

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My petition today is regarding the EMS (emergency medical services) report and people that are concerned about the impact on rural Saskatchewan:

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

The people who have signed this petition are from Yellow Quill, Rose Valley, Saint-Front, Archerwill, and Fosston.

Mr. Stewart: — 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 this petition is signed by individuals from the community of Avonlea.

I so present.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of residents of Swift Current and area concerned about the state of the hospital in my hometown. The prayer of their 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 petitioners today come from the city of Swift Current and the community of Rockglen.

I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the citizens of Weyburn-Big Muddy who believe we should 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 this in-patient treatment centre in the city of Weyburn and provide funding for the same.

And this is signed by citizens of Weyburn and Regina.

I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition trying to bring awareness to 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 communities of the signators, Mr. Speaker, are Stockholm, Esterhazy, Runnymede, and Togo.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens 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 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, long-term care services available to the users from the Craik and Davidson area and beyond.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present.

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson and Hanley.

Mr. Peters: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by folks that are concerned about the high energy costs. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by folks from Unity and Wilkie.

I so present.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a petition from concerned citizens that are really worried about the future of the emergency medical services in rural Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good citizens of Cadillac.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

These are petitions of citizens of the province on 12 matters that are addendums to previously tabled petitions.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 66 ask the government the following question:

From which industry sectors was capital tax revenue generated in fiscal year 2000-2001, and what was the total capital tax revenue received by the province of Saskatchewan from each of those respective industry groups in that year?

I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to welcome to Regina representatives of the Heritage Canada Foundation, who will be attending a two-day national gathering of that organization in Moose Jaw later this week.

In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, firstly I would like to introduce the chairperson of the foundation, Ms. Trudy Cowan from Alberta, as well as a Saskatchewan representative, Mr. Don Kerr from Saskatoon. And thirdly, Mr. Brian Anthony, the foundation's executive director from Ottawa.

Welcome to you all.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Seated with them, Mr. Speaker, is Chair of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, Dr. Bill Brennan; and foundation manager, Garth Pugh.

Let me just tell you a little bit about the Heritage Canada Foundation, which was formed in 1973 by the federal government as a non-profit, non-governmental organization to encourage the protection and promotion of the built, natural, historic, and scenic heritage of Canada.

Their board is comprised of representatives from all provinces and territories. I expect you will note with interest the numerous heritage preservation initiatives that have occurred and are presently underway in Moose Jaw. And this will form an appropriate backdrop for discussions with your colleagues later

this week.

Again, welcome to Regina and Saskatchewan, and best wishes for a productive meeting in Moose Jaw.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to welcome our special guests today, and we recognize the good work they do for our province. And again, welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a great pleasure to introduce a constituent of mine, Ms. Carol Skelton. Carol is the Member of Parliament for Saskatoon-Rosetown-Biggar and is serving in parliament after my opportunity to serve there.

Carol has shown a great interest in the agriculture concerns and I believe also in human resources development is an area that she's done a lot of work. So I would ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join with me in welcoming Carol Skelton, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon-Rosetown-Biggar, to our Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Saskatoon Math Students Win National Pythagoras Math Contest

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention and all members an example of educational excellence right here in Saskatchewan.

And while examples of excellence within a public education system might fail to interest some of the members opposite, we here on the government side take great interest in these matters.

Recently, a pair of Saskatoon math students did it again by taking the top spot in a national competition of over 24,000 students. That's right, Mr. Speaker, the top spots out of 24,000 other entrants.

A recent OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) report in education indicated that the achievements of Canadian students in the areas of math and science are improving. Well, Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan they are excelling.

This year, at the Pythagoras math contest based out of Quebec, Bobby Xiao from Greystone School in Saskatoon, and his classmate David Wang, won the gold and silver medals respectively in this highly competitive nationwide math contest.

This is the second time this year Bobby and his classmate helped propel their school to national fame through their talents in mathematics. It is through their accomplishments that the school of Greystone Heights has been ranked above even the

Academy for Gifted Children in Richmond Hill, Ontario as the top champion school in this over 1,000 school competition.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in congratulating Greystone Heights School and, in particular, the six Greystone students who took part in this math contest and their recognition as national champions in mathematics, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Farm Progress Show

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today marks the beginning of the Farm Progress Show at the exhibition grounds here in Regina. And it is a very, very important agribusiness exhibition that will feature producers and business people. Implement dealers and exhibitors from all around the world will spend the next few days here in Regina to show their latest wares and technology that are available to the farm community.

Mr. Speaker, this event also generates millions of dollars of activity for our economy here in this province, including everything from simply staying at a hotel here in Regina, eating at restaurants, to the sale of very important agribusiness tools and equipment to the farm people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, while I was attending it this morning we had the opportunity, along with the Minister of Agriculture, the member for Regina Qu'Appelle, to listen to the vice-president of New Holland North America. Very, very interesting presentation he had about the latest in technology over the years and what we can expect in terms of technology in the future, Mr. Speaker.

So I would want to take the opportunity to invite all of the members of the legislature down to see the latest of equipment and latest of technology that's available for our farm families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Highway No. 11 Designated Louis Riel Trail

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A significant era of Saskatchewan history was recognized today. At the Duck Lake Regional Interpretive Centre, our esteemed Minister of Highways officially announced that Highway No. 11 will, from this day forward, carry the designation Louis Riel Trail.

This designation will apply to the entire 364 kilometres of Highway 11 in Saskatchewan, from Regina to Saskatoon to Prince Albert. Putting the name of Louis Riel to one of our most important tourists routes will emphasize the seminal place Louis Riel has in the history of our great province and our nation, as well as recognize the contribution of Métis people to our shared experience.

The ceremony this morning is the culmination of vision and work begun two years ago by the Mid-Lakes Community coalition consisting of communities along the route, the Métis

Nation of Saskatchewan, and the Saskatchewan History & Folklore Society. This coalition approached the government and has now formed the Louis Riel Trail Association with the aim of capturing marketing and tourism opportunities along the trail.

\$225,000 from the Centenary Fund will be dedicated to promoting these opportunities over the next three years and to replacing or enhancing the existing signs along the way. Mr. Speaker, it is a proud day for the Métis people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Humboldt Actor to Attend Missoula Children's Theatre Performing Arts Camp

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a performer from Humboldt has been chosen to attend a prestigious acting camp this summer. Nathan Jenkins will be attending the Missoula Children's Theatre Performing Arts camp from August 12 to 25 in Missoula, Montana.

Nathan has taken part in Missoula productions in Humboldt for the past five years. This past year he played the lead role of Jim in *Treasure Island*, which involved both singing and acting. He has also been involved in the local productions of both *Oliver* and *Anne of Green Gables*.

Though Nathan does take voice lessons and plays a variety of instruments, acting is his passion, and it is his dream one day to have a career in that field. This Missoula Children's Theatre Performing Arts camp will take Nathan one step closer to that goal. He will work on improving his acting and singing skills as well as making contact in the world of entertainment.

Junior actors from Japan, United States, and Canada will be attending this two-week camp, which will culminate in a performance on the last night. The Jenkins family is planning on being there for that performance.

Mr. Speaker, the fee for the camp is \$900 Canadian, plus travel and accommodation costs. Nathan has received a working scholarship from the camp, which means his tuition is paid in exchange for performing odd jobs. The Humboldt Area Arts Council will provide some funding. As well, Nathan has started fundraising himself and he is hopeful he will have enough money in time to embark on his trip to Missoula. Congratulations, Nathan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

Five New Doctors Welcomed in Rural Saskatchewan

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome five new doctors to their new homes right here in Saskatchewan. Dr. Johan Geldenhuys of Carlyle; Dr. Anna and Dr. Michael Nsisi of Macklin; Dr. Dali Dewa of Melfort; and Dr. Salomine Theron, who recently moved to Kipling.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has been very successful in recruiting capable and qualified doctors for our rural

communities. The addition of these new doctors will have a positive impact on each respective community.

No matter how you look at it, Mr. Speaker, the arrival of these new doctors is good news for rural Saskatchewan. The health care system in this province is based on a solid foundation making it possible to build a future full of both opportunity and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members of this Assembly to join with me in officially welcoming the new doctors who are calling rural Saskatchewan home. Their contributions to the health care system in this province are greatly appreciated.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Used Oil Filter and Container EcoCentre Opens in Grenfell

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Friday I attended the official opening of the Used Oil Filter and Container EcoCentre No. 13 situated in the town of Grenfell. Mr. Speaker, this ecocentre is run by the community in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Association for Resource Recovery Corporation.

The Saskatchewan Association for Resource Recovery Corporation, or SARRC, is a non-profit corporation formed by the oil and oil filter industry in Saskatchewan to develop, implement, and maintain a province-wide used oil materials recycling program.

Mr. Speaker, the recycling program encourages the development of used oil collection facilities for the use of consumers, in addition to the province-wide collection network of over 30 used oil filter and container ecocentres; over 250 independent locations are also used to accept used oil materials across this province.

Mr. Speaker, the ecocentre in Grenfell becomes one of these 30 collection centres in Saskatchewan offering the area residents who are concerned about our environment, a place where they can dispose of their used oil, oil filters, and containers.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the community and the surrounding area for this worthwhile effort.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Good News for Industry in North Battleford

Ms. Jones: — Mr. Speaker, as anyone with a spoonful of sense knows, an economy and the infrastructure that supports that economy is built piece by piece, bit by bit, business by business. Like those huge complex gizmos our kids and grandkids build out of Lego pieces, a total economy is the sum of all its parts. And contrary to some bits of gloom that we hear from time to time in this Assembly the parts of our economy and the infrastructure are humming along quite nicely.

Let's take for instance, the city of North Battleford. For openers

North Battleford has received \$755,000 from the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program, the first instalment in May, the second last Friday courtesy of the minister of Municipal Government.

And work today . . . begins today on a \$10.2 million bridge over the North Saskatchewan River on Highway 4. Of course the Yellowhead Highway between Saskatoon and North Battleford had already been twinned by this government.

And what about the private sector? Well in the June 10 edition of the North Battleford *Optimist* — I say the North Battleford *Optimist*, Mr. Speaker — there is a story about Parkland Pulse Company of North Battleford that is currently undergoing a \$500,000 expansion in three stages, an expansion that will double its capacity, create five new jobs, increase its export markets, have significant spinoff benefits for other community firms, and set the stage for further expansion in the near future.

That's a fair bit of good news for one month in one town, I think. Wouldn't you say?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Economic Forecast for Province

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Today one of Canada's leading economists is saying the NDP (New Democratic Party) budget is based on a forecast for economic failure. According to Dale Orr, an economic adviser to federal and provincial governments of all political stripes, quote:

The Saskatchewan budget is very pessimistic on Saskatchewan's economic growth prospects.

Dr. Orr notes that the NDP's own budget forecasts Saskatchewan's . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. We seem to have many answers; we have not yet had the question.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll get to that.

