

The Assembly met at 13:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I rise again today with a petition for people who are concerned about the Fyke Commission.

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 Kelvington health centre be maintained at its current level, offering 24-hour acute care, emergency and physician services and that laboratory, physiotherapy, public health, home care, and long-term care services be readily accessible to users from Kelvington and district.

The people that have signed these petitions are from Kelvington and Lintlaw and Buchanan Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the condition of Highway 339. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 339 in order to facilitate economic development initiatives.

And the petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Briercrest, Claybank, Regina, Moose Jaw, and Hearne.

I so present.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of concerned citizens in southwest Saskatchewan regarding the state of Swift Current's hospital. And they presented me with the petition to present to the Assembly. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition today is signed by residents of the city of Swift Current, residents of Wymark, Gull Lake, and Tompkins.

I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the Weyburn Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse who are proposing to build an in-patient treatment centre in the city of Weyburn. And the prayer reads:

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

support the in-patient treatment centre in the city of Weyburn and provide funding for the same.

And the petition is signed by residents of Weyburn and Osage.

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to present a petition of citizens concerned about the cellular telephone coverage. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable telephone service in the districts of Rabbit Lake, Hafford, Blaine Lake, Leask, Radisson, Borden, Perdue, Maymont, Mistawasis, and Muskeg Lake.

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

I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present to do with the lack of funding to non-profit personal care homes. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide subsidies to non-profit personal care homes in the province so all seniors can be treated equally

The signators, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Melville, Bangor, and Kamsack.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here opposed to possible reduction of services to Davidson and Craik health centres. 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 steps to ensure that the Davidson and Craik health centres be maintained at their current level of service at a minimum with 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctor services available, as well as lab, public health, home care, and long-term care services available to the users from the Craik and Davidson area and beyond.

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

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson and Regina.

I so present.

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

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

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Mozart, Wynyard, Kandahar, Raymore, and Dafoe.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition regarding cellular telephone coverage in the Shellbrook-Spiritwood constituency. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in the districts of Spiritwood, Medstead, Glaslyn, Leoville, Chitek Lake, Big River, Canwood, Debden, Shellbrook, Parkside, Shell Lake, Duck Lake, and Macdowall.

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

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Meadow Lake, Spiritwood, and Mildred.

I so present.

Mr. Peters: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by folks that are concerned about the funding for the Territorial House in Battlefords. And the prayer reads:

Therefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to designate the restoration of Territorial House in the Battlefords as a centenary project, and provide the necessary funds to complete the project prior to 2005 centennial celebrations.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by folks from Battleford and North Battleford.

I so present.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise again with a petition from citizens in southern Saskatchewan concerned about long-term care facilities and the cuts at Assiniboia Pioneer Lodge facility, 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.

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

I so present.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to provide a petition that was presented to me from community health services in the Moose Jaw-Thunder Creek Health District. It's in support of comprehensive tobacco control

legislation, Mr. Speaker, and reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to pass comprehensive provincial legislation to prevent children from starting to smoke, to protect all citizens from second-hand smoke in public places and workplaces, and to control youth access to tobacco products.

As in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by citizens from Moose Jaw, Chaplin, Craik, from Mortlach, as well as Marquis, Regina, and Bushell Park, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to so present.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today dealing with health care. The prayer reads:

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

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Redvers, Antler, Wauchope, Fertile, Gainsborough, Storthoaks, and the southeast Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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.

There are nine petitions that are hereby tabled as addendums to previously tabled petitions.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Communication

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Communication presents the second report of the said committee which reads as follows:

Your committee has considered the recommendations of the Public Documents Committee, under The Archives Act, contained in the retention and disposal schedules comprising sessional paper no. 140, including schedule no. 344 — Department of Justice, law enforcement branch, private investigators and security guards, and schedule no. 345 — Farm Tenure Arbitration Board, the second session of the twenty-fourth legislature and referred to the committee by the Assembly on May 10, 2001.

Your committee recommends to the Assembly that the recommendations of the Public Documents Committee on

schedule nos. 344 and 345 be accepted.

Your committee reviewed the report of the Legislative Library for the period ended March 31, 2000.

Your committee also considered issues related to the broadcast of the legislative proceedings.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Cannington:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Communications be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Labour: does the Workers' Compensation Board pay to fly P.C. Council, vice-president of human resources of technology and corporate support, back and forth from Calgary every weekend; if so, how much has this cost so far and when did it begin?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, I would like to introduce 16 grade 4 students in the east gallery. I had a chance to meet with the students earlier on and they have had a tour of the building so now they are just going to watch the proceedings of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the students are accompanied by their teachers, Arnelda Lawrence and Paula Fondrick.

I hope you enjoyed the tour and I hope you enjoy the proceedings of the House this afternoon. It'll get a little livelier once we get into question period.

So would you please join me in welcoming this group to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you and to you, I'd like to introduce a number of guests who are in your gallery and seated on the Assembly floor. They are here to mark United Empire Loyalist Day in Saskatchewan.

The United Empire Loyalists, Mr. Speaker, were given the mark of honour, U.E. (The Unity of the Empire), by Governor General Dorchester in 1789. They were allowed to pass it on to their descendents as recognition for their loyalty to and service in defending the Crown during the American revolutionary war.

We have a number of guests whose ancestors played a pivotal role in ensuring that the northern and better half of North America is part of Canada we know and are so proud of today.

Among our guests today, Mr. Speaker, is Mr. Logan Bjarnason — please stand, sir — who is the president of the Saskatchewan branch of the United Empire Loyalists of Canada. Mr. Bjarnason is wearing a replica, a Butler's Ranger's uniform worn by one of his ancestors.

Butler's Rangers, Mr. Speaker, fought alongside our Aboriginal peoples in New York and Pennsylvania and settled the Niagara region after the war, ensuring that the land north of the Great Lakes would wind up in Canadian hands.

Among the other loyalists joining Mr. Bjarnason today are his wife Shirley, Mrs. Margaret Carter, president of the Manitoba branch; Ms. Lorna MacKenzie, archivist and librarian of the Saskatchewan branch; and Mrs. Linda Smith, the local branch secretary. And I also recognize a colleague, Mr. Speaker, with whom I also served in Her Majesty's Service.

Our guests will be attending Government House this afternoon where the pre-1801 Empire Union flag will be raised and they will have tea. I also understand the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld, a scholar and author on the Loyalists, will be meeting with them as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you and all members of this Assembly to welcome these wonderful people to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I also would like to welcome the Loyalists here to the legislature this afternoon.

I know they played a very significant part in the formation of Canada and it's definitely nice to see the costumes of the past era displayed here again today. So on behalf of the official opposition, I would like to welcome you.

And if I may, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, when I introduced the group from Assiniboia, I forgot to mention that they were in fact from Assiniboia.

So please join me in welcoming the Loyalists.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Seated in the west gallery is Mr. Howard McMaster of the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations). And I would like all members of the Assembly to welcome him.

And I hope that no one will misinterpret this when I say that Howard and I used to run around together when we were both members of the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) in Saskatoon and both a little lighter on our feet and we could run a fast and mean mile.

Please welcome Howard McMaster.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to my colleagues in the Assembly, a group of 20 students from the Ruskin Hutterite School at the Swift Current Hutterite Colony just north of Swift Current.

They're seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. And they're accompanied today by their teacher, Colleen Eliason, and the teacher aide, Sylvia Martens.

It's great to have them here and I'd invite all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming them to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, seated in the west gallery, a group of 26 post-secondary education students. And they are from the U of R (University of Regina), the U of S (University of Saskatchewan), SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), some from the U of A (University of Alberta), and also the U of Western Ontario.

And they all have one thing in common, Mr. Speaker, and that is, they're all working for the Department of Finance this summer. And I'd like to say that they're working in various branches. They're working for the Saskatchewan Savings Bonds program which is . . . they're being sold right now, the budget analysis division, the revenue division, the comptroller's division, the information technology branch, and one of them is working in my office for the summer, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm very, very happy, Mr. Speaker, to have these students working in government for the summer. They're working in Finance; there are other students working in other departments, some of them through the centenary student employment program.

And I want to say, I think it's a win-win situation, Mr. Speaker, because the government benefits from the work of the students — the creative ideas, their intellect — and also because it gives us an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to find new people that can come into the public service in the future.

It's a very valuable experience from our point of view and the people's point of view and I think it's a good experience for them, Mr. Speaker, because they get to learn something hopefully — I'm sure they do — and they get . . . and I hope I do learn something from them and I'm sure I will, Mr. Speaker, as well. And also I think it helps them pay the bills, Mr. Speaker. So it's a win for them as well.

So I want all members to join with me in welcoming and acknowledging the students working in the public service over the summer.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to extend a welcome to the post-secondary education students that are working with the

Minister of Finance. We certainly are looking forward to the positive results that we can expect from these students of higher learning having their influence on the Minister of Finance, and I think it will be certainly a positive for this province.

So I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and to all members in the House, I'm delighted to introduce 50 students from Watrous Elementary School, grade 7 students. They're in the east gallery. I'm sure that . . . They're here today with their teachers, Larry Orth, Ryan Gallagher; teacher assistant, Ryan Mart; chaperones, Leslie Frey and Leah Ullyott. And I'm sure that this will be a high point to your visit here in Regina. I'm sure you'll enjoy the Assembly as much as we do, at least those on this side of the House.

So welcome and I look forward to meeting you later.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon I want to introduce two individuals in the west gallery, friends of ours, Mr. Duane Theaker and his partner, Lorelei. Mr. Theaker is a very successful businessman in Yorkton and his partner is just recently retired as an employee of one of the RMs (rural municipality), being an RM administrator in this province.

Also a very special moment I know for Duane this afternoon. They're here for two reasons: one is to observe the work of the House; but secondly, rarely do we ever get an opportunity to observe our children at work. And of course this afternoon Mr. Theaker will get an opportunity to observe his daughter Sarah at work.

So I want to welcome you to the House and hope that you enjoy the proceedings here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce Ken Chevaldayoff to the Assembly. Ken is in the east gallery. Ken was the chairman of a very successful leader's dinner for the Saskatchewan Party in Saskatoon last month. It was sold out — over 700 people. Ken had to use all of his diplomatic skills to explain to people why it was sold out and they couldn't attend.

And I know that all members of the House will join with me in welcoming Ken Chevaldayoff to the Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wartman: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I was feeling like a yo-yo and now I realize I yo-yoed too late. I wanted to introduce one of my constituents, Betty Caldwell, who is here with the United Empire Loyalists.

Betty's ancestors settled in the same area as my ancestors around Napanee, Ontario, and her grandfather sold my

great-grandfather a piece of land in that area. And we share a common heritage as well — she sits in front of me in church. And so even though she is no longer in the House, I would like to bring attention to her. She's in the building, and I would like all to welcome her to this building at this time.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Drug Abuse Resistance Education

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, an impressive number of students in Humboldt and area have made a commitment to remain drug free.

The first group of grade 6 students from St. Dominic School recently graduated from the Drug Abuse Resistance Education class. D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) is a 17-week course that teaches students about drugs and their effects, as well as strategies on how to deal with pressure to avoid the use of drugs.

The course started back in January at the school and was taught by RCMP Cst. Dave Hamilton. According to St. Dominic School principal, Malcolm Eaton, the program involves more than education about drugs and violence; it focuses on self-esteem, setting goals, solving problems, how to be assertive, recognizing stress, and how to deal with anger.

Cst. Hamilton's enthusiasm about D.A.R.E. helped to create a super learning environment. Kathy, the grade 6 teacher, said this of Cst. Hamilton:

That he always left the students with something, another piece of knowledge to help them cope in a sometimes pretty tough world.

According to Constable Hamilton, he says:

If I have taught one kid to be drug and alcohol free, I've done my job.

Mr. Speaker, to finish the year, the students each wrote personal commitments to remain drug free. According to one student, being healthy is a gift and she doesn't want to take advantage of that gift. Drugs basically destroy your health, smarts, and creativity.

In the words of another student, the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program has given her the knowledge about drugs and their effects that she would not have had otherwise, and perhaps would have taken drugs to be cool and popular.

Thank you to the community of Humboldt that supported the D.A.R.E. program as the program is dependent on donations from local businesses, service groups, and private citizens.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Regina Transition House

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Regina Transition House run by the Regina Transition Women's Society is located in my constituency. And the current news bulletin of the society reminds us of two somewhat contradictory facts about Transition House.

I'll quote the opening paragraph of their bulletin to illustrate. It says, quote:

No one wants to celebrate the necessity of operating a shelter in our community. However, the board of directors and staff of Regina Transition House are proud of the services the agency has provided to women and children for the past 25 years.

And unfortunately in those 25 years we have not reached the perfection we strive for as a society, and for that reason Transition House continues as a caring, compassionate community aware of our human shortcomings.

But we are full of admiration for those staff who serve at Transition House and proud that it has been able to provide shelter and refuge to over 11,000 women and children in its first 25 years and will continue until we're able to eliminate the causes of spousal and child abuse.

Mr. Speaker, as the bulletin also says, the staff of Transition House is a wonderful group of women with diverse talents who make our shelter a special and caring home.

And I know all members will join me in congratulating the staff, board, and all the volunteers who serve women and children in need at Transition House. And I am proud that as a government we make a contribution through Social Services and Sask Housing. I wish them well in their future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Swift Current Student Outdoor Education Club Plants Trees

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to take some time to congratulate some ambitious students from the Swift Current Comprehensive High School.

Mr. Speaker, the Outdoor Education Club at the school provides students with the opportunity to experience a number of outdoor recreational activities in order to learn about the environment. Each year they also conduct an environmental enhancement project in the southwest.

This year a group of 30 students spent the afternoon of June 7 planting trees around a trout pond near Highway 32 in the Swift Current area. The Outdoor Education Club felt the trees would help beautify the trout pond for the people who enjoy fishing there and would also bring more wildlife to the region.

The club contacted the non-profit group known as TREEmendous Saskatchewan and requested 300 trees for their

project. Mr. Speaker, TREEmendous Saskatchewan thought it was such an excellent idea that they supplied the club with 720 trees.

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the students of the Outdoor Education club for their worthwhile efforts to enhance the environment, as well as their teacher advisers, Myles Radchenko, and Stew Tasche, who I believe were also involved in the club when I went to that high school a few years ago.

And I'd also like to thank TREEmendous Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, for providing the trees to the Outdoor Education Club.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Recognition of United Empire Loyalist Day

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, it's a great honour to rise on United Empire Loyalist Day to recognize the roughly 4 million Canadians who can trace their ancestry back to the United Empire Loyalists.

Mr. Speaker, we Canadians pride ourselves on our values. We boast that our country is founded on more than the narrow nationalism of language, region, or religion. Canada is built on a mutual respect of diversity, belief in peaceful change, and a balance of individual rights with responsibility to care for one another.

Mr. Speaker, Canadians owe these values and our country itself to the thousands of United Empire Loyalists who remained loyal to the Crown and fled to Canada following the American Revolutionary War. Loyalists were multicultural with African, German, British, and Aboriginal peoples among their ranks.

They settled many parts of Canada and brought with them parliamentary democracy. During the War of 1812, they helped successfully defend Canada from the attacking Americans, despite overwhelming odds.

Mr. Speaker, our country and our province would not exist without these contributions. We must remain thankful and work to build on our unique values with the same sense of hope and determination as our Loyalist friends, and our founders.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Radville Students Win National Platinum Recognition Award

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the students at St. Olivier School in Radville for winning the National Platinum Recognition Award for quality daily physical education.

This award is presented by the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. The award is given annually to Canadian schools achieving more than 150

minutes of physical education per student, per week.

St. Olivier is one of only 511 schools in Canada to receive this prestigious award.

Research shows that those who develop knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes towards physical activity in their youth, go on to live healthier, more active lives as adults.

St. Olivier attributes their success in achieving this award to a team effort by physical education teachers, classroom teachers, school administrators, the board of education, parents, and of course the students.

Once again, congratulations to St. Olivier School for all your hard work, and a job well done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

St. Paul's Hospital Emergency Department Wins Millennium Award

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased, but not surprised, that the emergency staff of St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon have received high praise and recognition for their exceptional service. Since I'm an alumnus of the St. Paul's School of Nursing, I take something of a personal interest in this award.

The emergency staff were presented with the Granger Campbell award for Clinical Excellence, one of the millennium awards presented by the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association and given to registered nurses and/or members of the public who have made an outstanding impact in nursing practice on the health environment.

The testimony in support of this award says all that needs to be said about these superb health care professionals. It states that professionally the members of St. Paul's emergency department are unmatched in their technical skills which cover a wide range. Despite a heavy workload, they are diligent in their work while exhibiting patience, kindness, and tenderness to patients who come to emergency filled with fear and uncertainty.

The award also notes the collegiality between the nurses and the skilled emergency doctors and other supportive technical and administrative staff.

Mr. Speaker, we can't say it often enough — we are aware of the professional excellence of all members of the Saskatoon Health District staff and we are proud to see these St. Paul's professionals recognized by their peers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

10th Annual Frenchman River Valley Gospel Music Jamboree

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if my

face has looked a little bit redder the past few days, it comes as a result of sitting in the sun all day this past Sunday. The occasion was the 10th Anniversary of the Frenchman River Valley Gospel Music Jamboree held in June in the valley south of Shaunavon.

The site sits almost directly on the line that divides the constituencies of Cypress Hills and Wood River. But that division is inconsequential to the hundreds of people that attend this annual event from locations all around this province and the state of Montana and from other jurisdictions in the nearby areas.

Gospel music of all different kinds presented by groups of various configurations, both local and some from as far away as Nashville and Missouri, blend together to create a weekend of joyful noise. It's an uplifting time in the valley, a time of sharing good music and friendship. And it's one for which I have a deep appreciation, having been on the organizing committee for several of the past 10 years.

