are, for all purposes, including taxation of whatever nature or description, deemed to be the property of the Crown.

I think that this should be of great concern to the people who now have these items in their community and that we are going to, through this foundation, make them the property of the Crown.

The second point is under board of trustees, 10(1):

A foundation consists of a board of not more than 20 trustees appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

And again, this is taking away control from the local communities where these historical sites are located.

Also under board of trustees, 10(7), and I quote:

A foundation may pay any allowances for trustees and any other costs of administering the foundation from its own money.

And so, again we see where these foundations will be able to pay their trustees and also allocate other costs for administration. Again, that is concern to members on this side of the House. It is our belief that most of these historical properties have been preserved through the willingness of volunteers to give of their time and not to be paid for these services.

Another concern is under investments, and no. 13(1):

A foundation may:

And I read, quoting from (3):

The costs incurred pursuant to this section are a charge on and payable out of the money held by the foundation.

And again it is giving free rein of the monies that are donated and given, to be used by this foundation under their discretion, and taking away local decisions.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, under direction of donors, no. 14, and I quote:

A foundation shall consider the directions of the persons who have made gifts, grants, . . . (bequeaths) or donations to a foundation but the foundation is not bound by those directions.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think this is very serious in that local communities want to be able to do what they will with these historical properties. And when someone makes a donation or bequeaths gifts, they should have the right to say where those dollars are going to go and those dollars should be spent appropriately.

And I think this is something that is of grave concern to the people of Saskatchewan, that they would give these monies and then the government, through the foundation, would make the decision of how this was going to be spent.

And so, Mr. Speaker, there are still some concerns with this Bill and we have sent out letters to third party groups that are directly involved with historical properties. We are waiting their return letter with their concerns, if they have any, and we will be bringing forth those concerns when we receive them.

We also have other members on this side of the House that would like to speak on this Bill and also have concerns about it, and so at this time I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 27 — The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2001

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2001. On June 30, 2000, SaskTel became regulated by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, commonly referred as the CRTC, which is a federal agency. In other words, SaskTel has come under federal regulation.

This Bill that I'm speaking to today introduces a technical amendment to enable SaskTel to maintain its existing rate structure for services offered to its competitors. In other words, what it charges competitors for providing use of its infrastructure and so on. SaskTel's competitors use SaskTel's infrastructure in delivering services to their customers. The CRTC regulates the fees that SaskTel can charge the other telephone companies.

SaskTel's existing rate structure for services offered to its competitors includes a notional charge for corporate income tax. And the reason for that, Mr. Speaker, is if Bell telephone, for example, is charging SaskTel for its services, Bell telephone would have as a component of the charge the amount of corporate capital tax or other tax that Bell might be paying in the province of Ontario or some other province.

SaskTel similarly would charge its competitors who use some of its services a notional charge for corporate income tax so that they're on a level playing field.

What this Bill does is to replace the notional income tax charge with an actual capital tax charge. In other words, what SaskTel charges the private sector for, it will now actually pay to the province. The new capital tax will closely represent the Saskatchewan corporate income tax that SaskTel would have paid if they were not exempt from income tax.

I want to assure you and the other members of the House, Mr. Speaker, and the public, that this change is strictly a technical change to satisfy CRTC requirements and it will not result in any rate increases for any SaskTel customers. It is purely a technical change in the way things are done because SaskTel has come under federal regulation and it's required pursuant to

CRTC rules.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Corporation Capital Tax Act.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the minister for his remarks. It was certainly enlightening on this side of the House to have a different perspective of what this Bill is presenting to us. As we take a look at the Bill, Mr. Speaker, we were trying to understand on this side of the House, as we read through the Bill and the explanatory notes, what this Bill is going to mean to the people and the province of Saskatchewan.