Dr. Orr notes that Saskatchewan's economy is going to fall further and further behind the rest of Canada. In fact the 2001 NDP budget forecasts Saskatchewan's economy to grow at only 59 per cent of the Canadian economy over the next four years. Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP government forecasting economic failure? Why is the Finance minister's own budget so pessimistic about their ability to grow the economy?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — You know, Mr. Speaker, I think this has to be a first for any opposition party, and I'll tell you why. What this report the opposition has come up with and paid good money for, taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker, says is this. It says that whereas the government projects that in 2002 our economy

will grow by 2.2 per cent, their economist says no, Mr. Speaker, the economy will grow by 2.8 per cent.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, what they're accusing us of is not that we're going to fail to meet our targets, but that we're going to exceed our targets, Mr. Speaker. Have you ever heard any more ridiculous criticism from an opposition, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — You know, Mr. Speaker, it's a wonder that this Finance minister can be satisfied by projecting a 59 per cent growth of the Canadian economy. That's what his document is saying, Mr. Speaker — 59 per cent of the rest of Canada and he's satisfied with that. You wonder where his guidance is coming from.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party agrees with the NDP on this one instance. It appears the Finance minister's dismal outlook for Saskatchewan was well-founded, Mr. Speaker, because over the last 12 months Saskatchewan has lost over 21,000 jobs. That's the worst one-year record since the Great Depression. And the NDP's budget is forecasting that things are even going to get worse, Mr. Speaker.

Two weeks ago the Premier and the minister of economic delusions trotted out the partnership for poverty document, you know, but all the glossy brochures can't hide the real facts, Mr. Speaker. In his own budget, Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister is pessimistic about their ability to grow the . . .

The Speaker: — Would the member put the question.

Mr. Krawetz: — My question, Mr. Speaker: why is the NDP planning for economic failure?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — There's a scandal here, Mr. Speaker. There's a scandal because the opposition is saying we're going to do better than the government projected in the budget. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? I and my colleagues are prepared to plead guilty.

We're prepared to agree with the opposition and it is our hope that the economy will grow even more than we projected in the budget, Mr. Speaker. We're prepared to say that. That's what the opposition says; that's what their economic forecaster says. We're prepared to throw in the towel and agree with them, Mr. Speaker.

We're prepared to agree that the sky is not falling, the economy has grown, the economy will continue to grow. The budget projects that 4,000 new jobs will be created this year, and their economic forecaster says we'll exceed that, Mr. Speaker. And we're prepared to plead guilty and say they're right, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — I'm not sure if the Finance minister is familiar with some track and field competitions, Mr. Speaker, but you know, anyone — anyone — can be a high jumper if you set the bar at six inches. Anyone can be a high jumper; even that minister could be a high jumper.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — You know, Mr. Speaker, apparently the Finance minister has succeeded in fooling at least one person in Saskatchewan — himself. But the rest of the province wants an explanation.

So I will ask the Finance minister once again: if the NDP's latest economic development plan is based on the commitments in the minister's 2001 budget, and the budget is based on the minister's forecast of provincial economic failure, how can the NDP claim that they have a plan to create new jobs with an economy performing at 59 per cent of the rest of Canada, when they just finished killing 21,000 jobs in this economy performing at almost 90 per cent of the Canadian economy?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — There's more scandal in this report, Mr. Speaker, more scandal. The opposition is accusing the government of underestimating the revenue to the year 2004-05, Mr. Speaker.

And do you know what their own forecaster says, Mr. Speaker? They say we're misleading the people. Their own forecaster says that in this year and in each of the next four years our revenue projections, Mr. Speaker, are within 1 per cent — 1 per cent — of the projections of the economic forecaster of the opposition.

And their forecaster concludes this, Mr. Speaker. Their forecaster says the revenue forecast does not make a difference that could be considered significant. That's their own forecaster, Mr. Speaker.

But there's one other thing that their forecaster says, Mr. Speaker, and that is that the economy has had good growth in the last number of years, something that the opposition denies day after day, Mr. Speaker. So we now have the reputation that we're headed in the right direction and we thank them for that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskEnergy Rates

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for SaskEnergy.

Mr. Speaker, today more confirmation that SaskEnergy is overcharging for the price of natural gas. This time from the city of Regina. A report prepared for the city of Regina says that SaskEnergy's current price is and I quote, "higher than the current market price."

As a result the city of Regina may bail out of its contract with SaskEnergy and start buying natural gas from CEG Energy Options of Saskatoon who are selling at a price apparently lower than SaskEnergy. This is good news for the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker. But unfortunately all of the homeowners that are SaskEnergy customers don't have the same option.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is SaskEnergy overcharging for the price of natural gas?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So is the expert over there now advising the city of Regina on when they should and shouldn't buy gas and who they should be buying it from, Mr. Speaker?

Last week, or the week before, that member advised us and SaskEnergy to lock in at \$5.60. Then the next day he said no, buy on the spot; buy on a 24-hour basis. That's what he advised SaskEnergy on behalf of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan to do. Then he said no, wait, it might go lower yet, Mr. Speaker. Well today he advises the city of Regina that they should lock in at \$6.10.

Mr. Speaker, that member has no credibility whatsoever when it comes to buying gas on behalf of the city of Regina or the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we know that a lot of the front bench over there are shopping their resumés around. And, Mr. Speaker, I hope that that minister puts more time into preparing his resumé than he does for question period or his will be the never-ending job search, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — The never-ending job search. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, apparently now he disagrees with the expert . . .

The Speaker: — Just a little quieter please.

(14:00)

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The experts on the issue have already spoken. The buyers at ATCO have confirmed that Alberta customers, effective July 1, will pay \$4.95 a gigajoule. The experts at the city of Regina administration are exploring the opportunity of buying cheaper gas than they can get from SaskEnergy, which is still gouging consumers at \$6.30 a gigajoule.

The question remains, Mr. Speaker; it's not been answered by the government. Why are they overcharging Saskatchewan people for natural gas?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, the member refers to resumes. On resumes lots of times there's phone numbers. And you know I note, when he . . . last time he was up he talked to us about DLC-West, and I refer to *The Leader-Post* where it says here, Mr. Speaker, that Sask Party officials confirmed that they never spoke with Nickel, who is the president prior to raising . . . (inaudible) . . . Mr. Speaker. Never even spoke to him.

So I wonder if maybe did he phone the city of Regina. Has he phoned CEG, Mr. Speaker? Has he phoned SaskEnergy about this stuff? I doubt it, Mr. Speaker.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, the truth is . . . the truth is that seeing that CEG's business, primary business is that of commercial . . . of a commercial perspective, Mr. Speaker. That's their primary business.

We are in a competitive environment. SaskEnergy acknowledges that. Mr. Speaker, this is nothing new. The city of Regina in the past has purchased from CEG; they've purchased from SaskEnergy, they've gone back and forth. This is nothing new.

While we regret losing customers in this particular case, if it happens this will be nothing new, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister regrets possibly losing a customer. Saskatchewan people across this province in the cities and in the country regret the fact that they are apparently overpaying for gas from this government, Mr. Speaker. And we still don't have any answers.

All over Saskatchewan consumers are right now, they're opening up their latest SaskEnergy bill, and they're getting quite a surprise. And top of that they've had to listen to a \$75,000 NDP ad campaign telling them they should be grateful for a 24 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP isn't fooling anyone. Saskatchewan people know that natural gas prices are falling, but theirs are going up.

Mr. Speaker, in light of this, the latest in a mounting lot of evidence that the NDP is overcharging SaskEnergy customers, will the minister at least tell the House at what point will he direct SaskEnergy to re-apply to the panel for a rate decrease in the price of natural gas?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, that question clearly shows how little the member knows about how this actually works, Mr. Speaker. That is ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I've said in this House many times, and I've said outside of the House, that the rate that SaskEnergy has applied for is a maximum rate — a maximum rate. So if rates continue to decrease, it is nothing but a good thing for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, Mr. Speaker, and as I have been advised and what I've read from the newspapers, Mr. Speaker, the rate that is being quoted by CEG, Mr. Speaker, is the rate that will be locked in. Well, SaskEnergy, hasn't locked, hasn't locked a rate in so if the city of Regina or any customer of SaskEnergy decides to stay with SaskEnergy their rates can continue to go down, Mr. Speaker.

Well the city of Regina will have to make a decision. Do they want to lock in at the rate that that member advises them to lock

in? Or do they want to stay with SaskEnergy and maybe get a better rate, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Recommendations on the Implementation of the Fyke Commission

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Yesterday the Chair of the Committee on Health Care told members of the media that recommendations for implementing Ken Fyke's recommendations would come from a parallel process now underway by the Department of Health, Mr. Speaker — a parallel process undertaken by the Department of Health.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister please detail this parallel process, and explain to the people of this province how they will have input into these department inputted regulations?

Mr. Speaker, has the minister deliberately set up this parallel process to exclude meaningful input from the people of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate this question because it's the same question the member asked me in estimates and I talked about the process of what we are doing in the department, whereby we work with people in the community, but specifically the people within the health care community, so that we can address some of the very difficult issues?

What we want to do is make sure that we're also talking with all of the members of the medical profession, the nursing profession, and other places so that we can get the best advice on what the possibilities are.

The member is working on the Standing Committee on Health and that's an important part of this. But what we want to do is get the best advice we can from the people who are working within the system as well as what the communities say.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, there's a problem with the mandate of the all-party committee. If we are to listen to people's responses to the Fyke report and to let the government know what we've heard, but at the same time that we are supposed to be hearing this from the people, the Department of Health is going about drafting its own recommendations and making decisions about what the Fyke report is going to be implemented at in this province.

This is exactly what they did in Channel Lake, Mr. Speaker. After months of hearings, after months of meetings, the government drafted its own report, made up its own mind, and went in its own direction.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP government doing this to the people of Saskatchewan? Why should anybody in this province believe that any presentation that they make is going to be

listened to in a meaningful way? And rather, why has the minister structured this so that people believe they have input, but in reality they're going to not be listened to and this government is going to implement the Fyke report irregardless?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the member from Melfort-Tisdale, and so what I'm led to believe is that this is not a question that he has written or the one that he has proposed because he understands what it is that we are doing as a community of Saskatchewan.

We do not have a plan written. We are listening carefully to the people. I'm going out to various communities, and I'm saying to them: look, you have developed many things that work very well in your community; whatever we're going to do as a province has to build on the positive things that we've done already.

The member from Melfort-Tisdale knows that, because that's what I said out in Melfort when we went forward with the plan for their new long-term care facility. And what we want to do as members of the government, working together with the members opposite, is to take the discussion away from this political banter here to what we really need which is building a health care system that will work for all of us. That's our goal and that's what we're sticking to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister has said that he has so much respect for our suggestions. Well if the minister is indeed respectful of our suggestions, he will listen to the people of Saskatchewan.