The event requires the support of about 100 volunteers and the financial backing of businesses and interested individuals throughout the southwest. To be fully successful, however, the help of an obliging weatherman is also required. And I'm glad to say that that was so for most of this weekend anyway, and hence my sunburn.

So today I would like to acknowledge the success story of this local gospel music event. It brings people together in fellowship, helps to reaffirm one's faith, and even provides a small economic benefit to the area.

I would like to offer my ongoing thanks and appreciation to each individual involved in making the 10th annual Frenchman River Valley Gospel Music Jamboree a wonderful event.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I would like to welcome all of the guests to the legislature in addition to the welcome you've received earlier. And I would remind the guests and ask them to respect the tradition of the House, and that is not to participate in the proceedings in any way.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier made the following statement regarding Justice Wakeling's report. The Premier said, and I quote:

. . . when (the) report is available, it will be available to the legislature and to the public . . .

At a news conference later the minister of Liquor and Gaming confirmed that Justice Wakeling's report is complete.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Justice Wakeling's report is complete. The Premier promised to release the report as soon as

it was ready. Will the minister release Judge Wakeling's report today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I believe that Justice Wakeling's report is being completed and printed. Part of the terms of reference that were delivered on two occasions to the members opposite require that Justice department look at that report to see if there are any further actions that are needed, Mr. Speaker.

On one hand they would say that we shouldn't interfere with those kinds of investigations, and on this hand they say release the report without completing the terms of reference that they requested, Mr. Speaker, for Justice to have that review.

Mr. Speaker, I have stated and it's the desire of the Premier that we would be able to release that report. If there is anything in the report that Justice requires and would be needed for further investigation, that would not be released, Mr. Speaker. But it's our desire to release as much as we can of Wakeling's findings.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister is sitting on Justice Wakeling's report and refusing to release it. The minister is sitting on the Liquor and Gaming annual report and refusing to release it. What are they hiding?

Mr. Speaker, will the minister release Justice Wakeling's report and the SLGA's (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority) annual report before this House adjourns for the summer?

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the report and I'm not sitting on any report, Mr. Speaker.

What I can say is that Justice Wakeling asked if his findings completed the terms of reference. And except for the last terms of reference, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition themselves were calling for, is that make certain it is reviewed to see if there are any further actions needed or investigations needed, Mr. Speaker. That's the final piece here. That is being done.

Mr. Speaker, it would please this side of the House to be able to release all of the information from Justice Wakeling's report as soon as possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Mr. Speaker, the minister of Liquor and Gaming has steadfastly maintained that she never knew anything about financial problems at SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) before June of 2000. However, much of the testimony at the Dosenberger trial focused on an SLGA audit of the Gold Eagle Casino in North Battleford conducted back in 1998.

This audit revealed numerous problems and it was apparently changed a number of times to cover up those problems.

Mr. Speaker, why does the minister continue to say she didn't know of the problems at SLGA . . . or pardon me, at SIGA until

last year when serious problems at the Gold Eagle Casino were identified back in 1998?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The preliminary audit that the member opposite is referring to was an internal auditing process on the operations of the Gold Eagle Casino.

We were very new in the industry, Mr. Speaker, and the auditors, the internal auditors, outlined a number of questions they would have, Mr. Speaker. That auditing report, as she mentions, as the information became available, changed a number of times when the auditors had the information available to them, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that had nothing to do with the misspending and the allocations of monies at SIGA.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we were working to have the internal audit processes in place and operating so that the integrity of casino gaming was in place for this province. When we discovered the misappropriation of monies at SIGA we immediately shared that information and took action, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP's (New Democratic Party) Liquor and Gaming Authority has a pattern of regulatory negligence and cover-up. They knew about problems at the Gold Eagle Casino as early as 1998, but instead of dealing with those problems, they covered them up.

The minister says she knew nothing about this matter. Now either she's not telling the truth or, if she is telling the truth, then her own officials were deliberately withholding information from her.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order. Order. I would ask the members in their questions to be very diligent and very careful about the use of parliamentary language in the questions and in their responses.

Ms. Eagles: — Mr. Speaker, which one is it? Did the minister know about problems at SIGA prior to June 1998, or were her officials covering up and keeping information from their own minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — I would say that there is a record. The record is on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, for use of misinformation, use of partial pieces of information to distort the issues and blow them out of proportion.

Mr. Speaker, as the member would have been told in the previous answer, the information she's talking about was a very preliminary auditing process within one facility. Many of the questions asked in that reporting, as she mentions, were answered or addressed; financial information was presented, Mr. Speaker.

That is a separate issue, Mr. Speaker, from the operations of SIGA. Mr. Speaker, much of that information would never even make it into a final audit report because they were addressed.

But, Mr. Speaker, very early on in the preliminary working papers, we discovered the misappropriation of money at SIGA. We immediately informed this House and took action, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it's the same old story from this minister. Say one thing and then do the opposite.

First the NDP held a news conference to say they fired Joe Dosenberger for leaking a cabinet document to the media. And for 11 months the NDP intentionally left the public with the impression that Mr. Dosenberger was fired for leaking documents, even though the minister didn't have a shred of evidence to prove it.

Finally last week, after Mr. Dosenberger took the NDP to court, a judge confirmed what Mr. Dosenberger already knew — the NDP fired Joe Dosenberger for no reason except to hide the NDP government incompetence.

Mr. Speaker, the minister spent 11 months attempting to trash Joe Dosenberger's professional reputation. And it finally took a judge to stop the NDP's attempt to assassinate the character of a 28-year RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) veteran. Will the minister do the right thing today? Will she accept responsibility for her government's disgusting conduct and tender her resignation immediately?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Members of the Assembly, while I find the subject at hand an important subject and it must be dealt with, I would ask members in their questioning and in their responses to be respectful of each other as members and not to impugn bad motives of any member in trying to use . . . in any of their relationships with the persons in their department. And in that respect I'd ask the member to be very mindful in her question.

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in good faith, the authority acted on what Justice Kyle himself said was a security leak within the authority. They acted with that information at that time, Mr. Speaker. As I say, it's unfortunate how the circumstances around this have unfolded. Through it, as I stated yesterday, I said that at no time did the authority or myself question the integrity of Mr. Dosenberger or question that his motives were other than to co-operate with the police investigation. It was the issue of a security leak and measure, Mr. Speaker.

So on . . . With that in mind, I said I regretted the result of this but we are learning from this, Mr. Speaker. I have asked the authority and they have ensured me they will put processes in place so that employees know exactly how to handle this kind of information in the future, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what part of Justice Kyle's ruling doesn't the minister understand? The judge says the NDP fired Joe Dosenberger to take the fall for embarrassment sustained by the government. The judge says the NDP fired Joe Dosenberger for doing his job. The judge says the NDP's decision to fire Joe Dosenberger was political and that it could put a chill on regulatory diligence.

The minister herself accused Mr. Dosenberger of having something to do with the leak of cabinet documents even though she didn't have a shred of evidence to prove it.

Mr. Speaker, if the minister is looking to blame someone for government incompetence perhaps she should look in the mirror. Isn't it time to call off this charade. Mr. Speaker, will the minister stop making excuses, take responsibility for the mess at SLGA, and resign immediately?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, I am the minister responsible and I am taking responsibility for the decision that Justice Kyle has rendered, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe, as the member opposite with her half bits of information would say, that I had said other than Mr. Dosenberger himself had stated he handed over that document, Mr. Speaker. And that's all I have ever stated and alluded to, Mr. Speaker.

I would remind the member opposite that SLGA has two functions that it performs. And one, as the minister responsible for the Authority, I identify the direction of this government in cabinet to the Authority with policies and the procedures to be carried out, Mr. Speaker. I have many examples of that. For example, VLT (video lottery terminal) distribution, Mr. Speaker.

On the other hand there is regulatory function under the Criminal Code of Canada and I will not, should not, and could not interfere in that process, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Really, Mr. Speaker, the minister sounds like a broken record.

The bottom line is that the NDP fired Joe Dosenberger without cause. The minister used Joe Dosenberger as a scapegoat for her own incompetent management. And then she forced Mr. Dosenberger to go to court to clear his reputation. It's the worst kind of government arrogance and incompetence. It's the kind that destroys the reputations of innocent people. And it's the kind of incompetence that cannot be condoned, Mr. Speaker.

The minister really only has one choice, Mr. Speaker. Will she do the right thing — accept responsibility for all the devastation she has caused in Joe Dosenberger's life and resign immediately.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, I have stated and I will state again that it is unfortunate the way the circumstances around this issue have unfolded. Mr. Speaker, it does not help to inflame those issues within this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I also have stated to the Assembly that I regret the result that this has had on Mr. Dosenberger and his career.

There is now a decision in hand. There is a settlement due to Mr. Dosenberger, and I'm hopeful that will help us all to move on from this issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Liberal Support for Crown Corporation Investments

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader has now made it clear. He's sticking with the shotgun marriage to the NDP no matter what. It doesn't matter how many Liberal policies the NDP ignore. It doesn't matter how low the Liberals drop in the poll. He's sticking with the NDP and they're stuck with him.

Mr. Speaker, one of the main reasons the Liberal member from North Battleford left the government was over the NDP's policy of using Crown corporations to buy private business.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education is now sitting on the board of CIC, Crown Investment Corporation. Does the Minister of Education support the NDP's policy of Crown corporations buying businesses?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation, I think I've been fairly clear in our policy with respect to CIC.

We will, of course, look to investments in Saskatchewan, partner with the private sector. We will look to invest outside of Saskatchewan, partner with the private sector outside of Saskatchewan in an attempt to diversify risk, as an example, in our insurance company, and also of course, to bring revenues to the province and to the people of Saskatchewan so they too can benefit from the investments of the Crown Investments Corporation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that was a very interesting answer to the question. Probably the answer that we would have loved to have heard. He doesn't mind investing outside the province.

Let me read a quote from the Liberal leader in the last provincial election. It states:

There is a role for government and there is a role for the private sector and we should know the difference between the two.

The private sector can invest in power plants in Guyana or cable companies in United States if the investment makes sense to them.

Government should not (should not) risk government taxpayers' money on these risky ventures.

Mr. Speaker, you know who said that? They said it was the Liberal leader of the 1999 election platform.

Mr. Speaker, how can the Liberal leader sit on that side of the House making up policies like that and then support investing taxpayers' money outside of the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my comments by saying that it's very clear that members opposite are very concerned about the success of this coalition government. It was, Mr. Speaker, a problem for them when we put it together; it's a problem, that fact that it's been successful; and it will be the problem that it's going to deliver a full term of good, solid, sound economic planning and government for this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Now, Mr. Speaker, the reason I'm responding to this question is day after day those members refer to NDP actions and they refer to Liberal actions.

Well I want to say that the role of this government is to respond to policy and programming that's pertinent to the operations of the government, not of a political party.

But what I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is — while I'm on my feet — the performance of their federal leader, the leader of the Alliance . . . the Canadian Alliance Party, his performance is one that's falling in the polls like a stone, supported by those members opposite. My question to them is every bit as pertinent as the question that that member asked and that is: how can you support a political movement whose political fortunes are falling faster than your own?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I may agree with the fact that they may finish their term as government, but there's nothing sound or competent about that government there.

Mr. Speaker, again to the Liberal leader if he'll answer. He was totally against Crown . . . buying Crown . . . against Crowns buying businesses in the last provincial election. Now he's completely . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Mr. McMorris: — . . . now he's completely in favour of Crowns buying business. It just goes to show you that the coalition is not about implementing Liberal policy; it's about Liberal leaders propping up a tired and completely worn out provincial government. All of that in turn for two cabinet positions, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader was dead against Crown corporations using taxpayers' dollars to compete against Saskatchewan businesses. It makes perfect sense. Why would they? Mr. Speaker, will that Minister of Education stand on his feet today and back up his policies in the last provincial election and go against the provincial government competing against Saskatchewan businesses?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, again, I'm willing to stand and answer questions with respect to policy and programs. What I would ask those members to do is recognize where some successes have taken place.

SaskTel last year as an example, generated \$30 million of revenue from outside of this province, that came into this province to deliver programs and to deliver policy implemented by our government, Mr. Speaker — 30 million of the \$90 million.

But what I want to say is that members opposite should be questioning their own judgment politically, since we're speaking of political parties. Those members supported Stockwell Day, with the exception of the Leader of the Opposition, of course — a leader whose political popularity has fallen like a rock.

So you've got to question their judgment on one hand, Mr. Speaker, but I think here in Saskatchewan you've got to question their judgment as well because their leader's political popularity is so far behind the Premier's, you can hardly see him and I think he might lap himself.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Liberal Election Promises

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the 1999 election platform, the Liberal leader promised to cut the size of the Premier's office by 75 per cent. The Liberal leader also promised to eliminate 61 staff positions in the Premier's office. And he was going to slash Executive Council's budget by \$5 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader is now part of a co-management team running the government. Could he please advise us, how is he doing with his campaign promises? How many positions have you actually cut from the Premier's office?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it's obvious to everybody in this House, and I'm sure everybody who happens to watch this legislature, that the loyal opposition over there have figured it out. They're falling in the polls, Mr. Speaker. They're falling in the polls, so what's the answer. What's the answer?

Well, try and attack the Liberal leader; try and attack the coalition.

Now I understand why they're falling in the polls — because they're so closely aligned, Mr. Speaker, so closely aligned with

their federal cousins, the Alliance Party. So closely aligned.

(14:30)

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's come to my attention today that there is an old hymn in the United Church hymn book, number 562, in the 1930 edition of the United Church hymn book that I think that group over there is going to start singing pretty soon. It's called *Day is Dying in the West*.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the fact is the Liberal leader isn't cutting the size of the Premier's office — he's making it bigger. He already has his chief of staff working in the Premier's office. He has defeated Harvey McLane, an ex-MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), working in the Premier's office. He has now defeated Liberal candidate Ken Magnus, who has a job . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. It's getting very difficult to hear the comments and the question.

Ms. Draude: — . . . MLA, Harvey McLane working in the Premier's office and now he has a defeated Liberal candidate, Ken Magnus, given a job in the Premier's office.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader isn't cutting the size of the Premier's office, he's just filling it with Liberals.

Mr. Speaker, what happened to the Liberal leader's campaign promise? Why is the government expanding the size of the Liberal's office . . . the Premier's office, and just filling it up with Liberals?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make reference to just some — just some of the accomplishments of this coalition government, Mr. Speaker.

In this budget alone, we've introduced and continued significant tax reform. We've introduced a Saskatchewan sales tax credit up to \$264 a year for low-income families. We've lowered income taxes. We've introduced a new Innovation and Science Fund, Mr. Speaker; \$213 million new dollars in health care; increased funding for schools, universities, SIAST, regional colleges.

The list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker. The largest ever highways budget in the province of Saskatchewan; the announcement of wind cogeneration, Mr. Speaker; a centennial summer student's program, Mr. Speaker, bringing students from across Canada to work in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in the weeklies . . . in the weekly newspaper this week, headlines like this: "Alberta ranchers moving to the Moosomin area to take up residence in this province."

Mr. Speaker, we'll put the record of this coalition government up against the record or the plans of that party any day of the week, any month of the year, any year of the decade.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Canada-Saskatchewan Integrated Student Loans Program Agreement

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I had the privilege of signing a landmark agreement. The Minister of Human Resources Development Canada, the Hon. Jane Stewart, and I signed an agreement to create the Canada-Saskatchewan Integrated Student Loans Program.

Mr. Speaker, my time as Chair of the CMEC, the Council of Ministers of Education Canada, has underlined for me the importance of co-operation and partnerships with the federal government in the post-secondary sector. The need for such partnerships has never been greater than it is today.

I am particularly pleased then that Canada's first integrated student loans program is already a model for negotiations on such agreements between other provinces and Ottawa.

Effective August 1, on new loans, Saskatchewan students will have one loan, one repayment, and one service centre. This is good news for students and taxpayers, Mr. Speaker. In addition to the simplicity of a single loan, this agreement provides for better service as well as improved relief on interest . . . interest relief, and debt reduction for students.

Mr. Speaker, we're making the best student loan program in the country, the Saskatchewan student loan program, even better.

In last year's public consultations held all across Saskatchewan on improving financial access to higher education, students and their families made it very clear that improvements to the student loan program were important and that we should reward success. One response to that was the unique Saskatchewan post-secondary graduate tax credit still unique in all of Canada. Another important response is this integrated student loan program.

The integrated service will free up funding for program improvements and get more benefits into the hands of students.

I am proud to hold this up as a model for other provinces to follow. It demonstrates how the federal and provincial governments can work together successfully to provide a better program at lower cost to the taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, before concluding I would request leave of the Assembly to introduce a guest in the gallery.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the agreement as well as the co-operation of other members.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to introduce today a woman who is sitting in your gallery, in the front row, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Carmela Hoffart who is the first Saskatchewan student, and

therefore the first Canadian to receive an integrated student loan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Ms. Hoffart is a single mother from here in Regina who would not be able to return to school without a student loan. She will be entering Avant-Garde College here in Regina in August to begin cosmetology study.

Mr. Speaker, I extend congratulations to Ms. Hoffart, the first recipient of the Canada-Saskatchewan integrated student loan, and wish her much success with her studies and her career to follow.