We understand and we know that in this province that the corporate capital tax is one of those excessive burdens that are put upon the corporations in this province, a tax that is excessively higher than other provinces charge their corporations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we see here in this Bill that the government is trying in some small part to address the problem, although as the minister has stated that the reason they're addressing this issue as it pertains to telecommunications Crown corporations in this province, Mr. Speaker, that the reason they're addressing it is because of a CRTC ruling and not because of any forward-looking taxation proposal that is being brought by this government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it will still continue though to be a Crown corporation exempt from corporate capital tax. What the minister has led us to believe in the House, Mr. Speaker, is that this tax will only be charged on services that SaskTel will be providing to other telecommunications in this country and throughout the world, as they do business to and through Saskatchewan. And certainly it's going to be, in small measure bring some tax dollars, further tax dollars into the province. But again, we're going to be seeing that the monopoly of the Crown corporations exempted from being on the same level playing field as other Corporations in the province.

But, Mr. Speaker, as we go through the Bill and we've listened to the brief . . . the statements that have been made by the Minister of Finance, it certainly raised probably more questions than we originally had about this Bill.

I think it's important that as we spend the next several days and weeks of examining the motives for this Bill and the wording of it, that we have an opportunity to be able to talk to other people in the industry as to what kind of effect it's going to have on them, and whether there's some way that we're going to be able to assist the government in being able to become more progressive in dealing with telecommunications in this province.

So, I think, Mr. Speaker, what we should do at this time is we'll adjourn debate for another day.

Debate adjourned.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, further to my point of order.

It's come to my attention that a document has been tabled regarding the point of order, and I just wanted to make a comment on that.

The Speaker: — I'd just like to mention this: that the members are not to comment on any rulings on a point of order. However, if the member is intending to raise another point of order, I would invite him to do so now.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's what this will be, is another point of order regarding the statement made by the minister and how he had not quoted from a document.

And looking at what was tabled, it clearly says that . . . and I just, from the document that was tabled, a goal of the final, and it says in brackets, not draft, so it was the final communication document that the cabinet had. And it quotes. It's got in quotation marks what that document said.

So I want that to be taken under advisement, that the issue that the minister raised was quoting from a cabinet document, and it's got it in quotation marks here. What is said here is, just because it's on a different sheet of paper and not from the actual document, is not applicable.

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, a couple of points. First of all the hon. member, under the guise of presenting a new point of order, simply comes to rehash a previous point of order that he raised and that has been ruled upon.

Also the point that he makes, Mr. Speaker, he says that if a minister would quote from something that exists somewhere else, that . . . Mr. Speaker, do I have the floor?

He says if the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order. I regard this . . . Members, I regard this as a serious matter. Order. I regard this as a serious matter and I would like to be able to hear the member's comments in full context please, and I do not appreciate interruptions during this time.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, when a minister is . . . the rules of the House require that when a minister is quoting directly from a document, that it be tabled. And what the hon. minister provided was his note that he was referring to.

(11:45)

If it is interpreted that whenever a minister should say something that is in another document that exists somewhere else, that somehow that has to be tabled at the Clerk's Table in this Assembly and be made public, Mr. Speaker, that would be an extreme stretch from any ruling ever previously made.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, ministers are entitled to work from their own notes in bringing information to the House. That is what the hon. minister has done and that's what he's provided to the House.

And I would ask that you would find this point of order not well

taken and, in fact, I think there may be grounds to rule it as frivolous, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I thank both members — order — I thank both members for their comments on the second point of order that has been raised.

Before making a comment on that, I note that the member has received the original document from which the quotation was made. The document that has been provided is a note that the minister was using from which he was making his remarks . . . Order, order. Order. Order. The document that was provided is from notes that the minister was using in making his remarks to the Assembly.

He has fulfilled perhaps even more of an obligation that he was required to, as I understand that he was not quoting directly from any type of a CDI. Therefore, the — order — therefore, the second point of order that was raised is not well taken.

The members will proceed with the agenda.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 28 The Commercial Liens Act/ Loi sur les privilèges à base commerciale

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Commercial Liens Act.

Mr. Speaker, existing statute law and common law currently provide for the creation of a legal right known as a lien, where a value is added or improvements are made on personal property in exchange for money. If the promised money is not paid, the lien provides the lien holder the first right to that personal property in order to secure the funds that are owed to him or her.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before this Assembly is intended to provide much needed updating of the existing outdated Acts and common law rules regarding the creation and enforcement of liens.

The Commercial Liens Act will codify the procedure for a lien attachment and enforcement for the following types of liens: a repairer's lien where a person has provided services for the purposes of improving, restoring, or maintaining the condition of goods.

