

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan concerned about certain inadequacies in the provincial tobacco legislation. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately amend tobacco legislation that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of any tobacco products; and furthermore, anyone found guilty of such an offence would be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition is signed by the good citizens of Carrot River, Nipawin, Shoal Lake, and The Pas, Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

I so present.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition on behalf of a lot of our senior citizens in Saskatchewan who are concerned with where this particular government's going. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

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

And this is signed by good people from Saskatoon, from Osler, and from Rosthern.

I so present.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present petitions on behalf of citizens throughout the province who would like to see all 49 recommendations of the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade implemented immediately. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately implement all 49 recommendations of the final report as submitted by the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade.

And the signatories on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Humboldt and Bruno.

I so present.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens who are concerned about the exorbitant long-term care fee increases. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

Signatures on this petition today, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of St. Brieux, Saskatoon, and Melfort.

I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to work with the federal government, First Nations representatives, and with other provincial governments to bring about a resolution in the Lake of the Prairies situation and to ensure that our natural resources as a whole are used in a responsible manner by all people in the future.

The signators, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Churchbridge, Esterhazy, and Langenburg.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens that are very concerned about the state of the highways, particularly Highway No. 35, and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to make the necessary repairs to Highway 35 in the Indian Head-Milestone constituency in order to prevent injury or loss of life and to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in that area.

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

And this is signed by citizens of Wilcox, Tyvan, Francis, Craven, and even Regina.

I so present. Thank you.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the tobacco legislation, and the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately amend tobacco legislation that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of any tobacco products; and furthermore anyone found guilty of such an offence would be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Weyburn, Port McNeill, BC (British Columbia), Congress, Yellow Grass, Trossachs.

I so present.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of the concerned residents of southwest Saskatchewan. And the issue they're concerned about today are changes that have been made to the drug plan in the province of Saskatchewan. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reinstate a reasonable annual deductible amount for prescription drugs in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the city of Swift Current and the small community of Neville, south of Swift Current.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with a petition with citizens from the town of Findlater concerned about snowmobile policy in Saskatchewan. Prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to recognize the financial savings that could be made by contracting to Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association to groom provincial trails and obtain funding for this which through the sale of provincially owned grooming equipment, mandatory trail permits on Crown land in the provincial parks, attachment of trail permits to snowmobile registration.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition with the citizens concerned about the deplorable state of Highway No. 15, and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to use a portion of its highway budget to address the concerns of the serious condition of Highway 15 for the Saskatchewan residents.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And the petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from Regina, Kenaston, Watrous, Weyburn, Calgary, Winnipeg, Lethbridge, Cold Lake, and there's even one signature from Germany, Mr. Speaker, and they also added a footnote, "I drove it and was appalled."

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly an honour to be able to rise in this Assembly and present a petition on behalf of constituents concerned with the recent changes to crop insurance. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to halt its plans to take money out of the crop insurance program and hike farmers' crop insurance premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

And the signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from my hometown of Cupar.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also have the privilege of rising in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition of citizens concerned about our health care. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reinstate a reasonable annual deductible amount for prescription drugs in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the good town of Spiritwood.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are received as addendums to sessional papers no. 7, 8, 11, 16, 17, 18, and 24.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Finance: (1) what are the names of all separately identified and/or separately named funds administered directly or indirectly by your department; (2) how many of these funds had surplus and/or retained earnings at the conclusion of the 2001-2002 fiscal year and what was the amount of the surplus in each case; (3) which of these funds had some or a portion of their surpluses taken away through government action and how much money was affected in each case; (4) in each case where the government took some or all of the surplus of one of these funds, what is the money being used for; (5) what programs previously paid out of the department budget are now being paid with surpluses from one of these funds; (6) which positions in the public service that were being funded through the department budget are now being funded through one of these funds or with the proceeds from these funds?

And, Mr. Speaker, I also respectfully submit 16 similar questions for various other departments. Thank you.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 23 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization: will the waterfowl and wildlife damage compensation program be administered through the Department of Agriculture; if not, which department will be responsible for administering the program?