Mr. Speaker, she welcomes the opportunity to continue her education. She welcomes the simplicity of one student, one loan. And I am very, very pleased to have Ms. Hoffart here with us today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join with the Minister of Post-Secondary Education in welcoming Ms. Carmela Hoffart here this afternoon and congratulate her on being the first student to receive the integrated student loan. And I would also like to ask members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming her.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Canada-Saskatchewan Integrated Student Loans Program Agreement (continued)

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to be able to attend the signing ceremonies this morning, witnessing the Minister of Post-Secondary Education along with the Minister of Human Resources Canada sign the new integrated student loan, the one student/one loan. I was certainly happy to hear the minister make the comment that the new program and the new . . . the administration part of the student loan program will free up benefits that will get into the student's hands. I take that to mean that the savings will be passed on . . . in administration will be passed on to the students.

This is certainly a departure from the past when we seen things like the millennium scholarship fund whereby the province, his department, kept all the benefits and passed none of those benefits along to the students, although the minister argues that there is . . . either those benefits and those increased funds or those savings in student bursaries were passed on to the universities. However, if you talk to the universities and the technical institutes, they will give you a different story.

We certainly have some problems in student loans today . . . or in post-secondary education today, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order. I would

ask the members to come to order.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, there certainly are problems in post-secondary education today in our nation. One only has to look at today's headlines in the *National Post*, which state that education boom is sidestepping Canada. Canada is the only industrialized country where enrolment in post-secondary education is declining at a time when international demand for graduates of post-secondary education is increasing.

The enrolment in the period 1995 to '99 has declined by some 10 per cent. And there's a reason for that, Mr. Speaker, and I think this government has to take a share in some of the blame for that decline in enrolment.

The article states, and I agree with it, that one of the main reasons for declining enrolment is the high tuition fees that are being faced by students today which are a direct result of the underfunding by both the provincial and federal governments to post-secondary education.

We see evidence of that, Mr. Speaker, in our own province where our two universities recently announced massive increases in tuition fees. I understand that tuition fees at SIAST will be going up, which is creating hardships for our students.

It's not good enough, Mr. Speaker, to simply say that we've improved our student loan, which this agreement, Mr. Speaker, does. It certainly will make things much more convenient for our students. It'll take out some of their . . . take away some of those frustrations with having to deal with two different levels of government. And it'll streamline things a lot.

But it's not good enough to say that we've got a better student loan program when on the same hand or in the same breath we see higher tuition fees, which will result in higher student debt upon graduation, Mr. Speaker.

Governments, all governments of this country, and particularly this government, must work to improve . . . not only work to improve student loans, Mr. Speaker, but they must adequately fund post-secondary education. And it's not good enough just to improve the administration part of the student loan program, Mr. Speaker. We have to look at the eligibility requirements, the accessibility, the adequate . . . the parental contributions, and those sorts of things, Mr. Speaker.

And secondly we must fund, adequately fund post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker. We must invest in the future, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand and respond on behalf of the government to written question no. 233. I think it's important to point out, Mr. Speaker, this is considerably more than last year so we must be doing a very good job as a government.

The Speaker: — The response to 233 is tabled.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Expansion of Effort to Combat Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my colleagues in the House for allowing this debate on fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect to take place. I'm convinced that the word debate is at least unfortunate in describing the discussion that will take place over the next 75 minutes.

Our parliamentary system describes the verbiage on private members' day as debate because in the normal course of events we disagree with the members opposite's stand on any given issue.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I believe with all my heart that that's not true. I say this because today we are speaking about children. It is my belief that all members of this Assembly are united in their desire to ensure that every child in this province has a right to be the very best person they can be. Every child has the right to use their talents, their abilities, to make not only their personal dreams come true, but to make this province and this world a better place for themselves, their family, and the society they live in.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility as legislators on both sides of the House to ensure that every child has the opportunity to use all their God-given talents and abilities to make the world — our world — a better place to live in.

Mr. Speaker, the motion we have before us today asks that the provincial government expand its efforts to prevent fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect and make Saskatchewan a leader in the fight against these conditions.

This is a motherhood and apple pie issue. Regardless of your political affiliations, you have to believe that ridding the world of a condition that ruins the lives of children before they are even born, a condition that can be prevented has to be a laudable goal.

Fetal alcohol syndrome, known as FAS, and fetal alcohol effect, known as FAE, is 100 per cent preventable. I wonder how many people — not just women, how many men as well — know that, Mr. Speaker. How many people know that this is a neurological disorder that is caused solely by the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy?

This alcohol consumption causes brain damage resulting in specific areas of strength and weaknesses similar to the damage caused to the brain during an auto accident. This damage to the brain can and does lead to behavioural problems because information isn't processed by the brain in a typical manner. And consequently, affected people don't behave the way they are expected to behave.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has been a leader in research and program development in the area of FAS since the mid-1970s. The first diagnosed case of FAS in Canada was made in the

university hospital in Saskatoon in 1975. However, we cannot rest on our laurels as the number of FAS and FAE cases is growing in Saskatchewan. The disorders have devastating consequences not only on the people diagnosed but the families and friends as well.

There is very little information on actual cases of FAS and FAE. We rely on figures published by Havik in 1996 which states they are .85 FAS cases per live births. Many health professionals argue that there's three in a thousand.

In discussing full spectrum alcohol-related conditions, FAS and FAE, it is more likely that the number is three to five times higher. That's one in a hundred live births.

It's also suspected that Aboriginal people suffer ten times more than do non-Aboriginal people. We all know that the Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan is the fastest growing segment of our society.

Alcohol consumption and patterns of drinking during pregnancy determine the degree of disability. However, there are a number of factors, such as socio-economic status, multiple drug use, and poor health which are related to FAS and FAE.

In our province we know that many of our Aboriginal population live in poverty and suffer from poor health. This adds pressure to the need to actively and quickly eradicate the disorder.

This disorder is extremely difficult to diagnose. Professionals are not certain what amount of alcohol consumption produces the damage or at what stage of fetal development is most susceptible to damage by alcohol. What has been determined is that prenatal alcohol exposure for one single day can be damaging, producing brain growth defects and neuron loss.

FAS is extremely difficult to diagnose because there are no single features which are uniquely characteristic to the condition. There are no standardized tools to test for the syndrome.

Diagnosis becomes even more complex when a mother's alcohol intake is not documented as sufficient to produce the physical characteristics commonly seen in a child with FAS. There can be central nervous system damage and brain dysfunction without facial disformology. The absence of the physical features can result in a wrong or under-diagnosis.

In many cases it is difficult to identify whether the neural behavioural abnormalities are due to prenatal exposure to alcohol or to the postnatal environment.

Physical diagnosis criteria cannot be applied across cultures, as some facial features of FAS are common in other cultures, such as the Afro-American and Native American communities.

Currently most hospitals in Saskatchewan don't keep statistics for FAS and FAE at birth. There is no province-wide surveillance system.

Mr. Speaker, there is so very little known about FAS and FAE and there is also currently very few programs available to deal

with individuals afflicted with the condition.

Currently many are either not diagnosed at all or diagnosed with something that will fit into the parameters of a program which already receives funding. Depending on the severity of the case, many doctors or educational psychologists will diagnose a child with FAS or FAE as having pervasive development disorder or PDD.

Teachers and school boards, frustrated with the lack of financial help to deal with FAS and FAE students, find it easier to have the child bumped into a targeted behavioural program so they can receive funding to give the child the extra help they need.

Other labels such as ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and ADD (attention deficit disorder) are given to students so they can get funding for extra programming in the classroom. But the programs that are then available are not necessarily those that will meet the needs of the child. Every disorder needs specific programming and education to give the best possible help to the child. And this is not happening for our children with FAS and FAE within the educational system.

(14:45)

Mr. Speaker, FAS and FAE lasts a lifetime, but the problems and manifestations change with age. Infants with FAS and FAE are usually small in height and weight, and they're excitable and fitful sleepers.

In preschool, your children with FAS and FAE are often alert and talkative, but they can have severe temper tantrums and be hyperactive.

In middle years, children with FAS and FAE are marked by hyperactivity, have memory difficulties, and they are very easily distracted.

Teenagers with FAS and FAE are very impulsive and they have an inability to use judgment so it's nearly impossible for them to hold down a job or have a stable life. The majority of afflicted teenagers become dissatisfied with school and drop out. Adolescents with FAS and FAE can be described as innocent, immature, and easily victimized.

In 1997 a four-year study on 253 adults from ages 12 to 51 with FAS and FAE found that 95 per cent of those had mental health problems; 60 per cent eventually dropped out of school; 49 per cent had inappropriate sexual behaviour; 60 per cent had been in trouble with the law; and 50 per cent had been incarcerated.

Mr. Speaker, their criminal behaviour is considered impulsive rather than premeditated. This suggests that cognitive deficit, difficulties sorting out causes and effects, and trouble understanding consequences leads them into trouble in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, last week the CTV (Canadian Television Network Limited) late news had a segment of their . . . a program on prisoners that are affected by FAS. They stated that one in four of the people incarcerated are victims of FAS. When they add FAE to the mix, it is estimated that two out of three prisoners are victims of disabilities caused by alcohol consumption

during the pregnancy of their mother. These statistics are staggering. Remember that this condition is preventable.

The cost of warehousing people in our justice system ranges from \$82,000 a year for adult offenders to \$120,000 a year for young offenders. The sad fact is that the prison is not helping the problem. Incarcerating victims of FAS and FAE does not solve the problem; it just keeps them out of society until the sentence is complete or parole is granted and then the problems start all over again.

Judge Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond tried to deal with the issue recently when she ordered a young offender to be assigned a youth worker with special training and understanding in organic brain impairment. She also ordered that his care consist of in-patient treatment centre with an Aboriginal focus. Unfortunately the appeal by the Crown was upheld and her order was struck down.

Judge Turpel-Lafond knows that our justice, education, health, and social systems are not working to address the problems of individuals with FAS and FAE.

Mr. Speaker, we not only need to develop programs which address the needs of these individuals, we must be at the forefront of diagnostic testing; we must be at the forefront of prevention, providing intervention programming for parents to help them raise these children with special needs, and we must be at the forefront of educating all people about the danger of drinking while pregnant.

Advertising in establishments where alcohol is sold is a positive first step but we must take this education into the school at a very early age. We must make society realize that unprotected sexual activity and alcohol consumption can result in pregnancies that are harmful to the fetus, to the fact that drinking while pregnant can and does result in brain damage to a fetus. And we have to educate people to the fact that there is no safe level of alcohol consumption while pregnant.

We have to get into people's faces with the fact that drinking while pregnant causes varying degrees of brain damage to the fetus. Many people don't even understand what the terms FAS and FAE mean. They don't understand that FAS and FAE people suffer from brain damage which was caused during pregnancy because the mother drank.

They don't understand that no amount of alcohol consumption is safe during pregnancy. They don't understand the devastating effect of brain damage and how difficult it is for individuals to cope with this disability, the heartache it has caused by the disability, and monetary cost of the disability. We have to accelerate the education of these facts.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, we must accelerate the fight to eliminate poverty, which is the purveyor of hopelessness, of dysfunctional families, increased health risks, and increased abuse of substances.

For infants born with FAS or FAE, the most important thing we can do is provide high-risk infant monitoring. We need therapeutic child care with low staff/child ratio. We need screening within early childhood agencies to identify but not

stigmatize children with FAS and FAE.

We need to be able to identify mothers who are substance abuse using. We need to educate professionals about alcohol effects.

We have to develop intervention programs that think long term. We need programs to affect children, re-frame their behaviours, and programs to help the families.

These strategies cannot be undertaken by one department alone. We must collaborate with professionals in Health, Social Services, Education, Justice, as well as biological and adoptive parents of children with FAS and FAE to put Saskatchewan at the forefront of treating and combating the problem.

Mr. Speaker, both FAS and FAE are totally preventable. My colleagues and I would be so very proud if Saskatchewan could be the first province to seriously deal with this problem. Mr. Speaker, if the day would ever come that we could be known as the province who led the way in putting an end to this condition that devastates so many lives, I believe that all of us as elected people would feel we had truly made a difference in this world.

We have all been given the responsibility by the virtue of our positions here in this Assembly to prevent and protect innocent babies from harm. We owe it to society. We owe it to parents. And mostly, we owe it to the children.

Before I read the motion I would like to quote a stanza from a poem that I feel is very applicable. It says:

This is no paradisaal dream; in its hardships is its possibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move a motion, seconded by the member from Estevan:

That this Assembly urge the provincial government to commit to expanding its efforts to prevent and eliminate fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect, which are both completely preventable, and to make Saskatchewan a leader in the fight against fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to second this motion this afternoon.

Fetal alcohol syndrome is combined mental and physical disabilities which are present at birth. Fetal alcohol syndrome is a lifelong condition, which not only affects the individual but, has very devastating effects on families. The saddest part of all this, Mr. Speaker, is that FAS is preventable — incurable, but preventable.

Mr. Speaker, FAS affects people of many different cultures. We do need to educate people. People must be educated so they are aware of the effects alcohol has on unborn children. Mr. Speaker, when you think about it you would never even consider giving a newborn baby or a young child a drink of alcohol. Yet some give no consideration to an unborn child when they drink.

Fetal alcohol syndrome has been recognized in Canada as one of the leading causes of preventable birth defects and developmental delays in children. No single group, organization, or community can effectively deal with this problem on its own, Mr. Speaker. Broad-based efforts are required, given that everyone has a stake in addressing this complex issue.

Fetal alcohol effects or FAE indicates that alcohol is being considered as one of the possible causes of a child's birth defect. This term is used to describe children with prenatal exposure to alcohol but only some FAS characteristics. These may include reduced or delayed growth of the baby, single birth defects, or developmental learning and behavioural disorders that may not be noticed until months, or perhaps even years after a child's birth.

While FAS is more likely to occur following continuous or the heavy intake of alcohol during pregnancy, effects have been observed after intermittent or binge drinking. There is no definite information that can be conveyed to women regarding the safe quantity . . . or quantity of alcohol use during pregnancy. Consequently the prudent choice for some women who are, or may become pregnant, is to abstain from alcohol.

Besides the devastating emotional effects on the people involved, there is also the financial side, Mr. Speaker. Children with FAS require extensive supports including health, special education, child and family services, and frequently justice services. It is estimated that a child with FAS may require as much as \$1.5 million in special care, supervision, and support during their lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, the Kids First program is very encouraging. Unfortunately this is all federal money, \$73 million over five years, 10 million of it being spent this year. It is encouraging, but I again question what the province would have done if this money wasn't forthcoming from the federal government.

We have this provincial government sitting on a half billion dollars in oil and gas windfall revenue, but only when money is coming from the feds will they deal with the issue of FAS and FAE.

Here are some very important statements that have been made . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

Ms. Eagles: — Here are some very important statements that have been made regarding FAS and FAE. New methods are needed to fight fetal alcohol syndrome says leading Canadian researcher, Joe Nanson, especially as only the tip of the iceberg has been seen so far.

What is needed is a system less punitive to parents of alcohol-affected youth, and one which will provide more stability for children.

Current social services, in-patient programs require mothers to leave families for their admission into treatment or remove affected children from their parents.

"I can't emphasize enough the need for long-term treatment for these individuals," said Nanson

"And we need more family-centered foster care where we don't have to put women in these terrible binds of choosing between their children and their treatment, and that we don't have this adversarial model of either 'do it all by yourself, or we'll take your kids away.'"

"We're not diagnosing . . . kids early enough. We're missing the critical times for intervening in children's lives and intervening in women's lives,"

Nanson said.

Another segment I'd like to read is from Gary Merasty. He's the Grand Chief of the Prince Albert Grand Council.

Thus far we have a lot of political talk and little tangible planning. It is time to take the interagency partnership approach that everyone identifies as necessary and make it a reality.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for Saskatchewan to lead the way in an area other than tax hikes and utility-rate increases. Let's take on a leadership role and be number one in the fight against FAS and fetal alcohol effect.

I second the motion put forth by the member from Kelvington-Wadena. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased today to talk about fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect. And there's many things that my colleagues opposite, both of them have said, that we all agree with. It is a devastating disorder that affects children, and as both of them have said, it's entirely preventable.

What I really want to make sure I do, and hopefully will be aware of this through with my remarks, is that I want to be sensitive to the fact that we will not be stigmatizing children when we talk about this disorder, we will not be laying blame and guilt on women, and we will be keen to work in partnership with our Aboriginal community to try and address these issues.

Our government, through Saskatchewan Health, is committed to developing more comprehensive services in the area of FAS prevention and support. I have had two and some years to be devoted to this file, and have spent a lot of time with my colleagues in other provinces talking about what we share and what's common — of course, across the country; this is not unique to Saskatchewan — and dealing with . . . and sharing our responses and our initiatives so that we can build on what each of us have done and not reinvent the wheel or spend money that we don't have to.

I will also talk about some of the . . . there are many things that we have done through Saskatchewan Health. There is of course all kinds of things we can do more of, but when we talk about the things that can be done we really have to remember what we have done and what we do have in place.

I'm going to try not to repeat too much of what's been said already by redefining fetal alcohol syndrome, but the medical diagnosis is also been . . . the more fine-tuned diagnosis has been talked about now as a full continuum of alcohol-related neural developmental disorder, which is the acronym of ARND (alcohol-related neural disorder).

And within that range of ARND are the alcohol-related birth defects and fetal alcohol syndrome. It is the most severe form of ARND — fetal alcohol syndrome. And we do have in Saskatchewan a rate of approximately 10 FAS births per year, and that's remained constant since 1973, based on studies that we have done here.

(15:00)

The rates of FAS are highest for children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. So when we talk about our approach to prevention of fetal alcohol syndrome, we do have to look into our issues of poverty and how people are living in their communities.

And 86 per cent of children diagnosed with FAS in Saskatchewan are of Aboriginal origin. So when I talked about partnership with Aboriginal agencies and groups, that is of key importance to dealing with this issue.