I'm in receipt of a letter that's addressed to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Health Care from the Rural Municipalities Association, and they say:

This letter is to inform you of our disappointment with the fact that all public hearings scheduled are being held in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, they go on to say:

We strongly request that the public hearings that are not yet scheduled be held at different locations throughout the province so that residents can be given the opportunity to make meaningful input to this committee.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Chair of the committee said: well we're not doing this because people have to be forced to focus on the big picture, Mr. Speaker. She's saying, and I quote:

What we need to hear is the broad view on this. If you go into individual communities, the communities will only look to themselves.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government afraid to listen to the people of Saskatchewan? Why have you got the mandate such that we're going to sit in Regina instead of listening to all the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I want to answer, and I'm pleased to answer on behalf of the government.

This committee was struck so that we could hear, so that we could listen to the people of Saskatchewan, and so that through the television media, we could share what the people of Saskatchewan were saying from north to south to east to west.

What you have today, Mr. Speaker, is a member who is afraid and who is hesitating and who is trying to savage the process of these hearings so that the Saskatchewan people can't have their say with respect to this.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that member why doesn't he be willing to do the job, to listen to the Saskatchewan people, the job that he was sent here to do?

If he's not willing to do the job, maybe he should resign his seat and let someone come to this Chamber who wants to hear what the people of Saskatchewan have to say with respect to the Fyke committee report.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Farmland Ownership Policy

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

Earlier this month, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business called on the provincial government to change its farmland ownership policy. The majority of Saskatchewan agribusiness people believe this change is needed now to encourage valuable investment in our agriculture sector.

In response, the Minister of Agriculture is quoted as saying, Mr. Speaker:

Changes are needed. It's something that we're looking at right now, but it won't be this session because it's too late in the day.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's not too late. My colleague, the member from Saltcoats, will be introducing legislation in this House this afternoon that will ease farmland ownership restrictions in this province.

Mr. Minister, will you support that legislation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that there has been a good deal of debate and discussion to date on The Farmland Security Act.

And I said yesterday in estimates to the member opposite that we're going to continue our exploration and make sure that when we proceed down this path, Mr. Speaker, that it'll be encompassing, in fact that it will be inclusive of all Saskatchewan agriculture producers and industry in that

decision.

But what we're not going to do, Mr. Speaker, is we're not going to adopt the direction that the members opposite recommend. Because, Mr. Speaker, we've witnessed it. We've had these people on our support when we went to get CFIP (Canada Farm Income Program) in this province or AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance) in this province. What happened? They dragged us down the path, Mr. Speaker, where Saskatchewan farmers had to pay and lost money.

Mr. Speaker, then we went down to the old CFIP on to the CSAP (Canada-Saskatchewan Adjustment Program) and what did the member opposite say when we're talking about CSAP? Saskatchewan farmers don't need any more money — they don't need any more money.

And that member there joined with Mr. Stockwell Day in his message saying Saskatchewan/Canadian farmers don't need any more money. So we're going to pay very little or no attention, Mr. Speaker, to the kind of recommendations that come from that side of the House because they have been a cost to Saskatchewan farmers every time it's happened.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister says he's been working on it for some time. I wonder if it's the same kind of work that the minister of Agriculture previous to him did when the AIDA program was being introduced and debated. He sat on a beach in Mexico — that's what he did — when it was being debated.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — And when CSAP . . . and when CSAP was being formed, where were they? They weren't anywhere near the debate then. And now when the discussions about a new farm safety net program are put in place, the minister goes to Ottawa, he doesn't put one single idea on the table — not a thing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — And now when the official opposition brings forward legislation, meaningful legislation to change farmland ownership laws in this province, the minister says no, we can't do that either.

Will you, Mr. Minister, stand in your place and do one thing for the province of Saskatchewan's farmers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before the answer, I just remind the members to direct their questions through the Chair.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member again, one more time, that what I'm not going to do is I'm not going to do what they do over there, Mr. Speaker. And we have a history of what they do over there, Mr. Speaker.

Because he makes an accusation of the previous deputy premier and the minister of Agriculture being away when we were

discussing the AIDA. Well this member of the opposition was sitting in Holland, Mr. Speaker, in Holland is where he was. And I say, Mr. Speaker, this . . . the Leader of the Opposition in Holland.

But I say to the member opposite and the Ag critic. When we're out negotiating for more money for Saskatchewan/Canadian farmers, and what does the Leader of the Opposition, this year on CSAP, what does the Leader of the Opposition and the Ag critic do? They align themselves with Mr. Stockwell Day, who says, Mr. Speaker, there should be no more money for Canadian/Saskatchewan farmers.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Ag critic goes on to say just recently . . . Not only, Mr. Speaker, doesn't he support Saskatchewan farmers, but today, Mr. Speaker, he supports Stockwell Day. And he says:

I support him and continue to support him, unqualified, and I don't have any doubts, and I still believe he's a good leader.

Here's the guy who's taking Saskatchewan/Canadian farmers in the dump and that agriculture member represents him, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Launch of Northern Health Science Access Program

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, this morning I had the privilege of signing a memorandum of understanding in Prince Albert which will provide Aboriginal people with greater access to post-secondary and health science education opportunities with a particular emphasis on nurse training.

Mr. Speaker, with my colleagues, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, we have today joined with our post-secondary partners and educational institutions, First Nations and Métis organizations to launch the northern health science access program.

The access program, Mr. Speaker, will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to further their education in the health sciences generally, and in nursing specifically.

The nursing initiative will focus on ensuring that students involved in the degree program will develop the necessary professional skills as well as the cultural and spiritual understandings needed to function effectively in northern communities, or for that matter, Mr. Speaker, anywhere else they would choose to work.

The impetus for these initiatives came from the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority, who initially invited the other partners to work together to respond to the need for more Aboriginal people in the health sector in northern Saskatchewan.

I want to congratulate and thank the chiefs of the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority and their representatives for the vision and commitment to these initiatives.

Our future, Mr. Speaker, success . . . our future success depends on developing initiatives like these that nurture the full participation of Aboriginal young people in post-secondary education. Initiatives that enable them upon graduation to gain employment that contributes to the economic . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, please. I'd ask the members to come to order. The minister will continue with his statement.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I appreciate your assistance, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to say that I believe that the initiatives that enable these Aboriginal students upon graduation to gain employment that contributes to the economic and social development of their communities and their province is welcome.

I congratulate the partners to this agreement for taking a flexible, inclusive, and strategic approach to supporting education that is responsive to the needs of northern communities, of Northerners, and of our needs for qualified health professionals in the North.

Mr. Speaker, we are sharing a vision for Saskatchewan's future and we are acting on that vision today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for providing me with a copy of his statement.

Mr. Speaker, there certainly is a great need for more health care workers in northern Saskatchewan. A recent study by Health Canada's First Nations Inuit health branch indicated that there's a nurse vacancy of some 40 per cent on First Nations communities. And this is likely to worsen as the baby boomers retire. Prevention and education programs such as diabetes awareness, breast feeding, and prenatal care often suffer on reserves that are short-staffed.

Last fall, Mr. Speaker, a number of our, of our . . . of my caucus members met with the Meadow Lake Tribal Council to discuss First Nations issues. And the people at the Meadow Lake Tribal Council quickly indicated to us that good health is very essential to their people, as it is to all people, for economic success.

At a recent reception, Mr. Speaker, that Chief Perry Bellegarde of the First Nations association indicated that — as many of his previous people who have held that position have indicated — that education is a First Nations new buffalo. And so, Mr. Speaker, I applaud all efforts to improve education and health care in First Nations people and congratulate the chiefs of the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority and the ministers on this initiative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 206 — The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2001

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 206, the Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2001.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government to table written responses to questions no. 234 and 235. And noting, Mr. Speaker, this exceeds the number in the last session by a fair number.

The Speaker: — Responses to 234 and 235 are tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 47

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 47 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Domestic Relations) Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago the Minister of Justice came to our caucus to advise the official opposition about impending changes to the NDP government . . . or I'm sorry, that the NDP government was prepared to make to various existing pieces of legislation.

These changes, according to the minister, were required as a result of a judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada in the *M v. H* case and trends in case law that require equal treatment of married and common-law partners. The minister said, and I quote:

The amendments are needed to protect people who are vulnerable because they are in dependent relationships. The legislation provides for unmarried couples to be treated the same way in law as legally married couples.

And thirdly, the minister insisted that:

The definition of marriage remains federal jurisdiction. This legislation does not alter that or redefine marriage in any way. The federal government has affirmed that marriage is the union of one man and one woman.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, some 24 pieces of legislation are to be amended as a result of this particular piece of legislation before the House today.

At the outset of this discussion, Mr. Speaker, I need to make it perfectly clear that the official opposition accepts the authority of the Supreme Court under the constitutional and legal framework that exists in Canada today. We may as individuals disagree with some of the decisions taken by the court and work toward attaining legal remedies to change, revoke, or minimize the effects of such rulings, but as a whole we recognize the court's authority in these areas.

My concern with this Bill today is that I believe there are serious philosophical errors and negative societal consequences that will flow from the government's legislation before us today.

Mr. Speaker, the first point of dispute, in my view, is the redefining of the word spouse, which this legislation undertakes.

While it is said that the Supreme Court ruling in *M v. H* requires a redefining of the word spouse, I view this interpretation as overstated. I would argue that the court intended that financial benefits which might normally accrue to a spouse be extended to common-law and same-sex couples on the basis of their relationship as reasonably stable and caring, not because the court viewed their relationship as explicitly spousal.

The usual and generally accepted definition of the word spouse is: the married partner of another person, either male or female. To say on one hand that the definition of marriage remains unchanged, while simultaneously changing the definition of spouse to suggest something more than its meaning, is in fact, a backdoor means of changing the definition of marriage.

The Minister of Justice denies this to be the case. Nevertheless, this legislation attempts to do, through the back door, what the government cannot do directly. The minister knows full well that the definition of marriage is the prerogative of the federal government and that that government has so far chosen to remain with the traditional definition.

Mr. Speaker, in introducing this legislation the minister has chosen to arbitrarily extend the definition of the term spouse to mean partners of common law, or same-sex couples. Furthermore, the minister has granted all rights and privileges of married couples to common law and same-sex couples in this piece of legislation. Whether the minister is aware of it or not, he has set the stage for a classic Charter challenge on the definition of marriage, especially by same-sex couples.

If, as the Charter states there cannot be discrimination on the basis of marital status or sexual preference, then to grant all rights and privilege of marriage to same-sex couples without giving them the right to legally marry is clearly discriminatory. And if the same-sex community doesn't challenge it very quickly, I will be most surprised.