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Highways and Transport: how much was the total cost of removal and installation of the two culverts west of Spiritwood on Highway No. 3 in the 2001 year?

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I shall give notice that I shall on day no. 23 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for SERM: in the event of a subsurface propane spill of 2,000 or more gallons of propane, what regulations for cleanup are required by SERM in the short term and what requirements are in place for cleaning up the environment before the said property could be sold?

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 23 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for SGI: does SGI have any special arrangements with Hi-Alta Capital that would be unavailable to any other insurance brokers currently doing business in Saskatchewan?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly a group of 23 grade 7 and 8 students from the Cupar School that are seated in your east gallery, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they are accompanied by their teacher, Miss Glenda Elliott; chaperone Miss Colleen Dinsmore, and bus driver Albert Sakal.

I will be meeting with them after they view the proceedings of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly a group — and I think at this point I'd describe them as very patient public servants — who are touring the legislature and are now seated in your gallery. We had a slightly longer preamble today than usual.

The participants are employees from the Department of Government Relations, Industry and Resources, Health, Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization, Finance, Social Services, the Public Service Commission, Crown Investments

Corporation, Executive Council, and the Legislative Library.

And I look forward to meeting with this group after question period, and I'm sure that all the members want to join me in welcoming them today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition I, too, would like to welcome the public servants to the legislature today and I hope you enjoy the proceedings.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the rest of this House an esteemed guest that we have here from Manitoba today who is behind the bar on our side. This is Minister Steve Ashton. He's Minister of Transportation and Government Services, and Minister Responsible for Gaming for Manitoba, and is here for the Gaming Commission — pardon me the gaming meetings here, conference.

And I would also like to just note that Mr. Ashton has been a member of the legislature in Manitoba since 1981, and I would ask all to join in welcoming him here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition we, too, would like to welcome the minister from Manitoba, Mr. Steve Ashton, who is visiting with us today. This morning, myself, and some other members of our caucus also had the opportunity to meet with the minister of liquor and gaming from the province of Alberta who is also in Regina attending the gaming conference.

So again, welcome to our Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, seated in the east gallery there are 13 students from my constituency. They are from the Shellbrook and District Homeschoolers, and I welcome them here today. They've had some vehicle difficulty getting down here — and it is a way from Shellbrook down here — but they are here, and I welcome and I will meet with them after the question period.

And I just want to reiterate, question period every now and again gets a little lively and today will be no exception.

So I want to say welcome to the chairpersons, Steve Clark, Marcella Teichrob, and Mr. and Mrs. — now correct me if I'm wrong in the pronunciation — Lepard, and I would welcome them here and ask all members to welcome them here also.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce some very special people in my life to you and to all members of the House.

Seated in the east gallery is my father and my stepmother, Peter and Sophie Krawetz from Invermay, and Sophie's daughter, Yvonne Mackie is also in attendance today. Yvonne, of course, is a long-time registered nurse here in the city of Regina.

My dad is . . . has been a long advocate of municipal affairs and has been involved in municipal government, and I know he watches almost every day and makes sure that my tie is straight and everything else. And he lets me know whether or not I have used the correct words in my questions.

So I would ask all members to welcome very special people to the Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

More Good News for Saskatchewan

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hang on, here's some more good news for Saskatchewan. Good news as reported yesterday on private sector radio by independent commentator, Paul Martin — Saskatchewan's Paul Martin, not Ottawa's.

What did Mr. Martin have to say? Well, for openers, he said that so far this year equipment manufacturers are enjoying a robust year. Shipments are up more than 30 per cent in the first quarter. Manufacturing, he said, seems to be in the midst of something of a resurgence.