And the incidence of ARBD (alcohol-related birth defects) is estimated to be three to four times as high in the Aboriginal community . . . in the community, as that of FAS. And as my colleague mentioned, FAS does cost over a lifetime, one and a half to two million dollars per child.

Our focus in Saskatchewan Health is on prevention since we have the ability to actually do that. If people do not drink, women do not drink at the beginning of pregnancy, then we do not have this. So we're involved in a number of initiatives to assist in the development of a more comprehensive array of services in the area of FAS support and prevention.

The early childhood development unit is formed right now and currently working on a strategy to address the needs of high-risk children and their families. One of my colleagues will speak later on, on the Kids First program and some of the wonderful initiatives that we have announced there.

The prenatal component of the strategy has been . . . a prenatal component of the strategy has been included in order to address the FAS/FAE prevention, and that is by intervening as soon as possible with the high-risk addicted pregnant women.

Other examples of our support and prevention, we have got . . . through the Saskatchewan Institute on Prevention of Handicaps, which is the acronym of SIPH, a preventative approach using culturally sensitive activities to support women, children, and families at risk.

And we have the Prairie Northern Partnership on FAS, which is a prevention strategy, as I said before, with our neighbouring provinces, Alberta and Manitoba. We've also included now Nunavet, Northwest Territories, and the Yukon, and I believe BC (British Columbia) is poised to join the group also.

We have collaboration on strategies for coordinated approaches and integration of our services, and we've talked about . . . we've shared posters, we've shared programs, and we've been quite successful in developing culturally sensitive and mutually acceptable programming.

One of the things we had in Saskatchewan was the kangaroo poster which people were very excited about, and we thought it was just a wonderful poster and very cute. The Northwest Territories and Nunavut in the Yukon said people in the North don't know what a kangaroo is, so to share this poster with them really meant nothing to them. So we had to relook at what do have as a universal symbol or a universal poster dealing with FAS.

We do have a number of programs in place. We have been a leader in the FAS war for many years. The Alvin Buckwold Child Development Program or ABCDP in Saskatoon has focused on research in FAS since the early '70s.

The first diagnosed case of FAS in Canada was made in Saskatoon in 1975, and the Alvin Buckwold program and the Kinsmen Children's Centre in Saskatoon is the major referral centre for children with mental and physical handicaps in central and northern Saskatchewan.

And SIPH, the Institute on Prevention of Handicaps, is housed in the Kinsmen Children's Centre and it has focused on FAS prevention since the early '80s. We have tapped on SIPH's expertise when initiating prevention strategies about FAS for many years.

We have many services already in place that I really do want to expand on. Our mental health services, we provide a broad range of community-based mental health services to children and youth under the age of 18. And those services include intake and referral, screening and assessment, emergency after-hours service, clinical treatment, consultation, and in-patient services.

In-patient mental health services are available in all service areas for stabilization, assessment, and treatment. Saskatoon provides a specialized adolescent in-patient unit. Clients requiring residential services are referred to Social Service group homes. Forensic services provides psychological and psychiatric assessment, sex offender treatment, and consultation services to other agencies. A diagnosis of FAS/FAE is always considered when doing individual case planning.

We also have alcohol and drugs services. Out-patient alcohol and drug services are available for youth and their families in every Saskatchewan health district. In-patient treatment is offered at the Calder Centre adolescent program in Saskatoon, which provides 24-hour chemical dependency recovery services staffed by a multidisciplinary clinical team.

In addition, depending on individual need, youth can receive residential treatment services at Pine Lodge centre in Indian Head; Métis Health and Addiction Council of Saskatchewan in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert; and at the Walter A. "Slim" Thorpe Recovery Centre in Lloydminster.

The high risk and violent young offender initiative addresses

the issue of service provision to high risk and violent young offenders. The aim of the project is to enhance assessment, treatment, and case management capacity for this population.

Since 1999, Saskatchewan Health has contributed funding to support the clinical teratology program within the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Saskatchewan. The program, headed by Dr. Patricia Blakley, focuses on ways to prevent and treat FAS. Through this program, Dr. Blakley is conducting research and providing medical education pertaining to the genetic and environmental causes of FAS and FAE and other preventable birth defects.

The program also seeks ways to reduce exposure to these causes and will treat high-risk mothers and affected children.

Dr. Blakley supports and provides education and training to other health professionals in assessing for FAS/FAE. And we contribute to that every year to support that initiative — and Dr. Blakley is one of the teratologists — because FAS is very difficult to diagnose and very little time has been spent on educating health providers to do that.

The government funded an initiative — FAS/FAE in Saskatchewan, programming for education and prevention — through our Institute on Prevention of Handicaps, and Social Services partnered with Sask Health, and Justice, Education, and SLGA in providing support.

Some of the institute's activities over the years have included an FAS coordinating committee and many of . . . our work is done to intersectoral committees in Regina, North Battleford, Prince Albert, and La Ronge.

Like I said, I want to talk one more time about the partnership that we have with Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba and the northern partners.

We have seen jointly many initiatives that we have been able to share, and in particular the kangaroo poster, as I mentioned, and the community development initiatives grant program which we developed in Saskatchewan so we can take programs out to support women in their communities to change their lifestyle.

It can't only be done by putting labels on bottles or labels on bags in liquor board stores. Women need to have community support where they live so they can make better choices in their lives.

And we took a lead in the Prairie Northern FAS Partnership, having the symposium here this year and the conference, and we are pleased to be part of that and continue ongoing excellent work in this issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a group of 22 grade 4 students that are seated in the east gallery. They are students at the Raymore School, and they're here today to sit in the gallery and observe the proceedings.

They are accompanied, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by their teacher, Ms. Linda Seidler; chaperones, Sheena Keep, Roland Huberdeau, Sandra Fazakas, Shelly Sentes, and Lori Bentz.

I'll be meeting with them shortly after they leave the gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask all members to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Expansion of Effort to Combat Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect (continued)

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that I welcome the motion from the official opposition and from the members for Kelvington-Wadena and Estevan on this issue. I'm pleased to see the official opposition raising this issue. And while I didn't agree with all their comments, I agree with the general thrust of the motion in terms of the need for us to do more to address fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think in fairness, what the official opposition didn't acknowledge and what my colleague from Saskatoon Eastview has already pointed out in large part, the province has taken significant steps to begin to deal with this issue. But what we're doing is not enough. More does need to be done.

I want to say a word about some of the initiatives around prevention which have not been referenced yet, and particularly the investment that is being made this year in the Kids First program. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we see as one of the major vehicles for addressing concerns around fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect, an early intervention program that includes home visitation support and prenatal support in high-risk neighbourhoods and with high-risk families across this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And specifically, we will be investing in an initiative in this fiscal year that should touch at least 900 children and their families. We will be identifying children who are at high risk as early as possible in the pregnancy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we will be providing support to those families.

We will also be ensuring that home visitation supports are in place for high-risk families after the child has been born. And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, looking at the result of initiatives like this in states like Hawaii in the United States, we can expect significant gains to be made around putting home visitation supports in place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition to the home visitation support by a paraprofessional, and where necessary, by a health staff in the mental health field and the alcohol and drug addiction field, we will also be expanding daycare support programs to children at risk, including children with fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect, and we will be expanding early learning programs for high-risk children.

We're hoping to place at least 195 new daycare spaces in place this year, and much of that work has already begun. And we're also going to be significantly expanding early learning programs.

Now all of this I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is going to make a real difference in terms of providing what I call first of all on the prevention side, of preventing FAS and FAE in the first place, and also working with children in the earlier years where children are deemed to be, or identified at being at high risk of a variety of problems, including FAS and FAE.

Where I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to do more is in the area of support for families, as children who've been diagnosed with FAS and FAE move into their middle years and their teen years.

Here we don't have a lot of services in place right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think we need to look at initiatives such as support for children who have FAS and FAE, during noon hour at school. Noon-hour supervision, good noon-hour supervision can make a real difference in terms of these children functioning well during the school day, because they often need structure to function effectively, and they need additional supports during the noon hour in some cases. And all of this has to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

They also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think in some cases, need more support after school. And I believe that we need to look at family home supports outside the . . . that are similar right now to child care for children who are 11, 12, 13. We need to extend that concept, I believe, for some children who have more serious FAS or FAE, so that we actually have teen support homes for teenagers with this diagnosis, in our communities, as required. And not all children who are diagnosed as FAS or FAE will need these supports, but some of them will.

(15:15)

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also need to do a better job of helping to identify cases of fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect when children are on the street. Because I believe there are many children who are on the street, including children who are involved in the sex trade, who are suffering from FAS and FAE and have not been diagnosed and aren't getting the help that they need. As the member for Kelvington-Wadena said, we do need a better system province-wide for properly diagnosing and identifying all these children and not just some of them.

So in those areas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do agree with the sentiments of the official opposition, and I think all members of the House, both on the government and the opposition side, want to see more done in this arena.

So I think we're off to a very good start on the prevention side of things and the early intervention side of things in terms of helping families and children in the early years. And where we need to put some more . . . look at placing some more strategic energy is in supporting these families as children progress into their teen years.

Because the alternative, as other members have outlined, really is either spending money on these children in the justice system or spending money on these children to help them before they come into contact with the justice system and before they drop out of school. We want to support them staying in school and we want to support them going on and having a productive life without needing to have contact with the justice system. And that in my mind implies more support during the time that they're aged 10 to aged 18.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to touch on a couple of other issues that I feel that members of the opposition haven't adequately acknowledged. One is that as the member for Kelvington-Wadena said, and she's correct, there is a relationship between poverty and higher incidence of things like FAS and FAE.

I think what she might also acknowledge is that Saskatchewan is making significant gains in terms of reducing child poverty. We are the only province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is year by year reducing our child poverty rate. Have we done enough? No, we've not. We need to do a great deal more. And I've often commented in the Assembly on some of the other initiatives that I want to see taken. Given the time, I won't get into that today.

But Saskatchewan stands alone in Canada and has been recognized nationally and internationally for the steps that we've taken to reduce child poverty. But our child poverty rate is still much too high and we have a lot more we need to do to bring it down. But things like the "building independence" program are making a real difference in our communities.

Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it should be acknowledged that, on this side of the House, we've significantly extended the support to children at risk through expanding our social worker placements in the Department of Social Services and putting more . . . investing in more social workers, an initiative unfortunately that members of the opposition oppose.

But Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we can reach agreement on this initiative. It think this is a good motion. I commend the member for Kelvington-Wadena for putting it forward and I hope we'll be able to reach all-party approval on it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand in this Assembly this afternoon and say a few words regarding the motion that has been brought forward by the member from Kelvington-Wadena in regards to fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects and the problems that it creates for members of our society and the fact that it's an issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that certainly needs to be addressed and needs to receive some public involvement and public discussion and debate.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that the debate has gone far enough and it's important that members of this Legislative Assembly take the time to recognize the serious effects of FAS and FAE on our society.

And, Mr. Speaker, in my remarks I'd like to quote from a couple of documents and articles that have been written in the last few months. First of all I'd like to quote a few paragraphs from the Tuesday, April 17 issue of *The Leader-Post*, an article written by Gary Merasty of the Prince Albert Grand Council. And I quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He says:

Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) and its related disabilities (such as alcohol-related neurological disorder or ARND) is more than just a justice problem in Saskatchewan. It is a health crisis, an education issue, and a vital issue for social services.

And then he goes on to talk about the Prince Albert Tribal Council holding a conference on FAS in northern Saskatchewan where they saw some 500 people come together to discuss the issue and to try to arrive at a consensus as to how we begin to deal with the problems associated with FAS and FAE. What he says is:

What we learned was both informative and shocking. Drinking alcohol from day 18 to day 25 of a pregnancy (when most women do not even know they are pregnant) is when the most visible damage happens.

However, drinking during any time of the pregnancy can harm what cannot be seen — the brain. The impact of alcohol consumption during pregnancy on the brain, and thus on all aspects of behaviour, is a shocking part of FAS.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker), while it can be seen on special brain scans in those who have FAS, it cannot be seen and is noticed only through behaviour and learning disabilities. Mr. Merasty goes on to say:

We do not know exactly how pervasive the FAS problem is in Saskatchewan. However, we do know that it is the leading cause of mental retardation, and when diagnosed, that Aboriginal people suffer 10 times more often than do non-Aboriginal people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd also like to read a couple of comments made by Judge Mary-Ellen Turpel-Lafond in a speech that she had given at a conference, a youth conference in this province early in May in regards to FAS as well.

And a couple of things I'd like to quote from her speech to the conference are these comments here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And she says:

With the lack of family support due to high rates of abandonment and adoption, the FAS/FAE person will be unlikely to stay in a school setting.

She says:

It has been suggested that 60 per cent of FAS youth in the US are suspended from, expelled from, or drop out of

school.

And she goes on to say:

From my experience in youth court in Saskatchewan, the rate is closer to 90 per cent with many expulsions due to impulsive and inappropriate behaviours, which disrupt classes, overwhelm teachers and teaching assistants.

Ms. Lafond also says:

Into adulthood, an FAS/FAE sufferer, depending on the severity of the secondary problems, may not gain employment, or if employed, be at a high risk to lose jobs because of unacceptable job performance, inattention to detail, and/or absenteeism.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what these two individuals are pointing out is the serious problems of FAS and FAE and the fact that our young people are being affected very dramatically.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the unfortunate reality of this problem is the fact that the individuals who are being affected have no say whatsoever, have no control whatsoever, over the problems that will affect them from the beginning of their life, well into adulthood and beyond, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So it's very important that the province of Saskatchewan, and as we've seen, the federal government, begin to realize that this is a major problem that we're facing. It's a major health problem. It's a health factor that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about the costs of providing health services, not only to the people of Saskatchewan but to the people of Canada, and we look at the effects of FAS and FAE in this province and in our country, and we realize that this is a health issue that can be dealt with at a very minimal cost, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The biggest factor in FAS and FAE is drinking while pregnant, and I believe some of the members have already pointed out that fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I'm not exactly sure how we really get the message out to young women that this is a serious issue. And if for no other reason, the fact of that little new life growing within you that it would be imperative that you even just abstain from drinking for that period, that nine-month period, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you could give that child growing within you a real opportunity at a wholesome and valuable life and be a valuable contributor to society, rather than take the chance that that child may become another statistic in this whole problem of FAS and FAE, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So it's certainly important that this Assembly . . . and that we move beyond the Assembly and that we include the very individuals that may be affected, that we include the groups and the peoples where this is a major problem, and that we begin to work with the leaders of those groups to begin the educational process to point out the fact, the detrimental fact, the fact of drinking while pregnant and the problems that FAS brings upon a young child.

I'd also like to quote another . . . from Ms. Lafond as well, and she says in her speech, she says:

At the provincial level, at least in Saskatchewan, no supports in place for individuals with FAS or ARND in the criminal justice system. We hear of existing programs which could help those with FAS and ARND as an afterthought.

(And she says) That is a problem. Plans and programs are announced or are on the drawing board. But in the real world of affected individuals, no presence to any of this as yet.

And then she goes on to say:

What is most discouraging is that there is no dialogue on what a comprehensive intervention and preventive treatment program would entail at the local, regional, or provincial level involving an interagency approach and with the participation from Aboriginal leaders. This has not happened.

Even an interdepartmental discussion which involves those in the justice system, who engage with FAS and ARND disabled individuals has not happened.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that's a point. We have a major problem. We have a health problem that can be addressed, and yet we have not taken the time to sit down with the agencies involved, with the leadership involved to begin to address this very real problem which the Saskatchewan School Trustees, back in 1992, recognized would be a major problem. It would be a fairly expensive problem to address and we need to address it immediately. Otherwise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what do we have if we don't address it and begin to address it right now?

We are going to have situations where children . . . FAS parents are going to be bringing children into the world, and what we will end up with is compounding the problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as my colleague from Kelvington-Wadena has pointed out, it's imperative that this Assembly and this province and both governments at the provincial and federal level recognize the problems of FAS and FAE, recognize that this problem can be addressed very effectively.

And the effects of FAS and FAE can be dealt with very quickly if indeed we're prepared to sit down and work with individuals to design a mentor program that will point out the problems and show the benefits of not drinking while pregnant.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a few comments that I would like to make on this motion. First of all I would like to thank the member from Kelvington for bringing the motion forward. It is an issue that needs to be dealt with clearly.

And I think it's very important also to acknowledge, particularly in the light of comments from the last speaker, that

in the language of the motion itself it acknowledges that there is work that has been done already where it says, we commit to expanding the programs.

And I think that's what it's about. Because to this point there has already been some very, very good, diligent work made . . . progress made by interdepartmental and interagency groups who have been working to try and get a very clear sense of how we can make these programs most effective for children and young people and adults who are affected by FAS and ARND.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think of the family in my constituency who I have spoken with recently who talked about their children who were adopted and who were raised with much love and care. But those children, even beyond their mid-teen and late-teen years, continue to struggle with the effects of FAS and ARND.

It is very difficult for them to learn; it is difficult for them to fit into job situations; it is difficult for them to fit into an educational situation. But the parents continue to struggle and to work with our Social Services department, our Department of Health, and with the available resources to try and make sure that their much-loved children have opportunity to have as full a life as possible. They are looking for support systems within the community.

(15:30)

And when I think about the way that we are dealing with fetal alcohol syndrome and ARND, I believe that the key is within the community itself; that there are many, many groups and bodies which can mutually support the raising of these young people.

I think of the work that has been done already. There is need for much more partnering between our provincial government and its departments and the federal government. And very clearly we need to extend that partnering beyond these two governments to work with tribal councils, with the FSIN, to make sure that together we are providing the best care that is possible.

The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has been in consultation with Chief Gary Merasty, has corresponded with him about this issue. And I need to say that she has conveyed to me the utmost respect that she has for the work that they have currently done in trying to prepare for and to care for the children in their community who are dealing with FAS and ARND.