For the minister to say that marriage is unaffected and remains protected by the federal definition is either naive or

disingenuous. It's only a matter of time until the legality of this situation is tested in the Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, assurances to the contrary by government ministers tend to ring hollow. I recently read a letter written by the former attorney general, Bob Mitchell, to an acquaintance of mine, offering similar assurances that legislation introduced by the NDP government at that time, would not lead any further than the legislation explicitly provided. At that time it was legislation to protect gay men and women from discrimination.

In his letter, Mr. Mitchell indicated that such protection would not lead to spousal benefits or to an adoption of children provision. He was clearly wrong. The courts have ruled on inequality issues on behalf of the gay community in a steady progression.

For politicians to suggest anything to the contrary is misleading. And the public, the voters of Saskatchewan, have a right to know realistic outcomes generated by legislation such as the piece of legislation we have before us today.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice told the official opposition that this legislation was intended to do more than fulfill the province's minimum obligations subsequent to the ruling of the Supreme Court. In the words of the minister, this legislation is intended to protect people who are vulnerable because they are in dependent relationships.

If the minister's stated goals are to be believed, he could have chosen another route to achieve his intentions. There are other means of protecting economically vulnerable people, examples of which are appearing in other jurisdictions.

This particular piece of legislation only protects individuals on the basis of who is sleeping with whom. In other words, economic vulnerability and need of protection is limited by conjugal relations. Its effect is to offer protection to the partner that a given individual is having sex with most of the time.

Such legislation is simply unnecessary when you consider the fact that there are perfectly acceptable models for achieving the minister's expressed desires without the implications offered by this legislation.

We know that some jurisdictions have already taken this matter beyond the concept of spousal relations, and that long-standing family or domestic relationships of all kinds have been acknowledged in law.

In Hawaii for example, Mr. Speaker, they have a reciprocal beneficiaries law that recognizes benefits for people who cannot marry each other, thereby providing protection to all individuals who might experience economic vulnerability on the dissolution of a domestic relationship.

This piece of legislation simply does not meet the test of protecting the economically vulnerable as suggested by the minister. It advances the cause of common-law couples and same sex couples, but leaves many people in equally vulnerable situations completely unprotected and disenfranchised on this count.

This legislation doesn't help the middle-aged, unmarried

daughter who has sacrificed personal pursuits and happiness to stay at home to look after her aging mother or father. It doesn't protect two elderly brothers who have lived together all their lives, forming an equally dependent financial and domestic unit.

It doesn't protect any group of people who form all kinds of loving and committed relationships and who are equally vulnerable from an economic point of view but aren't having sex with each other.

This legislation isn't simply about economic vulnerability in the face of break-up in previously stable relationships among same sex or common-law couples. It is about advancing the cause of these couples while never admitting to it for public review.

If property disputes really are the issue, then this law should address property division in these circumstances and not confuse such matters with important categories that turn on the definition of terms such as spouse, conjugal, marriage, and the family.

(14:30)

Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court has recognized the need to provide for equality and fairness in settling financial issues that arise out of failed relationships. The court insisted that this fairness be applied to common-law and same-sex partners, but it did not insist on redefining the term spouse as this legislation does, nor did the court encourage a redefinition of marriage, something else that is tacitly accomplished in this piece of legislation.

In fact in its wisdom the Supreme Court has on more than one occasion recognized the right and requirement of the state to preserve marriage as a foundational unit for society. The court has indicated that it does not question that marriage is between a man and a woman. In *Egan v. Canada*, the court majority said, and I quote:

Parliament may quite properly give special support to the institution of marriage . . .

Viewed in the larger context, then, there is nothing arbitrary about the distinction supportive of heterosexual family units.

Mr. Justice Sopinka, in a concurring judgment, indicated that the heterosexual family required support because most women in heterosexual unions made financial sacrifices to raise children and tended to earn lower salaries than men due to structural inequalities in the workplace.

In the case *M v. H*, the court distinguished consideration of same-sex couples' right to equal treatment from any consideration of marriage. The court took the position that the state had a clear, vested interest in preserving and even promoting marriage as significant to the well-being of the state.

Why did the court make such an exception when there is growing pressure to accept and legitimize any and every alternative? Because there is an importance to marriage as we have traditionally known it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote at length now from a joint presentation by several faith-based groups to the Ontario government when that institution was considering similar legislation:

The importance of traditional marriage. The family, a group of people related by blood, marriage, or adoption, is based on a marriage which unites a man and a woman in a union fully contracted and publicly expressed, with a mutual commitment to faithfulness and permanency.

A family, however, is much more than a mere legal, social, or economic unit. It is a community uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual, and religious values essential for the development and well-being of its own members and society as a whole.

The family is also a binding, permanent commitment to past, present, and future generations and as such it is the cement that holds society together. In addition, the family is a relationship that provides health, education, and welfare benefits that meet the needs of individuals without cost to the taxpayer. Although not perfect, it is the best system mankind has ever devised in which to raise children and to care for the disabled and the aged.

Most importantly, the family, according to American sociologist Christopher Lasch, is a haven in a heartless world since it is the only institution ever invented to provide children with a love that is centred on them. All other institutions such as child care and schools are intentionally impartial. But in order for children's personalities to develop in a healthy manner, it is necessary that someone care intensely for them. It is within the family unit that this kind of intense caring usually takes place.

Mr. Speaker, according to the 1996 census, 74 per cent of Canadian families conformed to the traditional union of husband and wife. This model is freely chosen because it's the model that works best for them.

According to Statistics Canada in its first report released in October 1996, the *National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth*, in which 23,000 children were tracked every two years from infancy to 11 years, the following was discovered: 83 per cent of children under 12 years of age lived in a two-parent family in 1994; sixteen and a half per cent lived with a single parent; and thirdly, the vast majority of families were biological families, not reconstructed by marriage or other means.

The survey also found that 41 per cent of children cared for by a single parent had at least one kind of developmental problem, compared to 26 per cent in all families and that children of single parents were one and a half to two times more likely to face problems compared with children of two-parent families.

In its next release in 1998 of its finding in the *National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth*, StatsCanada reported that 20 per cent of all births in the period 1993-94, were in common-law unions — double those of 10 years prior. The study states the children followed in the study will experience changes in their family environments of

unprecedented proportions as a result of their parents' changing relationships.

This is significant because common-law relationships break up more quickly than marriages, even where there are children. The study found that 12 per cent of married couples with children break up within 10 years compared to a breakup rate of 63 per cent of common-law couples with children.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear therefore that the preservation of the traditional family is in the best interests of children, and as such, is essential for the stability of society. It is crucial to encourage and support permanency and commitment in marriage.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that since the institution of legal marriage is the foundation of society and in the best interests of children, this institution should be distinguished from all others and should be given special recognition and support to promote and encourage its formation. Statutory protection can be extended to other interdependent couples by way of enacting a separate statute.

It should be mentioned here, Mr. Speaker, that the Supreme Court of Canada in 1995 in the Nesbit and Egan case held that it was not discriminatory to provide special benefits for legally married heterosexual couples since their relationship is the fundamental social unit in society. The court further stated as a fact that the married heterosexual couple has the ability to procreate and nurture children, but also anchors other social relationships and other aspects of society.

Mr. Justice Gerald La Forest on behalf of the majority stated the following. And I'm quoting from page 536 of the Supreme Court ruling:

Suffice it to say that marriage has from time to time been firmly grounded in our legal tradition, one that is itself a reflection of long-standing philosophical and religious tradition. But its ultimate *raison d'être* transcends all of these and is firmly anchored in the biological and social realities that heterosexual couples have the unique ability to procreate, that most children are the product of these relationships, and that they are generally cared for and nurtured by those who live in that relationship.

The Justice went on to say on page 538 of that Supreme Court judgment, and I quote:

Viewed in the larger context, then, there is nothing arbitrary about the distinction supportive of heterosexual family units . . . It is the social unit that uniquely has the capacity to procreate children and generally cares for their upbringing, and as such warrants support by Parliament to meet its needs. This is the only unit in society that expends resources to care for children on a routine and sustained basis . . . this is the unit in society that fundamentally anchors other social relationships and other aspects of society . . .

In a word, this distinction made by Parliament is grounded in a social relationship (I'm still quoting Justice La Forest). That unit, as I have attempted to explain, is unique . . .

. . . It is relevant here to describe a fundamental social unit, indeed the fundamental social unit in society, to which some measure of support is given. I add, interstitially, that this support does not exacerbate an historic disadvantage; rather it ameliorates an historic economic disadvantage, both for couples who are legally married and those who live in a common law relationship.

According to Justice Gonthier at page 177 in *M v. H*:

However, the extension of support mechanisms to common-law couples was due to the political recognition that such couples also perform a social role similar to that of a married couple.

Moreover, the Supreme Court of Canada, in *Miron v. Trudel*, 1995, held that:

Common-law couples are a historically disadvantaged group and that, in some circumstances, for instance motor vehicle accident benefits, they may receive the same benefits as legal spouses.

So, Mr. Speaker, it may be necessary to provide some statutory protection for common-law couples, as well as for other individuals living in economically interdependent relationships such as two siblings, two friends, same-sex couples, and a parent and an adult child.

However, non-marital relationships should not receive equivalent-to-married recognition or benefits. Public policy should always promote the best option and that is legal marriage.

Mr. Speaker, there is another area of concern that this piece of legislation raises. In my view, if the minister has said this legislation is intended to provide security to individuals affected negatively by the breakup of a previously committed and stable relationship, he has sent the wrong message by reducing the time a relationship has to survive from three years down to two years. It would seem to me that if the goal of stability in relationships is to be encouraged, it might be more prudent to require relationships to survive for five years or more maybe before a legal remedy would be available to partners breaking up.

Two years, Mr. Speaker, is hardly enough time to get to know one's partner, let alone to be recognized as the beneficiary of financial support or relief. I can only imagine the floodgates of litigation that this particular change will open.

Stability of relationships might be the real casualty of this provision in this piece of legislation. It will result in the exact opposite effect than what is intended and is doing a disservice to any two people who are in the throes of a developing loving relationship.

I would call on the minister to rethink his position on this article of the legislation, unless of course it really isn't his intention to enhance such relationships. It might well be that it is in this area that he is rewarding one or more groups of people who are seeking legitimacy before the law that is not otherwise afforded to them by society.

Mr. Speaker, the views I put forward today are not simply my own. During several days last week, I asked the people of my constituency and my constituency office to do a complete random survey of individuals, people living in the constituency of Cypress Hills. I wanted to find out how they felt about the legislation before us today.

I asked my constituency assistants to be as thorough as possible in assuring the unbiased results of a survey. They employed a modest, straightforward question about this legislation and provided for complete anonymity for the respondents.

Mr. Speaker, the results are in and they are unequivocal. By a margin of three to one — that's 75 per cent — the citizens of Cypress Hills do not support this legislation brought forward by the NDP government.