What else did he have to say, Mr. Speaker? I could have written it myself, Mr. Speaker, but I didn't. Martin did. He said, quote:

Underlying all this is a high level of confidence in the manufacturing community in Saskatchewan. When StatsCanada recently polled business on its investment intentions — a sign of confidence in the economy — this province's manufacturers seemed downright giddy. They were projecting a 200% increase in their investment plans for the coming year. In fact, the figures in this sector were so strong, Saskatchewan is now projecting the highest growth in capital investment in the country this year.

When a cautious, clear-thinking, measured commentator like Paul Martin uses words like robust, resurgence, and giddy to describe what's happening in our province, you have to assume that the signals for growth are pretty strong, Mr. Speaker.

So who do we trust, Mr. Speaker? Paul Martin or the members opposite?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Humboldt Resident Receives Caring Canadian Award

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I would like to congratulate Norman Duerr of Humboldt. Norman is one of 72 recipients of the Caring Canadian Awards as was announced

by Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson in Ottawa.

A career teacher, Norman Duerr spent hours with his students putting on dramatic performances of the highest quality. An activity he has continued even after his retirement. Mr. Duerr directed a number of fund-raising plays and performances to help Saint Elizabeth's Hospital Foundation. He has also worked tirelessly researching local heritage sites and speaking to various organizations on the benefits of preserving Humboldt's heritage.

Following a trip to Terracina, Brazil, Mr. Duerr organized a Toys for Terracina campaign that netted some \$100,000 worth of toys for the city's street children.

The Governor General's Caring Canadian Award is presented to people and groups whose voluntary contributions provide extraordinary help to people in the community. Recipients will normally have served their communities over a number of years and will not have been previously been recognized by a national or a provincial honour.

The award consists of a framed certificate and a lapel with a symbol representing Canadians, who selflessly give of their time and energy to others.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating Norman Duerr of Humboldt, a very worthy recipient of this award.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Envista Technologies

Ms. Jones: — Mr. Speaker, another innovative Saskatchewan company doing innovative things at Innovation Place in my constituency.

Envista Technologies was recently awarded a United Nations five-year funded project to design, develop, and implement a comprehensive environmental data management, reporting and assessment system for the government of Kuwait. The project started two years ago at a trade show in Vancouver and will incorporate a multi-theme relational data management system that encompasses the technical, legal, and administrative aspects.

With the assistance of STEP, Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, Envista was selected during an international competition. Envista's vice-president, Kevin Clifton, accredits Envista's complete system solution for why Envista was selected. The complete solution is a multi-level design and development directive that will instruct the Kuwaiti government through each stage of the system's development.

The five-year project will involve a diversified team of specialists in environmental management, information technology, environmental sciences, and training.

Mr. Speaker, this is another example of how the public sector creates the environment and the private sector thrives, allowing our province to achieve excellence in new areas of our vibrant, diversified economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Editorial in *The Melville Advance*

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read from a recent editorial in *The Melville Advance*. The headline reads, and I'm quoting, Mr. Speaker: "Arthur Andersen, meet Lorne Calvert."

The fifth largest accounting firm in the world, Chicago-based Arthur Andersen . . . knows what happens when jiggery-pokery finds its way to the balance sheet.

Andersen knowingly ignored problems on the balance sheet . . . abrogating (his) responsibility to provide accurate information to Enron stakeholders.

The result is . . . not only . . . Andersen's future (is) in peril . . . so too are the futures of thousands of Enron employees and investors who believed they were getting the straight goods.

And I'm quoting, Mr. Speaker:

That's a point . . . Lorne Calvert should keep in mind . . .

While the budget would be "balanced" according to the definition of the NDP government, the actual facts suggest we're hundreds of millions of dollars in the red and political sleight of hand by (this) government isn't going to change that.

While most would see the whole picture as a \$225 million budget deficit that uses a \$225 million loan to bring the budget to zero, the Calvert government prefers to see its budget as balanced.

The Calvert government has chosen not to . . . let the true state of affairs be shown, evidenced by its trying to masquerade a deficit budget as a balanced budget.

It's what Arthur Andersen would have done (Mr. Speaker).

