

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again have a petition today from people in my constituency that are opposed to the Fyke Commission.

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

The people that have signed these petitions are from Wadena, Rose Valley, and Fosston.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, as I have done every other chance I've had the opportunity, I rise to present more petitions from people concerned about the hospital in the city of Swift Current. The prayer of these petitions 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 people that have signed these petitions today from literally all over the southwest, from the city of Swift Current, and from all the surrounding communities.

And I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions on behalf of the citizens of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are concerned about the proposals in the Fyke report. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to take the necessary steps to ensure that services are maintained at least at their current levels at Weyburn General Hospital, Bengough Health Centre, Radville Marian Health Centre and Pangman Health Centre in order that accessible health care services are available to residents of the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency and beyond.

And these petitions, which there's 10 of, are signed by residents of Bengough and Weyburn.

I so present.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to present today dealing with health care. The prayer

reads:

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

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the good people of Storthoaks, Carnduff, Fertile, Alida, Fairlight, Bellegarde, Redvers, and Melita, Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition from citizens concerned about the high cost of power and energy. The prayer reads:

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

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

Signed by the good citizens of North Battleford and Battleford. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The signators, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Moosomin, Pelly, Bangor, Dubuc, Stockholm, Waldron and Melville and Kamsack and Pelly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here with citizens concerned about significant rate increases:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the citizens from Elbow.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present on behalf of concerned citizens. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And signators to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from Wynyard and Saskatoon.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition opposing the possible reduction of health care services in the Shellbrook-Spiritwood constituency. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to abandon any plans to reduce current levels of available acute care, emergency, and doctor services.

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

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

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 that are tabled as addendums to previously tabled petitions.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Special Committee on Rules and Procedures

Deputy Clerk: — Hon. Myron Kowalsky, Chair of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures hereby presents the second report of the said committee which is tabled.

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with a great deal of pleasure today that I rise in the Assembly to speak to the report that you've laid on the table concerning Rules and Procedures.

It was 18 months ago now that members on this side of the House started thinking about how we could start opening up our process; how we could start making this Assembly more relevant; how we could make sure that this institution continues

to play an important role in the lives of, the political life of this province as we move into this 21st century.

I can tell you that the work that was done by your committee, as we looked at jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth, I think really did drive home one single, recurring message to us: that the democratic institutions that we work in, that we're part of, are every bit as relevant today as they were when they were established.

The work that we have to do is to figure out now how we make additional contact points with the people we represent.

The report of your committee — this second report — will lay a foundation for us to make some very dramatic changes. Probably the most significant set of changes this Assembly's gone through since it was set up. It will open up the Assembly's processes to allow greater public participation; direct citizen input into discussion on our Bills and our agenda. It'll allow for better public scrutiny. It'll allow for more collegial and, hopefully, less partisan approach to politics.

Mr. Speaker, I know that as we're at the . . . nearing the end of our session on day 69, that it's hard for us in many ways to sit here today and think about how we would work in a less partisan environment. It's difficult for us to figure out how we can move forward to carry on the agenda that I think each of us have in terms of wanting to serve our constituents. We need to figure that out, and I think that this report moves us forward in an important set of directions.

Mr. Speaker, this report, while it is relatively brief, contains nine important recommendations. The recommendations will allow the Clerk to start preparing the standing orders so that we can look at the start of our next legislative session on opening up our Assembly, and opening up our process.

I believe strongly that Saskatchewan people still believe in our democratic institution and in this legislature. And I think that they want to have more contact and more input. I can tell you that, as I have had the opportunity over the last several weeks to sit in the Standing Committee on Health Care and listen to groups and delegations appear before us from throughout Saskatchewan, each of those groups starts out their presentation with one very simple message and that is, thank you for asking us to appear today.

There are a lot of people in this Assembly who believe that it is our right, and solely our right, to control the agenda as legislators. I want to say to people we have nothing to fear by opening up our process and opening up our system to greater public scrutiny and greater public input.

These changes will change the way that we work. It'll hopefully take out some of the acrimony out of our system. It'll allow us to work in smaller groups to provide a more useful input for ordinary members. It'll allow ministers to make better use of their time. It'll promote a better dialogue between ministers, and backbenchers, and opposition members, in terms of making sure that we are steering the province in the direction that our citizens and our constituents want us to.

Mr. Speaker, these are I think very important changes. I

wouldn't say they're revolutionary because indeed what we've been able to see as we've looked around, that there are many other jurisdictions that have very positive working models. From Ontario to our friends and our other . . . people in the Commonwealth in New Zealand and Australia, we've seen that many places they have working models that allow this kind of input today.

I want to also tell the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that part of what we found as we looked at other jurisdictions . . . there are some things that we do very right here. I was particularly impressed as we looked at other models to see that we are one of the very few jurisdictions that almost never invokes closure on debate; that the members regulate the debate themselves, that we work out our own timetables, and we find a natural conclusion to our debate without forcing it through on the rules, as we've seen in other places. In Ontario we were told it's almost routine now that when a motion is brought in, the day afterwards is a closure motion.

We saw in other jurisdictions like New Zealand where routine timed debate was the way it worked. Every debate was timed. Every debate was limited.

We have to find the compromise as we work through so that we can maintain that degree of freedom that individual members have here to represent and present the views of their constituents and yet, at the same time, allow us to move on into new areas that we have not in the past been able to dedicate our time to.

One of the most important changes in this set of reports will be moving more of our work into substantive policy committees. These committees will enable ministers and ordinary members to have more of a dialogue on the policy aspects of government. It will allow us to invite citizens in to comment on the legislative agenda. It will allow us to have members specialize and dedicate more of their time to areas that they have both interest and knowledge.

As we've seen throughout the last several months, and I think particularly this week as we are dealing with legislation that comes out of other work by other committees, there is some very positive things that can be done where we work in a non-partisan fashion, where we come together and we put our minds to it.

And I think of the work done by my colleague from Saskatoon Greystone and the others on the sexual exploitation of children. Those pieces of work that they've done, those reports, I think are testament to what we can do when we find the right mechanisms to work together.

Mr. Speaker, the nine recommendations that are contained in this report will set us on a path to reform our standing orders, to open up our legislature, to find a more meaningful role for all members.

And I want to ask members over the next several months, as they have a chance to think about this, to read the report, to ask questions, to be very . . . we're still very open in this as we move forward. And I want to encourage them to bring forward the new ideas on how we can make this Assembly more

relevant and a better place to represent our constituents.

With that, I will move seconded by the member for Cannington:

That the second report of the Special Committee on Rule and Procedures be now concurred in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the members on this side of the House also believe that it's time to make a change in some of the rules that we operate this Assembly under; and in fact, we talked with the previous deputy premier before the last session, or just as the last session started, to indeed to make some of those changes, make it possible to consider what kind of changes we would like to make, to take a look at what is available across the Commonwealth in those jurisdictions that have a similar style of parliament to our own.

(13:45)

And, Mr. Speaker, we came down with two main conclusions: that any rule changes need to allow for public input; that our Assembly up until today has allowed public input prior to the sitting of the Assembly when government and opposition would take their ideas to the public and perhaps even have public hearings and that was one avenue for public input.

After the legislative process took place it was possible for issues to be related to the public such as a number of select committees that we have that are performing their duties today. But in general, on most pieces of legislation, the public had no opportunities for direct input once it came to the floor of the Assembly and there were quite a number of people around this province who believe that they should have an opportunity to be able to provide their ideas and their input on to what was happening with public legislation, Mr. Speaker.

We believe some of the ideas that we have put forward in this report will allow for that to happen, for the public to have direct input into ideas that are not necessarily put forward by the whole House but rather provided for by committees or to have input directly into some of the Bills, the Bills that are before the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And we think that is extremely important.

The second item in this report, Mr. Speaker, I think that is critical is the role of the member in the Assembly, that there was a need to enhance the role of all members in the Assembly to make their role as legislators more meaningful, to give them more participation in all of the functions of the House, Mr. Speaker. And again the recommendations of this report I believe provide that opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

For democracy to function, for democracy in the legislature to function, Mr. Speaker, it's critical that all members feel they have a stake in the democracy and to do that, Mr. Speaker, they need to be full participants. And any changes that take place, Mr. Speaker, have to be fair for both government and opposition and fairness in democracy must be the keystone and the corner with which this legislature operates, Mr. Speaker. And I believe this report represents that kind of fairness, Mr.

Speaker.

These are not radical new ideas. They're not ideas that haven't been tried in other locations. They're not all being used in each location. What we have taken is what we believe is the best of the ideas and incorporated some of our own into them, into what we believe will be a unique Saskatchewan style of legislative operation.

We are modernizing some of the things that we do in this House, Mr. Speaker, and I believe overall it's worthy of the members' consideration over the next period of time. That we need, the members need time to look at this, to understand it, to try it, and to gauge whether or not it suits the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to other members of the Assembly, a very special young woman in my life. I have with me today, to spend the day to see how the parliamentary process works, my young niece from Saskatoon, Ms. Ashley Metz.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it isn't often that I have the honour of having guests in the Assembly, but today I have the very special pleasure of having five of them.

And I want to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, seated in your gallery, and if you start from your left, someone who's very special in my life, my soulmate and partner who has stood beside me and supported me through all of my career choices — hired, appointed, and elected — Mr. Robert Hackett. And beside Robert is his brother John, and John is visiting us from New Westminster, BC (British Columbia). And beside John is his daughter, Brittany, who actually hails from Mission. And then comes very special people, Robert's mother, Gladys Hackett, and his dad, Geoff Hackett.

Now Mom and Dad Hackett were originally both from Saskatchewan, but a very long time ago so you can't blame that on us. And Mom was actually born in Weyburn and provided babysitting services to Tommy and Mrs. Douglas in her younger years. And Dad was telling me at noon today that his brother, George, was actually a page to this Assembly probably in the early 1920s.

So they're visiting us from BC, and I'm very glad to have them and I ask all members to give them a very warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this place, a very good friend of mine from Gatineau, I guess it is these days, a gentleman by the name of Steve Moran seated in the west gallery. Steven is the legislative assistant to the NDP (New Democratic Party) MP (Member of Parliament) for Burnaby-Douglas, Svend Robinson.

He's out on a road trip with his fellow traveller, Nathalie LaBonté. Mr. Speaker, you may be interested in catching up with Nathalie later as she worked in Mr. Robinson's office as a parliamentary intern, one of the parliamentary internship program people. The pre-eminent internship in Canadian politics.

And I would just invite all members to welcome them to this place today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Deer Valley Golf and Estates

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the transformation of a picturesque valley setting into one of Saskatchewan's most scenic golf courses is virtually complete. The Deer Valley Golf and Estates near Lumsden officially opened yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, there has been talk about the beauty of this course since the public caught wind of the rumour of a valley golf course near Regina. Well, Mr. Speaker, what they will see upon arrival with their clubs is a well-designed course with breathtaking views.

(Deer Valley) is one of the few golf courses that I have been on where you think the next hole can't be better than the last one, but it is . . .

Joanne Goulet, a Regina golf legend said, Mr. Speaker.

Deer Valley plays 6,711 yards from the black tees and a more forgiving 5,337 yards from the reds. There are also many unique features to this golf course, Mr. Speaker. The individual hole pictures are painted on huge boulders beside each tee box. Each green looks like it is framed by a valley setting. Most of the tee boxes are elevated, but the fairways are spacious with large landing areas — just what the average golfer wants.

This golf course is sure to offer great and challenging golf experience to both the low and high handicap players. I encourage all the golfing members of this Assembly and the general public to get out to, as Joanne Goulet called it, the most beautiful golf course I have ever played.

And do not worry, Mr. Speaker. My sources tell me that you have the chance of finishing the round with the same ball hit off the first tee — but bring a few extra balls just in case.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

**Canadian Millennium Scholarship
Foundation Excellence Award**

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, and members of the legislature, a Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation Excellence Award was recently presented to a graduate of the Kinistino high school. This award is presented to only 36 laureates in the whole nation.

Kimberley Holmgren was awarded this honour on the basis of her academic excellence, commitment to the community, proven leadership qualities, and interest in innovation. Her volunteer involvements include helping at the seniors' Jubilee Lodge in Kinistino, teaching bible school, and being part of the student representative council. She was actively involved in sports, school music programs, and drama. Her spare time activity is tinkering with machinery.

Along with this \$4,000 award, Kimberley is the recipient of a University of Saskatchewan entrance scholarship of \$4,200 and the University of Saskatchewan Greystone scholarship of \$2,000.

On the basis of her past accomplishments, I have no doubt that this young lady will realize any goal she sets for herself in the future.

Mr. Speaker and members, please join me in congratulating Kimberley on her achievements and wishing her the very best in the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Cobalt-60 Beam Cancer Therapy Invention Recognized

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, medical research has yielded some truly remarkable treatments and innovations over the years.

One such project was developed at the University of Saskatchewan 50 years ago, and this new treatment opened the door for a better, more effective way to treat cancer. The Cobalt-60 Beam Therapy Unit used nuclear power to treat and cure cancer, and since its inception in 1951, more than 2,500 of the units have been in use all over the world.

Parks Canada and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada have designated the development of the Cobalt Bomb a national historic event. And last Thursday, a plaque was unveiled to commemorate this event.

On hand for the plaque's unveiling were four of the original members of the team that worked on the project: Edward Epp, Douglas McCormack, Cheryl Penny, and Sylvia Fedoruk were all in attendance.

The plaque will be on display at the Saskatoon Cancer Clinic. It will be displayed next to Saskatoon's original Cobalt Bomb, which was used until 1972.

Mr. Speaker, the Cobalt Bomb enabled those suffering from cancer around the world to access timely and effective treatment.

It is with a great deal of pride and respect that I congratulate and thank the scientists and researchers who collaborated to bring about this advance in the treatment of cancer. We are proud of your achievement and we are proud that this innovation, developed in Saskatchewan, went on to help so many people across the country and around the world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Student Thanks Legislative Assembly

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to read a thank you note to members of this Assembly from one Kristy Ridgway who is a student at Thom Collegiate in this city. And she writes:

I would like to thank all of the people who helped me along with my school project. I chose the topic of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. Because of all the help I received, I was able to receive 100 per cent on my project.

Thank you to the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy who was my mentor, the member from Thunder Creek who introduced me in the House, and to the following people who took time out of their busy schedules to answer my questions: the Speaker of the House; the Minister of Finance; the Leader of the Opposition; the member from Cannington; Mr. Reg Downs, Chief of Staff of the Saskatchewan Party; and also the independent member from the Battlefords.

Thank you to all of these people involved, it was very much appreciated.

Signed, Kristy Ridgway.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Committee on Exploitation of Children

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a pleasure for me to serve along with my six colleagues on the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade.

I believe our work was thorough and necessary, and I'm proud of the report we submitted to the Assembly for its consideration. I can modestly state that our collegial effort is an example of parliamentary democracy at its best.

And I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that serving on the committee was as much of an education as it was an assignment. We all learned things we didn't know, and things that we wished we did not have to know about the sordid underbelly of our society. And our forced lesson on the factors that contribute to children being exploited by the sex trade made us all the more determined to eliminate them one by one.

Some of the factors we already knew, although their reality was brought home to us. For instance, we knew that poverty in families can lead to children being put out on the street. Perhaps

though, we did not realize the role that self-esteem plays among the children involved.

We knew of the connection between drug addiction and abuse, but I for one did not fully realize that more often than not it is the addiction of the pimp, or worse the parent, that leads the child onto the street and then into their own addiction to lessen the pain and dull the realities of their situation.

As I say, lessons I would have preferred not to have had to learn.

But, Mr. Speaker, they're valuable lessons, ones we pass on to the Assembly and the public. Lessons we trust will be relegated to the history books in the very near future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Volunteers Dedicated to a New Hospital for Swift Current

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year and through the early part of 2001, a group of dedicated volunteers in southwest Saskatchewan struck out on a mission to collect the names of so many petitions on an issue of such great import that they could not be ignored by any government anywhere.

The issue at stake was nothing less than a reasoned solicitation for the provincial government to carefully consider their request for a new hospital in Swift Current.

Mr. Speaker, each and every day I've had the opportunity, I've stood in my place in the legislature and presented petitions on behalf of residents of my constituency, as well as people from across the southwest, and from across the entire province.

Over six thousand people have signed these petitions, Mr. Speaker; six thousand people have expressed their support for this government to carefully consider our request for a new hospital.

(14:00)

The Swift Current hospital was built in the late 1940s and has had no meaningful capital improvements since the early 1970s. The only question that remains is what will the response of the government to this earnest and Herculean effort of those who distributed these petitions be, those who posted them in their businesses and those who signed them.

Mr. Speaker, a final thank you to the volunteers who did work so hard in this effort including Gerald and Deanna Thorson, Roy Burnay, and Doreen Kern. Thank you to them and their efforts and to all of the people who've signed the petitions.