With regard to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's very, very important that at this point in what we are doing, we need to acknowledge that the partnership discussions that have happened between the provincial government and the federal government will be extended.

And I know that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has said clearly that there is much opportunity for her to work with the Prince Albert Grand Council, with FSIN, and with other tribal councils and to share some of the burden of dealing with this issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to quote from a document

that we have. It's the report of the Prince Albert Grand Council, *First Nation Community Healing Plan (A Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder Initiative)*.

With greatest respect, I have not read the whole document but what I have read is quite impressive and I think there is much for us to learn in terms of the way a community can pull together to help people who are dealing with this particular problem.

And so I would like to read into the record the executive summary of this report. And I quote:

The First Nations Community Healing Plan (A Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder Initiative) will focus on intervention, prevention, and treatment for individuals and families by building upon traditional values and beliefs that emphasize caring and support of communities.

The Prince Albert Grand Council Women's Commission wishes to establish a network of trained, committed, caring, and supportive individuals to help various First Nations promote, enhance, and maintain well communities.

This model proposes to engage a community-based interagency approach in helping communities deal with a variety of social issues, many of which revolve around alcohol abuse and the presence of FAS/ARND.

FAS/ARND has become an ominous fact of life in our communities. It has only been recently that FAS/ARND has been linked to many social issues, not only in First Nation communities but also in Canadian society as well. Unfortunately the prevalence of FAS/ARND is much greater in First Nation communities, with estimates suggesting 11 times the national average.

Research in FAS/ARND suggests that individuals and families must be enabled to function in the community with respect, free from exploitation, so that they can achieve their fullest potential. For this to occur the community must be involved in creating this supportive environment. If that environment is not available, those affected with alcohol-related birth defects tend to become frustrated from a lack of understanding, a lack of acceptance, which eventually results in individuals lashing out in negative ways.

These negative, secondary characteristics can generate extreme behaviours detrimental to FAS/ARND individuals and the community. The appearance of secondary characteristics can be prevented through an interagency, community-based approach that facilitates a supportive and caring environment. This is the intent of the two-streamed, multiphased community healing plan.

The community healing plan consists of a large variety of community personnel properly trained to deal with those individuals and community issues common to those affected with FAS/ARND. Furthermore, they are networked to an extensive list of support services and

agencies who can provide and/or access expertise to assist the community in its healing journey.

The personnel consist of a developmental facilitator, 2 FAS/ARND coordinators, 4 special education interveners, 20 community coordinators, and 20 community advocates. The development of a family treatment centre is proposed to further support and complete the holistic treatment, prevention, and intervention in the crisis issue of FAS/ARND.

Currently all treatment centres in Saskatchewan segregate family members from each other, the entire family unit is ignored in the rehabilitation plans, and individuals return to this unchanged family environment. A focus on family healing and a return to traditional beliefs and values towards parenting and living would be an essential aspect of the family treatment centre.

I end quote there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, having read that and having come out of the particular background that I come out of, I believe that this community-based approach is absolutely essential. We are finding this in our community schools approach. We are finding this now in the inter-agency work that is already being developed. That it is when people in community pull together, work together to try and treat not just the individual . . . Not to incarcerate, but to care for that individual with respect, to care for the family with respect. It is when all of these components come together that there is hope for those who are dealing with FAS/ARND.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is hope for our larger community when we pull together. And so I appreciate the work that our Social Services, our Health department, our other departments are doing as they are working to deal with these alcohol-related problems. And I appreciate the fact that we need to, as the motion before us says, expand our commitment.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say that I support this motion and I believe that we are as a government committed to further expanding this work to caring for these folks. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to enter into this debate today. FAS and FAE children and youth who are inflicted with this very sad condition are in fact in great jeopardy in their lives in as far as being able to function in the main stream of society and function in a healthy manner.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very complex situation, this syndrome. It's very seldom considered very objectively because of the immediate nature of the conflicts in many families and communities.

One should be aware of the characteristics of children and youth that are afflicted with FAS. One should be very aware of the kind of problems that causes them. One should be aware of

their background. Some of the characteristics, Mr. Speaker, are that there is poverty in these families and there is limited economic opportunities for them due to FAS.

There is family breakdown intolerance, tolerance of violence in families. There is poor attachment, limited experiences with trusted adult figures.

There is isolation, racism, alcohol, drug, and solvent abuse, poor self-image, as individuals and as people. There is cultural and linguistic alienation and absence of accepted individuals in the society in roles of perceived importance by all members of the public.

There is early sexualization, sexual inappropriate behaviour, education gap with non-Aboriginal population, teenage pregnancy, and a great involvement in the criminal justice system.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about the involvement of many FAS youth in the criminal justice system. We have a wonderful judge in this province in the person Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, and she brought forward a number of times the need for in-patient treatment services — comprehensive services to assist children that are already suffering from FAS.

Ms. Lafond points out, and pointed out at a conference in Saskatoon, some obstacles that she saw, obstacles in therapeutic approach. And my colleague from Moosomin has just pointed out some of these things, but I would like to elaborate a little bit more.

At the provincial level, at least in Saskatchewan, there is certainly was a sense at that conference that there were no supports in place for individuals with FAS, ARND in the criminal justice system. We hear of existing programs, which could help those with FAS, as an afterthought. And that's a problem. Plans and programs are often announced, or it is said they are on the drawing board, but in reality, in the real world of the affected individuals, no presence to any of this yet.

Mr. Speaker, what is being asked for, I believe, is to ensure that we have in place and co-operation with all of the people that want to help in this area. Prevention is one side of the concern. Prevention presents a necessary ingredient, I guess, in addressing FAS. However, we are at the present time looking at 90 per cent of Aboriginal youth in our province that are in the justice system that have problems with FAS.

And so it takes a collaborative and co-operative effort by governments on all levels, of all levels, including Aboriginal government, to come up with what it is they think would be helpful to children with FAS, to keep them out of the court system, to keep them from being recycled through the courts again and again.

Now there are some ideas and thoughts put forward not only by Judge Lafond but by many people from the conference that was in Saskatoon. And we need to focus on what those ideas were. We need to ensure that something is happening and we need to take a lesson from what we've heard at that conference.

Because in the past there has been a number of times this issue

has been brought forward to the health care system, or to the health care department rather, to Social Services, and to the education system, and nothing in fact has been done. Therefore I guess the justice system will have to be the focus on addressing this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my many colleagues in the legislature are concerned about this issue on both sides of the House. My concern certainly is as great as any. I have, along with other members of this House, been a part of the committee to address the sex trade of youth and children in Saskatchewan. And I recognize from that, that many of the children on the streets are inflicted with FAS and FAE.

They need specialized services. They need assistance. And there's a great concern that if these things are not provided, many of these children will in fact meet an early death. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The time of debate has expired. We now have a 10-minute debate for question and comment if required.

An Hon. Member: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — I hear the call for the question.

Motion agreed to.

(15:45)

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — To ask for leave to move to government orders.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly move to government orders.

Seconded by the member from Cannington.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 44

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Belanger that **Bill No. 44 — The Prairie and Forest Fires Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 44, The Prairie and Forest Fires Amendment Act.

This Bill puts into place the Forest Fire Contingency Fund. It's

somewhat curious that this fund was established last year in the amount of \$50 million, but without the benefit of this supporting legislation. And I think certainly there are some questions around how that was managed and the legality of having a fund that was actually drawn on last year without this kind of legislation being in place.

Now certainly we agree, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is some wisdom in setting aside a fund to deal with forest fires in a particularly bad year. And given the unpredictable nature of forest fires, it can be very, very damaging to not only the natural resource that we have, but it can also be very costly and very, very difficult for the department to budget accordingly. So to allow some cushion in terms of managing, particularly the large escape fires which are the costliest and the most dangerous is perhaps a good idea, Mr. Speaker.

An added benefit of this as well could be that we will see a greater degree of accountability on the part of government with respect to the way funds expended on forest fires are expended. And I know, Mr. Speaker, that while we in this province have not as of yet taken a very, very serious look at the entire forest firefighting operation with a view to finding efficiencies — if there are some to be found, and in completely reviewing the operation to determining if there are improvements that could be made — I do know however, Mr. Speaker, that in the province of Alberta, they have undertaken such a review. And they found a number of very, very interesting things when they reviewed their forest firefighting budget.

And at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, I am told that that review saved the province of Alberta and the taxpayers of Alberta literally, literally millions of dollars and, at the same time, provided a safer and more appropriate environment for the people actually fighting the fires.

I would just address a couple of the issues that were identified in Alberta and, given the fact that we haven't undertaken a similar review in this province, Mr. Speaker, I would venture to guess that these are areas that we could perhaps look at here as well.

They found that, in a lot of cases, meals were inadequate for forest firefighters. They found that forestry personnel were actually doing contractors' work. The contractors were not living up entirely to their obligations. They found that, in some cases, supplies and services were not up to contract specifications.

They found in terms of the ability of workers to look after themselves and to have appropriate access to things like toilets and showers and cooking facilities, that in some cases those were lacking as well. They found that food was not being handled in accordance with the acceptable standards.

And they found that, in cases, contractors were substituting personnel differently than what had been specified in the contract. So in some instances perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the government was not getting the expertise that they thought they were upon the signing of these contracts.

They found that there was a lot of inadequate record keeping on a daily basis for rental of equipment, for service records —

those kinds of things. They found, in some instances, that damage to equipment caused by contractors, for example, was being charged back to fire costs.

So they undertook a massive review, Mr. Speaker, and it showed, amongst other things, over billing, double billing, improper billing, overcharging resulting, in some instances, in exorbitant rates, not signed for in the field, or written into the contracts.

And I think this is something that in terms of the forest fire-fighting operation in this province, Mr. Speaker, we're going to have to look at. If the Forest Fire Contingency Fund is going to be spent wisely and efficiently, then we also have to look at the way in which those funds are going to be spent.

We do have some questions around the particulars with respect to this fund. If this is only a fund on paper, as some would suggest, is this any different at all from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, Mr. Speaker. And if this fund exists as well, would it be off limits to the government in a year, for example, when they may have difficulty balancing their budgets.

There are a number of avenues, Mr. Speaker, that we would like to pursue — these, amongst others — and I think we can certainly do that in Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

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

Bill No. 26

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 26 — The Hearing Aid Sales and Services Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's with pleasure that I rise to comment briefly on Bill No. 26, The Hearing Aid Sales and Services Act.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, I probably have to make sure that we've commented on these issues appropriately.

We've had an opportunity to talk to people that work in this field, especially the Saskatchewan Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, who believe that this legislation is not only needed, but very important to make sure that there are standards of excellence set for the hearing aid industry in this province.

And as well, the Saskatchewan Hearing Instrument Practitioners Society is also concerned that there is appropriate regulation and control of the industry so that clients that require hearing aid support are able to make sure that they can deal with practitioners with confidence.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we very much appreciate the time we've had in order to get this information back from these agencies, and any detailed questions that we may have, we will be very pleased to deal with in committee.

Thank you.

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

Bill No. 4

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 4 — The Registered Nurses Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill No. 4 — The Registered Nurses Amendment Act, 2001.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill recognizes advanced practical nurses or advanced clinical nurses, registered nurses who have received additional training and expanded their skill set that allows them to diagnose basic medical conditions, prescribe drugs, and order diagnostic tests.

It will also allow the SRNA (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association) to issue temporary licences to RNs (registered nurses) coming from other jurisdictions and who do not yet meet the full requirements for a full licence.

Bill No. 4 will also increase the number of public representatives on the SRNA council from two to three, ensuring that the public perspective is provided on nursing issues.

Mr. Speaker, virtually all pertinent associations were consulted on this Bill. This Bill is very . . . It is very encouraging to see this Bill has expanded the scope of practice because as nursing shortages become more evident across the country, this Bill will certainly move to address the issue of recruitment and retention here in Saskatchewan.

While we are encouraged to see this legislation, we also can't help but wonder why it wasn't introduced before. Had measures like this been implemented a few years ago, this would have had a positive impact on the number of nurses leaving the province.

The physician shortage has also been felt very sharply in rural Saskatchewan and we don't want to see any more physicians replaced by advanced clinical nurses, so the role of advanced clinical nurse must be clearly defined.

For years nurses, doctors, and other health care providers have been telling us that unless something was done and soon, the ongoing and irreversible out-migration of health workers would continue and have a negative impact on health delivery not only in rural Saskatchewan but also the impact that that has on urban Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, once these nurses, doctors, and other health care workers leave, they do not return. And the workplace in Saskatchewan has a lot to do with their decision to leave in the first place. Nurses were promised in the union agreement in the spring of 1999 that the workplace issues would be addressed. They have not been addressed.

Mr. Speaker, just for the record I would like to quote from

Rosalee Longmoore the president of SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses). And I quote:

The president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses says her membership is still waiting for working conditions to improve. It's a pledge that was made by the NDP government two years ago in the wake of the province-wide job action by nurses. Longmoore says even though two years have been passed since the strike, some workplace relationships are still troubled. The thought is pay me more to work me like a dog, said Longmoore. Until we do things to make people feel better about going to work, money will be the biggest single issue for a lot of people.

And that article was printed by . . . or was from CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Saskatchewan when Miss Longmoore was interviewed in April of this year.

Another reason, Mr. Speaker, that we are losing nurses is because of the part-time work that nurses have to put up with instead of being guaranteed full-time hours. Nurses need to know they will be guaranteed a certain number of hours in order to remain in Saskatchewan, and this is especially a concern of our new graduates.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan now has the dubious honour of boasting the longest waiting lists in the country. While this Bill will not reverse that negative trend entirely, it is important for a step towards that. SRNA statistics show that in 1991 there were 10,000 practicing nurses in the province and today we have only 9,000. This shows a clear problem with our manpower in the nursing . . . for nursing in the province.

Mr. Speaker, one of this government's 1999 election promises was to hire 500 more health care providers, and we all know that the front-line staff are critical to access and delivery of basic health care programs and services, and yet this promise has not been fulfilled.

While we're encouraged by the overall positive direction that this Bill takes, so much more remains to be done to address recruitment and retention issues in the province, not only for nursing but for all health care providers. By not moving to address this critical issue sooner, this government has directly negatively impacted health care for thousands of people in Saskatchewan.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move this Bill to Committee of the Whole.

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

(16:00)

Bill No. 5

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 5 — The Dietitians Act** be now read a second time.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak

on the Bill No. 5, The Dietitians Act. Mr. Speaker, we're encouraged by the overall content of this Bill which will formally put in place a regulatory body for dietitians across the province. Public accountability has also been strengthened by expanding the number of public representatives on the council, requiring open disciplinary hearings, and requiring the filing of an annual report.

As health care and health care delivery has changed over the years, changes were needed to reflect this within the professional bodies that are represented. The scope of a dietitian's work is far reaching. Dietitians are employed in many sectors of the health care field — food services, clinical dietitians, public health, community dietitians, nutritional supplement programs, even specialized clinical areas like pediatrics.

One of the primary roles that dietitians play in health care is to improve and maintain health and well-being. With the increased emphasis on personal responsibility for health and wellness, dietitians have played an increasingly vital role in health care delivery. They have seen their roles expand and change dramatically in the last decade. Unfortunately, amended legislation has not accompanied that change until now.

Mr. Speaker, hopefully this Bill not only recognizes the important contributions that dietitians make to health care delivery, but that it also ensures they have the tools and resources needed to deliver their programs and services to more people in a more timely manner.

We're pleased to see that discussion and consultation on this legislation took place over a two-year time period with the Dietitians Association. This allowed for a Bill that dietitians throughout the province can be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, one of this government's 1999 election promises was to hire 500 more health care providers. Last summer it announced that over 200 health care positions were lost. We know that a majority of those positions are nurses but we can't help but wonder if dietitians were part of this number as well.

And I should just clarify what I meant there, Mr. Speaker. It was made aware that 200 health care positions would be deleted, not that they were already lost.

Mr. Speaker, some concern regarding a dietitian's education. The University of Saskatchewan, the only place in the province where dietitians can train, has indicated that it will be hiking tuition fees this year by an average of 15 per cent. This will have a huge impact on students that are attending and will negatively impact the number of students that will study to become dietitians.

While this legislation finally gives some long overdue respect to dietitians throughout Saskatchewan, it does not address the more serious issue of increased funding to universities or increasing the number of seats in the various health care programs. Currently there are only 24 seats available in the dietitian program at the University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, another concern we have that isn't addressed in this Bill is with regards to student financial aid. We know this

government has a bursary program in place that will allow students going into the health-related fields to get help with their tuition costs if they promise to work in rural Saskatchewan.

While this is good news for rural Saskatchewan, it's bad news for students who want to study dietetics. From what we've seen, those bursaries are going to students in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, audiology, public health inspection, respiratory therapy, and early childhood psychology.

We also know that continued lack of funding to health districts has forced health boards to cut back even more on critical program services which has negatively impacted the access and delivery of health care in many communities.

We've been told that there's a two-year shortage of dietitians very similar to the problem facing nursing in this province. This Bill does not even begin to address this extremely important issue.

Mr. Speaker, there is no denying that hospitals are necessary to treat the sick and injured, but it's also important that people understand and therefore take responsibility for their own personal health. This is where dietitians come in.

Unfortunately we haven't seen much initiative from this government that will address its disappointing and overall lack of vision regarding health care in Saskatchewan. At this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move this Bill to the Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 54

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Melnychuk that **Bill No. 54 – The Education Amendment Act, 2001/Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation** be now read a second time.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues and I would like to acknowledge the importance of teachers to our K to 12 education system. Last fall's job action resulted in our offices hearing from residents right across the province regarding their concerns that the work teachers do is not being recognized.