Secondly, a storer's lien where the goods are maintained by storage.

And finally a carrier's lien where the transportation of goods from one place to another where they are needed or will be capable of being sold or repaired.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed Bill would restrict the value of a lien claim to the agreed upon amount to be paid between the parties. If no such agreement was made, the lien would be restricted to the value of services actually provided.

Even more significant from the perspective of a person who

faces a lien claim is the innovation in this legislation whereby the amount claimed in a lien or the validity of the lien itself could be easily and quickly challenged before a court.

From the perspective of a small business, the updated lien attachment and enforcement procedures set out in this Bill are an improvement as they adopt the well-established and well-known procedures under the personal property registry system.

Generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, once a lien is duly registered that lien will gain priority over all subsequent interests and certain prior interests as well. This Bill has been well received within our consultation groups, which included the legal community, Saskatchewan Trucking Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Automotive Repairers, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and the Centre for Public Interests Advocacy.

By setting out clear rules for how and when a lien will attach, as well as providing fairness to consumers by making the process for challenging the amount or nature of the lien quick and relatively simple, this new Act is a step forward.

Mr. Speaker, businesses will now be able to pursue the enforcement of legitimate liens from other provinces, thereby avoiding the need to entirely re-litigate a matter where the subject of the lien claim has simply crossed the provincial border.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, what this Bill also does is abolish certain common law liens and a series of existing liens statutes such as The Garage Keepers Lien Act, The Hotel Keepers Act, The Warehousemen's Lien Act, and what is left of The Mechanics' Lien Act to replace them with this modern, uniform legislation.

Rescinding these obsolete Acts and common law rules will make it easier for both consumers and businesses to locate and understand the applicable lien law.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this Assembly to join with both consumer and business communities in supporting this important initiative regarding commercial liens. I move second reading of An Act respecting Commercial Liens and making consequential amendments to other Acts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, after reviewing the Bill, there are a number of questions that we will have, and we'll be outlining those questions in the Committee of the Whole. But at this time, in order to give us the opportunity to speak with the various stakeholder groups across the province that would be interested in this piece of legislation, we would move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund

Public Service Commission

Vote 33

Subvote (PS01)

The Deputy Chair: — I'll recognize the minister and ask her to introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. Today I have with me Wynne Young, Chair of the Public Service Commission; Rick McKillop, executive director of employee relations division; Clare Isman, executive director, human resource development division; and Lynn Jacobson, director of administrative and information services division.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I also would like to thank the minister for being here and her officials for being here as well.

The first question that I have is can you provide us with a brief overview of anything new in initiative or direction that your department will be heading in during this fiscal year?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The two major things this year would be the Aboriginal internship and management development program, and as well, the development of an out-of-scope classification and performance management and compensation plan.

I don't know how much detail the member would like on this, but the Aboriginal internship one is intended to further the recruitment and development of Aboriginal employees at the management level of government and professional positions in the public service. So there's been funding of 690,000 and 15.3 full-time equivalents for this purpose.

And the out-of-scope classification performance management and compensation plan is a very interesting development because there's been a project underway in Finance for the last couple of years very much focused on outcome measures, performance requirements, and part of this out-of-scope classification and performance management plan will involve requiring managers to have outcome measures and accountability plans that go along with their job description and job duties.

So we see this as being, I guess, a little more focusing of the mandate in the various departments. And for that purpose, funding of 230,000 and three full-time equivalents was approved.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Deputy Chair, the full-time staff complement went up in your department by an astounding 20 per cent this year over the last year. Can you tell us why a relatively small department needs an increase of 20 per cent in staffing?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The positions that are new over the previous budget — 15.3 are the Aboriginal internship and management development positions. These are new positions for those trainees, if you want to put it in that terminology. One position for communication staff, and three positions that will only be there for two years to work specifically on the

out-of-scope classification and compensation plan. And as well, I might note, that there was 4.4 positions reduced in the CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) classification plan.