And, Mr. Speaker, indeed I'd encourage the government to listen to the prayer of that petition, it's a reasonable one, that they carefully consider Swift Current's request for a new hospital.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Sommerfest in Humboldt

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to talk about the 11th German Sommerfest which will take place in Humboldt during the first weekend of August.

And, Mr. Speaker, with the encouragement of my friends in the Saskatchewan German Council I would like to add a few words in German:

(The hon. member spoke for a time in German.)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I hope everyone has a chance to go to Sommerfest.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Surgical Waiting Lists

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

Mr. Speaker, in 1999 there were 9,300 people on surgical waiting lists in Saskatoon. That was too many and the NDP made an election promise to cut waiting lists by 30 per cent. Well how are they doing with that promise?

Today the waiting list in Saskatoon has ballooned to over 15,400 patients. That's an increase of over 65 per cent since 1999. Mr. Speaker, this is the government's health care record. What happened to the NDP's election promise to cut waiting lists? Why is the waiting list in Saskatoon up by over 65 per cent?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think all of the people in Saskatchewan are just thanking their lucky stars that they didn't elect the member opposite with a zero increase in the budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Or we would be talking about waiting lists in the 40s and 50,000 range because of their lack of money.

But I would say about what's happening in Saskatoon is that in January there were four anesthetists that left and that's set out in the information that's provided. And they have now recruited four members, four new anesthetists to come back starting in August and so they hope to then work at this list.

What we are looking at is a major problem across the country in obtaining the medical personnel and the other health care providers to provide services across the country. We are working hard on that particular task and we will . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I would ask all members to respect the members who are speaking at the time so that we can hear the responses as well as the questions.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue and I would call on the Premier to answer.

Doctors come and go but overall doctors are leaving, nurses are leaving, record waiting lists are getting longer. That is the NDP record. And it's a direct result of health reforms brought in by this Premier back in 1993.

Mr. Speaker, back then the NDP promised its health reforms would make the health care system in Saskatchewan better; instead it got worse. The NDP promised shorter waiting lists; they got longer. The NDP promised to hire health care workers; they have fired health care workers.

And this Premier, Mr. Speaker — the Premier sitting across the floor — is responsible. This Premier is the one who brought in health care reforms back in 1993. This Premier was the NDP campaign manager in 1999. So will this Premier stand up and take responsibility for the disaster that his health care system has become?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I will repeat that the people of Saskatchewan every day thank themselves that the members opposite are not running our health system with the kinds of proposals that they've had to set up this particular system.

What we as the people of Saskatchewan want is that we all work together to solve these particular problems. We're doing that by making sure that we resolve the issues around medical personnel, around health care providers, in a co-operative way. And we're going to continue to do that. In Saskatoon we now have the health district and the College of Medicine and all of the various surgical specialties starting to work together to address this problem as a group.

What we know is that there are many challenges, and we are going to continue to meet those challenges. We're going to meet them with the kinds of resources that people on this side of the House will put towards health, not the cutting that will go across from the other people on the other side.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would remind the Health minister that while his government watches the waiting lists get longer and longer, the Saskatchewan Party actually made the only submission of a political party to the Fyke Commission in the entire province of Saskatchewan. We've been positive and we've been proactive.

The Premier will not even stand up in this House and take responsibility for his dismal record. Well, Mr. Speaker, they are responsible. The Saskatoon District Medical Association president, Dr. Marc Baltzan, says that they are responsible. He says doctors have been warning of staff shortages for years but the government has ignored them. He says the government has

been making lame excuses. And I quote:

They are the people who created this. How did the shortage get here? You guys made it. God didn't cut the number of seats in the medical school and the nursing college.

Mr. Speaker, this government is responsible and this Premier is responsible for the current crisis in our health care system. Will the Premier stand up and take responsibility for the health crisis that he has created?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Rosthern sits in his chair hollering on a daily basis, which does not contribute to the debate in this House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has heard the Minister of Health explain the circumstance in Saskatoon, the recruitment of four new anesthetists, to tackle the issue in Saskatoon. That's the approach of this government — when there's a problem, we tackle the issue.

Now, Mr. Speaker, he's touched on a variety of things. He talks about the state of health care in Saskatchewan. I ask, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, according to the *Maclean's* magazine, which community in Canada is number two of communities that have a medical college. Which community in Canada is number two? The community of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's the result of health care in this province.

He wants to criticize that community. He talks about the Fyke Commission. Well isn't this an interesting observation. The Leader of the Opposition and the party who we had to drag kicking and screaming into the legislative committee to listen to the people of Saskatchewan on the Fyke Commission.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat, this is a government that believes in publicly funded health care, that will stand behind publicly funded, publicly administered health care. We're not varying from that and we are going to work with the people of Saskatchewan to deliver the best possible health care in all of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when people finally get health care in Saskatoon, the professional health caregivers there do give them good health care. The problem is they have to wait months and months and months for that health care to be given. The NDP promised . . .

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP promised to cut taxes; they raised taxes. They promised to create jobs; they killed jobs. They promised to hire health care workers; they fired health care workers. They promised to cut wait . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. Order. Order. Let's try it again. Order, please.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP don't

like hearing the truth, but waiting lists are now longer than they've ever been in Saskatchewan. Will the NDP stop making these kind of promises before they entirely ruin our province? Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Now let's just keep it this way for a little while.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. The NDP has been in office for 10 years. They brought in health reforms. They promised to cut waiting lists. They have no one else but themselves to blame.

When is the Premier going to take responsibility for the complete mismanagement of the health care system in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I'm happy, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about 10-year records. They had 10 years in government; we've got \$15 billion in debt as a result of that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Ten years in government, Mr. Speaker — Saskatoon, Saskatchewan rated second-best in all the country for health care delivery.

The last two years, Mr. Speaker, of this government — \$400 million more for health care in this province. Mr. Speaker, I ask you and I ask the people of Saskatchewan to consider just the record of the last two years — \$400 million, new dollars, for health care in this province as a result of this government.

What was their commitment, Mr. Speaker? What was their commitment in the last election? Zero. The rate of inflation, they said. Well I'll tell you, that doesn't equate \$400 million and that would not equate to good health care. As the Minister of Health has just said, thank goodness they were not re-elected . . . or elected.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, it will be really good and important for the 15,000 people on waiting lists in Saskatoon to thank the NDP. It will be really good for the people that are waiting in operating rooms and emergency rooms more than the 15 minutes they promised, to thank the NDP. And it'll also be good for the people who know that we're 500 nurses short, to thank the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, instead of any of these promises that the NDP made in the last election, what we have indeed is a problem in our health care system and it's time that these people acknowledge that they've made a mess of the health care system, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, while they're now embarking on a plan to try to justify closing 50 more hospitals in Saskatchewan, how does the minister think in the world that we're going to reduce

surgical waiting lists if he's going to go ahead and close more hospitals?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, we — the ministry of Health, this government — is concerned about the circumstance of waiting lists in Saskatoon and we're doing something about it. We're working with the Saskatoon district to recruit anesthetists. Now that member from Melfort knows that every province, every state for that matter, is being challenged by the provision of finding the appropriate health care professionals to deliver.

But I ask you, Mr. Speaker, is it sufficient that they should just stand in this House day after day, criticizing without a plan, without a suggestion? Now I'll tell you their plan. We saw it all in the last election. What was their plan? To . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. The Premier, 25 seconds.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it won't take me longer than 25 seconds to talk about their plan. What was it? Have an independent study and freeze funding. That was it. Would that have changed the circumstance to the better? I think not, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to further opportunity to talk about improvements in the health care system that are happening.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier talks about a plan. We had a plan presented to the Fyke Commission in February of this year, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, we've been calling all along that there has to be commitments made to the College of Medicine. We've had a plan that said we had to make a commitment to the integrated health sciences project at the University of Saskatchewan. And all the time we've been doing that, the Minister of Health says he's monitoring the situation.

Mr. Speaker, while the minister's been monitoring things, the waiting lists have gone from 9,000 to 15,000, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, we can't afford any more of this monitoring.

At plain English, Mr. Speaker, now the health districts in Saskatoon and Regina are calling on the rural districts to be able to accept patients after they've received major therapy. How in the world is this government's plan for closing 50 more hospitals going to make that possible?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — You see right here, Mr. Speaker, right here, Mr. Speaker, in this debate, we see the truth of the tale. He stands up and he talks about a government plan to close 50 hospitals. He knows, he knows — that member of all members should know — that what Mr. Fyke has proposed is under debate. We're having the hearings that we had to kick them, dragging and screaming, to be a part of, Mr. Speaker. He knows that.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to work with the people of Saskatchewan. We, the province who pioneered publicly funded health care, we are the people who will develop a health care system for the 21st century and again lead the nation. There is no doubt about that, Mr. Speaker.

These are not easy challenges. They are not. And they are not served when members opposite, the member from Melfort, the Leader of the Opposition, the leader . . . member from Cannington, want to turn the debate totally into a partisan political debate.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to build a health care system in this province that will serve the people of this province and will serve as a model for all of Canada. That, Mr. Speaker, is our plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, it's no wonder we're reluctant to get into a whitewashing process that this government is trying to distance themselves from their plan.

In 1993, Mr. Speaker, this Premier was the associate minister of Health who was part of the orchestration of closing 50 hospitals in this province . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, this Premier has a record and the people of this province simply do not trust it.

Mr. Speaker, how in the world is this government going to be trusted, given the absolute fact that they've already closed 50 hospitals in the name of their health plan? How do they going to trust people to not expect that they're going to close more hospitals with even worse waiting times in the future, Mr. Speaker? How can these people be trusted?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, there is a political movement in this province of long standing that occupies the government benches today in coalition with their Liberal partners, who have been trusted to preserve publicly funded medicare in this province. And that does not change, Mr. Speaker. That does not change.

And I'll tell you. He wants to talk about trust, Mr. Speaker. Nobody trusts that group of men and women when it comes to health care and their plans to privatize health care, both in this province and across the country. We see it in the province. We see it on a national basis, Mr. Speaker. We're not interested in that, Mr. Speaker. We're not interested in that nor are the

people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have in the course of this past decade taken on challenges. We have built the model for home care. We have built the model for community involvement. We have built the model for holistic health care in this province.

There is much work to do, Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt about that. And it's work that we see as a challenge that we will take on, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. The surgical waiting list situation in the province is very serious and it is affecting people of all ages.

I have received a letter from a constituent whose seven-year-old son was born with a congenital birth defect. He has had many, many surgeries since birth — several of which were performed outside of the province.

Laurie Beaulieu says her son's latest surgery was done in March in Saskatoon where he underwent a temporary colostomy. His condition has now improved to the point where this surgery could be reversed but the pediatric surgeon's urgent waiting list is four months long.

The surgeon has only been allowed two operating days in July and may not get any time in August. Mr. Speaker, how — how — does the minister expect waiting lists to shrink when operating times are continually reduced?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as the member knows that if she would raise these issues with me outside the House then I would take a look at them.

But what she also knows is that our system in Saskatchewan is designed so that those particular surgeries that are required on an emergency or urgent basis, according to the medical professionals, are done when they need to be done.

We know, for example, that the standard for cancer surgeries is less than 21 days and we meet that one consistently because those are the kinds of things that the medical professionals identify.

So what I would say is that we are going to continue to work with the health district, with the medical profession, with the health providers, to make sure that all of the people of Saskatchewan get the required treatment or surgery that they need.

And I would ask that member if she has specific questions that she raise them with me in my office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Laurie Beaulieu's seven-year-old son spent a month in the University Hospital in March. She says the nurses are understaffed and

their morale is poor because of their tremendous workload. She expresses support for the nurses and the doctors who have cared for her son but she is very dismayed at the staff shortages which regularly affect patient care.

Mr. Speaker, even a simple procedure such as inserting an IV (intravenous) pick line could not be done for her son because radiology was short staffed. Her son spent four days in pain until the procedure could go ahead.

Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for a parent to watch their child suffer while waiting for treatment, no matter how serious. But it is even harder for those parents when they know the provincial government is not making an effort to seriously address the problems in the system.

Mr. Speaker, what is the minister's plan to deal with the serious shortages of health care professionals in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is we are working with the medical professionals. We are working with the SRNA (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association). We are working with the LPNs (licensed practical nurse). We're working with all of the people involved in the system to train more people where we can, recruit more people where we can. And we also provide bursaries for people who go back and retrain.

But what we have to do is work with the professionals in this field. And that is what we are doing. And what it's . . . Part of the role that we in this legislature can play — and especially the members opposite and especially that member who's raised the questions — is to be part of the positive messaging about our particular province as a good place to work and live.

And what we hear consistently from the members opposite — and I guess it's day 69 and they're still having trouble with sour fruit of various kinds — and what we know is that they continue to put this negative spin on everything that happens here. It does not help in recruiting people or training people here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, Laurie Beaulieu writes, and I quote:

I had to tell my little boy, who still needs another big bladder reconstruction after he's healed up from this colostomy, that he's going to have to live with this all summer because the hospital won't give out enough operating time.

She says:

We have been in Winnipeg Children's Hospital and Ottawa Children's Hospital and can say that our Saskatchewan health care system for kids is in very bad shape. We have good people; just not enough of them. I don't think I can express fully in words how hard it is to have a child suffer more than he should have to due to cutbacks in health care.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain to Laurie Beaulieu and other parents like her what he intends to do to deal with the waiting list situation in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows, because we've worked together over many years, that when she raises issues with me personally I look into them. I do not like the fact that she's raised this issue here in the House.

Now what I would say is, I have a great deal of empathy for parents, for patients who have to wait for surgery. And what I would like to say to her and to the . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, what I would suggest to that member is that these kinds of cases are not the ones that she needs to make the front page of the paper about. What she needs to do is, she needs to work together with the people involved. We know that we have district quality care coordinators who will address concerns like this. We have people within the Department of Health that work on this; we have people within my office that answer questions.

All of those particular kinds of responses are more appropriate than the kind of question that's raised here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Employment Insurance Maternity Benefits for Self-Employed Women

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour.

Last week during the estimates of the Women's Secretariat, the minister indicated that there was some inclination from the provincial government to discuss how women entrepreneurs who own and operate their own businesses might access benefits similar to those allowed under the Employment Insurance such as paid maternity leave. The minister stated that this issue would be discussed at the upcoming federal-provincial-territorial ministers' meeting.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell us here today if this NDP government is taking any proposals of their own, dealing with this issue, to the first ministers' meeting and when this meeting is going to take place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Labour, and certainly the minister responsible for the Women's Secretariat may have more to add on this.

But from the perspective of the Unemployment Insurance program and its relationship to maternity leave benefits, it would have to be a decision of the federal government to allow entrepreneurs, individual entrepreneurs to pay their own share in order to be eligible for benefits. And certainly in the past we have suggested to them that we think this is something they

should look at because women entrepreneurs would like to have the same benefits as other women in society who want to access maternity leave.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do agree with the minister, and in May I attended the 2001 Pan Western Conference for Women Entrepreneurs which was held in Saskatoon.

And this was a very . . . or this was a very interesting and informative conference, and one of the topics that was discussed there was this specific issue. Women entrepreneurs sometimes face a lot of difficulties when they're having a family and are also trying to maintain their business operations.

There is interest from many women entrepreneurs investing into some kind of program that would allow them to draw support if they need to take time away from their business.

So, Mr. Speaker, is this minister planning to actively lobby the federal government for changes to existing employment insurance regulations to allow business owners to contribute to this program and access benefits? We both agree that it's very important. Is this government going to lobby the federal government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, the short answer to that question is yes. But on top of that I would like to say I'm pleased to hear the member support this, seeing as during our recent discussion of extending maternity benefits under the new federal law, many of the members opposite spoke against this. So I'm pleased to see they've had a change of heart and that they want to go even further and include women entrepreneurs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, Order.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 209 — The Fire-fighter Protection from Liability Act

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 209, The Fire-fighter Protection from Liability Act, be now read a first time.

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

(14:30)

Bill No. 211 — The Health Care Commissioner Act

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 211, The Health Care Commissioner Act be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a first time and ordered to be

read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 214 — The Direct Sellers Amendment Act, 2001

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 214, The Direct Sellers Amendment Act, 2001 be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered a second time?

Mr. Wall: — With leave, later this day.

Leave not granted.

Bill No. 225 — The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 2001 (Foreign Investments)

Ms. Harpauer: — I move that Bill No. 225, The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 2001 (Foreign Investments) be now read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 226 — The Trade Union Amendment Act, 2001 (Freedom of Speech in the Workplace)

Mr. Weekes: — I move Bill No. 226, The Trade Union Amendment Act, 2001 (Freedom of Speech in the Workplace) be read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 227 — The Four-year Taxation Plan Act

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 227, The Four-year Taxation Plan Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 58 — The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2001

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

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to introduce the officials with me today. First of all on my left is Larry Fogg, president of SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance); to my right is Elizabeth Flynn, she's SGI legal counsel. And behind me with the Department of Justice is Laura Bourassa.