We also know that the collective agreement that was reached must be honoured and the minister has indicated that the Bill is part of this.

We also know that while most teachers excel at their jobs, there will be occasion where, for whatever reason, a contract will have to be terminated, and in those instances, there is a provision for appeal. This is done through something called a board of reference.

This board of reference is not new. It's been in The Education Act for quite some time. But what is changing is that in addition to appealing not only a termination or a suspension, there will

now be an opportunity to appeal a formal reprimand. The problem with this Bill is that there is no definition of what a formal reprimand actually is. This is no doubt causing concern for teachers.

When they sit down for a discussion with the principal or with someone from their local board of education, is this considered a formal reprimand? Is this something they would put in their permanent record. If the director of education discusses some issues or events with a teacher, will this also be considered a formal reprimand?

This grey area, Mr. Speaker, leaves a lot of room for interpretation and application. We'd hate to see teachers spending a good deal of their free time defending themselves in front of a board of reference for a formal reprimand.

The members opposite could have gone quite a bit further in their legislation. They could have defined what a formal reprimand actually is. This would have clarified the issue for all groups — teachers, boards of education, parents, students, and stakeholder groups. Unfortunately what we have is something that does look like it could be up for an amendment this time next year, and will cause a lot of uncertainty and unhappiness in years to come.

Overall, while we're encouraged to see the government honouring its commitment to the teachers' collective agreement, there are still some questions we have regarding this Bill's intent. These questions however we'd like to address in Committee of the Whole so I'd like to move this to Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 53

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Atkinson that **Bill No. 53 — The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to give a few comments on Bill 53 this afternoon. There are a couple of concerns with the Bill and some items that may be a little bit controversial dealing with truck routes and weight restrictions.

Mr. Speaker, what this Bill does is give the minister the right to prohibit or restrict trucks from travelling routes which the minister thinks may cause the road damage, and there's a bit of a problem with that, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to just quote what the minister has stated with respect to the highway infrastructure. And I quote from *Hansard* and the minister says:

Our primary concern continues to be the protection of our transportation infrastructure.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's intuitively obvious to me that the minister has not travelled in the southwest part of this province

at all. When we look at the infrastructure in my constituency and in other parts of the southwestern part of the province, how do you protect an infrastructure that is already pretty much crumpled and destroyed?

And I'd like to just identify a couple of those concerns. We talk about re-routing trucks on roads through the constituency of Wood River. We have three major arteries from south of the border into Saskatchewan — Highway 2, Highway 4, and Highway 37 — and all of them are in an absolutely deplorable state for any kind of traffic. So when we say we want to save our infrastructure, how do we, how do we do that?

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, we had a lesson on how we save our infrastructure as witnessed a couple of years ago when the good citizens of Val Marie and Climax took it upon themselves to save the infrastructure. At that time we were a little worried about the road going back to gravel, and in fact that is still the case to this day — that we're worried about our highways going back to gravel — because there's no money going back in to preserve the infrastructure. So that, Mr. Speaker, is very much a concern of ours and it's going to be exacerbated with this Bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, another item on this Bill that I have some concern with is how this Bill can and will affect businesses. Now we have discussed this in the House and in estimates, where you've got a highway that is . . . that weight restrictions are put on by the minister. And if the restrictions are put on the highways for truck traffic, how do you get vehicles into towns for resupply, such as stores and fuel? And the minister stated, well, that's pretty, that's pretty easy. They can ask for a permit to go on the road.

Well there's a bit of a dichotomy here. If you say no heavy traffic on the road unless you have a permit, does a permit help you save the road? And the answer is no. So now, Mr. Speaker, we say you can go and ask for a permit.

Well to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, permits don't come for nothing. You are going to have to pay for a permit. So now if you have a road going into a small rural town and you have to have a permit, there is nothing about . . . no doubt about it, that that's another form of taxation. You just put a weight restriction on the road and say, okay, everybody that's over a 2 ton truck has to pay for a permit. Is that going to save the roads? I don't think so.

So in essence it's another form of taxation and I'm a little bit worried about that. When I look at some business development in rural Saskatchewan, and I look at heavy haul for feed lots, feed right now is moving — it has to move, Mr. Speaker. With the drought situation that we have, with the winter that we had and feeding cattle, there's an awful lot of hay moving. What are we going to do? We're going to say this is . . . this road's got a restricted weight on it and so we're going to charge you a permit. You can still take your hay on it — but we're going to charge you money for it.

So I have some deep concern over this, Mr. Speaker, and I think this is going to actually cause a real problem with any potential growth in rural Saskatchewan.

The other thing that really concerns me on this Bill is we say

we'll make a truck route here, and now it's going to be partially gravel or maybe all gravel, we're not going to force it into gravel. We've got to go in partnerships with the RM on it. But eventually, I think, we know the history of this government and it's going to go back to gravel.

So gravel is not really an all-weather road when you're talking heavy haul. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure it out. If you've got a lot of rain and you got a heavy truck on it, you're not going to move on one of those roads. So that is a concern also.

But another deep concern within this whole plan is once a road becomes gravel, you can rest assured it's going to be off-loaded on to the RM. And that is a very deep concern from a lot of people in the rural areas. It's another form of downloading.

So, Mr. Speaker, my concern is that this whole Bill will in fact prohibit growth in rural Saskatchewan. We'll have a lot more questions about it. But I recommend we move it to Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 51

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 51 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand today in the Assembly and express a few points on Bill No. 51, the amendment to the income tax.

Mr. Speaker, what we see in Bill No. 51 . . . and we've had the ability to have this Bill looked at by a number of people in the accounting field, professionals whose job it is to check numbers and check formulas and to look at all of the suggestions put forward in Bill No. 51 to incorporate a number of things.

Mr. Speaker, two things are happening in Bill 51. We're trying to address some of the concerns that have been changed at the federal level to ensure that The Income Tax Act for the province of Saskatchewan complies with regulations and changes at the federal level.

And secondly, of course, is to put in place the recommendations that have been put forward by the Minister of Finance in the budget. And it's not only the budget of this current year, but it's to also put in place the plan as identified by the Minister of Finance in the 2000 budget.

(16:15)

So, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of changes, and any person in the province who has had the opportunity to see a copy of Bill No. 51 would recognize that there are many formulas. There are complicated formulas regarding calculations and changes, but there are some things there that I think people are looking forward to.

When we see the changes to tax credits, and there have been a number of changes in the charitable contribution for instance, that now people will be able to have the calculation for charitable donations done at two different levels. At \$200 or lower, there will be one provincial tax rate, and then at a donation of anything over \$200, there will be a different tax rate. So those kinds of changes are being incorporated.

One of the ones, Mr. Speaker, that is I think necessary and that people who are attending post-secondary education, whether they be students or whether they be parents of those children, is the changes to the post-secondary tax credit that will now change the tax credit to \$400 per month, and this Bill will allow that tax credit to be put in place.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other changes is that the changes to the GST (goods and services tax), the federal rules that have been put in place for credits, are going to be incorporated into the . . . for the purposes of the sales . . . Saskatchewan sales tax credit. So those two things are going to be put in place.

One of the other changes, Mr. Speaker, is in the area of business, and while we commend the government, and the business owners of Saskatchewan have looked forward to this change for many, many years, we see that effective July 1 the rate of tax calculation on small business will be reduced from eight to six. So that is something that businesses will be looking forward to.

Hopefully, it would have occurred . . . it would have occurred a long time ago, but nevertheless it might be an incentive to businesses to look at the fact that now taxes are lower.

One of the other concerns of many individuals, Mr. Speaker, is that, as inflation erodes the amount of money and as of course our dollar changes, there is always a concern about indexation. Are we moving forward each year? Is the dollar value of 2001 the same as it was in 1996 or '97?

And one of the proposals, Mr. Speaker, deals with the indexation of the entire system. And when we look at the non-refundable personal tax credits such as, of course, the basic personal amount, the spousal amounts, the caregiver, age amount, dependent child credits — all of those are now going to be indexed so there's going to be a situation, Mr. Speaker, where I think that there's no longer a need for people to not understand what changes are being made. It is a situation where the indexation is going to look at the credits so that we know that each and every year they're finally going to keep up.

Now there are many people in the province, Mr. Speaker, who are very concerned about indexation as well, or the lack of it. And those are people who are collecting pensions, where pensions and the changes to pensions of course are at the whim of the government. And in many cases, indexation has not taken place.

So there is a lot of people that are expressing the point of view that if we have made some changes to get into line with the federal government, that it's time that maybe this government also took a look at some of those other changes as well.

Mr. Speaker, the identification of the various changes in the

provincial budget are incorporated into this Bill. It is an extensive Bill. It addresses 33 clauses and there are many formulas and changes.

There are a couple of points, Mr. Speaker, that we will require the Minister of Finance to clarify, concerns that have been raised by some people in the accounting field as to a particular wording of some of the sections. But we will be able to deal with those questions and concerns, Mr. Speaker, in Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

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

Bill No. 56

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 56 — The Tobacco Control Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to have the opportunity to speak to Bill No. 56, as I was a member of the Tobacco Committee that went around the province listening to people and listening to their presentations.

I think the one thing that we heard across the province was the fact that we have to denormalize the use of tobacco in the province of Saskatchewan. The other thing I think we heard loud and clear was that we should be starting with young people, Mr. Speaker. And I agreed extensively with that idea. I think if we can keep young people from starting to smoke, in time our problem will be . . . will start solving itself.

We're getting many calls though, Mr. Speaker, now that the legislation has been brought forward and actually two main concerns — although there's others — but two of the main concerns that we're hearing out there, and the first one being . . .

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, this was a recommendation that the Tobacco Committee as you know brought forward was that the seller of cigarettes, if he sells to someone under age, is fined. If he has a young person, say 18, 19 years old, working for him and that person sells to someone underage, they are fined for that infraction. In fact we've had confectionaries, stores, gas bars and that say they've actually let young people go because they've been caught once, maybe twice, three times selling to underage so the young person that's working there are selling the cigarettes to someone underage loses their job.

What the recommendation of the committee was, and I find it amazing that the government didn't see fit to bring that recommendation forward, was that we were told all across the province — at least that's what I heard, Mr. Speaker — was that people underage that were trying to buy cigarettes should also face some penalty. It would not have to be a drastic fine, but it had to be something that would go back to what the people of the province had said. Denormalizing the use of tobacco, I think that would go hand in hand, Mr. Speaker, with that.

Of the calls we're getting in, Mr. Speaker — and I know many of the MLAs are probably getting the same calls — is that

businesses out there feel that it's not fair for them to be put in one situation where they are responsible and yet young people can go from store to store, be refused at 10 in a row, but if they are allowed to buy in one store that store can be fined and yet the young person pays no retribution for trying to buy cigarettes under age.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think if we were listening when we were on the road, that was a message we heard loud and clear and I find it very disappointing that the government didn't see fit to include that in the legislation.

We will be dealing with that, Mr. Speaker, at a later date within this debate and bringing an amendment forward that would address that issue.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, that we're getting a lot of complaints and a lot of concerns from businesses out there is the fact that cigarettes now have to be stored out of sight in a business. And I know we had a lot of concerns when the committee was on the road with what we were recommending within the Bill, Mr. Speaker, would do to businesses all over this province — whether it was hoteliers, whether it was restaurateurs, small shops of any kind, convenience stores, gas bars that sell a lot of cigarettes, Mr. Speaker — and how it would affect their business.

And I think I know on the Saskatchewan Party side, the members on that committee, we wanted to treat this issue fairly. We wanted to deal with the idea that tobacco use, especially with young people we have to find ways to deter the use of it, but at the same time meeting business halfway so that we're not driving business under or driving business out of this province. I think, Mr. Speaker, we're losing businesses fast enough in this province. We don't need to do anything more that will help that trend continue.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague from Weyburn wants to speak on this issue today. I think those concerns keep coming up loud and clear.

I'd like to just read from some letters that we've had in — these ones I received today, and we've had many of these, Mr. Speaker — but I'd like to just quote from some of these to show you the concerns that people are bringing forward out there.

And this is a store owner, Mr. Speaker. And he goes on to say:

... that I'm not impressed with the proposed legislation. Probably will not be able to keep the store open if this Bill is passed.

She says that she has no place to put the tobacco products except back in storage which would mean leaving the till when someone wants a pack of cigarettes. So it's either going to be adding another staff member to go and get the cigarettes, and while she's gone, I think her concern is probably that someone has to be there. So it would cost her another employee — something which she just isn't capable financially to do.

Another one goes on to say they are against the proposed changes to the tobacco legislation. And the person goes on to say:

Why not just make it illegal for youth to smoke?

And that was some of my comments earlier, Mr. Speaker; something I thought we heard loud and clear when we were on the road with the Tobacco Committee.

Another letter, and I quote, Mr. Speaker. Sheldon's talking about an IGA that his dad owns and he said:

He is already struggling because of competition with the major chains and if he has to put all the tobacco products out of sight, it will decrease his profits even further and probably he will go out of business. He has no place to put the tobacco products except away in a storage room (Once again we're hearing this, Mr. Speaker) which would be terribly inconvenient.

Another letter, Mr. Speaker. George is a grocery store owner and he's upset with the proposed changes to the tobacco legislation. He says:

Not only will they lose money but they will have to do renovating to creating a proper place to put tobacco products where they cannot be seen. (He thinks) Politicians are wasting valuable time and money and should be spending it on more important issues.

And that's a quote, Mr. Speaker.

Another letter. It's from Dwight, and he's also a retailer. And he says he would have to do some fairly extensive renovations to have tobacco products put out of sight. He would have a substantial loss of income and he suggests the following instead:

If a retailer is caught selling to minors, he should have his licence revoked and you should fine the underage smokers just like you would do for underage drinkers.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, we heard many times on the road that maybe tobacco should be compared to alcohol when it comes to underage. And I think ... I thought we did in our recommendations actually deal to that degree, something though that the government has seen fit to neglect within the Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Craig is the owner of a convenience store and gas station. He's also not very happy with the changes to the legislation, Mr. Speaker, and has the same concerns that many others.

Arnold's not happy with the proposed changes to the tobacco legislation. He thinks it's not right that people who have depended on selling tobacco products for their livelihood should have to babysit other people's kids.

And I guess what he's saying there, Mr. Speaker, he goes on more, but he's saying there is that the responsibility for what we're trying to do here, I think, is, number one, yes, us as legislators but also with the parents and with the young people out there. We have to put some onus on them that when they go and buy cigarettes they have some responsibility knowingly buying these cigarettes or attempting to buy these cigarettes that they are doing wrong and they are breaking the law.

When we can . . . we say the law — on one hand, it's illegal for someone to sell underage tobacco products, but on the same hand, we're saying it's not illegal for young people to go and try and purchase cigarettes. I think we are missing the boat on that one, Mr. Speaker, and wished we had included that in the legislation. And I hope the government will see fit when we bring our amendment forward later in the debate that they would see fit to support that amendment.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know this is going to be a fairly intensive debate on this issue, and at this time, I would like to let my colleague from Weyburn also speak to this Bill.

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

Mr. Prebble: — To take part in the debate. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to speak in support of this important piece of legislation, The Tobacco Control Act. I think this is one of the most significant pieces of preventive health legislation that we've debated in the Assembly during my years here.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say first that I think we need to look at this legislation in the context of the health problem that we know tobacco is causing among our population today. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that there's clearly two thrusts to this Bill: one is reducing tobacco use by youth, and the second is expanding the restrictions on tobacco use in public places.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I think we need to look at this in the context of the reality that tobacco use in Saskatchewan is the leading cause of disease and the leading cause of premature death in this province. Smoking in Saskatchewan is killing more people than AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome), illicit drugs, suicides, murder, and traffic accidents all combined each year.

And it's in that context, Mr. Speaker, that we need to judge this Bill and realize that we have to make significant moves forward in terms of reducing access, particularly by young people, to tobacco.

(16:30)

Tobacco users are at risk of developing an array of diseases that I think are well-known to the public, and these include cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and cancers of the lung, mouth, tongue, throat, esophagus, larynx, urinary tract, and bladder.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among men and women in this province, Mr. Speaker.

An exposure to environmental tobacco smoke can also result in ear infections, asthma, sudden infant death syndrome among young children, and heart and lung disease, lung cancer, and other cancers in people of all ages. And as I say, Mr. Speaker, it's in the context of the health impacts of tobacco exposure that we need to judge this Bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, first of all, that this Bill is going to make Saskatchewan a leader in the country in terms of prohibiting tobacco displays and advertising in retail outlets that

children can access. And I think that's a very, very important feature of this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, earlier, the member for Saltcoats was expressing some of the concerns that retailers in his constituency have with the Bill. But I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that there was all-party agreement on the part of the special committee that looked at tobacco control, there was all-party agreement that these restrictions on the display and advertising of tobacco in any retail outlet that a child can access were appropriate.

This was a recommendation that was agreed on in terms of the restrictions on tobacco display and tobacco advertising in retail outlets. This was agreed to by every member of the special committee, both opposition and government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to see this legislation extending a complete ban on smoking in a wider array of public places than we've ever seen before in this province. There are of course six significant exceptions, and that is that there are exemptions for restaurants, bingo halls, casinos, bars, billiard halls, and bowling alleys where there is a phase-in of restriction on tobacco use.

But in all other public places in the province, Mr. Speaker, we're now going to see a complete ban on smoking in public places. And this is an important step forward for our province and it will reduce exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, to second-hand smoke, for all residents of the province, Mr. Speaker.

Third, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the very important initiatives in this Bill is that there is also action being taken to restrict tobacco use province-wide in restaurants, bars, billiard halls, bowling alleys, and casinos, Mr. Speaker. And what we are going to see there is a gradual phase-in over the next three years until we have 60 per cent of all these facilities as being designated as non-smoking.