While I was quite sure of how my constituents felt, I wanted to be certain. My office conducted telephone calls until we had an even 100 responses. The results vary little from town to rural residents, from young to old, from men to women, although women did appear to be somewhat more sympathetic to the legislation, especially as it relates to common-law relationships.

Mr. Speaker, for the reasons I have enunciated today, I cannot support this piece of legislation. It goes further in many areas than is required by the *M v. H* Supreme Court decision. It does not provide protection for economically vulnerable people except on the basis of who's having sex with whom, and it fails to recognize the value of marriage and child raising to our society.

In fact this legislation contributes to the undermining of that very institution by providing all the rights and privileges of marriage to people who are unmarried thereby subjecting that institution to probable litigation and a further diminished value.

I would say on these bases alone, I cannot support the legislation. As a result of my phone survey, neither can my constituents. I would hope that the minister would be open to constructive changes that the official opposition may introduce as this legislation makes its way through the House. To facilitate his considered response, I would move that this Bill, the domestic relations amendment Act, 2001, move to Committee of the Whole.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 14:45 until 15:01.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 35

Calvert	Addley	Hagel
Lautermilch	Atkinson	Serby
Melenchuk	Cline	Sonntag
Goulet	Van Mulligen	MacKinnon
Wartman	Thomson	Pebble
Belanger	Crofford	Axworthy
Nilson	Hamilton	Junor

Harper	Jones	Higgins
Kasperski	Trew	Osika
Lorjé	Yates	McCall
Krawetz	Boyd	D'Autremont
Wakefield	Huyghebaert	

Nays — 17

Hermanson	Elhard	Heppner
Julé	Draude	Gantefoer
Toth	Stewart	Eagles
Wall	Bakken	Bjornerud
Kwiatkowski	Brkich	Wiberg
Hart	Peters	

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

Bill No. 48

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 48 — The Miscellaneous Statues (Domestic Relations) Amendment Act, 2001 (No. 2)/Loi corrective (relations domestiques) de 2001 (n° 2)** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in this Assembly today and just raise a few points regarding Bill No. 48, which incidentally is equivocally the same to what Bill No. 47 is, other than it's the French version of the legislation.

I would like to point out the fact that, Mr. Speaker, as we saw just a few moments ago, that this . . . these two pieces of legislation certainly initiated a fair bit of debate in our caucus — as I'm sure it has in other caucuses — and has raised . . . a lot of concerns have been raised.

And as was noted just a few moments ago, our caucuses talked at end about free votes in the Legislative Assembly, and certainly what just transpired in this Assembly is something that we have talked about for a long time — that members should have that opportunity.

And I can assure you, as my colleague the member from Maple Creek mentioned, when these two pieces of legislation were brought forward — and we certainly want to acknowledge and thank the minister for coming to our caucus and giving us a heads-up and giving us some explanations as to the two pieces of legislation and the intent — that my colleagues and I did take the time to do an intensive survey in all of our constituencies. And the vote that took place a moment ago reflected the views that came from our specific constituencies.

I would be remiss if I did not thank my assistant and those in my office who did take the time to do the phone-around. And, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you it was a phone-around; it was just individuals picked at random so that we had an overview of how people felt about this issue before us today.

And the fact was, Mr. Speaker, the results from my constituency reflected the same as the member from Maple Creek and a lot of other constituencies. And I want to thank my

constituents who did respond to the phone-around, giving me an opportunity to really represent their viewpoints. While on many occasions . . . and I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, I believe the constituents I represent certainly is a constituency that is, that is . . . I have a fairly sound understanding of their views on many issues; certainly moral issues as well.

While this piece of legislation isn't strictly tied to a moral agenda, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation I believe, as was pointed out, tends to basically extend and actually promote — not necessarily promote views — but certainly really challenges the traditional views that society has had for a great period of time.

And I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, that in talking to my constituents — and not just the, the survey that was taken — talking to individuals over the past few days, what I have found, that my constituents probably reflect the views of many people. They are not opposed to anyone, regardless of the relationships you're in, having the rights to protection and the opportunity to be looked after financially; and to pass on, if a person chooses, to be able to buy a will or whatever form to make sure that their, their particular partner is looked after and looked after properly. And no one's opposed to that.

But certainly, Mr. Speaker, when it came to the areas of adoption . . . and I noticed, note in Manitoba, the Manitoba government is moving a number of amendments to laws in their lands to reflect the Supreme Court ruling as well. However what's particularly noteworthy is that Manitoba is amending 10 laws, where in the province of Saskatchewan we've chosen to move amendments to 24 provincial laws.

And both of these amendments, in both provinces, they do deal with issues such as spousal support, death benefits, and pension benefits. The one major difference is that while Saskatchewan proposes to allow same-sex couples to adopt children of their partners, Manitoba chose not to go that far.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe we can from . . . for far too long we have argued that many times we make decisions and choices and change laws because somebody else has moved in that direction. My colleague talked about the fact that we were actually changing our laws to fit into the rulings brought down by the Supreme Court of Canada. And while the Supreme Court is certainly an institution that is revered in Canada, it's also an institution that has all of the individuals on that, on that court have been appointed — appointed by someone or some government at one time or other.

And I do have a particular concern when the elected representatives across this country — whether they're at the provincial or the federal or even the local level — and the population in general, have the view and may move legislation as such, we're beginning to find more and more often that those pieces of legislation may be challenged and eventually they find their way to the Supreme Court. And on many occasions we have found that the court is ruling and actually calling on elected members, duly elected members to then change the rules.

And that is a concern to me, Mr. Speaker, and it's a concern to many individuals. The feeling is that if we elect people to

represent and be our voice, they should be able to pass legislation, move legislation that reflects our views and not have an appointed body then at the end of the day say, no, you have to change it because the law says . . . or this is our interpretation of the law.

Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated earlier, there isn't a problem with the fact of passing on the need to recognize spousal benefits and pension benefits and death benefits of that nature, but when it comes to adoption — and that was one of the issues that probably was raised, brought to the forefront in the survey that I had conducted, Mr. Speaker — that's where my constituents really drew the line.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I think the other concern is the fact that we are watering down what is really seen in this country, this country that was based and the principles of our nation were based on Judeo-Christian, values and those Judeo-Christian values really have promoted and accepted the lifestyle of the heterosexual relationship of one man, one woman cohabiting together and having and raising children.

And I really appreciated what the member from Maple Creek, some of the detail that the member went into in pointing out the differences in different relationships.

Mr. Speaker, what I would have to conclude by saying is while we have given our members the opportunity to have the free vote, one concern we do have, and not specifically with the legislation, is that we had asked the minister when he had met with us about . . . or the minister had indicated that they had held off on this legislation for over a period of a year so that they could consult with many stakeholders and seek their views and opinions in regards to the legislation we have before us. And when we met with the minister, the minister did indicate that, and promise, that he would share the results of his research.

However we could see that the officials disagreed with that, and as I understand, they have basically said no, we will not share those results. The concern I have with that, Mr. Speaker, is the fact of what did the results of their consultations reflect. Would those results have actually reflected what my colleagues and I have found in our survey? And, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that we probably will never know because those results will have . . . the indication is that the results are not and will not be made public.

And one would have to ask, then what's the point of consulting if you're not going to let people know exactly what conclusions you've arrived at, at the end of the day, in your consultation process?

So, Mr. Speaker, having made those few points, I think it's important that the public of Saskatchewan be represented and their voice be heard as well. And I certainly am pleased to have raised these issues, brought these points to the forefront, and reflect the fact that there is a difference . . . a differing view and opinion throughout this province on many of the issues.

But again to say, that certain parts of the Bill everybody can agree with, because we're not opposed to those spousal benefits and death benefits and pension benefits. But there are other

areas that we're afraid we're going down a slippery slope that's leading us into an area that I don't believe most people really want to enter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

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

(15:15)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 57 — The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act

Clause 1

The Chair: — I would invite the minister to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I have with me to my left Arun Srinivas, the senior taxation policy analyst for the Department of Finance. And to my right is Susan Amrud, director of legislative service with the Department of Justice.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, and officials, welcome today. Both parties . . . all three parties were involved in negotiations and discussions on this particular Bill and its development. I just wonder is there anything different in this Bill other than what was agreed to by the joint committee that was in place that initiated and developed this particular Bill?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Chairman, I think I can say to the member that I don't believe there are any changes other than what the three parties agreed to.

I should put the member on notice that I would like to do an amendment during the process to clause 5 of the printed Bill in that there was a printing error, as I understand.

There's a number in here of 33 per cent and I will be recommending that we strike out 33 per cent and put the proper figure in which was agreed to, which was thirty-three and a third per cent.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, I noted that, Mr. Minister, and I thank you for bringing forward that House amendment.

I guess the only other item on here that I noticed was slightly — not different because that was the original discussion — but the annual reporting day of the last day of April each year. I know there was some discussion. Was that cleared up?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, I'm advised that the Department of Finance checked with Revenue Canada and they indicated that that was appropriate, that there was no difficulty with that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. I believe that this Bill is an appropriate Bill to be passed in this legislature. It's certainly something that has been needed for a while as was discussed in second reading debates. That it brings fairness to our democracy. It brings a level playing field and I would certainly support this Bill when it comes up for the vote.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Chairman, I would just say to the member opposite that I think what it does is recognizes the changes in political circumstances and it allows our province to have, as you've indicated, a level playing field and balance. And government members will certainly be supporting the Bill as well. I think it's something that the electorate will be comfortable with.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I noted one thing here that I forgot.

You mentioned a figure of \$625,000. Is that an average over a four-year term, including an election, or what is that number based on?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, the Department of Finance indicates to me that in an election year it's about a million dollars. And other years it would be about half a million dollars so the average would be something in the neighbourhood of six and a half.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 5

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes I'd like to move an amendment that clause 5 of the printed Bill be amended:

... by striking out "33 %" and substituting "33 1/3%".

I so move.

The Chair: — The minister has moved an amendment to:

Amend clause 5(4)(a) of the printed Bill by striking out "33%" and substituting "33 1/3%".

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 5 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 23 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to thank the officials who assisted me with today's proceedings.

Bill No. 2 — The Securities Amendment Act, 2001

The Chair: — I invite the minister to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my

right, Barbara Shourounis, who is director of Saskatchewan Securities Commission, and Brent Prenevost on my left is Crown counsel with the Department of Justice. And I'd ask all members to welcome them here today.

Clause 1

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to the minister and to his officials. A number of questions that we do have dealing with The Securities Amendment Act, Bill No. 2.

I guess, how many other provinces have such a permanent system in place? So this is . . . Saskatchewan's moving in that direction. Are we a leader; are we a follower; are we halfway in the pack? What's happening throughout the rest of Canada?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — In response to the member's question. There's a large process taking place across the country of consolidating and bringing together securities operations, indeed financial institutions regulation, if you would, across the country to try to have us all following the same path with the same rules and regulations. And this is part of that.