Mr. Speaker, now everyone knows the books won't balance for the second straight year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Four Directions Film and Video Festival

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last session I was proud to bring to the Assembly's attention the formation of an Aboriginal youth drama group in my constituency whose purpose is to promote community development and social improvement through an aggressive and thoughtful use of the arts.

This group already has been instrumental in creating and presenting two major dramatic productions as well as several workshops. And they are at it again, Mr. Speaker.

Last night at the McKenzie Art Gallery I attended . . .

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

I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone. You've got another minute.

Mr. McCall: — Encore performance, Mr. Speaker. This group is at it again. Last night at the McKenzie Art Gallery, I attended the production of a play called *The Longest Bus Ride*. And we all know how much we like bus rides on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. It was performed by the cast of the 4 Directions Youth Theatre Group.

This play, incidentally, was part of this week's Four Directions Film and Video Festival, the first edition of what its sponsors hope will be an annual event to engage First Nations youth in the appreciation and process of film and video-making. Films and discussions have been taking place throughout the city at several venues, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to talk about the group. *The Longest Bus Ride* was directed by Mark Dieter and was put together collectively by the cast with the assistance of renowned guest artist Gary Farmer. The play follows eight Aboriginal youth as they journey across Canada to Ottawa for a rally.

It was a great show, Mr. Speaker, and I want to give a quick shout out to the excellent cast: James Donais, Ryan Atimoyoo, Kristen Friday, Tania Alexson, Tara Black Sioux, Jenny Labelle, Gabe Kinistino, and Candy Fox.

There's a crow hop wrap-up tonight, Mr. Speaker. A good time will be had by all and I encourage all members to get on down to the Exchange. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Girvin United Church Fire

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with sorrow that I inform this House of a tragedy that occurred in my constituency early this morning. The United Church in Girvin burnt to the ground around 3:30 a.m.

This beautiful old church was built in the early 1920s and reflected the heart and soul of this rural community. Over the years, this church was a centre of community activities, gatherings where fellowship was enjoyed by hundreds of families in the Girvin area.

Sadly, as the community declined in population and became more centred in the community of Davidson, seven miles north, the congregation had dropped to about 20 members.

In January of this year, a board of trustees was established to begin the tough task of closing this elegant old church. My constituency assistant, Clark Puckett, is vice-chairman of this board who told me this morning that it had been a difficult task to follow the process of itemizing the contents of the church. Any of the older church members have strong emotional ties to this church community. The loss of this church has been devastating to them.

Mr. Puckett indicated the church had scheduled the last service for June 30 and the contents and the church itself would be sold on August 10. So this has been . . . understandably come as a severe blow to the entire Girvin United Church community to see their church burn to the ground.

At 6:30 today, there will be a memorial service conducted at this site by the Minister of the Davidson-Girvin Pastoral Charge, Reverend Nobuko Iwai, to begin the process of healing those deeply hurt by this tragedy.

I would ask that all of the members of the House join me in a show of support to the Girvin United Church during this sad time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Housing Starts Rise

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More good news, more good economic news for Saskatchewan. Today I would like to draw all members' attention to housing starts throughout this province. Economists tell us that growth of the housing construction is a good indicator of a robust and vibrant economy.

We heard yesterday from the member from Saskatoon Eastview about how manufacturing is growing all over Saskatoon, another indication of a growing economy.

Mr. Speaker, housing starts rose in Regina by 33 per cent in the first quarter of the year with a total of 102 starts, and Saskatoon followed suit by reporting an increase of more than 50 per cent, to 224 starts. Across the province, housing starts increased by 38 per cent in the first three months of 2001.

Mr. Speaker, an increase in home construction further indicates that there are families in this province and they are choosing to live and to work here.

Quoting Mr. Ken McKinlay from the Saskatchewan Home Builders' Association:

There's optimism especially in Saskatoon, we don't see anything that would change that.