And that is going to be an important gain, both in terms of workers in those facilities, Mr. Speaker, whose exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke will at least be reduced, and it will also be an important gain in terms of reducing overall public exposure, including exposure of children.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also very pleased that this Bill is going to give municipal government the ability to set stricter regulations with respect to no smoking in the six categories of facilities that we have just discussed. Because in a restaurant or a bar or a casino or any of the other facilities that I have just made reference to, municipalities will be able to set stricter regulations to in effect extend the prohibition on tobacco use.

But that will be made, those decisions will be made at the local level. And I think that reflects the reality in our province, Mr. Speaker, that there are differing views on this issue in different communities across our province.

I just want to say in closing, Mr. Speaker, that personally I would have liked to have seen the Bill go a little further in some areas. I would have preferred to see the age of purchase be 19 rather than 18. I would have preferred to see a prohibition on tobacco on pharmacies being able to sell tobacco. And I would

have liked to see a 100 per cent ban on tobacco use in restaurants, Mr. Speaker.

But these are my own personal views as I attempt to represent my constituencies. I recognize we need to find balance and compromise on this Bill in the Assembly. I've been pressing for these measures and will continue to do so, but I think this Bill represents a major step forward in terms of reducing access to tobacco and denormalizing tobacco for young people.

It also represents an important step forward in terms of increasing smoke-free public places in the province of Saskatchewan. And I think we will see the benefits of this Bill in terms of the health of future generations of Saskatchewan people and in terms of the health of our current generation of our Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And I think we will see long-term benefits in terms of reduced health costs for the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd urge all members in the Assembly to support this very important piece of legislation. Thank you so much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to also speak on the legislation, Bill No. 56, The Tobacco Control Act, 2000. And, Mr. Speaker, the government says the overall intent of this Bill is to reduce youth smoking and to provide protection from second-hand smoke and to denormalize the use of tobacco.

While we're encouraged to see steps taken to further reduce smoking in young people and to protect the public from the second-hand smoke, we still have concerns regarding some of the legislation that will severely impact business owners and retailers.

We are also concerned with the government's decision not to impose penalties or fines on minors found to be in possession of tobacco products.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important at this time that I read from our final report and the mandate that we were charged with as being members of the Committee on Tobacco Control in Saskatchewan. And I'd just like to read this into the record.

First, we were to study;

the impact of tobacco use in Saskatchewan, especially children and youth;

Secondly:

the need for, and content of, provincial tobacco control legislation protecting children and youth;

Thirdly:

strategies to protect the public from the health risks of second hand smoke, including consideration of smoke-free public place designations and jurisdictional authority related to tobacco use bylaws;

And fourthly:

effective and appropriate strategies related to enforcement, pricing, education and public awareness as may contribute to the prevention or reduction of tobacco use, especially by children and youth in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the legislation has lost much of the intent regarding the main issues that we were charged with when we started the study on tobacco.

One of the main downsides that I see, Mr. Speaker, is that we spent excessive time travelling to schools throughout this province, and to speaking to educators about the impact of tobacco on our youth.

The recommendation of the committee was that we were to enhance education in the schools to prevent children from either starting to smoke, or to cause them to quit smoking if they'd already started. The message that we received was that we should start this as young as kindergarten, and that it should be mandatory and continue throughout from kindergarten through to grade 12.

There is not one word in this legislation to do with education. And we have the member from Saskatoon Greystone getting up and telling us that this Bill is going to go far to prevent the harm to health of the people of this province. And yet how are they going to know the harmful effect if they're not educated within the school?

We also do not see anywhere in the legislation any kind of an ad program to impact the harmful effects to people's health in the province of Saskatchewan, which was also a recommendation of our committee. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that the members opposite need to look seriously at this. And how are we going to impact our young people if we're not going to even tell them about the harmful effects to their health.

The second part about not educating them is that we do not denormalize the use of cigarettes for young people. And, Mr. Speaker, the committee that travelled throughout this province and studied this, heard time and time again that that was of the utmost importance that we make it mandatory within our school system to educate our young people about the harms of tobacco and to make it . . . to denormalize it, to make it something that isn't cool so that kids will not start to smoke. Because we all know that once they start to smoke, it's a lot harder to stop.

And so I believe that this is a huge neglect from this legislation to address this whole issue. And it also needs to be stressed that under denormalization of the use of the tobacco products, one of our main points was that the possession of tobaccos had to be . . . there had to be repercussion for that. If there isn't any repercussion for the possession of it, then how are we going to teach them not to engage in this activity? And yet those two important parts were left out of it. And I dropped my paper, so I'm just picking it up.

So, Mr. Speaker, although there's some good parts to this Bill, there certainly are some parts that have been left out that were recommended to the committee and that we felt very strongly about. And I think it's a huge mistake by the government not to

do something in this regard.

And what we found out when we did talk to those in the school was that even some of the teachers that did talk about the harmful effects of tobacco use in the school, they made that decision on their own. It is not mandatory within the province of Saskatchewan to have any component of the health curriculum dealing with the harmful effect of tobacco.

And so I would hope that this government will look at that seriously and consider bringing in an amendment to this or bringing in legislation that would address that serious issue, and so we can educate our young people at a very young age about the harmful effects of tobacco.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue that I wanted to address was the concern by retailers that are finding the brunt of this legislation is on their backs. I think that the member from Greystone makes the comment that all committee members agreed on the way we were going to address it within business places. But when we agreed to that as committee members, we agreed to it on the basis that there would also be repercussion for the users.

And what we have lost in this legislation is that there is absolutely no repercussion for usage. All the repercussion is on the seller, and I find that to be very unfair. And the retailers of this province are finding it to be very unfair too, because young people can walk in and if they get away with buying it and they have possession, there is absolutely no repercussion to them. And yet a business owner has the full brunt of the repercussion on actually selling it, or one of his employees selling it.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have received numerous communications from business owners in this province who are very upset and who are saying that this is going to be a huge financial barrier for them.

And I'd just like to read a couple of letters that I have received, and I'm sure that other members of the legislative body have also received similar letters. And one is from an owner of a gas bar in Saskatoon. And quoting part of his letter, he says:

I feel that the proposed legislation as drafted by the Saskatchewan legislature is wrong. It is shifting the moral responsibility on the retailer to police the sale of tobacco and away from the Government of Saskatchewan that is collecting huge tax dollars levied on tobacco products.

Part of that tax dollar should flow back to retailers to offset the cost of implementing the proposed legislation in regards to the sale of tobacco at the retail level. If the provincial government isn't prepared to cover the retailer's cost of implementation, then I do not agree that the retailer should bear the cost. Those who are implementing the costly legislation change should bear the cost.

And, Mr. Speaker, another fax that we've received from a grocery store. And this is in a rural area, and it says:

Re: hiding tobacco products. Kick this out. We can't afford to make these changes. This is going to be a major pain. This is not the answer. Small stores cannot do this.

And then he gives his number to call regarding this.

And, Mr. Speaker, something that is very alarming is that we've been contacted today by Mac's stores who are a huge retailer in the province of Saskatchewan. They're very concerned about this, and we cannot afford to lose any more businesses in the province of Saskatchewan. And so I think that it's very important that we look at this whole issue and be concerned about it.

We've done enough in this province to drive business away and we don't need to bring in more legislation that's going to cause further negative impact on the province.

(16:45)

Mr. Speaker, overall we find this legislation to be unbalanced. The members opposite had the opportunity directly to affect young smokers where it hurt the most, in their wallets. And it's the opposition's view that imposing a penalty or fine is the best way to stress to young people that this is not a normal thing to do, and that we can denormalize it in our young people and hopefully start a new wave in Saskatchewan that young people will grow up with this and impact on others around them.

It is ironic that the NDP says that their number one goal is to keep youth from smoking. Yet nowhere in this legislation are there any provisions that would penalize those under 18 for possession.

And, Mr. Speaker, again I would like to emphasize that the education component is missed completely from this legislation. That we believe that the education within the school, that there should be component to make it mandatory from K to 12, that there be education within our schools to stress the harmful effect of tobacco, and also that it is not a normal use.

The intent of . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. I'm sure all members will have an opportunity to have their voices heard. Right now the floor belongs to the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader is stressing the fact that maybe we would like to put into the legislation that there should be a charge for possession of cigarettes. We absolutely do agree with that. We think we need a level playing field in this province. And that was part of the recommendation by this committee, that there is repercussion for possession of underage.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the intent of the committee was to denormalize the use of tobacco, especially for youth, and to protect our children from environmental tobacco smoke.

I believe the legislation fails to adequately address the main issues that this committee was charged with, and this Bill needs further discussion. And so I move to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 50

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Sonntag that **Bill No. 50 — The Mineral Resources Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to speak to Bill No. 50, The Minister Resources Amendment Act, 2001.

Mr. Speaker, this amending Act seems to be of a housekeeping nature. It appears to be advanced to support the announcement in last provincial budget of a temporary 10 per cent non-refundable tax credit that will allow investors ineligible flow-through share offerings for exploration activities in Saskatchewan, to claim a 10 per cent tax credit in the calculation of their Saskatchewan income tax.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments contained in this Bill are fourfold. They provide authority for the province to establish a tax credit applied to flow-through share purchases that may be claimed by the purchaser under The Income Tax Act.

They allow the development of regulations under The Mineral Resources Act, 1995 to govern reporting and administration requirements necessary to the operation of the tax credit program. They provide authority for the minister to recover the value of credits issued by an exploration company that do not meet the eligibility criteria.

And finally, they provide consequential amendments to The Income Tax Act, and The Income Tax Act, 2000 to allow investors and eligible flow-through shares to claim the 10 per cent non-refundable tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, while the devil may be in the details, the intent of this Bill seems laudable. Anything this government does that may have the effect of stimulating investment in exploration in Saskatchewan is surely worthwhile.

In this province that is so rich in unrealized resource potential while our economy is in a shambles, we must do much more to promote exploration and development of our vast resources.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill advance to the Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 52

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Atkinson that **Bill No. 52 — The Railway Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an important Bill the government has brought forward because of the implications that this particular piece of legislation has for short-line railways, for branch lines that have been slated for

abandonment, and for the future of short-line railway operations in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we waited all session for this Bill to arrive and we've had a chance to look at it. And while I have some very serious concerns about this, I want to state at the outset that the official opposition is very supportive of the concept of rural railways, short-line railways, and the operators of such railways.

I think that the very issue has been substantive in terms of our discussions, our considerations, and certainly the people who have been affected by rail-line abandonment have made their feelings known to the official opposition, as well as to the government.

This legislation is, I'm sure, a response to the lobbying that has been done by the communities that were going to suffer most seriously with the loss of rail lines, and I think this legislation in many respects reflects that very serious concern.

But I have my own concerns about the Bill because, Mr. Speaker, I believe in some ways and in some areas, it goes too far.

I said at the outset that the official opposition supports the concept of short-line railways and recognizes the value that such operations would provide for rural Saskatchewan and for our rail and transportation infrastructure generally. We believe short lines should be encouraged for several reasons, not the least of which is the impact that the ever increasing amount of grain has had on our thin membrane roads and our highways generally throughout the province.

The minister and the minister before her, both have alluded on many occasions to the heavy impact of grain being moved in this province, the increasing demands and the increasing damage that that movement of grain has created to the roads. And so the short lines can and will in effect play a very important role in taking some of that pressure off of the highways.

So we think that there is value to the highway infrastructure having a very successful short-line industry develop in this particular province. We also think that the short lines provide value to the communities where there are wooden elevators still standing.

You know, one of the things that has troubled rural Saskatchewan the most is the changing landscape, most noticeable in small communities where elevators that have been there for decades have suddenly disappeared under the consolidation that is being undertaken by the grain companies.

And the changing landscape has brought with it not just the possibility of new opportunities, it certainly brought with it the possibility of the demise of many rural communities.

So there's been an effort on the part of individuals to salvage those elevators, to retain ownership in the community, to put those elevators to some different use, and to try and keep them as a participating business in the community where they're located.

In order for those efforts to see real value, to come to complete fruition, to provide the economic benefit to their communities that they're capable of providing, a short-line railway needs to serve that community. Rail-line abandonment in those instances will only short-circuit the plans of local operators to provide the economic activity that they have designed for that particular elevator in any given community.

So we have the value to the roads, and I think we have a value that a short-line railway can provide to the people who have taken the initiative to maintain the existing wood-structured elevators.

We also think that short-line railways will bring other economic benefits to rural Saskatchewan — not just in those small individual communities, but generally throughout the region.

I think if short-line railways become an integral part of, and a significant part of our transportation infrastructure, they won't just necessarily be limited to moving grain. I think short-line railways can play an important part in the movement of other products.

Frankly the reason that railway service has dropped off significantly in rural Saskatchewan is that there was no reliability of service. If you only have a grain train coming through a given community infrequently or at some unscheduled time throughout the year, a business that is dependent on regular transportation can't use the trains effectively.

Short-line operators are only going to survive if they can provide regular and effective scheduled service. And I think that there is some opportunity for that type of service to be reintroduced to many of the smaller communities where manufacturing plants exist, where processing plants now exist, that have been without rail service in the past. And if we got a fairly consistent and reliable short-line operator in position in some of these areas, businesses would use them. So I think there's an economic development element and prospect associated with short-line rails that we haven't seen of late.

And I guess the other factor at play here frankly is that when you have a business like a short-line operator coming into a region, that by itself will generate more economic activity. There are supplies that need to be purchased, there's fuel that needs to be purchased, there are employees that need to be hired to run the train — those kind of purchases and hirings have a spinoff effect, a ripple effect in the economy of the region that the short-line railway serves. So from that standpoint, I think that we can see quite clearly that there is important and significant benefit to having a short-line system develop in this province.

One of the things though that the official opposition is quite concerned about is the prospect of government subsidy of short-line railways. We believe that those provide significant business opportunities for entrepreneurs and people who are familiar with the railway business who want to maybe own their own rail line, even though it's a short line.

But I believe those opportunities should exist on their own merit, and that means their own financial merit as well. So if a

person, a company that wants to develop a short-line rail operation feels that they can do so, they can operate it from an economic advantage point of view. They can make a few dollars on it. They can make it a situation that can stand on its own two feet financially. I believe that type of operation should be encouraged.

But I certainly, Mr. Speaker, cannot encourage a situation where the provincial government would jump in with a subsidy program to sustain short-line rails. I think that there has to be a very clear delineation between the official opposition and the government on that particular point.

This Act, Mr. Speaker, is a fairly interesting document. As I said I've read through it several times and there's many, many points to discuss on this particular Bill. But I want to just review some of the highlights that jumped out at me as I went through it.

This Act is very thorough. I can't overstate the case, I don't believe that the thoroughness of this Act in terms of the evaluation process is complete. In fact it's almost overdone. The Act appears to want to be . . . or the Act appears to be so secure in the parameters of decision making that I'm afraid what might happen is that individuals or companies who want to start a short-line rail will be discouraged by the thoroughness of the process.

You know it's one thing to want to be careful about getting people of good reputation, of solid financial capability, of good management potential, to come in and take over a railway because you do want some longevity, some security in that particular industry. But it's another to be so restrictive and so concerned about the details of the application that you discourage anybody from actually undertaking an application to run a short-line railway. And I'm afraid that this Act may go overboard in that regard, Mr. Speaker.

(17:00)

There is a thoroughness to this Act that I believe is overdone. There is requirements for financial information. The Act wants to be sure that the operator is fit to run a rail line. It wants to be sure that the safety management capability is there in place. And it goes into any number of small details relating to the suitability of any applicant to run a short-line railway. And ultimately all discretionary elements — all discretionary elements — are left to the minister

Now I think that that says to me that it doesn't matter how many hoops you have to jump through in order to get your short-line rail application before the Highway Traffic Board, and ultimately, the minister; it doesn't matter how many questions you answer, how many rafts of paper you provide in response to requests for information, ultimately the minister can ask for more and more and more.

I think that this particular element in the legislation will discourage, frankly, new short-line operators. It might protect the viability of any operators that do succeed, but I think what will happen, it will minimize the number of people who want to go through all of that to even try and start a short-line railway.

So maybe this part of the legislation will in fact be self-defeating.

The issue of viability was very important to the minister when we talked about that in estimates early on in the session. She, at several instances, indicated that viability of any given short-line operator was very much the matter of her primary concern in this legislation.

As I was saying earlier, the minister expressed a very deep concern for the issue of viability when it came to granting applications for short-line operations, and I can respect that concern and I think it's a legitimate concern. But we, in this particular piece of legislation, find that issue being taken to, I believe, lengths that are unnecessary. And I think some of this particular piece of legislation grew out of the department's experience with the application put forward by Great Western Railway that serves the region of the immediate and large southwest.

Great Western Railway is a company that came to Saskatchewan out of British Columbia. It's a subsidiary of a company that does a lot of rail salvage and rail construction in the province of British Columbia, but it saw this particular short line in the southwest as an opportunity to diversify and expand its rail operations. So the subsidiary purchased that piece of track from the Canadian Pacific. It was the first transaction of its type in the province, the first time an out-of-province operator came and bought trackage from an existing class one railway operator and determined to set up a short—line railway.

The people that were fronting that particular application met with the Highway Traffic Board and the board didn't have a real thorough process in place by which to evaluate the application. And so as the principals of that company met one set of demands from the Highway Traffic Board and satisfied the requests, a whole new set of requests were brought forward.

I am told by the general manager of that company that he spent innumerable hours meeting the requirements of the Highway Traffic Board in terms of having his application approved. It wasn't as though there was a process in place. It was sort of a situation where the board said, well, we need this information. And when it was provided, well, we need more information and now we need additional information. By the time the whole process was done, the applicant was nearly exhausted completely.