Clause 1

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And good afternoon to the minister and his officials today. It's a grand day in Saskatchewan no doubt with the amendment to The Highway Traffic Act coming in that would provide for the seizure of vehicles upon being charged with an offence against children on the streets.

Mr. Minister, just for the record, what I would ask you to provide today is a description of the proscribed offence under the Criminal Code to which this legislation is pertaining when we're talking about what offences a person can be charged with. In the amendment Act it's referred to under part VII.2, 90.11, and it states:

(1) If a peace officer has reasonable grounds to believe that a motor vehicle is being driven in the course of committing a proscribed offence, the peace officer shall:

(a) seize the motor vehicle; (etc., etc.)

So I would just for the record like you to outline what the proscribed offences are under section 211, 212, and 213 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member for her patience. She will appreciate that I don't have a legal background. Let me try and summarize as best I can the information that I have been provided with.

First of all, under 211 the issue is the transporting of an individual to a common bawdy house. Under 212 — there are several sections here — there is procuring prostitutes; and then secondly, under a subsection with respect to child prostitutes, 212(2.1), there is the aggravated offence of living off the avails of a person under the age of 18; 212(4), there is the issue of obtaining or communicating with an individual under the age of 18 for the purpose of securing sexual services. And under section 213, the offence is with respect to the communication — communicating, I should say — for the purpose of securing the services of a prostitute.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And certainly those very facts that you bring forward have been discussed prior to this time by the committee that was responsible to bring forward these recommendations. However, I did want to make sure it was on public record because as the amendment stands right here, there hasn't been an explanation of those sections of the Criminal Code. And I just wanted to have it on public record. So thank you for that.

Mr. Minister, I would like to just refer you to The Highway Traffic Act where you're making amendments as described under Part VII.3, referring to the drinking and driving section. You talk about section 119 being amended by repealing clause (d) and then substituting, of course, a clause in here that would refer to the seizure of vehicles and any acts that would result because of the seizure of vehicles.

So I'm wondering what you did repeal in that existing Highway Traffic Act. You repealed clause (d). What was contained within that clause prior to it being repealed?

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

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — With leave, Mr. Chair, to introduce a guest.

Leave granted.

(14:45)

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, it's my pleasure to see in the Speaker's gallery a visitor from the city of Saskatoon, the university of Saskatoon, who has also done work for the Department of Education, Dr. John Conway. I want to be very clear, as John always is, this is the Saskatoon Dr. John Conway and is well known to myself and our family; his spouse, Dr. Linda McMullan, another good friend of our family. And I've very much appreciated John's good counsel in the past and look forward to his good counsel in future.

I'd ask all members in the Chamber and committee this afternoon to welcome John Conway to the Chamber.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**Bill No. 58 — The Highway Traffic
Amendment Act, 2001
(continued)****Clause 1**

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. In response to the member's question, we have . . . what we've done really is developed, I guess, what we would describe as a cleaner process. We've repealed the entire section and replaced it with section VII.1 that deals with the impoundment of vehicles.

But in terms of policy change, there is no policy change at all. There's just a cleaner way to deal with the whole section, and so there isn't . . . be clear there's no change in policy specifically.

I'm advised as well that the one section that was added deals with the requiring . . . the payment of fees which I suspect you will have noticed. But that doesn't change in any way the policy at all.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, once again for the record, could you clarify under what circumstances would there be a licence suspension in addition to a seizure of a vehicle?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The issue of licence suspension, only where there's a conviction under one of the sections that I listed above for an offence under section 211, 212, or 213. Also a licence can be suspended where an individual, who has agreed to attend a designated educational program in the prescribed time, does not complete the course within that prescribed time. That person's licence can also be suspended.

Ms. Julé: — So I would take it then, again for the clarification in respect to the public who are listening to this, that licence suspension would take place only upon conviction. Or would it be upon charging?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — It would be only on conviction, for clarification.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I recognize very clearly, as I'm sure do all members of this Assembly, that in fact it is wonderful to have pieces of legislation put forward that really do enhance the protection of people in our society, particularly our children in this case.

But to have a law passed and given third reading doesn't necessarily mean that it's law until it's proclaimed. And I know that in looking at this piece of legislation, there is a little ambiguity as to when this particular piece of legislation will be proclaimed.

I'm wondering whether or not you could clarify for me, for instance, under the section where it says "Coming into force," here is what it reads right now, "Subject to subsections (2) and (3), this Act comes into force on proclamation." There is no date here in reference to date of proclamation, but it does say,

Section 8 of this Act comes into force on the day on which section 1 of *The Commercial Liens Act* comes into force.

So this is really not giving very much information, and I would like to know exactly how long your government has determined that it is going to take before all of these other Acts are cleared up, I guess, and making sure that every other Act that comes into force is into force. And I want to know, I guess in quite plain language right now, when you can see the proclamation of this particular piece of legislation.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — The short answer to your question, to the hon. member, is first of all, as soon as is practically possible. I can't give you a categorical answer. But in reference to your concerns with respect to the other Acts of reference in this proposed legislation to those amendments, those amendments to the other Acts will in no way delay or in any way affect when this legislation will be proclaimed.

I can repeat that if you want. The only reason there's reference to those other Acts is because they will have . . . there will be consequential amendments to those Acts as a result of the changes that we're proposing here. But there will be absolutely no delay as a result of having to amend those . . . make those consequential amendments. And we'll move this ahead as soon as we practically can.

There will be things such as the development of different forms and stuff like that that has to happen, first of all.

Ms. Julé: — Yes, I'm having a hard time accepting that as good reasoning, in all due respect, Mr. Minister, because consequential amendments, to my understanding, have to come before the House. Those consequential amendments would have to be in fact before the House to be made. And if that is the way it goes, and that's my understanding, is it would have to be before the House in the next session in order for them to be

made. So that would mean then that there would be a delay in proclaiming this Act.

You have just stated, sort of a bit contrary to what I'm saying, that there is no reason this Act would not be proclaimed because of those consequential amendments. But you've also reversed that view and said the opposite also. So I'm really quite at a loss now as to understand exactly what the procedure is here. Could you explain it for me?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I'm advised after much discussion — we wanted to be absolutely certain of this — that any changes to ensure that this legislation goes ahead, even though there is reference to other pieces of legislation, this does not have to come back before the legislature in order for this new legislation to be proclaimed.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Minister, in all of the discussion that must have taken place between your officials and yourself, and I'm sure the Co-Chair of our special committee regarding this Act, I'm sure there must have been some discussion about the necessity to proclaim this Act as soon as possible so it can become effective law.

It's just a piece of paper and it isn't . . . it's not going to affect the help that we want out there to deter offenders unless it is law. So I hope you can understand my concern about ensuring that this Act is made into . . . proclaimed in law so that it can be acted upon as soon as possible.

Now I would like if you could possibly give me an idea of the discussions that you have had surrounding this Act pertaining to when this could be proclaimed into law. Can you give me a ballpark figure? Will it be one month? Six months? Seven months? A year? I really want to know exactly when in all likelihood this can be proclaimed?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Again the short answer is just simply that we'll try and do this as soon as possible, and we obviously would not have introduced this legislation if we didn't want it to move forward.

There will be issues that I referred to earlier, the development of forms. We will need to determine where we can impound vehicles.

(15:00)

There will be issues that I referred to earlier, the development of forms. We will need to determine where we can impound vehicles. There will be implementation issues with the police. We will need to inform justices of the peace and work with justices of the peace around this new legislation.

There will be a whole host of things that we have to work through. But I give you and I give the public of Saskatchewan the assurance that we will proclaim this as soon as we possibly can.

Ms. Julé: — Well I thank you for that reassurance and I'll hold your feet to the fire on it.

It's important to the people of Saskatchewan, to the children of

Saskatchewan, and to justice in Saskatchewan. And it's also very important to all of the committee members who feel an obligation to ensure that as many recommendations as possible are enacted into legislation or that there is policy set for those recommendations to be able to bring the effect about in the province that we want to, to help our children.

In regards to that, Mr. Minister, this specific Act is very, very important. It is but one piece though of the whole comprehensive package that was put forward by the committee. And it's not your responsibility as minister to, you know, know and understand the comprehensive package at this time. But I will tell you that it is very, very important that the recommendations that came through our committee that pertain to new offences that were created — actually in recommendation, new offences to charge johns with — there is a link between that and the confiscation of vehicles.

So it has to be easier for police to gather evidence, easier than it has been, and we have had some recommendations to allow that to happen. So those kind of things need to be in play and should have been I guess or it would have been wonderful if they could have been concurrently with this particular piece of legislation on the seizure of vehicles.

So I would like to just ensure that, as you're speaking with your cabinet and with your government, you bring that to mind every cabinet meeting so that those particular recommendations on allowing police to gather evidence more effectively and efficiently and easier would be considered to be brought into another legislative package possibly that could address more comprehensively what needs to be done. Okay?

So thank you very much.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I want to assure the member that if at any cabinet meeting I am remiss in bringing forward those concerns, I know that there are a number of other cabinet colleagues who will surely do that on my behalf.

And again I give you the assurance that there is the commitment on government's side, and I know there is from you as well, to move this ahead as quickly as we possibly can.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and I thank your officials for coming in today. I must say it's been a pleasure to have had the opportunity to have some discussion with Laura Bourassa in the past. And I thank you very much for your knowledge and your wisdom and certainly your efforts in addressing this issue with this piece of legislation.

Thank you very much.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 11 inclusive agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will move that we report the Bill without amendment. And again I want to take the opportunity to thank the hon. member for the questions and for her participation in helping to develop this and certainly all of the members of the committee as well on our side of the House who were also very instrumental in helping develop this.

So thank you very much.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 42 — The Métis Act

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

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I would like to introduce my officials. I have with me today, Mr. Brent Cotter, deputy minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs; Mr. Donovan Young, acting assistant deputy minister of Aboriginal Affairs; and Mr. Tony Koschinsky from the Justice department.

Clause 1

Ms. Julé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I welcome the minister and her officials.

Madam Minister, the first question that I have in regards to this Act and just in regards to your, your views, I'm wanting to know whether you consider the Métis of Saskatchewan a nation the Métis of Saskatchewan, are the Métis a nation of people?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would like to thank the member from Humboldt for the question. And I would point out that Métis residents of Saskatchewan do consider themselves to be a nation. They are, of course, one group within the fabric of Canada and as such do consider themselves to be a nation.

I would point out that a political science definition of nation would be a group that has a common identity, common culture, common history. And so in that sense, of course, yes I would say the Métis are a nation.

But I will also add that we the government do not consider the Métis people of Saskatchewan to be a sovereign nation nor do I believe do the Métis people of Saskatchewan consider themselves to be a sovereign nation.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you very much, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, I'd like some clarification regarding the first few sections of the Bill that's before the House. Is it your belief that the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan represents the majority of Saskatchewan Métis?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would point out to the member that, quite frankly, that question is not for us as a government to say and the Bill does not speak to that, nor should it.

Ms. Julé: — Well, Madam Minister, this Bill speaks of a number of things that are going to be under the purview of a secretariat that will be providing programs and policies, etc., for the Métis of Saskatchewan, so it's important that you understand just who that group of people are. After all, you're the minister that has brought forward this Bill on behalf of . . . who? I guess that's what I'm asking.

I'm wondering how you might have arrived, you know, at the fact that there are 30,000 Métis people in the province — perhaps as many as 70,000, that's what I have been told. Yet

only 4,000 voted in the last Métis election.

But the Bill is not clear as to who the Métis people are. Are they as defined by the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan constitution? Is that who the Métis people that you refer to in this Bill are? Are they the people defined by the Métis Nation's constitution?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would advise the member that we do not define who the Métis are. That's a socio-political question. That's not within the scope of this Bill.

I would also point out to the member that the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Secretariat exists already under The Non-profit Corporations Act. What this Bill will be doing is continuing that existing body, only now when we pass this Bill, it will have its own stand-alone legislation and it will be out from under the not for profit corporations Act.

Ms. Julé: — Madam Minister, in the last year and farther beyond that there has been a number of very hurt Métis people in this province because of the elections and the way the elections were being handled.

What is happening is that there are locals that are being basically disenfranchised. They're suspending individual rights of Métis people. All of these things that are happening.

So when we talk about a Bill that is coming before the House representing Métis people, it's important that we understand who it is that this Bill is representing. So I ask you, I'm wondering exactly: does the Act extend to all Métis of the province or just members of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan?

(15:15)

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Well, Madam Member, I want to point out to you what this Bill does.

This Bill recognizes and celebrates the contributions of Métis people to the development and prosperity of our province and our country. This Bill is about the Métis and about good corporate Métis governance. The Bill commits the province to work out, in mutually satisfactory ways, issues of importance to Métis people. And the Bill, as I believe you do know, creates a corporate entity to serve as the administrative arm of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan.

Now the Bill is not about the last Métis election. And this Bill does not interfere with Métis electoral processes, either by endorsing or qualifying any particular electoral result. This Bill is not about Métis elections, past or present.

And I would finally say, this Bill does nothing to entrench the current Métis MNS (Métis Nation of Saskatchewan) political leadership. That is a matter for Métis people to decide on their own through their own electoral process.

The Chair: — Order, order, order. I would welcome the guests in the gallery, but I ask the guests not to participate in the debate in any manner, shape, or form. Thank you.

Ms. Julé: — Madam Minister, this Bill has got implications for the Métis people of Saskatchewan who believe at this time that

there are programs and policies that they have had a part in developing. This Act extends the authority to the secretariat, not only for administration but for programs and policies and their development. So that in turn will affect the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, the Métis people of Saskatchewan, whether they're disenfranchised or not.

They need to have some understanding of just what kind of relationship they are going to have in order to be able to access the programs and policies that they feel they should have and whereby, prior to this Act, they were able to have a voice in. There's no guarantee for them that they have a voice any more. And that is one of the issues that a number of the Métis people have brought to me. And I simply put it to you on their behalf.

Madam Minister, if the Act applies equally to all Métis in the province — I'm not too sure if you feel that it does or it doesn't, but I think that that's something that you should have known or established — if the Act applies equally to all Métis in the province, who consulted the Métis in Saskatchewan that are not affiliated with the MNS?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — If I understand the member opposite correctly, she's asking two questions. First of all, she's asking whether or not The Métis Act grants additional powers to the MNS Secretariat Inc. with respect to the administration of policies and programs. And secondly she's asking what the consultation process was with respect to The Métis Act. I'd like to answer both those questions.

First of all, with respect to the question of whether or not The Métis Act grants additional powers to the MNS Secretariat Inc., which certainly is a charge that I have heard and I have heard people say that they believe that this creates a virtual dictatorship. I want to say to you, Madam Member, and I believe you know this, if you would read the Bill with a good mind and using good faith, you would see that absolutely not.

The Métis Act does not grant additional powers to the MNS Secretariat Inc. The MNS Secretariat Inc. under this legislation will not have expanded powers with respect to the administration of MNS policies and programs.

Article 7(11) and 7(12) of the MNS constitution permit the incorporation of Métis locals and also permit locals to seek the necessary finances and resources to carry out their programs, services, and objectives. The Métis Act does not undermine the ability or the freedom of locals to incorporate, to seek financial assistance, or to administer their own programs and services. So it is important, Madam Member, to distinguish between MNS Secretariat programs and programs of locals.

Now with respect to your question about consultation, it's important to keep in mind that there have been two streams of consultation.

First of all, as you may know, this is a long-standing election promise by the New Democratic Party. I believe the promise was first made some 10 years ago, to introduce a Métis Act. And I'm very pleased now that our coalition government, NDP and Liberal, are introducing and will be passing this Act.

So we've had two streams of consultation, one directly

involving the government and one led by the MNS. With respect to the government's consultation, staff in Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs visited every MNS region twice in 1997 on the former proposed Bill, although the government did decide in the end at the request of the MNS not to proceed.

This Bill that is before us today — Bill 42 — has not changed significantly since 1997. In fact what we did hear in the consultations was that the Act should extend a little further and address issues of governance, harvesting issues, and land issues, which the former Act did not address but the current Act does.

The government has not had direct consultations with Métis people on the Act in this past year, but the MNS has had significant formal consultations with its membership in the year 2000, I'm advised. In September there was a leaders' forum attended by approximately 100 people involving all elected leaders and heads of Métis institutions, and the Act was unanimously passed there. One of my staff members who was here in the House today with me was personally there witnessing this.

As well, in the fall of last year there was a Métis Nation legislative assembly at which the Act was passed by about 90 per cent of the delegates, and there were roughly 250 people in attendance. Former minister, the former minister responsible for this portfolio, the member for North Battleford; Mr. Ernie Lawton, a now retired official in Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs; and Giselle Marcotte, an official with IGAA (Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs) were present at that assembly.