And the . . . all provinces except Alberta are moving in this direction. We are all doing this roughly at the same time. So we are basically doing what the vast majority of other provinces are doing with regards to securities regulation.

And I'll think you'll see — well I know you'll see in the years ahead much more uniformity in securities regulation across Canada.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. I think, and that's something that we appreciate, that when people move around the country and I think that happens more all the time — people move province to province — that they can feel secure that they have some understanding of what the rules and regulations are.

Part of this Bill I believe deals with the fact that it explicitly prohibits people trading in securities to make statements that aren't true.

I would like a bit of an explanation of that. Like is this just an outright lie on a number, or is it just sort of a shady misrepresentation? Exactly what has been occurring that has sort of triggered this response throughout the country?

(15:30)

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member raises, I think, an important question in terms of security that people will have with a system of . . . when they're investing their savings or whatever they might be investing they want to know that what they're being told about the investment is accurate so that they can judge whether or not to invest in it.

And the legislation defines the phrase "misrepresentation" as follows:

(i) an untrue statement of a material fact; or

(ii) an omission to state a material fact that is required to be

stated or that is necessary to make a statement not misleading in the light of the circumstances in which it was made;

In other words, you can mislead somebody by saying something that is untrue. You can also mislead somebody by not . . . by giving an impression of something being true when it is not in fact the case and by leaving out some phrase or some representation that would clarify that in the person's . . . the investor's mind.

If I think back to when I was a law professor, these things are . . . in the common law decided by judges but this makes it clear and more precise.

I should also say too that there are a number of other provisions that we have ensured to make sure that people don't receive misrepresentations.

For example, we have existing prohibitions against making representations about the future value of a security, about whether security will be listed on exchange, about whether anyone will repurchase the security, and things of that sort to try and ensure that when a person is investing in an investment — I'm not being very clear here today but I seem to not have very many words to say — but when the person is making an investment you want to make sure that it's as they perceive it to be.

These are always risky, of course, transactions because they are based upon speculation but you want to make sure that people have all the facts available to them and that we would . . . might even of heard of a number of cases or people might have come to your constituency office with cases where they feel they've been misrepresented, invested their savings and lost them.

So it's particularly important for those individuals to be protected. I think it's also very important to facilitate the accumulation of capital to invest in our economy and to build the economy here in the province.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you and thank you for the answer. I think it's one of those areas that people are always concerned about because as a minister, as you mentioned, there's always a certain amount of risk in any investment, and it's important that people understand the risk that they're taking and not find out later on that there was something else involved that they perceived that wasn't actually there.

The question or two on the Securities Commission. What is the makeup of the Securities Commission and how do people get to hold a position on the Securities Commission?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — In section 4 of the Act there's significant provisions dealing with the commission itself.

The member asks how are people appointed to the Securities Commission. They're appointed by cabinet, and of course we try to ensure that there's a mix of expertise and a wide range of experience to ensure that the Securities Commission does both have the trust of the community at large as well as an understanding of how securities and business operates.

There is a chairperson, of course, a vice-chairperson, and six other members . . . or a maximum of six members as well as the chairperson for the Securities Commission.

At the present time there's the Chair and three members.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. A question or two on the work that the Securities Commission does.

On an average year . . . how many investigations into wrongdoing does the commission do in an average year? And I believe that there's also the change now that this can be up to two years to do that.

And my second question — because I'm noted for having a barrage of questions is — approximately what percentage of the cases are sort of the two-year cases?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — While I don't have the number of investigations, for example, over the last year at hand, I'll get that for the member as soon as possible. But at any given time about 80 files are opened and being investigated by the Securities Commission. So you can see the commission has, you know, a fair bit of work to do ensuring that people are protected in the province.

With regards to the limitation period, while there haven't been cases where the shorter limitation period has been a problem, it's easy to conceive of a situation in which that might be the case. So the extension of a limitation period is more of a preventative measure.

I might, if I may, take the opportunity to say that the commission . . . the member asked the question earlier about where we are in the pack and how we're playing our role across Canada in securities commissions. And the chairperson, Mr. de la Gorgendiere, has played a significant role both in Canada and in North America in representing smaller securities commissions and the concerns and interests and particular priorities of smaller securities commissions in the overall scheme of things. This is plainly a venture which is dominated by Toronto and to some extent the Nasdaq or the Canadian exchange now.

So we played a significant role I think and played our part in making sure that this consolidation is in the interests of Saskatchewan and other smaller . . . provinces with smaller commissions. I would just add that.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you for that answer and the clarification of the broad scope that we play. Mr. Chair, I believe that takes care of the questions we have on Bill No. 2 from Committee of the Whole.

The Chair: — Thank you, members. This Bill has very many number of sections and with the pleasure of the committee, would it be appropriate . . . or is leave granted to deal with it by page. Is that agreed?

Leave granted.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 31 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 17 — The Professional Corporations Act

The Chair: — Order. I invite the minister to introduce his official.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Most of you will know Susan Amrud on my right, the director of legislative services, who is here for The Professional Corporations Act and probably a few more as well.

Clause 1

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And welcome again to the minister and his official. Fewer officials means they must definitely know more.

Anyways, on this particular Bill, Bill No. 17, I think all sides of the House have had numerous people contact us from various professions asking for this to move ahead, so I think we're all on the same page on this one for the most part.

But I think one of the questions that should probably be asked is: exactly what groups are considered professional for the purpose of this Act so we know who's covered under it and who isn't?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Those professions who are . . . who will have the capacity to have their members incorporate under this legislation are those professions which are regulated by an Act of the legislature; for example, accountants, lawyers, dentists, chiropractors, optometrists, and investment dealers. And they will apply to be designated as a profession which can have its members incorporate to the appropriate minister that they answer to.

So it's an opportunity here, as the member I think indicated, for professionals, those who work in partnerships rather than as corporations, to obtain now the same benefits as other business people who are incorporated, and indeed to be on an equal footing with professions in other provinces who've passed similar . . . which have passed similar legislation; and should be a significant assistance to the province and to citizens of the province in ensuring that there are professionals who . . . there's another encouragement to professionals to stay in the province.

And we look forward to this being a useful adjunct to other programs within the government in terms of economic development to ensure that we do have the professionals we need here in our communities, not just in our larger communities but in our smaller communities as well.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you for that answer, Mr. Minister. And I believe we fully support the government and the initiative on this particular Bill because I think the concerns that are there are definitely ones that are shared by everyone.

Somewhat of a similar question to the previous Bill: are we sort of in keeping now with all the rest of Canada, our neighbouring provinces — and I'd probably refer particularly to Ontario and

west — are we all on the same page at this point?

And another question which I wouldn't expect the minister to have an answer for, but he just might. How do we compare with the States in this area? Because a lot of our professionals are also lured into the US (United States).

(15:45)

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — In most provinces — in response to the member's question — in most provinces the availability of incorporation for professions is dealt with on a case-by-case basis, rather similar to the way in which we dealt with the medical physicians last year.

And we're the only province that has taken this route, to implement a process so that, so that professionals can come . . . can seek a process which is other than coming to the legislature and asking for legislation to be passed. So this facilitates in a much better way than the one . . . than the piecemeal process.

And I would say, too, that just in contrast with Alberta, the member might know that this legislation will be of more assistance to professionals who are of course concerned, amongst other things, with planning their tax strategies than the Alberta provisions does. This will provide for non-voting shares in the corporation to be held by family members as well as other active members of the corporation.

So it permits the professionals . . . the individual professionals to better plan their tax regime than would be the case in Alberta. And of course, that's a big part of ensuring that Saskatchewan is more attractive to those professionals, and thereby encouraging them to stay in the province.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, and I appreciate that direction. As I said earlier on, we support that direction totally.

Obviously the benefits that we're trying to give to the various professions is a financial benefit in this particular case. And it's obviously going to be a sort of a short-term pain for a long-term gain, I think is what we're all looking for.

Obviously I would imagine, or I would hope, that when the province looked at doing this, they would have looked at the dollar issues and would have said, okay, on the short-term for the year 2002 — because these people have the opportunity to go ahead and experience a tax saving — I would imagine and I guess is part of the question, that government has done some research to see what percentage would probably use this Bill to their advantage . . . that in the short term will have some cost on government coffers.

Over the long term, I think it should definitely be to the benefit of the province and the long term, it'll be a financial gain for the province.

But my question is, in the short term, saying probably for the year 2002-2003, what would be the cost to the government coffers from Bill No. 17?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — This obviously is an important question when a policy change like this is being made as the

member rightly points out.

We can only kind of estimate who might take up this opportunity because not every professional will decide to incorporate. But it's anticipated that about 200 accountants, 200 lawyers, 300 dentists, and perhaps 400 other professionals might take advantage of this provision. It's not likely that it will all happen in one year and the people will do this over a period of time.

And I think the member mentioned that this is really not a tax loss issue; it's a tax deferral question. Of course, in the short term it means that tax will not come into the provincial coffers. But it's anticipated that at its maximum this might cost between 3 and \$5 million a year.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. It's good to see that government has done some research on this and has some idea of exactly what the short-term costs are going to be. And I think we all agree that the long-term benefits are definitely going to be high for this particular province.

That, Mr. Deputy Chair, I believe concludes the questions that we have on this side of the House for Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

Clause 1 agreed to

Clauses 2 to 25 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

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

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the minister and ask the minister to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, on my right is Andrea Seale — again, no stranger to this House — the Crown counsel in the Department of Justice, and I ask you to welcome her.

Clause 1

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Again to the minister, welcome to his officials.

A few comments or questions on The Commercial Liens Act, Bill No. 28. There are three specific areas that are brought under one roof as it were, under Bill No. 28. They are repair work, storage facilities, and movers. And I'm wondering if there are still other separate lien Acts out there that aren't underneath here, and why just these three were put underneath this Bill if there are other ones out there?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member might be aware that builders' liens are dealt with differently by a separate piece of legislation. We have had a series of Acts dealing with commercial liens based upon different occupations — The Garage Keepers Act, The Hotel Keepers Act, The Warehousemen's Lien Act, and what remains of The Mechanics' Lien Act. All those are repealed and absorbed

within this piece of legislation.

So, for example, the member could easily understand that The Garage Keepers Act would go in a storer's lien because mostly that's what they would be doing. But he's quite right that the attempt here is to codify liens under three headings: repairer's liens, storer's lien, and carrier's lien.

I might say, maybe to pre-empt one of the member's questions, that this is legislation flowing from the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, worked on by all provinces.

I'm sure the member will be interested to know where we are in the pack in terms of introducing this legislation. Ontario has introduced this legislation, pretty similar legislation already and the other provinces can be expected to do so in the near future.

So we're actually at the beginning of the pack on this.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. It's good to see that we're leading the pack and it's also good to see that my questions make so much sense that people have imminent knowledge of where they're going.