I think this particular piece of legislation has codified that process that the Highway Traffic Board introduced by trial and error on the application by Great Western Railway, and I think that we are seeing the consequences of that type of situation, that experience, encoded in this piece of legislation.

So while we have, we have a situation where viability is of concern and the process is very, very intense, we have a situation on the other end of the legislation that is equally challenging and equally of concern to me. It might be tough to get into business, Mr. Speaker, as a short—line operator, but this legislation makes it even tougher to get out of business.

Let's assume that for purposes of the discussion today that you have a short-line operator who is successful, who is financially

viable, whose process is ongoing. He's satisfied the customers and he's done everything he can in order to keep his rail line business going. But through circumstances beyond his control, whether it's a change in crops, a change in product that might use his rail line, whatever the case, if five years into his operation he finds that viability is no longer possible, this Act almost makes it impossible for him to quit business. And I don't think that's a situation that any prudent businessman would want to put himself in, in any type of business let alone the rail business.

And if I may, Mr. Speaker, I just want to summarize some of the conditions that are put in place for any short-line operator who is even thinking about going out of business. To discontinue service this is the procedure: 180 days notice has to be given to the Highway Traffic Board — so that's a full six months — and anyone else that might be deemed necessary or appropriate by the minister.

So here we have a situation where things aren't going very good. It looks like your business is going slower than you expected. You've been subsidizing it for a year or two and now you think that it's impossible to maintain your operation. You have to give 180 days notice to the Highway Traffic Board, to the minister, or anybody that she deems appropriate in this case.

The dismantling requires advertising, very thorough advertising as a matter of fact. It has to be directed to anyone else who may visit — I'm sorry — who may wish to buy or lease that railway for the purpose of continuing service on the line, and 60 days is required as part of that advertising procedure.

Then after that, after the advertising is completed, there's four months during which any respondents to the ad, any prospective purchasers, and the owner of the short line have to come to an agreement. So if there's no agreement reached within that four months, then the railway is obligated to continue service or to offer to sell that short line to the Government of Saskatchewan or to a municipality for net salvage value.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've got a situation here where the operator hardly could get into business to begin with, now he can't get out of business. And if he does want to get out of business, he's got to follow this complicated procedure. It's going to take a huge amount of time, a lot of expense, and ultimately, if he hasn't got a buyer, he's going to be forced to sell the rail line to the Government of Saskatchewan or to a municipality for a net salvage value.

Well the net salvage value, Mr. Speaker, might be an acceptable value if the owner of the line could determine what that value was. But by this legislation the owner can't even do that. The net salvage value is something that's going to be imposed on the owner of that short-line railway.

Now I can imagine if I was that individual and I had paid net salvage value to get into the business, getting out at the same value might be acceptable. But if I had to pay a retail value or a set cash price that somebody else had determined and then when I wanted to get out of business, I had to accept whatever somebody else was going to determine the value was, I don't think I'd be very happy with that. And that's not the kind of condition that business people are going to respond to

positively.

And if I was in a situation where I was going to invest money and those conditions were put in place, I wouldn't even think of taking up that challenge, that investment. I'd walk away from it. How is that going to help the short-line rail business in this province? I think, frankly, Mr. Speaker, it is a detrimental element that is almost going to be impossible to overcome unless of course the minister and the government are prepared to make changes in that piece of legislation.

Now if, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to offer the rail line to the minister. In this case, she has 30 days to accept. And if the minister decides not to accept, then the municipalities may accept the offer. The RMs then have 60 days to accept after the minister has already taken up her 30 days.

Now this is an interminable, ongoing situation, and by that time, if the rail line operator isn't completely broke, he certainly won't have much money left in his bank account. If the government and the railway operator can't agree on a price, the net salvage value will be set by the Court of Queen's Bench.

Now that sounds fair enough I suppose, but I don't think we'd want to get to that point, frankly. If an RM and a railway can't agree on a price, then the Highway Traffic Board would be the determinant in the salvage value.

There's another element to this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, that has companies and individuals and interested groups somewhat concerned, and that is that the legislation seems to expand the authority of the Highway Traffic Board in its regulatory role as it pertains to short-line rails to the point where there is a considerable amount of duplication between the provincial legislation and the federal CTA (Canadian Transportation Agency).

I'm almost certain I've heard members on the government side indicate that it has been their intention to reduce red tape wherever possible, to facilitate business in this province. This particular piece of legislation goes in the opposite direction. It frankly makes it more complicated and more difficult to get into the short-line rail business. And as I mentioned several times, once you're in you can't get out. But now we've also seen some duplication of this legislation with the CTA.

For instance, we have what is called final offer arbitration that is introduced in this particular piece of legislation. And without going into any great detail about how that will work, people in the industry know that final offer arbitration is a feature of the CTA and it has been used with some satisfaction, I might add, by various parties in times recently passed.

But in this case the arbiter is going to be appointed by the Highway Traffic Board. Now I'm not so sure that that's in anybody's best interests because the Highway Traffic Board is also the regulator. And we have a situation where the regulator is the arbitrator, which is also the body that licenses the applicants in the first place and oversees the dismantling of an application if his financial fortunes go south on him. So we have too much overlapping jurisdiction. And in some cases, potentially contradictory issues being decided by the same board.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other areas in this particular Bill that need to be addressed, but at this point I think you can see that we have enough concerns which I've already raised that we feel needs more attention and more opportunity to address.

I know that there is strong support for this legislation from SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities). They have talked to me about their concerns and have asked that we support the Bill. And I can see why they would want us to support it, and I think that the intent is probably proper on the part of the government with this piece of legislation. I'm just not happy with the mechanics of it and I think that we need to spend more time reviewing it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

(17:15)

Bill No. 49

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 49 — The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've had a number of occasions to speak to Bill No. 49 before and we also understand that this Bill has the support of the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association, the Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians, and I think it's also supported by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan. So we will have some questions in committee, Mr. Speaker, but we'd be willing to let it go to committee at this point.

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

Bill No. 33

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lautermilch that **Bill No. 33 — The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand today to speak to Bill No. 33, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

Mr. Speaker, as it has been pointed out by some of my colleagues and the member from North Battleford, this Bill changes the definition of third party caucus. Currently members have to be sitting in opposition to obtain all funds. And so the upshot of this Bill is simply that the two Liberals sitting with the government will receive another \$65,000 on top of the 160,000 they already receive to support the NDP government.

When it comes to Bill 33, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan can see clearly what it's all about. It's not about fairness, as the Minister of Economic Development suggests; it's only about bolstering that shaky coalition by providing

more funds for the two so-called Liberals who now sit with the NDP.

In realistic terms, those two members constitute a Liberal caucus about as much as I, along with the member from Saltcoats, constitute a Liberal caucus. Like the Minister of Education and the minister of Municipal Government, I and some of my colleagues left the Liberal Party long ago when it was under the leadership of the Minister of Education.

Those members pretend to be the voice of the Liberal Party in this Assembly, but the people of Saskatchewan know differently. Those two members presently have a full ministerial staff as well as the current \$160,000 grant to the Liberal caucus. To justify calling them a separate caucus in order to give them a grant of another 65,000 is totally unjustifiable and government largesse at its worst.

Those two members are now totally indistinguishable from the NDP, so this Bill might as well be unilaterally increasing the NDP's caucus grant.

The Saskatchewan Party opposes this Bill. Like the people of Saskatchewan, we see it for what it is.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make some comparisons here. Right now the Saskatchewan Party caucus grant per MLA for the year is \$31,370. The Saskatchewan Party considers this adequate funding to perform its role as official opposition in the legislature.

The current Liberal caucus grant equals \$80,000 per Liberal MLA per year. This is in addition to two fully funded staff in the ministers' offices and a number of Liberal staffers in the Premier's office.

And now, Mr. Speaker, what we see is that if this Bill passes, the new Liberal caucus grant will equal \$112,000 per year . . . per Liberal MLA per year. That is nearly four times what the Saskatchewan Party MLAs receive for caucus grant.

Mr. Speaker, I would move that this Bill be referred to Committee of the Whole at this time.

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

Bill No. 29

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Sonntag that **Bill No. 29 — The Student Assistance and Student Aid Fund Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We almost missed that Bill, but we have the opportunity to look at this Bill and listen with interest, Mr. Speaker, to the comments made by the Minister for Post-Secondary Education this afternoon in the House; timely, in that we see the announcement of the Canada-Saskatchewan Integrated Student Loans Program, as announced this morning with the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and the federal minister here for the province of Saskatchewan.

So even though I note that second reading of this Bill took place back on May 17, we have the opportunity to still have the ability to look at some of the points that have been raised by the minister and by our critic, the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood, who was also in attendance at that announcement this morning, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as pointed out by the minister, we have had a program in place for Saskatchewan students for a number of years now — that expires on July 31 of this year — with the Royal Bank of Canada. And it's now . . . the opportunity is here because the banks and the financial institutions across Canada are not looking at being involved with student loans. So we now have to develop a program that is going to meet the needs of Saskatchewan students, and we're going to do that collectively with the federal government.

And I want to express my support for the fact that the minister announced that we should see a more efficient program; we should see a more cost-efficient program. And that should only translate into more dollars being available for Saskatchewan students.

I think while the minister travelled around the province over the last couple of years and both government and opposition members did the same thing, we had the opportunity to hear from many students, from many parents that expressed a number of concerns. Mr. Speaker, a number of concerns were expressed by many people including some people in the Legislative Assembly today, Mr. Speaker, that continue to express concerns even though I'm not quite able to hear them.

But, Mr. Speaker, what we did hear is that many families in the middle-income brackets, Mr. Speaker, are concerned about the fact that while their salaries indicate that they should be able to provide assistance for their children to attend post-secondary institutions, that is not always possible. And as a result of evaluations by the Canada-Saskatchewan student loan program, many times a student was ineligible for a loan of any degree or they were limited in the amount of money that was provided to the student and were thus not able to have additional financial support given to them.

One of the statistics that I find very distressing, Mr. Speaker, is that over the years we see a great number of students from the low- and middle-income brackets — and this is a Canadian statistic and it's not just relative to Saskatchewan — is that the number of students attending post-secondary education institutions from those categories has fallen. And the reason stated of course is that financial support is not available.

So, Mr. Speaker, one of the many concerns that comes to my office — and I'm sure it does to members on both sides of the House — is concerns raised by students about the ability to access . . . or the inability to access sufficient funds to meet their educational obligations.

So, Mr. Speaker, the proposal that has been signed today and puts Saskatchewan as one of the first provinces to introduce the Canada-Saskatchewan integrated program — the first. The minister, and I want to compliment the minister for taking the lead and for a change putting Saskatchewan first — for a change, Mr. Speaker. We seem to be last on a number of things

but finally — finally — he does indicate that we are first.

Bill No. 9

But I think what we need to now ensure is that students who have concerns about whether or not funds are available to them, whether or not they will be able to access those loans, are those changes being implemented?

A number of concerns were raised, Mr. Speaker, at the time of second reading as to who would administer this new program. And I know the minister has commented about EduLinks and the kind of program that's being put in place.

There are concerns expressed by people that . . . I guess the same kinds of concerns that were there prior to the Royal Bank being the major financial institution that provided the loans over the last five years. Those concerns dealt with bankruptcies and the fact that students could not meet their obligations and, as a result, the province incurred losses. And I recall the announcement about the Royal Bank taking on the program for the province of Saskatchewan, and they indicated very clearly that they needed a percentage of monies made available that would deal with bad debt. And there is going to be some bad debt.

So the situation I think that we have to be very careful with is how will the one institution . . . as the minister has indicated — one student, one loan. When we see greater access to loans, we hope . . . when we see additional students from the lower- and middle-income brackets being able to access these loans, hopefully the program is going to be administered in a much more cost-effective manner.

But at the end of the day — and I'm assuming that, you know, depending upon the length of the education program, we may see students in two or three or four years coming out of their educational programs with a significant student loan, whether that be 20,000 or 30 or 40,000 — who is going to administer that program?

Are we going to create greater government bureaucracy to be able to implement the rules and the procedures that will be dealt with?

Minister has talked about the ability for students to access interest-free programs, the ability to look at debt reduction. Who will dictate what conditions and regulations are implemented? Will it be the minister of Post-Secondary Education of the day? Will it be the government? Will it be some other program that's implemented?

So those are concerns that are being raised by individuals as they have looked towards this Bill and knowing full well that there is going to be a new program put in place effective August 1. That announcement has taken place.

And I think the minister will be able to provide a number of those answers to questions that we will direct to him in Committee of the Whole. Thank you very much.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Sonntag that **Bill No. 9 — The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have a couple of quick comments and maybe a couple of concerns I'd like to register before we move this one on to committee, because I think we'll have an opportunity then to expand on these concerns.

One of the things that I've noticed in reviewing this particular Act or the amendments, Mr. Speaker, is of course the lifting of really the monopoly restrictions on Saskatchewan Power, albeit just to two of the cities or municipalities, Swift Current and Saskatoon, at this time. But it does open up the possibility of expanding this third party access to power maybe in a broader way.

So I'm really pleased to see this and I think we could support this. But we have to make sure that a couple of concerns are out of the way first.

The first one of course is that of transmission. If power's going to be supplied to municipalities it has to go over a transmission line. That'll be the function really of deregulation. And so here this Act is in fact opening up the possibility then of deregulating partially, and probably further into the future, deregulating SaskPower.

The concerns therefore arrive from this deregulation. And it seems odd to me, Mr. Speaker, that the deregulation word, as it was applied to Alberta by this particular government, was in fact a very derogatory term that applied in a situation in the natural gas industry. Now we're seeing a Bill coming forward that in fact does exactly the same deregulating for the future transmission of power.

The questions are this. What happens is that the Act will allow, Mr. Speaker, the SaskPower to actually regulate what conditions are in place by other people producing the power, and what conditions they have to comply with in order to be able to use the transmission lines. So in effect, SaskPower still becomes the monopoly force in terms of setting the conditions that are going to have to be addressed by other people wanting to use those lines.

It really forces these third party competitors to follow the standards as set by SaskPower, and it may in fact set these regulations in such a way that they . . . to become non-competitive. That's a concern that we would like to address with the minister when we get into Committee of the Whole.

Also there's a provision in here to allow SaskPower to employ people outside the provisions of The Public Service Act. I would like to explore that a little bit further to see what the intent was, what protection there would be, and how that fits into the overall objectives of both The Labour Standards Act, SaskPower, and under the deregulated form of energy transmission.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that we move this on to committee so that we can explore these concerns a little bit further in detail.

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

Bill No. 19

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 19 — The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make a few comments on The Land Titles Amendment Act, Bill No. 19. Apparently there's a few amendments on this Bill. A few of them I'll read: remove the requirement for certification of mineral commodities; also to permit registration of prescribed interest against a non-certified mineral title; and also clarify that implied interests are only implied in titles where they are otherwise applied by law; to provide discretion to the register to set the hours of the registry.

Now some of the groups we talked to — people in the real estate, surveyors, and the legal community — one of the biggest concerns with Land Titles was the time. I think in Saskatchewan was anywhere from 10 to 14 days, they had to work. In Alberta, BC, and Ontario, the waiting time apparently is just one day.

So the questions are — about this Bill — is this going to speed up the time? We hope it will and these people are hoping that it's going to.

Another point about it though, unfortunately, is the Crowns. They always want to set up . . . When they want to set up another business or to do anything in this province, seems like they always have to have a Crown to do it. And when a Crown gets involved, Mr. Speaker, it just seems to drag things out, costs more money, and everything just . . . you can just go after fiasco, fiasco when it comes to the Crowns. So that's a concern to the business people that we've mentioned, Mr. Speaker, in this province, is the Crowns when they get involved in this.

Now the Crown involved is ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan). Now whether it's going to do its job, we hope it's going to. Because of the people that we've sent the Bill to are fairly happy with Bill. The biggest concern they . . . we said and we want to stipulate, it will speed the time up for things to go through Land Titles Office, Mr. Speaker.

Now one of the other concerns we have about it is the money that's lost. Apparently ISC lost \$11 million last year. It's going to cost 40 to \$50 million to operate them this year. They've had a plan to sell their LAND system, Land Titles Automated Network Development Project. Unfortunately they haven't had any buyers yet and it . . . so that's also a little worrisome.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, mentioning them few things and the biggest issue is to speed up the time in this province so to work with the Land Titles Office, and those are questions we'll ask under Committee of the Whole. So I will propose that this Bill

move into Committee of the Whole, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bill No. 45

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Crofford that **Bill No. 45 — The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2001** be now read the second time.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand in this Assembly to speak on Bill No. 45, An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Act, and I am going to be very brief as I am sure that the . . . I know the member from Regina South is getting extremely hungry so I will be brief.

It is our understanding that one of the things that this proposed legislation will do is set up new stakeholders, who along with the previous ones will deal with revenues and very importantly, accountability. Mr. Speaker, I am sure everyone would agree that the Liquor and Gaming Authority has had more than its share of problems lately. This government department seems to be out of control, completely lacking in leadership, and very busy covering up its many embarrassments.

As the minister stated in her second reading speech, a percentage of funds paid into the Associated Entities Fund are currently allocated for Métis economic development. What this Bill will do is create a Métis Development Fund separate from the Associated Entities Fund. The government will pay to that fund \$2 million a year for the next three years, for a total of \$6 million.

Mr. Speaker, the social and economic growth of the Métis people in this province are very important to members on this side of the House. And we hope that the government will be able to keep their eyes on this and that this board will have to be accountable as accountability is very important also to members on this side of the House.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are questions we have and there will probably be more as we study this Bill. But, Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill No. 45 be moved to Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

The Acting Chair (Mr. Yates): — Seeing the hour, we will now recess until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 19:00.