Two hundred and fifty people as I say were there; 98 per cent of the delegates passed it. Indeed some of the people who oppose the legislation today were the ones who spoke in favour and made motions passing the endorsement for this Act.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, in reference to the first part of your comments to me just now, it is my understanding that under the Métis constitution that presently exists, that the secretariat has administrative authority but they do not have authority for programs and policies. Under this existing Act that is before the House today, it will grant further powers to the secretariat than is stated under . . . in the Métis constitution.

So that is just something that I wanted to bring to your attention because it has been brought to my attention by grassroots Métis people that have spoken to me about that concern of theirs.

Madam Minister, the other thing I'd like to mention to you in reference to your comments about having the majority of Métis people at their Assembly have unanimous support of this Bill. It was also brought to my attention that at the Assembly there wasn't a vote that took place. So they're concerned about that because they feel if there had been an opportunity for a vote to take place, that it may have shown that there are a number of Métis people have some concerns about specific parts of this Act.

So I will just make those comments and I see that you're looking through some papers there, so I'll give you a moment to

do your research and be waiting for your comments.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Well I suppose we can go back and reconstruct history, but I can only go by what I am advised by my officials, and I believe that they are people of good faith, and I do not believe that they are going to give me deliberately erroneous information.

My officials were present at that meeting. The former minister of the Crown was present at that meeting. And they all say that there was a vote taken and that approximately 98 per cent of the delegates approved this Act.

Now with respect to your question about this Act extending powers to the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Secretariat Inc., extending powers beyond what is currently in the Métis constitution, I think what we're into is a debate about how many angels are dancing on the head of a pin, and perhaps duelling lawyers.

But quite frankly, I know that article 14(1) of the Métis constitution says:

A secretariat shall be retained under The Non-profit Corporations Act for the sole purpose of carrying out the administrative duties of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan.

And the Act that we have says, section 5(2):

The corporation is the administrative body by which the policies and programs of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan may be carried out and administered.

I would point out to you, Madam Member, that we currently have both a tripartite process with the federal government and the MNS, and a bilateral process with the provincial government and the MNS. I would call that a process or a program. They're administering it right now, the MNS secretariat. So nothing is changing.

Ms. Julé: — If nothing is changing, Madam Minister, what is the need for a law? What part of this law is necessary to be a law?

Certainly I agree, and I honour and respect the fact that Métis people of Saskatchewan need to have discussions to ensure that there is possibly some work towards land use and so on but, Madam Minister . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. A couple of points. There's usually quite a bit of . . . Order, please order. A couple of points.

The first point. I would advise all of the people that are in the gallery that they're observers only; they're not to participate in the debate either, clapping either.

Second point; there's generally a great deal of latitude in the conversation back and forth, but I would ask that the hon. minister and the hon. member please direct their comments to the Chair.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, to the minister. Regarding the part of section 3(1) that says to:

... work together through a bilateral process to address issues that are important to the Métis people ...

Now rather than having legislation, which is a law to discuss issues with the Métis people, Madam Minister, is very, very important, and I agree with that fully. But why do we need to have a piece of legislation in order to do discussions? Wouldn't it be much more sensible or wouldn't it be better to have a memorandum of understanding? That would have been just as effective in stating this — in fact more effective rather than using statements that are rather vague and open to interpretation. I mean a law is a law for a reason.

If this, for instance, your bilateral process that you refer to here is for discussion, why would you need a law? Why would it have to be enshrined in law? It just doesn't make ... it's very unclear to me as to why this is necessary.

(15:30)

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would say, Mr. Chair, that the member opposite has asked several questions and I want to attempt to answer them.

I do believe that sections 3(1) and 3(2) of The Métis Act referring to a bilateral process between the province and the MNS to address issues that are important to Métis people including: capacity building, land, harvesting, and governance. Very clearly these sections show the seriousness of the province to deal with these issues. And we are by virtue of passing this legislation showing that the honour of the Crown is behind our commitment to address these issues seriously. And I guess I would question why the member opposite is questioning the honour of the Crown.

Now with respect to the vision or why would we indeed be bothered passing a Bill. I noted yesterday in the House that one of the members did challenge me to indicate what my vision of what this Act is and what it is going to do for the Métis people of Saskatchewan. I've also consulted extensively with many grassroots Métis people and they have asked me the same question. I think it's a perfectly legitimate question and one that I welcome.

And I would say, Mr. Chair, that for a very long time in our province, perhaps from the time of European settlement, there have been two solitudes in this province — Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. And we all agree that such a divide, such a division in our society is not healthy. At the same time we, on this side of the House, have no interest in a simulationist approaches to Aboriginal people. Those are approaches that would compromise or erode their history, their culture, and their identity.

Our vision, Mr. Chair, is to enable Aboriginal people to have the opportunity to participate fully in the social and economic life of Saskatchewan, but in ways that enable Aboriginal people to preserve, strengthen, and celebrate their cultural values and their cultural identities.

The Métis, Mr. Chair, are a significant part of this cultural community. And we have a wide variety of strategies to achieve this full participation objective. We have for instance a 13

government department-wide Métis and off-reserve First Nation strategy, Métis specific initiatives in our Aboriginal economic development strategy, our northern strategy, our Aboriginal employment development strategy, and so on and so on.

Now on the legislative front, The Métis Act before us today will assist in this vision. Meaningful recognition of the Métis people, their history, their culture, their identity, is long overdue. This Bill celebrates their culture, creates a Métis-specific entity to conduct administrative affairs, and at the same time the Bill signals commitments to work with Métis people on issues of concern to them. This will advance Métis people's opportunities to participate in the social and economic life of the province.

I will say, Mr. Chair, in closing that The Métis Act will not, on its own, change history, but it is our collective way of celebrating Métis people as an important component of our society and our desire to see Métis people be full participants in this society.

Ms. Julé: — That is a very good political speech, there's no doubt about it. You've done very well with that but I think it's really important that we address ... (inaudible interjection) ... exactly, we need to be very, very relevant to what questions we're asking specifically and we'd like to have some specific answers.

So that would, I think, help Métis people in this province, all Métis people, much more than giving a long dissertation.

Madam Minister, when we talk about in the Bill there is the phrase, working together through a bilateral process, and you've gone into some of that. But the language of the preamble is misleading, Madam Minister, as it claims that this Act does not affect the government's position that Canada has legislative authority for the Métis pursuant to section 91(24) of the Constitution Act. It's misleading, Madam Minister, because in effect you are giving force to law, through this law, to a commitment to address ... (inaudible interjection) ... what's the matter?

In effect you are giving force of law to a commitment to address issues as fundamental as land and governance. This is an issue, a nation-to-nation issue, between the federal government and the Métis people.

The law that you have before the House today in effect gives the provincial government ... or it's presuming that the provincial government has jurisdiction over things like land and government, when clearly we know it does not.

Obviously the legislation can't alter the Constitution. We recognize that also and I think you should have. But this Bill certainly has constitutional meaning, not only for the Métis but also for the province itself.

Where is Canada in all of this, Madam Minister? Certainly the Métis people want the very best for themselves and they recognize that their agreement is with the country of Canada, with the Crown. So I ask you, are you honouring the Crown by having consent to a Bill that is basically under the jurisdiction of the federal Crown?

Where is Canada in all of this? Since the federal government has a very distinct authority regarding the Métis people, why would you want to commit to a bilateral process as opposed to a trilateral process to ensure that the federal government is in on this so finally land, hunting, fishing, trapping issues, can be cleared up and granted to the Métis people?

We need to make sure that that is done, and without the federal government at the table it doesn't matter if you talk till you're blue in the face. It's not going to grant any . . . anything to the Métis people because the federal government have authority in this area. They have an agreement with the Métis people. It is not the province that has an agreement with the Métis people in respect to land and governance.

So, Madam Minister, could you please comment on this and give me your rationale as to why Canada was not sitting down and formulating this Act with the Métis people, and possibly with the province, encouraging things. That would have been great.

But the federal government clearly needs to be in on this before anything is going to be granted to the Métis people.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I thank the member opposite for her series of questions. I think there were a couple of questions in her statements and so, with the indulgence of the House, I will take some time to answer them.

I would first of all like to point out she talked extensively about this Act dealing with land and governance. Now the members opposite have been very fond of pointing to their supposed land of milk and honey being the province to the west of us, Alberta, and saying that if only we were more like Alberta, everything would be wonderful.

Well quite frankly, I have with me today the Metis Settlements Act, 1990 of the province of Alberta and it is extremely thick. And what this Act does, in summary — in summary, Mr. Chair . . .

The Chair: — Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the minister, so would the House please come to order. If there's other conversations that want to occur, please take them behind the bar.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. This 130-page Act as compared to the 6-page Act that the member opposite is so concerned about today, the 130-page Metis Settlements Act of Alberta establishes a series of tracts of lands that are historic Métis settlements and creates the equivalent of local governments for these settlements — creates these local governments not under the municipalities Act, but under the Metis Settlements Act.

So in essence, in Alberta, what they have done is created Métis local government with a land base. That legislation, that Alberta legislation, has not been struck down as unconstitutional.

Now what are we doing? Under what authority are we legislating The Métis Act? I want to say that we are exercising provincial authority pursuant to section 92(13) of the Constitution Act, 1867 of Canada, dealing with property and

civil rights, and we are creating a corporation to enable Métis people to carry on business in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now dealing specifically with the constitutional question that the member raises, it is not possible to inherit or diminish a province's constitutional jurisdiction as a result of provincial legislation such as The Métis Act.

In other words, provincial legislation cannot alter federal-provincial division of powers. And if we are overstepping our bounds, as the member opposite seems to be suggesting, comparable legislation in Alberta that goes a lot further than this six-page Métis Act would surely be more problematic, and for the last 11 years this has not proven to be the case there.

The legal explanation, in summary, Mr. Chair, is that we are not legislating in relation to Métis people any more than by providing services to Métis people under, for example, the Aboriginal court work program, we are violating the constitution.

Now the member opposite has also asked me about the bilateral process between the province and the Métis Nation, and why we are establishing a bilateral process and not a tripartite process which would involve Canada.

I have to tell the member opposite that the province is currently involved — and I believe she knows this — the province is currently involved in both a bilateral and a tripartite process with the MNS. The province cannot write things into legislation that would bind the federal government to act in relation to Métis people.

Nevertheless on certain key issues such as capacity building and governance, we intend to continue our practice of involving the federal government at our tripartite table, that is the province, the federal government, and the MNS.

We intend to use the existing bilateral process to address those issues within provincial authority and jurisdiction, and then to shift the appropriate issues to the tripartite table for negotiation.

Mr. Chair, I expect that the province and the MNS will develop a joint strategy that will engage the federal government on significant issues relating to land and to governance. I need also to remind the member opposite that The Métis Act is about practical, non-rights-based initiatives that the province will discuss with the MNS, and as I had already said during second reading of this Bill.

Furthermore, with respect to certain issues, we do have a constitutional obligation to respect the existing Aboriginal rights of Métis people provided for in section 35 of the constitution — in the case of harvesting, for example — regardless of the involvement of the federal government. And surely the member opposite is not suggesting that if the federal government is not at the table that we can ignore our own constitutional commitments to Métis people. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, in your speech just a moment ago you mentioned that the Bill is

going to address those areas where the province does have responsibility for Métis people. So clearly my understanding is that yes, you can care about land and governance; you can discuss with the Métis people; you can encourage the federal government to deal with issues pertaining to land, hunting, fishing, trapping, governance; but clearly the provincial government does not have the jurisdictional authority in order to effect changes that would benefit the Métis people in that way.

So, Madam Minister, what in fact are the things that the provincial government does do in relationship with the Métis people that is for their advancement and their benefit? What is it, then — if you can explain to myself and the House just what it is. What is the relationship — legislative relationship — with the Métis people of this province?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Through the Chair, I would advise the member opposite that her concerns are clearly unfounded as has been more than amply demonstrated over the last 11 years by the unchallenged passage of the Metis Settlement Act of Alberta.

And we are dealing clearly — very clearly — with property and civil rights and those are well within our jurisdiction.

Ms. Julé: — Could you explain to me further just what you mean by property, Madam Minister? If it's land that the Métis people have a right to — as they feel they have a right to, I can understand that — but that is clearly the jurisdiction of the federal government. What properties are you referring to?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would advise the member opposite that property is a large category, obviously, and we've had many debates in this House about property. I would refer the member opposite to some of the debates that occurred in this legislature regarding Bill C-68.

Property is a large category. It includes land and land is clearly within the jurisdiction of the province to address. We can address it with any citizens of this province, including Métis.

Ms. Julé: — Yes, Madam Minister, you can address it; you can discuss it. But you do not as a provincial government have the jurisdictional or legislative authority to really do anything about it.

So in section 32, Madam Minister — I would refer you to that section — will the memorandum of understanding that you refer to be legally binding? Will this legislation effectively give you, as the minister, the power to enforce agreements relating to issues as fundamental as land and governance as discussed and agreed upon through a bilateral process — the process that seeks to exclude the federal government?

So again, I do have three or four questions, one after the other there, Madam Minister, and I apologize for that. Maybe what I will do is just ask you to answer the first one in reference to section 32: will the memorandum of understanding that you refer to in that section be legally binding?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would thank the member opposite for that question and for the other question too. And I just want to

advise her that clearly this province, which will be 100 years old in 2005, was given the authority to deal with land by the Government of Canada under the NRTA, the Natural Resources Transfer Act.

We deal right now with pasture land, parkland, farmland — I could go on and on, on that, with respect — and also obviously another area clearly within my portfolio, treaty land entitlement.

Now with respect to your question about will the MOU, the memorandum of understanding, be legally binding — the answer is no.

Ms. Julé: — Madam Minister, this is news to me. I always thought treaty land entitlement certainly involved land within Saskatchewan but that the negotiations for that were clearly between First Nations people and the federal government. I really never realized that what you've just said was the case in Saskatchewan, where the provincial government actually gets right into the deliberations and the discussions of handing land, or determining, determining . . . you know, or having the authority to deal with land entitlements. I honestly did not even know that that happened.

So this is a day for me that is very, very different than any other day I've had, Madam Minister, because if what you're saying is true, all the information that I've had brought to me about treaty land entitlements in the past from a number of legal sources as well as a number of First Nations people, that is all untrue I guess at this time based on what you were saying.

So I don't know what to say. I'm quite at awe of all of this, Madam Minister. Would you like to make a comment? It's quite interesting.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Mr. Chair, I just have to wonder where the member opposite has been for the last nine years. We signed the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement in 1992. The province has been involved in TLE (treaty land entitlement) discussions and negotiations since 1992. Indeed, we will be formalizing a TLE agreement tomorrow with the Flying Dust First Nation.

I just . . . I'm frankly dumbfounded that the member opposite was so unaware that she did not realize that the province has been involved in the TLE Framework Agreement all these many years.

Ms. Julé: — Madam Minister, certainly you have been involved, and I know that there's treaty land entitlement agreements that include the provincial government in discussion. You had some discussion, involvement in that way, Madam Minister. Certainly you have.

Madam Minister, we could go on forever. I think we both understand that it is under the purview of the federal government and the First Nations of Saskatchewan to determine treaty land entitlements — whether or not there's going to be land, whether or not there's going to be money associated with this and so on.

So if the province has a determination to make in as far as coming to that agreement, my information up till this point is

that it has been simply to discuss things and to talk, but certainly not having any authority on determining the lands and so on, and how much of the land the First Nations people would be entitled to.

So anyway, Madam Minister, I have a couple more questions regarding the corporate provisions of the Bill, specifically Part IV. There is some concerns that this section has far less protection for the members of the corporation than what is contained in The Non-profit Corporations Act and similar legislation.

Section 8 of this Bill says bylaws can be made for governance and administration of the corporation, yet the section doesn't say who can make those bylaws.

By comparison, section 90 of The Non-profit Corporations Act provides that any amendments to a bylaw must be submitted to the members at the next meeting of members, and that the members may reject the change by ordinary resolution.

With all the controversy surrounding the recent Métis elections, Madam Minister, I find this part of the Bill does not address some very crucial issues. Are we to assume that the directors, as indicated in the Bill, have the authority to make bylaws as they see fit? In other words, could they change the number of directors, how they are elected, what matters go to the membership, who can vote at meetings and so on?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I'm going to try to answer the question and if I'm leaving out anything I'm sure that the member opposite will remind me.

First of all, she is glossing over the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement. So I do want to point out to members of this House — and again quite frankly I'm stunned to realize that this was not something the member opposite, as the critic for Aboriginal Affairs, was aware of — but she should now know very clearly that the province sells and transfers land to First Nations almost every week or indeed every month.