I wonder if the minister could just briefly describe how the lien process works, so that if someone was going to put a lien against a piece of property or something, what's the system that takes place there?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member asks really what this legislation pertains to and how it works. If, for example, some improvements are made to someone's property and they're not paid for, then the person providing those services who hasn't been paid would place a lien on the property, which would give that person the first right to the proceeds of the property should it be sold at some later date.

The process really fits in with the personal property securities registry, which requires then . . . so to effect the lien, the person who was not paid would register the lien with the personal property registry. It would be there for all to see. And it would be enforced in the normal way so that if that property was sold, the proceeds of the lien would be . . . the first call on those proceeds would be to the lien holder.

So it's a fairly structured, I think well understood process by those in the business community who might access this legislation, who might be in need of a lien, and works well.

Mr. Heppner: — Thanks, Mr. Minister, for the explanation of how it operates.

Is it possible in Saskatchewan to file a lien against a piece of government property?

(16:00)

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — I think the member's question is primarily concerned with The Builders' Lien Act, and he's raised this matter before. And there's nothing in that Act which would prevent anyone from having a lien against the government, although there is . . . there isn't the possibility to register that lien against the land that the government owns.

But bearing in mind that this is a process designed to enforce outstanding debts, to enforce somebody who's received a service to pay for that service, the government is always going to be in a position of having resources to pay for that service. And there would be ways in which to pursue that through all the normal processes of collecting a debt.

So there would be no disadvantage to a person who's provided services to the government, not being paid, not being able to register that lien against the land.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you for that answer. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that concludes the questions that we have on commercial liens, Bill No. 28.

The Chair: — This is quite a lengthy Bill. Do I have leave to do the clauses page by page? Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 36 inclusive agreed to

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 37 — The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001

The Chair: — I'll give a moment for the minister to bring in his officials.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. Brent Prenevost on my right, Crown counsel in Department of Justice.

Clause 1

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Welcome to your official. I feel a bit like an old schoolmaster checking typographical and grammar errors here.

But I do have one question. Just for the record: are there any substantive changes being made to any of the Acts through this Bill?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Chair, no, there are no substantive changes here. Just the points the schoolteacher mentioned — the grammar, typographical errors, spelling, and so on.

And, Mr. Chair, I'm always prepared to be reprimanded by a teacher if we're making grammatical or other errors, which of course we do on a regular basis. And then every once in a while we have to clean them all up, as we're doing today.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I can assure the minister that, unless I pointed my finger, there's no reprimand intended.

That is the only question that we have on Bill No. 37.

The Chair: — Thank you. Again this Bill is extremely lengthy as it pertains to clauses. Do I have leave to deal with it by page? Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 24 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 38 — The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001 (No. 2)/Loi corrective de 2001 (n° 2)

Mr. Heppner: — No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have no further questions on this one. We would just hope that the government doesn't make the same mistakes in French as they do in English when they write those things.

The Chair: — Again this Bill has very many clauses, and do I have leave to deal with it page by page? Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Clauses 1 to 19 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 57 — The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read the first time?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, to proceed immediately now.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Post-Secondary Education that the amendments be now read the first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

(16:15)

Bill No. 2 — The Securities Amendment Act, 2001

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 17 — The Professional Corporations Act

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

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

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

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

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

Bill No. 37 — The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 37 be now read the third time and passed under its title.

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

**Bill No. 38 – The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001
(No. 2)/Loi corrective de 2001 (n° 2)**

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 38 be now read the third time and passed under its title.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**General Revenue Fund
Justice
Vote 3**

Subvote (JU01)

The Chair: — I invite the Minister of Justice to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm happy to welcome to the Assembly the following officials. On my right, Doug Moen, who is the executive director of public law and community justice. On my left is Don Head, who is the executive director of corrections; behind Don Head is Murray Brown, who's director of appeals and public prosecutions division.

Behind me is Mike Pestill, the acting director of administrative services branch. Sitting to his right is Colleen Matthews, the executive assistant to the deputy minister; and behind Murray Brown is Keith Laxdal, who is associate deputy minister of Justice. And at the back, Rod Crook who's executive director of registry services; Darryl Bogdasavich who is not on my list but we all know who Darryl Bogdasavich is; and Betty Ann Pottruff who is the director of policy, planning, and evaluation. And that's it.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Welcome to the minister and his officials this evening.

Mr. Minister, there has been a call by the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) for a public inquiry into the

deaths . . . or into the justice system, and that call was based on, primarily on the deaths of First Nations people outside of Saskatoon near the Queen Elizabeth station.

I'm wondering why your government has not responded to the FSIN by leading a public inquiry?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member raises the important question of the relationship between the justice system and Aboriginal peoples and . . . which was brought to a head by deaths in Saskatoon. We know that that's not the full extent of the challenges we face with regards to the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the justice system, and we're committed to ensuring that the system is more responsive and more respectful and more productive in its relationship with Aboriginal peoples.

These are complex matters. We are in discussion, and have been in discussion with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and Métis Nation of Saskatchewan over how to best proceed in response to the call by Métis for a public inquiry, a judicial inquiry into the relationship. And those negotiations, those discussions are ongoing. And we anticipate being able to develop and announce the process in the very near future.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, to my knowledge the FSIN are, to this day, are calling for a public inquiry. And I think there is a lot of rationale and good reasoning behind their call. A public inquiry could possibly expose just what was behind the whole sequence of events that happened. If in fact there are underlying issues that contributed to these deaths, then those things would also come to light.

I think many of us in the province know and recognize that health issues, mental health issues, as well as addiction issues — that are certainly unfortunate but happening within the First Nations community — sometimes are the reason that there is a snowballing of events that happens like this.

And a public inquiry would expose that. A public inquiry could bring that forward and then we could deal with the underlying issue here, which I believe is a health issue.

But nonetheless I think in due respect to the First Nations, to the FSIN, and to Chief Perry Bellegarde, who is calling for this public inquiry, that in fact it should be done. Because we have a number of issues that have come forward in the past few years where there has been question about the justice system and this is just one of them, but it's a very important issue and I think needs to be addressed.

So I'm asking you again, in your deliberations with First Nations people — as you have indicated you've been having ongoing talks with them — have they, at any time, told you that they were not interested in continuing with a call for a public inquiry?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member raises important questions and is quite right in pointing out that the issues that we have to address above and beyond all of the individual situations are the underlying issues, the underlying causes of this tension between Aboriginal people and the justice system. And there are many ways in which we can do that.

In response to the specific instances, the member will know that there have been coroner's inquiries into two deaths in Saskatoon — the deaths of Mr. Ironchild and Mr. Dustyhorn — and that those coroner's inquests and the reports out of those inquests have been well received by the First Nations and Métis communities in the sense that they have, in large measure, brought closure to the families and also presented, as the member will well know, some specific issues that really need to be addressed if we're going to prevent the reoccurrence of similar events.

So in response to those two cases, I think we acted quickly and had inquests. We will also, if other instances arise and charges are not recommended and charges are not laid, we would have inquiries, coroners' inquires into those . . . inquests into those cases too. There are then specific issues, specific cases, which can be addressed in that way.

The member points out the need to look at underlying causes. And our approach all along has been, as the member will know, to focus on reform, to focus on how we make . . . how we understand the issues that generate concern within the system and with its relationship with Aboriginal peoples, and that we focus on making the system work better; that it be more respectful, more responsive, and in fact, more effective.

The member also quite rightly points out that these are very often health issues which are being dealt with in a criminal way. So we have many challenges which we have to work on together.

It is not an issue which can be resolved by the member personally, or by me, no matter how well-intentioned we might be. We have to find ways to work with those most affected to find solutions, and that's what we've been doing over the last while. And as I said earlier, I anticipate a process in place quite soon, but the negotiations and the discussions can continue.

And I want to say at this stage that we have . . . First Nations and Métis Nation and the Department of Justice have spent many hours trying to work out a process which will be the most productive. I might say that in particular we want to focus on reform.

It's important to hear people's experiences with the justice system. It's important to hear ordinary people tell us how they think the system could work better. It's also important to look at the recommendations of the many Aboriginal justice inquiries which have taken place. And the member might know there are some over 4,000 recommendations which need to be addressed, which need to be focused on as well. And some, I'm sure, could be implemented quite quickly if we all agreed that that was the best course of action.

So we are focusing on making the system better. And I must say that all officials in the Department of Justice who have been working on this are thoroughly committed to ensuring that we have a system that works better, that is more responsive, and that is a true partnership between Aboriginal peoples and the province of Saskatchewan.

(16:30)

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, there's a reason that I put this forward to you today. I have commented to you just a few minutes ago about the underlying causes being identified, the underlying . . . I guess all the aspects of one's life needs to be addressed. And we need to look at the whole picture, of course. But because there have been a number of calls for justice from the First Nations people and those calls have not been responded to, there is a feeling by First Nations people that racism is quite rampant and that they're not being heard.

And so this is the reason that, I believe, that it is important to have a public inquiry into this so that everyone can have input into just what is happening, what we need to do to address it, and so on. I think it certainly would help to clear the air and it would also identify where we need to go immediately to address these issues. And I think, in fact, it would help in maintaining and restoring, where necessary, the relationship between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in the province.

Mr. Minister, I'm going to take you to another issue, and it certainly is a Justice issue also, that I have found that I'm quite disturbed about, and I'm wondering why within the justice system we're not doing a little bit more in this regard.

I have with me a newspaper article entitled, "Reporter wonders why society cared so little about murdered Indians." Okay. And this article refers to a serial killer, John Martin Crofford, who sexually assaulted and murdered Mary Jane Serloin, a Native woman in Lethbridge, Alberta, in 1981. He was 19.

Eleven years later in Saskatoon, he assaulted and murdered Eva Taysup, Shelley Napope, and Calinda Waterhen — all Natives — in the space of just a few months. And he continues to be a suspect in the murder of a fourth woman the same year and the disappearances of two other women.

Now this man was convicted and sentenced to a term in jail. And that is fine. However, previously he was sentenced, I believe, in 1981 and had a sentencing of 10 years. He served two-thirds of that term and was out of jail.

I'm wondering in cases like this, for one thing there is another — like I'd mentioned to you — there's another, there's some suspicion that this person, this Mr. Crofford, was also responsible or could have been responsible for the death of Janet Sylvestre because her killing is still unsolved and there's obviously quite a bit of evidence surrounding his doings with this person.

Now that murder has not been resolved. The family continue to wait for news about what's going to be done, and still we don't see anyone pursuing this matter.

So I want to make that point, Mr. Minister, because I think it's important that these things are followed up on — whether it's in fact whether the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) don't have the resources to follow up or whether in fact we care so little about First Nations people that we don't think it's necessary to follow up. I'm not sure what it is, Mr. Minister, but I think it's important that we ensure these things are followed up.