So there's been some additions, some deletions, but the majority of it is very specific to the Aboriginal internship and management program.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. So you said that presently you have 15.3 people that are enrolled for the Aboriginal program, or that are staff to look after the Aboriginal program?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — It's 1.5 FTEs (full-time equivalents) to look after the program, 10 actual interns, and 4 summer student positions.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you. Can you describe the program a little more in depth in terms of the tasks performed and the length of terms, as well as the pay scales that will be paid for this department?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I didn't hear the member's question well. If you could maybe just . . .

Ms. Harpauer: — Sure. Can you describe that department a little more depth just in terms of the tasks that will be performed within the Aboriginal program and the length of the term of the interns that will be in the program, as well as the pay scales that are being paid?

(12:00)

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We'll learn a few things together here. It's not until September that they will actually be selected and be in place. Recruitment is taking place right now. They'll be approximately at the out-of-scope level 2, which is 30 to 35,000.

And what's envisaged for their training will be some specific training courses. But as well to rotate through all the central agencies so they would understand, you know, the functions of Treasury Board, the functions of the various planning and other departments of government, but also through the line departments that relate specifically to their areas of study.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. What kind of qualifications . . . for the applicants who are applying for this program, what kind of qualifications are you asking? Is it just a high school diploma, a college, you know, education, or what's the prerequisite?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The applicants will have to be within five years of graduating, but they have to be university graduates.

Ms. Harpauer: — Is it the intention of the department that the interns that will be enrolled in this program, will they then stay on with the government — is that the intention of the program — on a permanent basis? And will there be more brought into a program again the following year?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — There is no guarantee of employment,

but I think we can have a fairly high comfort level that with the amount of retirement that will be taking place in the public sector over the next 10 years, that certainly there's very good opportunities right across government. And given the commitment to making sure that Aboriginal people fully participate in government, in the economy, certainly I think there's every chance that they would be successful.

I'd be very surprised if anyone didn't continue on.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Can you tell us what percentage of the workforce of the government is of Aboriginal descent now and compare that with approximately five years ago, like with the past — have we increased?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I can start out just generally by saying that the goal overall in terms of being representative according to the number of working-age people in the workforce would be 12.2 per cent. Right now we're at 9 per cent, and in 1992 we were at 3.1 per cent. So we've been making, I guess, about a per cent of progress a year.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Would you also have the stats, in terms of other minorities and in the case of people with disabilities, of how we've increased using that staff for our government?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I'd be happy to answer this question, and I'm pleased that you're interested in this area because this is an area I'm very interested in as well.

The desired representation of persons with disabilities, again, going by the representation in the workforce, is 9.7 per cent. This is one where we don't feel we're doing as well as we need to and that's at 2.8 per cent right now.

For members of visible minority groups, the target is 5.4 per cent. At the moment, we're at 2.8 per cent.

Women in management, the target is 45 per cent; we're at 36.1 per cent. And women in non-traditional occupations, the target is 45 per cent and we're very close to the 20 per cent mark there now.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. We're going to move on to a different area. Last year in estimates the minister was questioned as to why the administration costs had increased over \$100,000. And the reply from the minister at that time was that there was an increase of \$57,000 for pay equity and that there was a \$65,000 increase for a return of a one-time information technology funding that was being reduced later and this would help for reductions in the later years.

However, this year we're seeing yet another increase of an additional \$125,000 in administration costs and I was wondering why this had occurred?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Most of this is made up with the negotiated economic and salary increases that are part of the ongoing change in people's incomes with each bargaining cycle. So 75,000 of the increase was for those economic and negotiated increases. The communications person actually reports within the administration area, so 45,000 of that was the

new position in communications.

In operating expenses there was an increase of 25,000 for the actual work of the communications unit operating expense, and 13,000 reduction of miscellaneous administrative expenses. So there was a bit of balance off there.