Millions of dollars each year are set aside for our commitments and our responsibilities under the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement that was signed by former Prime Minister Mulroney, and former Premier Romanow was also involved with this. So it is amazing to me that she was not aware that the province was involved in treaty land entitlement.

Now with respect to her questions about . . . with respect to her questions about The Non-Profit Corporations Act and the difference that there is with The Métis Act, I do want to advise members of this House, and I have earlier this day advised the member opposite, of my intention to be introducing three amendments in relation to the Bill.

I will be amending clause 8 to change the word "may" to "shall" so that the clause will read, "Bylaws shall be made." This will tighten up the Bill. I was earlier advised that the word may was simply the passive tense in lawyer's language of the word shall, but because people were concerned about it I will be introducing the amendment so that we will be changing it to read that bylaws shall be made.

I will also be introducing an amendment to clause 9, sub (1), to add the words, "within 60 days," so that the clause would read, "the board of directors shall within 60 days hold a special meeting." Because people that I met with from several Métis locals pointed out to me that there was no timeline with respect to when a special meeting must be held, so I will be introducing that amendment.

I will also be introducing an amendment to clause 18, the coming into force section, because right now the Bill would come into force upon assent. And I will be changing that so that it comes into force upon proclamation.

I would also advise the member opposite that directors make the bylaws, directors make the bylaws, and they cannot therefore . . . the directors cannot be removed; they can't change the membership of the board at these special meetings because it's set out in the Act.

And it seems to me that some of the issues that the member opposite is raising are really red herrings. Because, quite frankly, what we are doing here is taking the existing MNS secretariat that is . . . has been enabled to be established by virtue of the MNS constitution, we are taking that existing body that is under The Non-Profit Corporations Act and we are establishing under its own stand-alone Act, The Métis Act.

This is in accord with the wish of this government to respect the dignity of Métis people and to listen to their wishes to be out from under The Non-Profit Corporations Act and to have a separate stand-alone Act. But the provisions of The Non-profit Corporations Act are, in the main, being transferred over into The Métis Act.

Ms. Julé: — Madam Minister, are we to assume that the directors, as indicated in this Bill, have the authority to make bylaws as they see fit?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I'd advise the member opposite that the directors make bylaws, that is very clear. But the bylaws have to be in accordance with the purposes of the legislation. The bylaws have to be in accordance, therefore, with the notion that the MNS Secretariat Inc. is the administrative body by which the policies and programs of the MNS are carried out and administered.

(16:00)

Ms. Julé: — Madam Minister, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan constitution has a section that is to ensure all ministers give reports to the Métis Nation legislative assembly, yet a lot of grassroots people, Métis people, have told us examples where Métis ministers have not reported to their constituents.

Grassroots Métis people say then an accountability framework needs to be outlined through bylaws enacted by the Métis people who are affiliated with the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. What are your comments in this area?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would advise the member opposite that it is not for me to dictate to the MNS what they can and cannot do. That is an issue for Métis people to sort out themselves

under their own constitution of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan.

Ms. Julé: — Madam Minister, grassroots Métis people have asked for an accountability framework to be outlined through their bylaws.

And it has been stated by you, in this House previously, it's your belief that accountability already exists. If that's the case, why weren't there any provisions for the current bylaws to be continued or why weren't the same provisions as outlined in The Non-Profit Corporations Act simply transferred over to this Act?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Well it seems to me, madam member that — or I would advise the member opposite through the Chair — that perhaps there's some confusion between the MNS as a political body and the MNS Secretariat Inc.

The MNS as a political body has, continues to have, and will have hence forward, I'm sure, a constitution. The accountability that people . . . that she is talking about, seem to be asking for, is political accountability. That is most properly addressed through the MNS's political framework and through the constitution.

This Act deals with an administrative body that has been established in the past under The Non-profit Corporations Act and will now be established under its own, stand alone Act. It will now become a statutory corporation. And all that bylaws do is set out internal processes for the operation of a corporation's governance. But because we're moving it from a non-profit . . . from under the structure of The Non-profit Corporations Act into the structure of The Métis Act, it is important to designate that bylaws shall be made.

And I would point out further, subsection 10, under records, of The Métis Act, clearly refers to the bylaws of the corporation and all amendments to them.

Now because the Act had originally said that the Act would come into force upon assent, in order to give the MNS, as a political body, an opportunity to discuss this with their membership at the their upcoming legislative assembly, and in order to give the MNS Secretariat Inc., as an administrative body, the opportunity to tailor their bylaws to this new Act as opposed to the provisions that there would have been under The Non-profit Corporations Act, I am introducing an amendment so that we will not proclaim The Métis Act until the MNS does two things.

First of all, to develop bylaws related to governance and proper administration of the MNS Secretariat Inc., with respect to corporation activities, affairs, properties, property and interest.

And secondly, we will hold off proclaiming of this Act until the MNS holds a Métis Nation legislative assembly to provide Métis people with a further opportunity to discuss and endorse this Bill.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Pertaining to section 9 clause (1), of the Bill, that section provides for a meeting to be called by the board to discuss matters with the Métis people.

Yet nowhere in this piece of legislation is there an obligation for the board to take direction . . . to take direction from those who attend or for resolutions to be tabled and voted upon. In fact, there isn't any indication at all that this meeting is a meeting of members at all.

By comparison, when you look at The Non-profit Corporations Act, and the way it would have been before this Act is passed, section 133 clause (1) of The Non-profit Corporations Act provides that members with 5 per cent of the votes — which could certainly be less than 250 people, by the way — have the right to call a meeting at any time stating the business to be transacted at the meeting.

Now, Madam Minister, how will there be any measure of accountability for that board, as outlined in this Bill, regarding such fundamental issues as meetings, members, and resolutions?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Again I would advise the member opposite, through the Chair, that I think she's seeing bogeymen where there are none and reading far more into this Act than is the intent. The clause 9, dealing with special meetings, very clearly says:

. . . the board of directors shall hold a special meeting with the Métis people of Saskatchewan to discuss any matter stated in the petition respecting the operation of the corporation.

I have already indicated to the member that I will be introducing an amendment to that section 9, to trigger that special meeting within 60 days.

But clearly, in answer to her question about whether or not this is going to involve the Métis people, it's written right in the legislation, that they "shall hold a special meeting with the Métis people of Saskatchewan." And we believe that by saying that the petition to trigger that is 250 Métis individuals of Saskatchewan that we are accommodating the grassroots. Rather than cutting out the grassroots, we think that we are significantly lowering the bar by which a meeting should be triggered.

So we do believe that this Bill is both accountable and does create an opportunity for grassroots individuals to hold meetings with the board of directors of the MNS Secretariat Inc.

Now having said all that, I do want to say that I recognize very clearly that there are concerns amongst Métis people, there are concerns with Métis locals in this province. Those are issues I would suggest to the member opposite that are political matters and are most properly dealt with not through holding a bunch of special meetings with the administrative body, the MNS Secretariat Inc., but dealing with it through the Métis political process as is outlined under the constitution of the MNS.

And very clearly there are legislative assemblies that the MNS holds. I believe it's twice a year. There is also a general assembly that's held. And the issues that are being raised with both the member opposite and with myself are political matters that most properly ought to be dealt with through the political process rather than worrying or setting up a bogeyman about

the administrative process.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the minister: Section 96 of The Non-Profit Corporations Act provides that members of a corporation may remove any director by ordinary resolution at a special meeting. This Bill contains no such provisions. Why was this not included?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Because, Madam Member, the board of directors are people who are elected through the election process of the MNS, and just as you cannot be removed by a petition of 250 individuals, so neither will a Métis director who is duly elected be removed.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Chair, to the minister: section 107 of The Non-Profit Corporations Act provides for the disclosure of material contracts by directors and contains voting and fairness rules designated, or rather, designed to prevent the directors from taking advantage of their ability to self-deal. Again there are no provisions like that in this Bill. Why?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would advise the member opposite that that is incorporated by reference to The Interpretation Act.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the minister: section 109 of The Non-Profit Corporations Act obliges the directors of a non-profit corporation to act honestly and in good faith and to exercise the care, diligence, and skill of a reasonably prudent person in the circumstances. It also obliges directors to comply with the articles and bylaws of the corporation.

There has been so much controversy and so much turmoil and upset within the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan regarding the action of some of the members, yet there are no such provisions as I just outlined in The Métis Act. Why, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Again I would advise the member opposite that the concerns she's raising are incorporated in The Métis Act by reference to The Interpretation Act.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Chair, to the minister: section 112 of The Non-Profit Corporations Act provides that a director may receive reasonable remuneration and that directors may set that remuneration unless the articles or bylaws otherwise provide.

The Métis Act does not address remuneration of directors at all. Again why was this excluded?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Boards of directors are bound to act in good faith and they're bound by the fiduciary responsibilities of the corporation.

(16:15)

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, first of all welcome to your officials here today to discuss this Act, The Métis Act.

First of all I want to make it clear that I am of Métis descent. I am proud of it. But first and foremost, I like to think myself as a Canadian.

In regards to this Act, The Métis Act, I have always stated that I

see no problem with having a Métis Act. What I do see is a problem with this Métis Act and in the context of what is in this Act and also what is not in this Act.

First of all in regards to elections, to many people in and around my area where I'm from, they thought that The Métis Act coming forth was to do mostly with elections. Now we know very well, Madam Minister, that there's been lots of controversy regarding the elections and the process in which the elections took place. In fact, the member from Cumberland, his voice was not even counted . . . or his vote, pardon me, was not even counted neither was his family. And I find that very frustrating to him and also to Métis people that in many cases their vote was not counted.

And the last election there is figures that there was supposed to be some 40,000 members of the Métis Nation. Of that 40,000 approximately only 3,000 voted. The reason a lot of them did not come to vote is the problem with elections and the problems around the elections.

Madam Minister, in regards to the problems of elections, you and the federal . . . pardon me, the minister and the federal government created \$50,000 — 25 provincially, 25,000 federally — to come up with a process to solve election problems in Saskatchewan in dealing with the Métis Nation. That is ongoing right now.

The member from Humboldt brought forth a while ago a hoist in regards to hoisting this Bill for six months so that there would be more consultation regarding this Bill. It was voted down.

To the minister: will the minister stand in the House today and make reference to the organizations she has put forth regarding the elections and solving the election problems in Saskatchewan to deal with the Métis, will she stand in the House today and say that this Act will not . . . or this Bill will not come into force on proclamation till that group of people, both provincially and federally, have dealt with the election problems of the Métis Nation?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Well, through the Chair, the fact of the matter is that this Bill is not intended to respond to the election process that the member opposite is referring to. I have a separate process, that being a tripartite process, to look at the recent election and to provide advice and recommendations with respect to changes.

The MNS has their own election process that is separate from this Bill. I've already said that I do not intend to recommend to cabinet that we proclaim The Métis Act until the MNS does two things. First to develop bylaws; and secondly, to hold a Métis Nation legislative assembly to provide Métis people with a further opportunity to discuss and endorse the Bill.

I anticipate . . . I have been told that that MNLA (Métis Nation legislative assembly) is scheduled for late November. It is my great hope that the election . . . the process of reviewing the recent election will also have been completed by that time.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Madam Minister, in regards to the answer you just put forth to me, in

regards to the 25,000 provincial dollars that is being spent to come up with a process for the Métis people in regards to elections, the \$25,000 is taxpayers' money.

Should this not take into account some precedence, and therefore that the Act that's before us now wait under proclamation till that is dealt with?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would advise the member opposite that we have provided in the past, and probably will in the future, small amounts of money — taxpayers' money — to support the Métis in reviewing their processes and to building capacity.

That, though, is unrelated to the whole question of this Bill. It is important, I believe, for members opposite not to be disingenuous and to be mixing up the controversy that there is with respect to the recent MNS elections and the issue of The Métis Act before us here today.

The Métis Act is to celebrate the contributions, the very substantial contributions that Métis people have made to this province; to celebrate the historical significance of many symbols, including the sash, the flag, and so forth. It is also to set up an administrative body for the MNS, called the MNS Secretariat Inc., and as I have tried to outline in my answers to the member from Humboldt, we are including in significant part, the provisions of The Non-profit Corporations Act.

The Métis Act is something to be celebrated. We have a separate process dealing with the election controversy, and I am hopeful that we will have a report on or about the same time that we intend to proclaim The Métis Act.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Deputy Chair. Madam Minister, yes, Madam Minister, we all want to celebrate and I use the words all, because all Métis people want to celebrate this Act. But there is a number of Métis people, in fact the biggest majority of Métis people, who are not going to be celebrating this Act because they're not counted under The Election Act which is duly and most important to this Act that is here before us.

That's why I'm asking to let the people, the Métis people, know that yes, their voice will be heard. And that by holding this proclamation of this Act till that is dealt with is the most proper way to do it. That way all Métis people, Madam Minister, have a right to be celebrating this Act.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would advise the member opposite that The Métis Act is not about the Métis election process. It is a totally separate issue, and it's important not to confuse them.

The Métis Act, as I said, probably 10 years from now, we will all be celebrating this and we will have forgotten what the specifics were of the current controversy with respect to the February MNS elections. We have a separate process for assisting the MNS to review the recent election and to make changes. That is totally separate from The Métis Act, and we should in this House today be dealing with The Métis Act, not with the concerns about the Métis election process.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Madam Minister, in regards to the Bill on the first page, under:

And whereas nothing in this Act is to be construed as altering or affecting the position of the Government of Saskatchewan that legislative authority in relation to Métis people rests with the Government of Canada . . .

Government of Canada, Madam Minister.

Then we go to Part III under "Bilateral Process" and it states under there, Madam Minister, and my colleague, the member from Humboldt, has reiterated that, that under:

Bilateral process

3(1) The Government of Saskatchewan and the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan will work together through a bilateral process to address issues that are important to the Métis people, including the following:

capacity building;

land;

harvesting;

governance.

Madam Minister, on the first page it is stated in the Bill that it rests with the Government of Canada. Then I'm asking you, Madam Minister, why the bilateral process 3(1) contradicts it and is in the Act?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Again I'm going to say we have the authority to do what is contemplated in this Act, that is the signing of a bilateral MOU with the MNS. We have the authority under the constitution and we will be doing that. And we will also be respecting section 35 of the constitution.

And I have already answered the questions about under what authority the province is legislating The Métis Act and the concerns about bilateral versus tripartite and constitutional authority and responsibility that you're raising with respect to section 3. I've answered those to the member from Humboldt and I think that you can review the record to see the answers.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Deputy Chair, I have indicated to the minister that I am prepared to support this Act should certain concerns that I have and other members of the opposition have been addressed.

And, Mr. Chair, the reasons that I am prepared to support this Act are that firstly I believe this is something that is long overdue, and the recognition of the history and the culture of the Métis people is something that is long overdue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — It is also because . . . it is also because as a member of Eastern Region II, Eastern Region II — and Eastern Region II, Mr. Deputy Chair, I should indicate also blankets my entire constituency, the constituency of Carrot River Valley — and all of the elected officials within Eastern Region II are also very, very supportive of this Act.

There's a third reason, Mr. Deputy Chair, and the third reason is

is that because perhaps one of the best friends I ever had, Mr. Deputy Chair, a lifelong friend and colleague, Mr. Clarence Campeau, made the establishment of an Act such as this his lifelong dream and mission. And, Mr. Deputy Chair, if I could I would just like to take a moment or two and tell the House a little bit about Mr. Clarence Campeau.

Clarence was born in 1947. As young as the eighth grade he realized there was a difference in the way non-Aboriginal people and Aboriginal people fit into society.

Somehow he felt he never fit anywhere until he learned about the Métis people, his people. He became involved in the Métis Society in the late 1960s. In 1974 he became the youngest ever area director elected for the Métis Society of Saskatchewan. He also worked in research and development for the Gabriel Dumont Institute. He worked as an addictions counsellor and for the Métis Housing Corporation.

He was provincial Chair for the Saskatchewan Native Addictions Council. He sat on boards of the Local Advisory Council to the Melfort Canada Employment Centre. He was a board member and a colleague of mine at the NEWSASK, Community Futures Development Corporation. He sat as a member of the Archerwill and Rose Valley school boards. He was on the SIMAS (Saskatchewan Indian and Métis Affairs Secretariat) provincial board and on the Métis Economic Development Foundation.

(16:30)

Clarence was so well renowned throughout this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for his passion regarding economic development that the Clarence Campeau Development Fund was designed to provide financial assistance to Métis individuals and communities in Saskatchewan for economic and small business activities.

Clarence's ultimate goal in life was self-sufficiency for Métis people. He believed that the Métis people should have control over their own destinies, be able to make important decisions over training and education in order for them to become self-sufficient.

Clarence was addressing the importance of a Métis Act to his members and throughout the province right up until his death in 1997. Clarence was addressing the importance of a Métis Act to all the Métis people across the province way prior to 1991, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As I indicated, Clarence was a colleague of mine. Clarence appointed me as Chair of the social initiatives department for Eastern Region II, a position that I held for roughly seven years.