However, Mr. Speaker, there is still more good news. The Bank of Montreal commodity index rose 9 per cent in March; gains in the oil and gas commodity index will help to further strengthen and solidify our economic position.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, a growing demand for Saskatchewan goods leads to a consumer confidence which in turns leads to consumer spending as we see in recent home building figures. Good news indeed for Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Financial Effect on Agriculture of Government Policies

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, farm

families throughout the province are just now starting to realize the full impact of the NDP's cancellation of the property tax rebate and the NDP's massive increase in crop insurance premiums. I received a letter, Mr. Speaker, from Arden Roulston, a Langenburg area farmer, and he writes:

The combined cost of . . . (the) two program changes will result in a total increase of (get this, Mr. Speaker) 21,860 dollars.

That's how the NDP is helping farm families — by taking thousands of dollars out of their pockets.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP jacking up crop insurance premiums and farm property taxes by thousands of dollars? Why is the NDP once again attacking farm families?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to take the question from the new Ag critic, Mr. Speaker, and I want to say to the member opposite, first of all, that in Saskatchewan today these are the numbers regarding the crop insurance program. And for the last several weeks, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite and that party has been misleading Saskatchewan farmers in a major way.

And let me tell you . . .

(14:00)

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I'd just ask all the members to measure their language very carefully — using words which they know have been ruled unparliamentary in the past.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the party opposite has been advising farmers about what the costs and the returns of the crop insurance program have been, which, Mr. Speaker, have been exaggerated by an extensive way.

Let me tell you this, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that if I just look, Mr. Speaker, at the Saskatchewan spring red wheat, Mr. Speaker, the average liability this year over last year has gone from \$95 per acre to this year it's gone to \$102 per acre. So the increase of coverage has gone up, Mr. Speaker, by somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$7. It's gone up, though, Mr. Speaker. And the premium, Mr. Speaker, has gone up accordingly.

When you take a look at durum wheat, Mr. Speaker, durum has gone from \$92 per acre to \$111 per acre. And when you take a look at canola, Mr. Speaker, canola has gone from \$94 an acre to \$138 an acre, Mr. Speaker. And they've been saying that coverage per acre hasn't gone up at all. On all of the grains and oilseeds, Mr. Speaker, the cost per acre on every commodity, Mr. Speaker, per acreage cover has gone up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. The farmers of Saskatchewan know the one thing that has gone up is their costs because of that

government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, Arden Roulston sat down and figured out exactly how much the NDP is taking out of his pocket this year. His crop insurance premiums are up 35 per cent. That doesn't include the spot loss hail which will bring the total increase up to 77 per cent. That's a total increase of \$17,700 just to get the same coverage he had last year, Mr. Speaker. Plus the NDP's cancellation of the property tax rebate will cost him another \$4,100 for a total increase of nearly \$22,000.

Mr. Speaker, that's just one farm in Saskatchewan. Every farm in Saskatchewan is getting hit with the same kind of increase.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP Saskatchewan government attacking farm families with thousands and thousands of dollars in increased costs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — I just want to point out to the members opposite today that when we talk about what's happening in agriculture, Mr. Speaker — and that's what this member is talking about here today, Mr. Speaker — on this side of the House, not more than four or five months ago, our Premier sent the report, which is a report to all of the premiers that talks about a fair deal for Canadian farmers, Mr. Speaker.

This document, Mr. Speaker, was piloted by our government, Mr. Speaker. And what this document talked about is the unfairness that Saskatchewan farmers today are experiencing in the war against the subsidies, Mr. Speaker, in the war against the subsidies. Our Premier submitted that, Mr. Speaker.

And today, Mr. Speaker, across the land our federal Minister of Agriculture has said Canadian and Saskatchewan farmers are disadvantaged, Mr. Speaker, because of the subsidies — because of the subsidies, he says. And he says we should be mitigating the subsidies. And every farm organization, every group in Saskatchewan today, this side of the House, says it's the subsidies that are dampening the work that we're doing today — except the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, except the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I find that minister amazing. He's blaming the federal . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — He's blaming the federal government; whining and complaining constantly about the federal government for the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker.