And then . . . that's about it really, with that area.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. When you say salary increases, are you including pay . . . salary increases due to the pay equity program?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, that would include the pay equity adjustments.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you. Can you give us an update on the status of the pay equity program that you are following? Is it now fully in place, or are we looking at this graduating over a few more years yet?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I'm just trying to think of an easy way to express this. We're about 85 per cent completed, and keeping in mind that the out of scope are some of the last to be brought under this umbrella. And CUPE, we haven't completed the CUPE part of the whole sector yet.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. As I mentioned earlier, because of this, the administration cost budget has increased over the last two years. Do you have an estimate as to what the final tab will be for the taxpayers on the pay equity program?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Because it's job by job. There's two ways of going at it. Most pay equity settlements are usually in the range of 4 to 6 per cent of payroll. So if you look at the total payroll you get an estimate. But at the moment the cost of implementation within SGEU (Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union) were 16 million.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Do you have an estimate of how many current government employees will see a raise once the pay equity is fully in place in the government?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Because of the way that pay equity was done by the government, we tried to, I guess, solve two problems at once. One problem was a lot of the classification work was out of date, and because of a lot of changes that took place in government, some years of cutbacks and whatnot, a lot of people's job duties changed.

And so rather than do all the pay equity, then do a classification, which would have necessitated pay adjustments again, the classification process was rolled in with the pay equity process so that it could all be done in the most affordable way and all at once.

And because our plan is also gender neutral — it doesn't just affect women; it affects anybody who's not appropriately classified — it would be altogether about 80 per cent of employees that would . . . 75 to 80 per cent of employees that would receive pay adjustments, some due to reclass, some due

to the pay equity adjustment. But overall it would be about 75 to 80 per cent.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. You say that there's . . . okay there's pay equity adjustments and there's also classification adjustments. Are we looking at solely increases in salaries? Is there anyone that is going to realize a reduction in their salary due to either of these factors?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — No one gets any salary taken away, but people who have exceeded their classification are . . . it's what's called red-circled, and don't receive adjustments until they come to the level of their classification.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Many people in Saskatchewan don't understand the whole pay equity concept. They understand the concept of getting some pay or the same pay for doing the same work, but equal pay for work of equal value is quite a grey area for a lot of people.

Can you give us the process of assigning values to different jobs. And who does this and what are their qualifications to be making these decisions, and what criteria do they use when they're making these decisions?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — First of all, I guess to understand I guess the theory behind this, and the theory of course is that if you look across government and start to graph women's wages compared to men's, the main distinguishing feature seems to be that all women are paid lower than all men throughout the public service.

So there is the equal pay for equal work, but the equal pay for work of equal value takes into account not just the exact job that's being done, but the value of the work that's being done. And the criteria includes working conditions, skill, the effort required, the level of responsibility.

And these things are worked out jointly with the union. But also there's people who specialize in classification, whose job is to assign jobs to classification categories, and they work closely with this process. And at the end of the day, people have the right of appeal and whatnot, if they feel they've been inappropriately classified.

But it's trying to get beyond rating a job. I mean I don't want to get too controversial about this but I've been aware of, not within government but in some community agencies where if a woman applies for the job, they get offered one salary, and if a man applies for the job, they increase the salary by 10 or 20,000, because how can you expect a man to work for that little.

So I mean there's that kind of a thinking that goes deep within all of the pay systems. And I think a lot of women who are now supporting families, either jointly with their husbands or solely, basically said, we want to be recognized equally for the work we do.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. As I said, equal pay . . . or same pay for the same work, I think everyone does understand.

But in the area of jobs, you named four areas of evaluation to define the classification of a job position. Are there more than four areas of evaluation?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — It really is a point system. The categories I gave you — working conditions, skill, effort, and responsibility — are the broad categories. And then within that, there's factors to help you decide where that fits. And within those factors, there would be a rating, you know, on a scale of one to ten.

And so all those work into an assignment of points to the job categories and the different conditions. And then based on that, an overall rating would be given to the job.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Can I get a list of the criteria that's used or the evaluation that's used for deciding the classification of a job?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We'd be happy to provide that. Yes.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you. And who does this evaluating and what are their qualifications to give them this position?

(12:15)

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — When I was assistant director of personnel for DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan), I found out that there was a whole science and art of classification for which people were classification professionals, and this is the work they do. And those kinds of people work within the Public Service Commission, so they would be very involved in this process. They are specialists in doing classification work.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I suppose my question that quickly jumped to mind is how do you become a specialist in classification. Is there no job qualification here?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — They would be people who graduate from university courses in the human resource personnel. Probably some of the B.Com. (Bachelor of Commerce) courses actually probably include some of that as well.