And I want to just get back, Mr. Minister, to the reference I made about the release from jail of Mr. Crofford after he was convicted of manslaughter for killing a Lethbridge girl with a brick in 1981, and that he only served two-thirds of a 10-year sentence before being released.

I'm wondering why is it not the policy for RCMP to warn the wider public about the threat of a possible serial killer and rapist on the loose? I mean this person has not really been identified as a serial killer, although he certainly has the characteristics of one because he has murdered a number of people.

When Paul Bernardo did that, there was all kinds of headlines. When this Mr. Crofford did the same thing, it seems like the whole issue was downplayed. Mr. Crofford apparently is the murderer of First Nations people; Paul Bernardo was not. Is that the difference?

But I just take you back. Why do you believe it's not the policy of the RCMP to warn the wider public about the threat of a possible serial killer in their midst — a serial killer who is also a rapist?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member raises many serious questions, and in particular she asks about the RCMP's practice with regards to notifying the public about the presence of dangerous offenders in their community.

And the member will be aware of The Public Disclosure Act which provides for a process should the police, municipal or RCMP, wish to disclose information for the protection of the public; a process whereby they go to the Public Disclosure Committee, which is a committee made up of nine members of the public to review whether or not it would be in the public interest to in fact disclose that information.

So there is, if you want, a community response to whether or not it would be useful in any given circumstance to advise a community of the presence of a dangerous offender within it. And of course sometimes the Public Disclosure Committee will decide that it is in the public interest to do so, other times it will not.

It does beg the question too of, if a community is advised that there is an offender in their community who has served his or her time and paid his or her penalty to society, what would that community then do? How would that community then respond? And the member might remember the case here in Regina last year where that disclosure caused great consternation in the community.

But there's obviously a balance between the interests of the community, the protection of our children in particular, and the rights of somebody who has served his time and is now, in accordance with our law, free to be at large.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I'd like to just take you now to another issue and we've spoken of this issue in the last couple of days in the Assembly, and it's the issue of fetal alcohol syndrome. I would like to speak with you particularly today about the youth justice system in relation to fetal alcohol effects.

And, Mr. Minister, we did have a court case where a young adolescent was brought before the courts, before a Saskatchewan Provincial Court judge I believe it was last year, and the judge obviously was quite frustrated that we didn't have any intervention methods in the province to deal with children and youth affected by fetal alcohol syndrome.

Clearly I don't believe that the court has any opportunity or provides any opportunity for alternative sentencing in that, and for a provision for services for youth that are suffering from FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome) rather than recycling them through the court system time and time again.

When this judge brought forward the need for these kind of services and ordered social workers to create a treatment program for a young arsonist with fetal alcohol syndrome, the government didn't like it, I guess, because it was deemed that the Provincial Court judge doesn't have that kind of authority. And so the government is appealing the ruling and argues that the judge went beyond her jurisdiction in making the order.

And in a sense I agree with the government, but I think it's sort of a sad day when we have to . . . when people like judges have got to issue to the government a major statement like this, saying we need to have something alternative to what is going on now because this is not serving these children well. They are needing intervention treatment as a sentence.

And what is needed, Mr. Minister, is a great deal of coaching for these children — specialized learning, life skills training, and pro-social-interaction. It's vital.

Holistic approaches have been suggested and they have worked. They assist by grounding the child both mentally and physically and spiritually and intellectually. These are the kind of programs that need to be happening so that we are actually doing something that's meaningful and beneficial for youth affected with FAS.

I know very well that as a judge in the court system there is a deep challenge that they feel when they're confronted by trying to determine what it is that's best for these youth — what to do with them. Many youth have disabilities.

This judge says law, criminal law especially, is a constructive social instrument most of the time. It promotes beneficial social norms and social solidarity. It's rooted in the practices of respect for people and property which benefits society based on notions of intention and individual ability to make choices.

Yet what happens if this doesn't seem to hold . . . if this theory in practice doesn't work, what happens? What if we have suspicions that the criminal justice system is not a constructive social instrument, that it is a destructive one, especially towards certain groups in society such as those affected by FAS, and it simply labels them and recycles them through the correctional facilities.

So I think it's very important, Mr. Minister, that we have some comprehensive intervention treatment programs because this is happening in other provinces. And I think it's up to the justice system and yourself as minister to make sure that these alternative methods are put in place. And I hope this can be

done soon because it is no good to continue labelling and recycling people.

Now having said that, Mr. Minister, I'm aware that government is putting in some prevention measures to prevent FAS and so on. And that's very laudable; we all agree with that. But we have got to also address the many children out there, children and youth, who need to have intervention and meaningful intervention programs.

Mr. Minister, I'm asking if you and your government are looking at having those programs in place so the courts have an alternative whereby to really help these youth?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well once again the member raises an important question not only for the justice system but, as she rightly points out, to the health care system, to social services, to education, and indeed to the government and to our society as a whole.

And the government is doing precisely what the member suggests we need to do — develop a strategy to respond in a comprehensive way to the range of issues, a range of challenges we face together as we address the impact of fetal alcohol syndrome and the fetal alcohol effects.

So in short order the government will be considering a strategy, as I say, a comprehensive strategy for dealing with precisely the issues the member raises in pretty close to the way the member suggests.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Minister, I will turn over some questioning to my colleague from Arm River.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Chair, I'm going to lump a few questions together for the minister so I hope you will bear in mind with that. And I won't read any letters; I'll just make this very quick.

But I think he's heard about the Hanley-Dundurn Community Consultative Group which was formed several years ago. It has to do with — they've sent you a letter, so if you don't know you can look it up — and it deals with the man hours that the RCMP officers have been cut back . . . there's been two. It deals with highway patrol officers that were originally based in Hanley, but now they base them out of Saskatoon. They would like that funding restored so then police officers could be living in the town of Hanley.

And also I was just wondering, was . . . is there any funding available for the Hanley-Dundurn Community Consultative Group?

(16:45)

And one other issue I want to raise is the mayor from Craik has . . . I'll just give you a quick list of his policing costs — in 1999 it was \$33 per capita with \$30 grant money back from the province; 2000, it was still \$33 per capita with \$15 per capita grant from the province; last year, it was still \$33 per capita but no grant from the province.

So basically, he's gone from about . . . That town has gone from about \$300 to \$14,500 — paying policing costs — in three

years, which makes it very hard for the town to budget.

So with the three questions I will give you, can you give me any indication of funding being restored at any of the levels?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member raises a question of the allocation of . . . raises a number of questions. One, the allocation of RCMP resources; and the other, the costs to each community of RCMP policing services. And he also raises the question of support for the Hanley-Dundurn community efforts.

On that last point, I would just suggest to that community that we find a way to get together and talk about their concerns and their issues and, yes, we'll find a way to facilitate speaking with them about those questions. And indeed, it's important that communities do play a significant role in addressing and assessing and considering policing services and security in their communities.

With regards to the allocation of resources and where RCMP officers would be based when they're on highway patrol or indeed in any other activity, that is the matter within the purview of the commander of "F" Division of the RCMP, our RCMP police service here in the province. And Commander Boucher would make those decisions based upon what he saw to be the best use of resources and the best way to allocate those resources.

And when that happens and when a police officer is no longer situated in a community, that of course raises concerns for the community; in particular it raises concerns about their own security. And it also raises concerns about the amount of money they're paying for police services. And there are frequently problems in this regard.

But I would suggest that the member take this matter up with Commander Boucher as to the allocation of resources where police officers are placed with regards to . . . I think it's Hanley he's mainly concerned about. And of course, we'll facilitate those efforts wherever we can.

In regards to the contribution paid by individual communities for their RCMP services, the member might know that a couple of communities who once had free-standing police services have moved to be covered by the RCMP in the province, seeing that as the most efficient use of resources for them.

While it plainly is the case that the costs of RCMP services have increased because of salary increases, because of the new radio system, and the need for individual communities to continue to contribute as they always have done from the beginning of the province to the policing costs in their communities, there has been an increase to the communities and there have been discussions about how best to allocate that increase.

That task force met and agreed on a particular formula. That formula is not well received by everyone and efforts are being made to find another formula.

But I would say to the member that the dollars provided by those communities for their RCMP services are, as the member well knows, much less than they were three or four years ago.

So I think we're offering a good value service to the communities. The RCMP of course is a police service with a very close, long, and important relationship to this province; which has provided terrific service to the people of the province.

A world-class police service is not . . . doesn't come cheaply and we are doing our best to ensure that the costs are spread as fairly and equitably as possible and don't create too big a burden on the communities. But I think it is worth remembering that the costs to the communities is significantly less than was the case three or four years ago.

Mr. Brkich: — Well maybe you can respond back to the letter from the Hanley-Dundurn community group — I'll let you do that.

On the costing end of it you say it's less, but you know, you've cut the funding back per capita to go to them. So how can it be less? It's costing them \$14,500 this year; three years ago it cost them under \$600.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — At the suggestion of SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) some years ago, there was an effort to spread the costs of policing, which were previously borne by 100 communities, to 800 communities.

It being the view of SUMA, and I think a view we would all share, that there should be some form of equitable contribution to police services in the province, based upon the population of the communities and the service provided.

Then there was an effort to assess how best to allocate those costs, and there was an offsetting \$4 million contribution from the province to ease the transition.

The member picks one year where because of that, because of the change of the formula and the contribution from the province, the costs to the communities would have been lower.

But if the member goes back just a couple of years before that, he'll see that they were much higher, and that even today that those costs are not as high as they were back then for the vast majority of communities.

And if I had more time, I could go into this at much greater length.

Subvote (JU01) agreed to.

Subvotes (JU02), (JU04), (JU03), (JU06), (JU05), (JU07), (JU08) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan
Vote 159**

Vote 159 — Statutory.

Vote 3 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 2000-01
General Revenue Fund
Justice
Vote 3**

Subvotes (JU04), (JU03), (JU06), (JU05), (JU07), (JU08) agreed to.

Vote 3 agreed to.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you very much. I would like to thank the minister and his officials for the time they've given us this afternoon and for the help in going through some of those Bills. So thank you very much.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Let me thank the member for his co-operation too, and thank the officials who are here today to help us with our estimates and with the legislation. As always, they do a terrific job under quite difficult circumstances. And if I had more time, I would thank them for even longer.

The committee reported progress.

ROYAL ASSENT

At 16:58 His Honour the Administrator entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills:

- Bill No. 57 - The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act
- Bill No. 2 - The Securities Amendment Act, 2001
- Bill No. 17 - The Professional Corporations Act
- Bill No. 28 - The Commercial Liens Act/Loi sur les privilèges à base commerciale
- Bill No. 37 - The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001
- Bill No. 38 - The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001 (No. 2)/Loi corrective de 2001 (n° 2)

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these Bills.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 17:02.

The Assembly adjourned at 17:03.