And what does he and his government do? In 1992 they cancelled GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) and you know what happened, Mr. Speaker? They sent back over \$250 million of farmers' money from Saskatchewan back to the

federal government. Now they get their books this badly in trouble again and what do they do? They cut crop insurance; they send another 17.4 million of Saskatchewan farmers' money back to Mr. Vanclief.

Mr. Speaker, will that minister admit he's made a mistake, get back on the phone to Mr. Vanclief, and ask him to return the \$17.4 million to our Saskatchewan farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — This is now the second time that I've heard this response, Mr. Speaker.

I listened to the Premier . . . or to the previous member from Kindersley, the previous member from Kindersley . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I recognize the kind of . . . I recognize, Mr. Speaker, the kind of joy they display when I refer to the member from Kindersley, Mr. Speaker, because he had his sights, as you know, Mr. Speaker, on a far larger parcel here for the Saskatchewan Party.

But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that this is the second time in the last two weeks that I've heard the Saskatchewan Party say that in fact we've sent money back — 17 million.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, the money that come out of the crop hail insurance spot loss, Mr. Speaker, was reinvested in the crop insurance program, Mr. Speaker — and the federal government will confirm this. And the only people who don't know, Mr. Speaker, what's happened with the Saskatchewan crop insurance, hail insurance dollars . . . Not one penny, Mr. Speaker, was sent anywhere except reinvested for the farmers in the crop insurance program this year.

They have it wrong, Mr. Speaker. They don't support Saskatchewan farmers and they don't support the process, Mr. Speaker, of building a strong agricultural policy in our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I'd like, Mr. Speaker, the minister to tell farmers of Saskatchewan just where he's reinvesting that money. Farmers in Saskatchewan don't trust that government. They haven't for 10 years and they certainly won't be starting now, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, farmers across the province are telling us the impact of the crop insurance rate hike and the property tax hike comes to about \$4 an acre. That's a huge hit for farm families to absorb just a few weeks before spring seeding. On a 1,000-acre farm, Mr. Speaker, that's about a \$4,000 increase, and many are far larger than that. On a 2,000-acre farm, \$8,000. On Arden Roulston's farm — get this, Mr. Speaker — \$22,000 more in premiums and cuts.

Mr. Speaker, last year the NDP promised to do something about high input costs and this year the NDP is raising input costs by thousands of dollars. Mr. Speaker, how can the NDP justify this

massive attack once again on farm families in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the members opposite and to the House, Mr. Speaker, it was about 10 or 12 months ago that I said to this House and farmers in Saskatchewan, that in this province we have a huge issue when it relates to the value and return that farmers are getting in Saskatchewan for their commodity, Mr. Speaker. This is the issue, Mr. Speaker.

And today, Mr. Speaker, what Mr. Vanclief says to Saskatchewan and Canadian farmers, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to increase some return on the subsidies for Saskatchewan farmers. Now he says that; Mr. Vanclief says that. Finally they recognize the subsidies and need to provide greater incomes for Saskatchewan farmers.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, is on record where he doesn't support subsidizing Canadian and Saskatchewan farmers — doesn't support it, Mr. Speaker.

But what's happened, Mr. Speaker, now is that the federal Liberals now say we should be providing mitigation for farmers. Farm organizations in Saskatchewan say that we should be providing mitigation. The Canadian Alliance, Mr. Speaker, now says . . . the Canadian Alliance says we should now be providing subsidies — except the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, who don't support . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Water Quality

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Northern Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most startling and disturbing revelations in Justice Laing's report into the North Battleford cryptosporidium outbreak was that the North Battleford water treatment facilities in that city had not been inspected for 10 years prior to the outbreak.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that this government deliberately made choices that resulted in the reduction or elimination of programs for water quality, that resulted in the reduction or elimination of budgets for water quality. But, Mr. Speaker, what level of incompetence needs to be reached in order that the water treatment facilities in North Battleford weren't inspected for 10 years prior to the outbreak?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, this is not an excuse. But in the early '90s we were so busy cleaning up his cousins' party's mess for the last 10 years that we had a lot of challenges ahead of us during that period, Mr. Speaker.