But a lot of it's learning on the job as well, because no matter who you're paying, you have to figure out on what basis you pay them. And whether it's the discussion about how you pay a teacher, how you pay a nurse, how you pay a public servant, you have to have some rational basis on which that pay is decided, because otherwise people would accuse you that you pay that person more because you like them better, or you pay that person more for whatever reason.

So classification is really an attempt to find as fair and comparative a basis as possible for pay so that you can give a reason why jobs have the pay that they have, and to remove the controversy of there being a bias based on other things. But those people would have a general type of university degree in the human resource area or related area, and do the rest of their learning on the job.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. When you're talking in the area of pay equity I think the rationale of equal

pay for work of equal value is quite a concern, because it's whose rationale are we using here. Are you . . . is this a Made in Saskatchewan set of classifications or have we reviewed those in other provinces? Is it also within the same classifications as what would be used by the federal government?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Most of the work done on pay equity across Canada, people have relied on each other's work in this area, in developing it. And ours would be fairly similar to other places.

One of the factors that was different from ours because we decided to do our whole classification review at the same time, is that it's gender neutral. So that would be one feature that makes it slightly different from pay equity plans in other places.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I was led to believe that there was a union/management committee that was looking at . . . okay, can you tell me who sits on this committee?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — They're appointed both by their own representative organization, so the Public Service Commission, or the department in a particular case would appoint someone, and the union would appoint their reps to the process.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. How many people are on this committee, what are their backgrounds, and what are they getting paid to do the committee work?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Committees are composed of three and three representatives, so it would be six. The people on the Public Service Commission part of the committee would be people who are already in the employ, and therefore it's part of their work to continue doing the work that needs doing in the public service. And the people from the union part would be able to be on union leave, and being paid as a recognized part of being part of the unionized workplace.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Also in the area of concern of equal pay for work of equal value, and we have a committee that's doing the classifications and looking after that, but jobs . . . they evolve for what's necessary at the time in a lot of cases. So how often will we have to be reviewing this and redoing our classifications?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We believe that the plan will have integrity over the long term and that we won't have to keep redoing this. Now if a person's individual job changes, there always has been the ability, even back 25 years ago when I was involved in this, there always was the ability to ask for a reclassification if your job duties changed significantly. But aside from that, we believe the plan will stay intact and we won't see the wage gap start to spread again as it has through some of the systems in the past.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Okay, moving on to another area. In last year's estimates the minister in charge of the department at the time stated that the Public Service had moved to a new location which would produce a savings of \$352,000 per year. And yet the estimates this year under accommodation and central services, there's an increase of 13,000 and not a decrease.

Can you explain why that happened?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I can verify that there was a saving of \$350,000, and the increase of 13,000 this year is a very small portion of that 350,000 saved. And it was just that the lease rental charges changed at the head office, because this is leased space. So I guess the landlord would be the one who effected that.

Ms. Harpauer: — I'm sorry, Madam Minister. I don't understand how an increase of 13,000 is the effect of a decrease of 352,000. I didn't understand that.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Decrease was the year before. Last year 350,000 was saved. This year 13,000 was spent. So net 332,000 over two years was saved.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The travel expenses in the last ... going by the Public Accounts 1999-2000, which is the last report that we have, we see an increase in the travel expenses, in particular for the minister. She went from 90,000 to quite considerably more than that in the last Estimates, or from \$90 to 8,939. Can you explain why?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Okay. I'm going to give this a go. It might be a little tricky to understand, but I think I can explain it clearly enough.

The total listed for travel there, \$9,888, was actually related to the previous minister's two portfolios — Liquor and Gaming and Public Service Commission — and they were reimbursed \$9,644 from Liquor and Gaming.

So the only actual travel charged and not recouped by the Public Service Commission was a trip to Saskatoon.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Well then if the reimbursement was the minister's travel, then there was little reimbursement for the other travel which I'm assuming is for training and whatnot. So travel overall has increased. Can you explain why employees in the Public Service Commission are incurring travel expenses?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The areas that would likely have the most effect on travel in this particular year is we are in a collective bargaining year and that means travelling for purposes of bargaining sessions.