But Eastern Region II, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a very, very dynamic and viable force in the Métis community today. It provides programs and services that are second to none in the province. And the current area director, Helen Johnson, continues Clarence's dream of seeking self-sufficiency for the Métis people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have two questions and I know that they would be questions that Clarence would ask. To the minister:

will you facilitate the accountability concerns that some in the Métis community have with respect to this Act? And two, will you continue to listen to Métis people in order that everything possible is done to move the Métis community toward self-sufficiency as was Clarence's lifelong mission and dream?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would like to thank the member opposite and I want to acknowledge at this time what I consider to be his very brave and very principled stand.

I have had many discussions with members opposite about this Act and I have found that either they are being deliberately obtuse or they are pandering to fears or scaremongering and trying to find bogeymen where there are none.

By contrast though, the member from Carrot River Valley clearly respects and understands the intent of The Métis Act. He clearly respects and understands the internal processes of non-profit corporations and of the MNS Secretariat. And he clearly respects and understands the MNS constitution.

With respect to his questions about accountability concerns, the answer is yes. With respect to his question about will I continue to listen, the answer is yes.

And I would say, in the spirit of Clarence Campeau, just as the member from Carrot River Valley intends to support The Métis Act, I would ask all the members opposite to put aside their minor concerns, to think about the future and to think about history, and to join with him and with the members on this side of the House and vote yes to The Métis Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 8

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would like to move at this time, Mr. Chair, that we:

Amend Clause 8 of the printed Bill by striking out "may" and substituting "shall".

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8 as amended agreed to.

Clause 9

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would like to advise the House that I would move to:

Amend Clause 9(1) of the printed Bill by adding " , within 60 days," after "shall".

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 17 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 18

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair the opposition had an amendment to Clause 18 to be printed into the Bill. However, we have recognized the minister's amendment, the government's amendment on that Clause.

And I would just like to ask you, Madam Minister, will you give us the assurance that proclamation will not take place for a period of about six months at least, so that there can be further consultation with the Métis people of the province who are very concerned that this Act may have the potential to be an anti-democratic Act?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I can advise the member opposite that as I have already stated, it is my intention to recommend to cabinet that this Bill not be proclaimed until at least two things have occurred.

First of all, that bylaws have been drafted; and secondly, that there has been a Métis Nation legislative assembly so that Métis people can go to that very proper forum and discuss and endorse the Bill.

Now it is my understanding that the legislative assembly is scheduled for the end of November. Once that occurs and I am able to . . . and I get a report back on that, then I will be recommending proclamation of the Bill.

So that will occur probably sometime in early December. Perhaps it might even be early January, I don't know. So I think we're debating here about a time frame of two months — whether it's four months or six months.

But quite clearly I have said, now three times in the debate on this, that I will recommend that we delay proclamation of the Bill until those other things have happened.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And so, Madam Minister, I take that that's giving us an assurance that the Bill will not be proclaimed till at least early January.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I didn't say that. Through the Chair, I said it could be the end of November, in December, or early January. We're talking about, though, a proclamation that will most likely occur in the early winter months.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in regards to clause 18 of the printed Bill, I would like to put forward an amendment that:

Clause 18 of the printed Bill is struck out and the following substituted:

“18 This Act comes into force on January 1, 2002”.

Amendment negated on division.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would like to advise the House that at this point I would move that we:

Amend Clause 18 of the printed Bill by striking out the word “assent” and substituting the word “proclamation”.

So this Act comes into force upon proclamation.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 18 as amended agreed to.

Preamble agreed to.

The Deputy Chair: — The committee will take a five-minute recess so we can get our process in order. Thank you.

The Assembly recessed for a period of time.

The Deputy Chair: — I call the committee to order, and I apologize to the committee for erring in calling the question on the title of a Bill, which is not the correct procedure. I will now invite the minister to move that the committee report the Bill with amendment.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I move that we report the Bill with amendments.

The division bells rang from 16:50 until 16:57.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 29

Calvert	Addley	Hagel
Lautermilch	Atkinson	Serby
Melenchuk	Cline	Sonntag
Goulet	Van Mulligen	MacKinnon
Wartman	Thomson	Prebble
Belanger	Crofford	Axworthy
Nilson	Hamilton	Junor
Jones	Kasperski	Osika
Lorjé	Yates	McCall
Draude	Kwiatkowski	

Nays — 20

Hermanson	Heppner	Julé
Boyd	Gantefoer	Toth
Stewart	Eagles	Wall
Bakken	D'Autremont	Weekes
Bjornerud	Brkich	Harpauer
Wakefield	Wiberg	Hart
Allchurch	Huyghebaert	

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

(17:00)

THIRD READINGS**Bill No. 58 — The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2001**

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this 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. 42 — The Métis Act

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read the first and second time.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move that Bill No. 42, The Métis Act, be now read the third time and passed under its title.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**General Revenue Fund
Social Services
Vote 36**

Subvote (SS01)

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's my pleasure to introduce to . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. I'm having difficulty hearing the minister, so would the committee please come to order. And if there's any conversations that need to take place, please move them behind the bar.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Seated beside me is Bonnie Durnford, the deputy minister of Social Services. And seated behind me is Darcy Smycniuk, he's the acting executive director of financial management.

Seated in the rear of the Chamber is Phil Walsh, the executive director of income support. Next to him is Larry Moffatt, the executive director of community living. Next to Mr. Moffatt is Debra Bryck, who is the director of child daycare. And next to Ms. Bryck is Dorothea Warren, who's the associate executive director of family and youth.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, welcome to your officials. Mr. Minister, I have a few questions here. Actually I have a lot, but I'm going to confine them.

A question . . . and I believe we talked a little about rental and the ability to . . . for people to get their rent, maybe paying rent directly to the landlord. A lady from Regina had called and I've left the message with your office. But I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, what your department is doing in regards to rent and where landlords are having difficulty collecting the rent.

And the specific question that arose here — and I still await a response from the office and they may not have had a chance to

do total follow-up as . . . (inaudible) . . . arrived late last week — but in the fact the question arises that the fact that some landlords are finding that tenants leave and they're really not aware of the fact that they've left; they're already in arrears. And it's difficult to follow up and recover or receive the funds for the rent on that property.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, what the department is doing to address the problems where that arises where tenants may leave and have left unpaid rent?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, without speaking to any tenancy agreements that landlords and tenants may have come to themselves, it is our practice to issue a cheque for the full amount of the rent and to have that cheque issued jointly to both the client of the department who's eligible to receive that and the landlord. So there should be no reason that rents being made jointly that the landlord should not be paid.

In the event that a client who's a tenant leaves the premises prematurely without giving notice, the landlord can make application through the Rentalsman. And if the landlord can substantiate that, we do provide a security. We guarantee whatever ruling the Rentalsman may have come down with in terms of the month's rent, or whatever it might be. And that can then be paid to the landlord. And then we call that an overpayment against that client — if they're still a client, or if they become a client again — we call that an overpayment that we feel we should be collecting back from that client.

So through those measures we've over the years reduced the amount of potential conflict or potential for conflict between our clients and landlords, and also to reduce what might be termed unacceptable practices on the part of clients or tenants, but also on the part of the landlords. And we feel it's been working fairly well. Obviously this is a case where it hasn't.

But that's the process. The landlord can go to the Rentalsman, substantiate the lack of notice, and the Rentalsman will make a ruling. And we provide a guarantee of one month's rent for these kinds of contingencies.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, so just a quick follow-up. What I understand, are all cheques made jointly to the tenant and the landlord? And if so, and as the request that just came to the office, which we forwarded to your office, if a landlord doesn't receive the payment, does your department find that there are occasions where some of the cheques do not get cashed? It's quite possible that maybe a tenant may lose the cheque if it's made jointly. You're right. It would appear then it should get to the landlord.

But if there are cheques not arriving, do you find at times that the department finds that there are cheques for housing that actually do not get cashed, possibly because they've been misplaced or lost?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Yes, there are some exceptions to the policy. For example, if we provide assistance to, say, a working family, and that's to top up their earnings from work but because of their need — say it's a large family, that they can't make enough on, say a low wage — that we can top up

from social assistance, although less so now with the employment supplement and the Child Benefit.

But if that's the case and if the amount of the additional assistance we provide is, say, less than the rent that the person might be paying, then we would not issue a cheque jointly to the landlord and to the tenant. We would expect the tenant to continue to pay for that.

With respect to misplaced cheques, yes, we have a process that, if people didn't get their cheque — it was lost in the mail or someone took it from the mailbox — we have a process that involves signing an affidavit and all the like so that we can replace that. There is a process to go through, through that process.

(17:15)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and certainly I'll look forward to the response from your office in regard to the specific case and do the follow-up and see what has happened in regards to the rent and the fact that there's been a lack of payment in regards to that rent and to find out exactly what's happened. And maybe we can get it resolved.

I have another issue just in front of me and I'm not exactly sure, Mr. Minister, if there's been actually a contact with your office. Certainly I think I had put it aside myself but it's regarding an overpayment and I'll just give a last name. It's a Mr. Beech from Biggar who due to some health reasons had to look to Social Services but did apply for some work.

An opportunity arose for a three-month period back in 1999. It indicates that the worker was aware of it and had given him . . . said yes, if there's some work to try and see if you can do some partial work as a result of your health problems. Now he finds himself with an overpayment that he feels should not have been . . . And I don't know. It almost sounds like maybe cheques continued even though he had indicated he was going to be working for a period of time.

And so I would just ask, Mr. Minister, if your office could . . . if you could do a follow-up on that and get back to me in writing because it might be something that may not be accessible right offhand. And I'm not sure if you want to respond to that right now or if you just want me to move on to another question?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — If there's a specific case that we can review, we'll be pleased to do that. I might say as a general policy that we encourage people to work if they're able to work but on the other hand, if they're enrolled to receive Saskatchewan Assistance Plan payments then we also expect them and it's their responsibility to report any earned income to us.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, I understand that's what took place. But we'll just do the follow-up to see exactly what happened and why the overpayment actually ended up.

Back in May of 2000 you had indicated that you were putting together new funds to help persons with disabilities find jobs. And, Mr. Minister, it's been at least a year now since that announcement was made and I wonder if you could indicate to

us whether or not it's been a successful program, whether you've been able to indeed assist people with disabilities to find meaningful employment and therefore move off of the direct involvement of Social Services.

And if you could as well, Mr. Minister, indicate how many individuals have been able to move to full-time employment and move away from the dependence on Social Services.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, last year there was an announcement made jointly with the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training with respect to the funding of 12 organizations throughout the province. These organizations were formed by the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres.

Their objective was to work with local communities to see if they could effect a change in attitude and hopefully to behaviour on the part of employers within the communities about taking on to their staffs into employment people with intellectual disabilities so that those persons might also have a chance at regular jobs in a regular economy.

My understanding is that this project is about, oh, two-thirds complete. There are about 50 individuals that have been hired in Saskatchewan. There are more who are involved in training and job coaching to get them ready to take on jobs.

But the important thing is that work has taken place in a number of communities across Saskatchewan to work with employers about changing attitudes so that not just this year we employed 50, but that into the future we can grow the acceptance of mainstream employers about hiring people with intellectual disabilities and to find a place for them in their operations so that people with intellectual disabilities can take their rightful place in society.

We're very encouraged by what we see taking place. The change in attitudes I think is important. I think we need to recognize if individuals with intellectual disabilities can work at a regular job, same as anyone else in the economy, then we should try to find those kinds of opportunities for them to coach them, to train them to do that as opposed to having the only alternative being sheltered workshops.

So we're encouraged by the success we see taking place.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, I appreciate that. A follow-up question has to do with going beyond just assisting or working with people with disabilities find some meaningful employment, and that is working with individuals on assistance right now and assisting them or working along with them to as well find some meaningful employment.

And I noticed in Ontario, Ontario has got the slogan, A Hand Up Rather Than a Handout, and basically designing a program that rather than their workers just totally assisting people and getting assistance, beginning to work with individuals to help them to actually get into the job force.

And that probably, I'm assuming, that there are many people out there on assistance who may not have a lot of . . . or really understand the process of applying for work or the criteria of

putting together a resume. And certainly if they do . . . and sometimes maybe it's not always their fault that they're unable to find employment.

Just this weekend, unfortunately, a young fellow actually came to me and asked about how the program . . . I mean how assistance works. He was just informed Wednesday or Thursday that he was being cut off assistance, and unfortunately also he was informed that he had to be out of the house.

He's got a young child that's his responsibility. Even though he had taken — and I don't know if the department had helped with some funding to get some training for a truck driving job — a local employer had actually given him some assistance. Unfortunately to date he hasn't been able to find a job with the training he's taken to give him some . . . the ability to get off of employment.

So I guess the question is what is done to really work with and assist people in finding meaningful employment even after they've maybe upgraded and done some training and yet find that maybe the location there in, there aren't a lot of jobs available? In some of the small communities right now, there aren't a lot of jobs available.

So maybe, Mr. Minister, you can indicate what your department is doing to assist people — rather than handing them the finances, but also working with them to find ways of finding meaningful employment?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. I would not want to comment on the province of Ontario and how they are proposing to deal with their issues. But as it pertains to the general issue of labour force attachment or people on social assistance, we've taken the approach that first of all, we need to redesign our system so that there is in a sense, a carrot if you like, that there's some . . . that people see a benefit in working as opposed to simply remaining on social assistance. And that we do that not from a punitive point of view, but from a positive point of view.

And it's for those reasons that the Government of Saskatchewan developed the building independence program some, oh I'd say three years ago, four years ago. The first aspect of the building independence program is called Saskatchewan training allowance, whereby we are prepared to provide training allowances to people who are on social assistance; this training allowance being more generous in the main than what people might expect to receive on social assistance. And that's then tied to attendance at training courses so that we have more people on social assistance being trained for jobs in the economy. That was one aspect of it.

The other aspect was to provide a better income support for families so that there is financial encouragement for them to continue working or to work as opposed to looking to social assistance for alternatives and included in that is family health benefits.

It's for that reason that organizations such as the OECD, which is the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, which is a think tank, a research unit, of the major industrialized countries — Germany, Britain, France, the

Netherlands, Canada, I think the United States as well — have a research unit which tries to analyze trends that are occurring between various jurisdictions in the industrialized world so that we might learn from each other about what it is that we are doing, so that we can learn what is taking place in Switzerland and the same token, the people in Norway or the Netherlands might learn about how it is that we approach social assistance and labour force attachment.

And the conclusion they came to in a study that they took of Canadian jurisdictions and some European jurisdictions was that Saskatchewan has the best approach, not Ontario or any other province. But when you want to set into place programs that encourage people to work as opposed to remaining on social assistance, Saskatchewan has the best approach.

It's probably the reason too that the British House of Commons, which has a parliamentary committee on income security, decided to visit Saskatchewan to look at our programs. So we're encouraged by the success that we are seeing; also encouraged because we know that the greater the opportunities people can find in the labour force and to have earned income, the greater their chances that they will escape poverty. And it's probably for those reasons that the Canadian Council on Social Development in reviewing income security programs, and comparing us to Ontario and Alberta, takes the point of view that when it comes to programs that seem to have an impact on poverty, Saskatchewan has a better approach than those two provinces.

Well that's the conclusion that they came to.

Now we're engaged in building independence phase 2. And as I indicated that when we launched a consultation on our welfare redesign — and I believe the member was present — we indicated that we would try to shift resources within the department without adding additional resources or staff within the department; but to redeploy staff. To have staff work more intensively with people who come to us and who need help because of unemployment. And that we would work with them intensively through the Canada-Sask employment centres to help them find a job where they may not have been able to find a job.

And secondly, to also assist them with issues such as interviewing skills, resume preparation, all the things that one might find useful in looking for employment. And of course we also try to encourage them in furthering their employment because . . . or their education because lack of education and training is an issue for many people. So we continue to put emphasis on Saskatchewan training allowance and to try to encourage people with limited education and training to move in that direction.

I think we're having some success in that. The figures with respect to caseloads seem to indicate that the downward trend, which started in 1994, has been going for over six years, is continuing, and that we're having some success in that.

So yes, I agree with the member. And I think that all of the ministers of Social Services in Canada will agree that labour force attachment is desirable from the point of view of helping individuals and helping families to escape the poverty that is

associated with social assistance. We agree on that. We may disagree on how you do that but I think that the approach we have in Saskatchewan is a far better approach.

And I don't say that in a boastful way. I think that's the conclusion that people from outside of Saskatchewan come to about Saskatchewan's approach being the right approach.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, thank you. And certainly we could get into even a further debate but I'm not going to pursue that tonight. You're fortunate.

But, Mr. Minister, you just made a couple of comments about how there should be . . . there's client involvement . . . or necessity for people on assistance.

In your most recent budget you announced 54 new positions in the department. I believe of that, 20 or so were dealing directly with individuals. There was, I believe 9 . . . 25 administrative, 9 managers. And it just seems to me that's fairly heavy on the managerial and the administrative side of the 54 positions.

And I notice that a number of workers basically are suggesting that, really, while you're talking about 54 new positions, a number of those are just ongoing jobs that were there before and have now been turned into permanent positions. So it's not necessarily an increase of workers in the field.

But having said that, Mr. Minister, a couple of other positions . . . points that need to be raised is the area of paratransits. An inquiry came from Saskatoon about the eight special needs buses for 3,000 where Regina has 30 for 3,500 people, and the inquiry was the fact that there seems to be a shortage in Saskatoon. And I don't what the department has done or what efforts are being done to address that question regarding transit needs of special needs people in the Saskatoon area.

And also, Mr. Minister, I'm throwing another one at you, is this conflict of community-based organizations that provide services for handicapped individuals and the contractual problems that have been arising. I know there's about three or four different areas I've hit you with all at once, but I'm wondering if you could let us know what's happening in regards to the negotiations with the CBO (community-based organizations) workers organizations as well and their contracts — the individuals who work in the centres across the province providing care for people on disabilities as we try to move them into more of an independent style of living.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I'm not in a position to comment on issues with respect to paratransit in the cities. That is a question that can be directed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing who has responsibilities for support for paratransit operations in Saskatchewan.

Although I do take an interest in these issues as the Minister Responsible for Disability Issues, I am not in a position, neither do I have the staff, to deal with the detailed questions that the member has in that area.

The member mentioned, almost in disparaging terms, that we had hired 54 staff in the department. Actually there were 60 staff who were hired.

Six of those staff were for our community living division to assist families and individuals throughout Saskatchewan with intellectual disabilities to do the right placement for their future needs. We seem to have an increasing number, I believe, of people being identified as in need of our services and we need people to work with families to provide for the planning.

The other 54 positions are in the child welfare area. About half of those are for front-line workers. And the other half are for front-line . . . almost half are for front-line administrative support.

And I encourage the member not to get caught up in the rhetoric of his own party where they speak in disparaging terms of additional government workers being hired and then make the leap to calling them bureaucrats and administrators as if to say they have no importance.

I might say it's somewhat akin to a person being a jet pilot, a jet pilot who says . . . or you take the position that the jet pilot should somehow be responsible for doing the weather forecasting for his own flight, that the jet pilot should also gas up the plane, that the jet pilot should do all of the maintenance work with respect to the planes, that they should repair the engines and do all of that kind of work.

Well we know that's not the way that it works in the real world. In the real world we provide the jet pilot with on-ground support to ensure that that plane is ready and available for flight when that jet pilot needs it.

And similarly in the area of child welfare, we have taken a position after review with our staff, that our staff have many administrative details that they need to attend to so therefore they took the position, they took the position that they are better served by having the appropriately trained administrative support staff so that they can do the work that they were hired to do, which is child welfare.

Similarly the jet pilot is trained to do the work of flying the plane not sort of pumping the . . . pumping up the flat tires, or doing the engine repair.

That's the position that we take, similar to jet pilots, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Chair, to the minister. Mr. Minister, I just have one question. The last time Social Service estimates were up I was referring to the case of Sandra Richard, who was the foster mother of Karen Quill, and I just have one very specific question and it is: will Social Services give some compensation to Sandra for her loss of income during the year that Social Services put her home on hold as a foster home, in order to compensate her for that time when she did not . . . was not able to earn any income?

Mr. Minister, this was basically due to the neglect of Social Services because Ms. Richard did bring it to the department's attention that in fact there were . . . her home was overcrowded and she was asking for help.

So did the minister reply to Sandra Richard's letter? And will the minister consider compensation for Sandra for that year when she was with no income?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I would generally say, without commenting on specific cases on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, that foster parents, we provide them a fee for services that they provide. We do not provide them income per se, but we contract with them to provide a service and for that we pay them a fee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Subvote (SS01) agreed to.

Subvotes (SS02), (SS03), (SS04), (SS05), (SS06), (SS07), (SS09), (SS10) agreed to.

Vote 36 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 2000-01
General Revenue Fund
Social Services
Vote 36**

Subvote (SS04) agreed to.

Vote 36 agreed to.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to extend a thank you to the officials who have joined us today and over the past number of weeks as we've discussed the issue. And certainly there we could have probably gone into a lot more debate in different areas, but I want to thank the officials for their time and their efforts and wish them a very pleasant summer.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I want to at the outset thank the members opposite for their interest and questions in the area of Social Services. My only regret is that we didn't have more time to explore a department that has many different facets and is doing very many interesting things.

I would also like to thank my staff, not only for attending here but all of the staff of the department for the excellent work that they do, for the leadership that they've shown in a number of areas, for the innovation and effective programming that they provide. And I thank them for that, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you.

**General Revenue Fund
Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs
Vote 30**

Subvote (IA01)

The Chair: — I would recognize the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to introduce the officials.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'd like to introduce the officials from both Intergovernmental Affairs, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Provincial Secretary.

Attending with us today are Brent Cotter, deputy minister; Paul Osborne, ADM (assistant deputy minister); Al Hilton, ADM; Donovan Young, acting ADM; Glen Benedict, director; and Olivia Shumski of the anniversary secretariat.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

welcome to the minister and her officials.

Madam Minister, I wonder if you could comment on the agreement between the federal government and the provincial government here. And I understand there's an agreement called the Social Union Framework Agreement between the feds and the province. Could you tell me about that agreement and tell me if monies are transferred to the province from the federal government, what those monies are allocated for and how in fact those monies are dispersed?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — In response to the member's question, the Social Union Framework Agreement is, as it suggests, a framework agreement between the federal government and the provinces to better facilitate the provision of services to Canadians.

It doesn't transfer money and resources but it is a process of discussion, negotiation, working together to ensure that programs are better provided to Canadians across the country. And in fact this coming week, ministers responsible will be meeting in Winnipeg.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you. Mr. Chair, to the minister. Mr. Minister, from your comments you had indicated that there were no monies that come through from the federal government to the provincial government in this agreement?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — There are no monies coming from the federal government to the provincial government under the Social Union Framework Agreement. Of course there are from various other arrangements and programs from the federal government but not under SUFA (Social Union Framework Agreement).

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Minister, I'm wondering then, if you said there's no money specifically through the agreement but there are other organizations or other ways that money is transferred to the province for specific things, I presume, that would be discussed under the agreement, like education, housing, etc.

So can you clarify for me just how then the federal government transfers money for that and in fact who is allocated that money, how that money is then transferred to the Indian people?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member asks the question, if I understand properly, then under what auspices would money come from the federal government to the provinces and how might that money might be dispersed?

Maybe I'll just give one example. The CHST (Canada Health and Social Transfer) transfers money from the federal government to the provinces for health and social programs for example; not specifically to individuals but to the provinces to administer in accordance with their programs after discussion with the federal government over priorities. But that money comes to the province and is then dispersed by the province through its various programs.

I'm not sure . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . oh, to Aboriginal people.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Through the Chair, I would like to advise the member opposite that Saskatchewan receives funding from the federal government under either CHST or equalization funding that is global funding for programs and services for all Saskatchewan residents and that obviously includes treaty Indians, Métis, non-status Indians.

Under these arrangements there are no specific dollars set aside for Aboriginal people per se, however as the member opposite probably knows from time to time we do receive from the federal government specific funding for things such as Aboriginal court workers.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, I had a visit from one of the chiefs of the bands in Saskatchewan and it's their understanding that there is money transferred specifically for Aboriginal people through this "Social Union Framework Agreement" and they're not convinced that they're seeing it and they're wondering how it's dispersed, so I ask the question on his behalf.

Madam Minister, I have one more question before I'm going to turn the questioning over to my colleague here because he has some very important questions to put forward to you, and it's regarding the First Nations Fund. As you well know we have had some debate in the legislature this session over whether or not the First Nations Fund is public money.

Do you say that the First Nations Fund is public money?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I'd like to advise the member opposite that the issue of whether it's public money or not is to me taking away from the real substantive point. And the substantive point is that the First Nations Fund will be, as a result of the Provincial Auditor's report, will be fully accounted for. And that's the issue that we should be concerned about.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Well, Madam Minister, the substantive point is that if the Provincial Auditor has records of how the money — and if we would consider it public money — was used and if it was used correctly for the purposes intended under the Act, then we would be able to assure the grassroots, rank and file, Indian people of this province that that money is in fact coming to them and they would see the results that they would wish to see from it. At this time many of them are telling me they are not seeing the benefit from that money.

But, Madam Minister, the money from the fund is public money and that's an important thing to underline. It's public money subject to trust law, including disclosure of transfers and expenditures.

Madam Minister, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians is incorporated with the Saskatchewan corporation branch as a non-profit. The fund is controlled and managed by this provincially incorporated body, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians. And there is a section in the corporations Act that stipulates full disclosure in such cases.

So this is something that must be acknowledged and certainly I hope that, as minister, that you relay and make quite clear to those people that you're dealing with when, in fact, there is a

law involved with how the money is to be used.

So, Madam Minister, I just leave that with you. If you'd like to comment on that, you're certainly welcome. Otherwise I will turn the questioning over to the member from Spiritwood.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you very much. I will try to be brief. I want to reiterate, as I have said during question period in the House, that I have received a commitment which I agree with and respect. I have received a very firm commitment from Chief Bellegarde of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations that he will see that the First Nations Fund puts into place all proper accounting procedures.

I also would point out, as the member opposite is aware, that she has received a letter from Chief Perry Bellegarde indicating that proper research on her part would have discovered that First Nations annually undertake a rigorous accounting and audit process. Through this process, First Nations are answerable to government as well as their own citizens for all monies received at the First Nations level. First Nations have been, and will continue to be, accountable to their own people.

Chief Bellegarde then goes on to say . . . I can assure you — referring to the member from Humboldt:

I can assure you and your party, the Saskatchewan Party, that all of the money provided to the fund was properly distributed and that none of the \$34 million are missing or unaccounted for.

He further says:

I would also like to take this opportunity to address your adamant call for a public inquiry into the alleged missing money. Again comments like this do nothing but reaffirm the negative perception that the public already has about First Nations people. I find it extremely irresponsible of your party to contribute to the difficulties and prejudices that our people face daily because it serves your political purposes.

He then says:

On behalf of First Nations in this region, I ask that you and your party be a bit more mindful of the comments you make and the impact, intended or not, they have on our growing First Nations population.

Madam Member, I endorse Chief Bellegarde's letter.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the minister: Madam Minister, putting that letter on record is nothing that's going to be a surprise to anybody. That record . . . that letter has been distributed all over the place. And I have responded to that letter.

I have asked Chief Bellegarde this: I have asked whether you, as minister, gave him the information and the direction that it was his responsibility to ensure that all monies used from the First Nations Fund and all records of those monies were submitted to the Provincial Auditor. Because if you didn't do that, you should have.

(18:00)

I further asked Chief Bellegarde, or made a point to him, that if in fact a rigorous internal audit is taking place — and I substantiate that his words and his assurance of this, I think that is just great. But then if that rigorous audit is taking place, does he have the records associated with how money is spent, then it would seem correct under the corporations Act to make sure that that is handed over to the Provincial Auditor.

So that is the way that you would be accountable to government. Otherwise one cannot say you're going to be accountable to government and not take the steps to ensure that accountability is in place.

I have also mentioned to Chief Bellegarde that there need not be any . . . if a platform for prejudice is not given, if in fact there was open, transparent dealings as far as public money goes, that there will not be any platform for prejudice.

And so, Madam Minister, I make those comments to you. I have, I have openly spoken about this issue with Chief Bellegarde on radio shows and have talked to many, many First Nations people in fact who are asking me, as I've mentioned to you before, have asked me to bring the issue forward, because they want to have an accountability measure in place that will assure them that the money is used for the purposes intended in the Act so that their people can benefit.

So, Madam Minister, I turn the questioning over to my colleague from Spiritwood at this time.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, Mr. Minister, your officials again today. My questioning revolves around the Lac Eau Claire Treaty Land Entitlement, and the Pelican Lake Band Treaty Land Entitlement claim is on that portion of land. And at this time I would like to know if you have the information as to where the claim stands at this time?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you very much. I would like to thank you for that question.

And again, I did want to very briefly answer the member from Humboldt just to make absolutely certain that she realizes and all members of this House realize that the First Nations Fund trustees have a responsibility to ensure accountability and they do have quality independent auditors to assist in putting procedures in place and they are committed to sharing the results of their audit with the Provincial Auditor.

And quite frankly, I wouldn't — if somebody sent me a letter like Chief Bellegarde sent the member from Humboldt — I don't think I would be standing up and being proud of having received that sort of a letter.

Now to the member opposite with respect to Lac Eau Claire and the Pelican Lake, I would like to point out to you that we have addressed occupant interests and we have made available land for sale.

But as you likely know, there is a current issue of disagreement or dispute between the rural municipality of Big River and the Pelican Lake First Nation with respect to the Carlton to Green

Lake Trail. We have offered to put into place a mediation process to resolve that.

The Pelican Lake First Nation as well has agreed to enact a Band bylaw to protect and preserve the heritage of the trail. And I believe that this addresses the key concern of the RM (rural municipality).

So I would be very hopeful that this particular treaty land entitlement matter can be settled fairly shortly.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, in your first regard to the member from Humboldt and your last statement, I will pass that on. And it's maybe just as well she not be here, because we could keep going on for some time tonight.

In regards to what you mentioned regarding the Pelican Lake Indian Band treaty land entitlement and the Carlton Trail portion, that was my next questioning.

The reeve of the RM of Big River, Reeve John Teer mentions that there is an issue regarding the Lac Eau Claire TLE section which includes a portion of the Carlton to Green Lake Trail, and that's what my next questioning is in regards.

And you have mentioned that there's a mediation process right now to try and rectify that problem. At this time can you expound on how long this may or may not take? And how soon the Carlton to Green Lake Trail will be looked at seriously so that the treaty land entitlement will go through with the expansion of that portion of the trail?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Well, I would dearly love to be able to give the member opposite a clear, concise answer on this. Unfortunately as you may or may not know, the issue is still under some dispute, but we do have this mediation process on the go.

I am aware that Sinclair Harrison of the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) met today with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I have offered to meet with Mr. Harrison on July 19 or 20 depending on his schedule and availability.

We are very hopeful that we will be able to find a way round the impasse. As I mentioned, the Pelican Lake First Nation has agreed — and I think this is important information for people to know — they have agreed to enact a band bylaw to protect and preserve the heritage of the trail.

And I do believe that addresses the main concern of the RM. However I will certainly, as I said, I will be meeting with Mr. Harrison, and if members of the RM want to meet with me as well, I will.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, Madam Minister. Thank you for that answer. I think the people in and around the RM of Big River will look forward to that answer.

I just want to go into . . . further in regards to Mr. Sinclair being at this meeting with you in regarding this matter. Is there any thought of having the reeve and maybe some councillors from

Big River attend this meeting also because they actually deal with the process and the problem to begin with, rather than also Mr. Harrison?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Well, again I thought I had indicated that. But I have not had a request from the RM of Big River to meet with me directly. However, I am more than willing to sit down with them at their convenience, within the next few weeks to discuss the matter.

I have an open door policy in my office and that applies equally to RM councillors and Reeves as it does to members of First Nations. So if they wish to meet with me to discuss the matter, I am more than willing to meet with them.

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Chair, I have a question that I believe would pertain to both ministers here this afternoon.

It has to do with the treaty land entitlement settlement process. I'm aware of at least two RMs who are, find themselves in a very difficult situation because of this process. The situation is this.

The RM of Edenwold and the RM of Cupar both . . . the Piapot Band has purchased land under both treaty land entitlements, specific land claims, in both RMs. The land is in the holding company. In the case of the RM of Edenwold, there is some \$181,000 in tax arrears against that land. In the case of the RM of Cupar, there's some \$47,000 worth of tax arrears.

Now part of those two figures, there's also some charges by the RM for weed control that they were forced to do under the noxious weed control Act and so on.

What remedies are available to these RMs to collect these taxes?

Also I would like to make the ministers aware, in the case of the RM of Edenwold, there was some land that was transferred from the, from the holding company and went to reserve status with \$24,000 worth of tax arrears owing against that land. The RM has not been able to collect those, to recover those taxes. And they are, they are quite concerned about this situation.

And I'm first of all wondering, are the ministers aware of this situation? And if so, what are the remedies available to the RMs?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would like to advise the member opposite that I did actually meet with various representatives, I believe it was from the RM of Edenwold and with the SARM board of directors about this matter and others, so certainly I am aware of it.

With respect to the first issue you raised about the \$180,000, that matter is before the courts so it would be improper for me to comment on it.