And as well there were two conferences held to improve the development and functioning of union/management committees across the province, and the employees' costs were paid for participation at these conferences and this was a special initiative.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Under the supplier payments, can you explain to me what Henry Birks & Sons Ltd. is?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I believe this question was asked last year as well, when I look back in *Hansard*, and it's basically the watch is for 25-year-service employees.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. There was

\$69,168 spent on this. Could you please tell me how many employees got watches this year?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — There were 431 employees who received their 10-year pins and then there was 400 employees who had either 25 or 35 years of service.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Last year that expense was around 25,000; this year it's up to 69,000. Is it not a concern that perhaps we should be looking at something for employees as they retire rather than every five-year increments of a gift?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — There's only three increments. One is at 10 years, the next is at 25, and then the next is at 35. It's not even as good as your wedding anniversaries.

Ms. Harpauer: — Expensive gifts. Thank you, Madam Minister. This year there was an expense at the Radisson Plaza Hotel here in Regina of 24,000. What was that for?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — That's the long-service banquets that are part of this process.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you. Recently it was announced that nearly 700 government managers are being forced into the union. Can you give us a brief outline on how this came to be and the events that led up to the latest example of forced unionization by the government?

(12:00)

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Since 1981 actually, there was a commitment to review the scope status of positions within government, and every contract there's a renewed commitment to review the scope positions in government. So on April 30, 1999 that commitment was finally fulfilled. It had been sitting there since '81, and a joint application of the union and the government was presented to the Labour Relations Board.

On April 5, the board made its decision and as a result approximately 645 out-of-scope positions moved into scope of the SGEU bargaining unit.

So this was a ruling of the board that these positions were more appropriately in scope. And we do recognize that this was, you know, a big lapse of time, but in fact it was based on an assessment of the scope of those positions and whether that scope was appropriately in scope or out of scope based on the duties of the job.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Who actually made the decision that this was going to be reviewed and that these managers should be part of the union?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Again, whether or not managers are part of the union isn't a matter of personal preference; it's a matter of their job duties and what their relationship is to the employees in the workplace. And so it's not an arbitrary kind of thing. It's based on the rules of how those positions are in scope or out of scope.

And just as part of every collective agreement for years and

years, there's been an agreement to review which positions should legitimately be in scope or out of scope and that's what happened in this case. And the Labour Relations Board looked at the information put forward and decided that 645 of the out-of-scope positions should more appropriately be in scope.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. So it's not the manager's personal preference. So the board takes a look at all the positions and they make a decision, all on their own, as who's going to be in scope and what positions are going to be out of scope?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, they do. And I will point out again that the Labour Relations Board is 50 per cent employers, 50 per cent representatives of labour, and that they jointly make that decision.

Ms. Harpauer: — So what percentage of all the out-of-scope managers did this latest number represent that were put in scope?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — It was about 5 per cent of the total public service. And in fact, that now brings us in line with most other provinces who are at 15 per cent of their public service being out of scope. We were different before. This makes us more like every other province now.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Five per cent of the public service is in scope or 5 per cent of the public service is out of scope?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — No, you'd asked me what the change was. The change was about 5 per cent. It went from about 20 to 15.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. We understand that while the Labour Relations Board was deliberating over whether or not to move these management positions in scope, half, if not more, of the people affected lobbied against becoming members of the union. Is this your understanding as well?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I suspect there was all kinds of opinions on all sides of the discussion but the fact of the matter is there is a process, and even at this point people always have the ability to appeal a decision. And certainly if people decided that was what they wanted to do it's certainly within their rights to do that.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Did the Government of Saskatchewan, who is actually the employer in this situation and as the entity that will ultimately pay the cost for this move, intervene at all in this case either in support of or in opposition to this forced amalgamation of government department managers?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Again what you would do in this process is you would agree which positions should go forward to the Labour Relations Board for a determination. This was done jointly. The Labour Relations Board made their determination. And what was appropriate for us was to — in the integrity of the agreements made to review scope — is to put forward those positions where there was a legitimate question

about whether it should be in or out of scope.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. It's interesting you use the word integrity. As the minister in charge of the Public Service Commission, does it not concern you in the least that half or more of the managers did not want to become members of the union and yet they find themselves there anyways? Does this not strike you as being unfair? And is it what you consider to be the most democratic way to run things?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — There are rules that govern a workplace and so what is appropriate is to follow the rules that govern that workplace. And I think that's entirely fair and appropriate. Why have rules in a workplace if you ignore them? So these are rules that are jointly negotiated. They're agreed-upon rules that govern that workplace.