With respect to the second matter that you raised, we have offered the services of a mediator and we are trying to find some resolution for both the RM and the First Nation.

Mr. Hart: — Madam Minister, does the province not feel they

have a responsibility in this area. They were part of the negotiation process and the RMs . . . I believe SARM had an observer status. The local municipalities and the ratepayers within those municipalities are now caught in this situation where if they are not able to collect these taxes it'll be a huge revenue loss to both RMs.

And what I am seeking is some assurance from your government that at the end of the day, if these two RMs are not able to collect these taxes, that your government will come to their aid. Can you give those RMs that assurance?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Well I appreciate what you're doing. And I do want to point out that all of us, First Nations and non-Aboriginal people, have to live together in this province and we have to find appropriate resolution to various issues including the matter of non-payment of taxes.

But I don't think you would come to me if you had a constituent in your riding who was refusing to pay his or her taxes and ask me to make a commitment on behalf of the provincial government to pay those property taxes.

So I can't make the commitment that you want from me. What I can say is we do have a mediator involved and the federal government has indicated that it will refuse to allow this land to attain reserve status until and unless the taxes are paid.

(18:15)

So I think that the processes are in place through the mediator and through the various safeguards that the federal government is putting into place to eventually resolve this issue. And it would be my hope that both the Piapot First Nation and the two RMs involved can continue to be good neighbours to each other.

Mr. Hart: — Madam Minister, the RMs and the band are working together to try and solve this problem, but you indicated that if a ratepayer in one of the municipalities refused to pay his taxes, I certainly wouldn't expect the provincial government to come to the municipality's aid. But the municipality could acquire ownership of the land.

The municipality, particularly in the RM of Edenwold's case, where that land has already gone into reserve status, will not be able to attain ownership. And so therefore if those tax arrears cannot be collected, the ratepayers of that municipality will be left holding the bag.

The provincial government negotiated with the federal government, along with the First Nations of this province, to set this process in place and what's happening here is that the local ratepayers are being left out in the cold. They're holding the bag on these tax arrears. And they have nowhere to turn but to the governments that negotiated the original agreement. And so what they are doing or asking for is some assurance from your government so . . . giving them an insurance that they won't be left out in the cold and come up short with those dollars in tax arrears.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I can appreciate that the member opposite did not appreciate my example of a private citizen not paying

taxes, so I'm going to try it again. I want to say we have offered to provide the services of a mediator in this dispute, and we are very hopeful that we will be able to find an answer to this, both for the RMs involved and for the First Nation involved. But we do not, as a provincial government, establish the rules with respect to seizure of land from reserves — that's the federal government.

So the solution that you would want to pursue must properly ought to be pursued with the federal government, not the provincial government.

Having said that, I am not washing my hands of the matter. I am saying that we will provide mediation services and we will attempt to have the RM or the RMs involved be able to eventually recover this money that, that they say is owing to them.

Mr. Hart: — Madam Minister, I don't think we can let your government off the hook quite this easily. The RMs are a creature of the provincial government and therefore they are looking for some protection from the provincial government in this matter.

They certainly, they are willing to work through the mediation process and all those sorts of things, but what they're asking for at the end of the day, if none of the solutions work: are they going to be left holding the bag and lose those tax arrears? And are the local ratepayers of those municipalities going to have to carry that burden on their shoulders when it should be the responsibility of at least of all the people of this province if not all the people of this country?

And that's all they're asking for is an assurance from your government. Will you be there with them at the end of the day if all these processes fail, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Again I'm going to try this. The complaint it seems to me is with Canada, not with the provincial government. Our obligations under the TLE process are to Canada. But we expect that other people's, other parties' obligations will be fulfilled, and we are hopeful that this will happen.

It seems to me though that the RMs in question ought properly to be going to the federal government for a resolution on this. And again the provincial government is providing the services of a mediator. We're not trying to leave them hanging out there. We are mindful of their concerns; we are mindful of the money that's owing. And we are fairly confident through the processes that have been established that the RMs will be able to recover the money that's owing to them from the First Nation.

Mr. Hart: — Madam Minister, you should know that the RMs tried to negotiate a tax compensation package under the specific land claims with Ottawa and they were told by Ottawa that Ottawa wouldn't do that because it's provincial . . . they deal with the provincial government.

So now what you're telling the RMs is going to Ottawa. Well, that doesn't work, Madam Minister.

So basically what you're saying here today is that the RMs and

the ratepayers of the RMs are left on their own and you're not willing to stand by them, Madam Minister. That's the message that's coming through loud and clear.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Through the Chair, the only thing I can say is that the member is wrong when he says that there's no compensation for tax loss for specific claims. There is a specific claims agreement that has been signed by SARM, endorsed by SARM, the money was paid to SARM with the agreement that it would be transferred to the municipalities as specific claims get resolved. And last year SARM, SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), and the Saskatchewan conservation and development authorities agreed to the package and it was in excess of \$4 million.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I just want to take this opportunity to thank the ministers and their officials today for the answers that we received.

Subvote(IA01) agreed to.

Subvotes (IA02), (IA14), (IA15), (IA16) agreed to.

Vote 30 agreed to.

Supplementary Estimates 2000-01
General Revenue Fund
Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs
Vote 30

Subvote (IA16) agreed to.

Vote 30 agreed to.

General Revenue Fund
Culture, Youth and Recreation
Vote 27

Subvote (CR01)

The Deputy Chair: — I'll invite the minister to introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Beside me is Ken Pontikes, acting deputy minister. To his left, Jill McKeen, executive director, corporate development. To my right, Emile St. Amand, director of sport and recreation; Larry Chaykowski, executive director, finance, administration, and facilities; and Jocelyn Souliere, staffing and classification services.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair, and welcome to the minister and officials. In the interest of time, I will be brief. If your answers will be the same, we won't be here very long. I have a whole pile of questions and I think I'll forego most of them, but I will ask you a few.

On the film industry, Mr. Deputy Chair, to the minister, I understand that a deal has been announced about a sound stage. Could the minister tell me what role the Culture, Youth and Recreation has played in this? And if it did, as to how many

dollars?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I'll thank the member for the question. In actual fact there is no final determination yet about whether that project will go forward. But we do, through the department, administer the film tax credit, provide the funding to SaskFILM, which provides support to Saskatchewan filmmakers. And that would be our major role in the industry.

But certainly are supportive of the project and hopeful that the various levels of government will be able to come together to make this happen so that we can have more benefit of film production in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Madam Minister. So there's no direct dollars — I may have missed the first part — there's no direct dollars from Culture, Youth, Recreation that was going into the sound stage?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — There isn't.

(18:30)

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Madam Minister, this might be a follow-on to it and you may not have an answer for it, but it has been announced that the sound stage is going ahead, and I know that the film industry is maybe played between your department and other departments, but it's a sizeable chunk of dollars that's been announced going into it. And I'm wondering if there's been any assurances from the film industry to you or your department for some kind of a long-range commitment for the dollars that we're putting into this?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — In actual fact, this project has been substantially driven out of the Regina Economic Development Authority. And there were business studies done and feasibility studies, and it appears as though the project, which is really more than a sound stage — I like to refer to it as an education broadcasting production centre — which links a number of other investments that have been made in CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) and SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network) and SaskFILM and some private entrepreneurs in the film and production area into a single site to maximize that relationship.

And in looking at that proposal and all the people that were consulted in developing it, it's right now projected that there would be at least 80 per cent occupancy, which would mean that the project should run firmly in the black.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — That sounds good, Madam Minister.

I've got a couple of questions now on lotteries, if I may, Mr. Deputy Chair. And it is my understanding that of every lottery dollar that's spent in Saskatchewan, 13 cents go to something called the government payments. Can you tell us how much this amounts to on a yearly basis?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The amount that I think you're referring to — correct me if I'm wrong — is we do have a licensing fee that's nine and a half per cent of sales, which amounts to 11.8 million.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Madam Minister. And may I ask how that money is used?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — That money flows into the General Revenue Fund and is part of setting the priorities of the budget right across government. So without tracking each dollar, some of it may have been spent on highways, some of it may have been spent on health care, but it's spent on the general budgetary purposes of government.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — So in absolute fairness, I guess, it's really a hidden tax on the lottery system. Beyond this 13 cents, there's another 2 cents in administration fees. How much do you take in annually on this 2 cents in administration fees?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We're not clear what your question is.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well the information I have is that beyond the 13 cents that we referred to, or 11.8, there's an additional 2 cents on every dollar that is charged for an administration fee. Is this correct?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We can't find the 2 cents you're referring to, but while I'm on my feet I will mention that we are, I think, the only province in Canada that just transfers all the lottery money directly to sports, recreation, and culture while only retaining nine and a half per cent. So I would say there's nothing hidden about this whole process. In fact it's a very generous process.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Madam Minister, just a couple of questions on youth. Besides the hiring program that we discussed in one of our previous sittings, can you tell me if there's any other initiatives that your department is planning to promote youth employment and training, other than the hiring program for the summer?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — There's actually a couple of things underway and some things anticipated for the future. At the moment of course we have the summer employment program which is attempting to — and I think quite successfully — link people to career opportunities.

But as well, we're doing a project with the Labour Force Development Board because in their work — and as you know the Labour Force Development Board is a board co-chaired by business and labour to look at emerging labour force issues in Saskatchewan — in their work with students in the schools, they determined that students had a very poor understanding of what the opportunities are in Saskatchewan and couldn't even name what the major sectors of economic activity were in the province.

So they have a project going to help inform students of where the growth sectors are in the Saskatchewan economy so that students can be thoughtful about choosing their careers and understanding what kind of opportunities that exist in the province for them.

And also for the future, there's two other areas that I plan to be putting emphasis on. One is the development of more supports to youth who choose entrepreneurship as a course. And myself, the Minister of Economic Development, and Post-Secondary

Education had previously established but are working on some renewal on a youth PACE (Provincial Action Committee on the Economy), which will basically be young entrepreneurs and young people interested in business directions.

And as well to look more broadly at what opportunities exist in rural Saskatchewan, urban, and the North, for more structured leadership development opportunities for youth.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Madam Minister, Mr. Deputy Chair. That was my next question, you already answered it, thank you.

Madam Minister, if it's appropriate, the rest of the questions I have are long and drawn-out, and if you would agree, I would just like to forward them to you and ask that if you would do a written reply, at some time, rather than go through all of them right now.

If you would be agreeable to that, I'll just send them to you at a later date.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And if I could also offer it to the member opposite, if at some point you wanted to meet and discuss what you thought were some of the priorities and to have a bit of a dialogue about this, we'd certainly be happy to do that.

We have very good staff in the department, and I think there's some exciting opportunities ahead and we'd be interested in having your input into that. So certainly I agree to answer the member's questions at any time that he might bring them forward.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Madam Minister, and one last one. When we spoke, I believe it was our first chance at estimates, we'd talked about cultural grants. And I may be wrong here, so excuse me if I am, but I understood that there was a methodology of cultural grants because I'd spoke about two places specific in my area.

And I'm recollecting — I couldn't find it in *Hansard* where you were going to provide me the methodology whereby these people could apply for it. And as yet I haven't received that. And I don't know if I understood you correctly at that time or not, if there is a method whereby they can apply for the cultural grants.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — It's our understanding that response is on its way to you, hopefully not by Pony Express but some quicker method. And so you should be receiving that shortly.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Madam Minister. And if it comes by Pony Express, it goes along with the theme of the park that they're trying to establish in Willow Bunch.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you, Madam Minister, and your staff for the answers to the questions that we've put forward in the last few weeks on behalf of all of us on this side, and especially from my position as the critic for Youth, Culture and Recreation. So I'd like to thank you very much.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — And I'd like to thank the member

opposite for his interest in this area, and also all the people from the department who have worked to assist in answering the questions and keep this department on the path of growth and development.

Subvote (CR01) agreed to.

Subvotes (CR02), (CR05), (CR03), (CR04), (CR06) agreed to.

Vote 27 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 2000-01
General Revenue Fund
Culture, Youth and Recreation
Vote 27**

Subvotes (CR04), (CR06) agreed to.

Vote 27 agreed to.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you all very much.

**General Revenue Fund
Energy and Mines
Vote 23**

Subvotes (EM01), (EM02), (EM03), (EM04), (EM05), (EM06), (EM07) agreed to.

Vote 23 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 2000-01
General Revenue Fund
Energy and Mines
Vote 23**

Subvote (EM03) agreed to.

Vote 23 agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

(18:45)

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Chairman, leave to return to motions for return (debatable).

Leave granted.

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Debatable)

Return No. 1

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers, the order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 1 showing:

To the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs: the government's expenditure for Team Canada's trip to China in 2001.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, we now have the answer and I recommend we pass the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 2

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 2 showing:

To the Minister of Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation: (1) the cost incurred to send the former Premier to Vancouver on Executive Air as part of the Team Canada Trade Mission in 2001; (2) the names of those who accompanied the former Premier on this trip and the cost.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We now have an answer and I recommend we pass the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 57

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy, that an order of the Assembly to issue for return no. 57 showing:

To the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation: (1) the amount that was spent on salaries by ISC during the year 2000; and (2) the amount of this salary expense that was related to ISC's Land and Geomatics services and the amount of this salary expense that was related to other activities of ISC.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, we now have the answer. I recommend we pass the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 58

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Redberry Lake, that an order of the Assembly do issue a return no. 58 showing:

To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: (1) the total amount of grants-in-lieu paid, or to be paid by the province to the city of Regina for all provincial government-owned properties in the city; (2) that the amount paid, or to be paid, in grants-in-lieu to the school system in Regina for provincial government-owned property with the city for the current fiscal year; (3) whether the provincial government received a tax notice or grant-in-lieu notice from the city of Regina or the school divisions in the city for the current fiscal year and, if so, in what amount for each; (4) if the provincial government was subject to property taxation, the amount it would owe individually to the city of Regina and the school divisions in Regina for the current fiscal year.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, we now have the answer and we recommend we pass the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 65

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the member from Lloydminster that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 65 showing:

To the Minister of Northern Affairs: (1) the non-profit and community-based organizations that received funding from the office of Northern Affairs in the 2000-2001 fiscal year; (2) the amount that each of these organizations received.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, we now have the answer and I recommend we pass the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 67

Ms. Bakken: — I move seconded by the member from Swift Current that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 67 showing:

To the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation: (1) since, and including, 1996, the number of SaskPower employees that have been dismissed without cause; (2) the amount of total severance that has been paid to these dismissed employees; (3) the number of severance agreements that were accompanied by a gag order.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, we now have the answer and I recommend we pass the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 68

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Rosetown-Biggar that an order of the Assembly do issue for the return no. 68 showing:

To the Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development: the number of forestry jobs that have been created in Northern Saskatchewan since April 1, 2000 and what the actual figures are for the number of forestry jobs in Northern Saskatchewan on that date and the actual number currently.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move the following:

That we amend return no. 68 by deleting all the words after "to the Minister of Economic Development" and substitute the following:

Based on the four major forestry projects and many smaller projects in the forestry and forestry-related sectors, the amount of new investment that has taken place and the number of new jobs created since April 2000.

And seconded by . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — State your point of order.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, an amendment to a motion must in some way relate to the main motion. I guess the use of the word forestry in the motion would perhaps qualify it. But the original motion dealt with forestry jobs, Mr. Speaker, and the amendment in no way, shape, or form deals with jobs.

(19:00)

The Speaker: — I thank the member for his comments on raising the point of order. I would just reread the amendment as it is. The amendment reads:

To the Minister of Economic Development: that based on the four major forestry projects and many smaller projects in the forestry and forestry-related sectors, the amount of new investment that has taken place and the number of new jobs created since April 2000.

I would interpret that the item, new jobs, refers to jobs in the forestry sector; therefore I found the motion in order.

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 70

Mr. Heppner: — I move, seconded by the member for Cannington, an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 70 showing:

To the Minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority: Provide the exact terms of reference of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's investigation of the former Minister of Liquor and Gaming.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would recommend that we defeat this motion for a number of reasons. The most important and significant reason is that the Conflict of Interest Commissioner is in fact an officer of this Assembly. And it is not the purview of any member of this Assembly to direct an independent officer of the Assembly in any way.

So based on the responsibility of this Assembly to that individual, I recommend we defeat this motion.

Motion negatived.

Return No. 71

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Saltcoats, an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 71 showing:

To the Minister of Labour: Whether the Workers' Compensation Board pays to fly P.C. Consul, vice-president of human resources, technology and corporate support, back and forth from Calgary every weekend; and if so, the amount that this has cost so far and when it began?

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recommend that we defeat this motion because of the personal issues related to the individual being asked about. And in this motion I am going to recommend to the Assembly that this motion be defeated. And I believe the member has been briefed on what those reasons were.

Motion negatived.

The Assembly adjourned at 19:06.