And I will reiterate: just like a teacher who becomes a teacher becomes a member of the teachers' union, just like a nurse who becomes a nurse if she's in a unionized workplace becomes a member of the union, so does somebody whose classification appropriately is in scope become a member of the union if they're a member of a unionized workplace.

And these are the rules that these have operated under for years and years. And I think a lot of the associations would take great exception to anybody suggesting there should be a different rule.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. So who makes the rules? Like who decides ultimately the in-scope and out-of-scope positions?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Now I've mentioned several times that it's negotiated. That means both parties come together and they come to an agreement under the rules that govern those agreements.

And certainly if you were of a different philosophical bent, I suppose you could decide to change the rules and take your chances with the results. But these are the rules we operate under at the moment and this is very normal to all of the public sector workplaces in the province.

Ms. Harpauer: — Madam Minister, who makes up the rules that the board has this kind of power?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Those are governed by the labour Acts in the province, The Trade Union Act.

Ms. Harpauer: — Madam Minister, we have a number of managers now who have gone public and said that they're very, very unhappy. So does it not concern you that this will damage the morale within the Public Service Commission and negatively affect the government service?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well one of the very sad side effects of governing is that you can't make everybody happy. So what you try to do is follow some rules so that at least you can be fair. And even if everyone's not happy they may see the inherent fairness in the process.

And the fairness in this process is that there is a process by

which this is done, and either party has the opportunity to appeal if they don't feel that process, which is mutually agreed on, has produced a result that they can live with.

But at the same time, I've also been around long enough to know that once people get an opportunity to look more closely and perhaps adjust to the new situation, that initial reactions do not always continue.

But again, I'm not going to prejudge for people what they like or what they don't like because I think you would find people all through this discussion that would have a variety of positions. And I don't think it would be appropriate for me to jump in the pile with one or the other point of view. This has gone through a process. Independent people who are not me have made the ruling, and people have a right to appeal.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The fact that these managers are now part of a union brings to mind what will happen in the unfortunate event of a strike of public employees. How much more difficult will it now be to continue even providing bare services of the government with these managers now part of the union? Or was it the intent of this move to absolutely paralyze government services in the unfortunate event of a strike?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The fact of the matter is we would be no more paralyzed or less paralyzed than every other government in Canada who's at the same 15 per cent.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. We understand that the movement in this positions are . . . of these positions into union will cost in excess of approximately \$2 million. Is that more or less accurate?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I think that's a pretty good estimate of the cost because, of course, when you're out of scope quite often you do a lot of overtime without additional compensation. When you're in scope, overtime is paid.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Was this money accounted for in last year's budget?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We weren't able to budget for it until we knew the cost, but we feel that with careful management, and looking through all other areas, that we can manage to absorb these costs.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Minister, and I thank your officials. That's all the questions I have for today.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I thank the member for her thoughtful questions.

The committee reported progress.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave of the Assembly to present two motions, one related to a referral to the Estimates Committee and a second related to broadcasting of proceedings.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Estimates and Supplementary Estimates Referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move, with leave of the Assembly:

That the estimates for: the Legislative Assembly, Vote 21; the Provincial Auditor, Vote 28; the Chief Electoral Officer, Vote 34; the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Vote 55; the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate, Vote 56; the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Vote 57; as well as the Supplementary Estimates for the Legislative Assembly, Vote 21; be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates.

This is seconded by the hon. member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Assembly Proceedings Broadcast on the Internet

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, with leave of the Assembly, I move:

That this Legislative Assembly authorize the broadcast of its proceedings on the Internet; and, further, that the broadcast be made through the web site of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

And that is seconded by the hon. member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — Members, I wish everybody a good weekend. This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:46.