And I will point out, there has been some good progress made over the last several years, Mr. Speaker — good progress made. And there's going to be greater progress yet to be made, Mr.

Speaker. We are working very closely with many communities, and we're going to continue working closely.

And, Mr. Speaker, I've asked that member to stop playing politics with this issue. I've asked that member to respect what the people of North Battleford want, and that is to get on with their lives and to build that community, to build that economy, Mr. Speaker. And yet day after day he gets up here and he fearmongers, he plays politics, he blames all kinds of people out there.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that they stop whining and they join us on this side and start building and rebuilding our system so in the future we all have safe water, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Mr. Speaker, Justice Laing links the lack of an inspection over the last 10 years directly to the outbreak in North Battleford — the lack of an inspection, the lack of technical services.

Now what's the NDP's response to that, Mr. Speaker? They're going to restructure Sask Water. They're going to turn it into a consultant. They're going to compete with the private sector. There are private sector consultants that can do those things out there, Mr. Speaker. But after this, they will be leaving the province as well.

Now, over and above, Mr. Speaker, they are asking, they are asking communities to pay for those consulting services.

Mr. Speaker, how do they expect to get communities to pay for consulting services from Sask Water when they have completely, completely undermined their ability to do so?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. And in that plan, we talk about watershed protection. We're transferring a whole pile of people from Sask Water to help with the protection of water at source.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we're going to put some rules and regulations in place to make sure that if anybody wilfully and continually disregards the rules, that there are penalties for them. We're not going to put people in jail. We're going to work with them, Mr. Speaker.

And secondly, we have the Municipal Finance Corporation is going to offer some financial help, Mr. Speaker. We have the CSIP (Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program) program, so that's part of the plan, Mr. Speaker.

And also, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to let any community, no matter how small or large they are, we're not going to let them stand alone. We're going to continue to work with them. And that's why Sask Water is saying, if you don't have anybody out there helping you, we will help you; if you do have a private contractor or an engineer that's going to help you or the private firms, well we'll work with them as well. Sask Water will work with everybody to make sure that we have a good system in place for all people of Saskatchewan, Mr.

Speaker.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Mr. Speaker, I think most people would realize that the government attempting to generate revenue from the very same agency that is going to be responsible for regulating water quality in this province is a conflict of interest.

Mr. Speaker, the minister refers to the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program. Well the other day, the minister was suggesting that that now is in fact a way that these communities can pay for their new consulting services from Sask Water. They can apply to the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program and they can use that money to pay the government for the technical services that Sask Water is going to provide.

Mr. Speaker, when is this NDP government going to stop downloading all of the costs onto cities, towns, and villages in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — . . . very important that once again I tell the people out there that there are many challenges, as we've often maintained in this Assembly, when it comes to safe water. And I'm looking forward to standing up in the coming weeks explaining what the plan is, Mr. Speaker.

And what we're not going to do, Mr. Speaker, is we're not going to fearmonger. What we're not going to do is we're not going to play politics, Mr. Speaker. We're going to work with every small community and every private sector person out there to help meet some of the challenges, Mr. Speaker. That's what we've been saying on this side all along, Mr. Speaker.

And I point out, last year 23 of the communities that were on a boil-water advisory, they applied for a CSIP program, and guess what, Mr. Speaker? They got funding and that system is being worked on as we speak — all those systems. This year, my fine friend will be making an announcement here within the next 10 days about a new CSIP program and that program is going to help many small communities.

So once again I ask you to stand up in this Assembly and join us in this battle to make sure we have good water for all people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Fish and Wildlife Development Fund

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the minister confirmed that the NDP is raiding the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund for the purpose of financing other programming in the Environment department.

Steering committee members of the fund are outraged and they say the minister is wrong when she says they were consulted about this move. In fact, by confusing the department's own Fish and Wildlife Fund with the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Mr. Speaker, the minister has proven that she

doesn't know what she's responsible for and what she's not.

Mr. Speaker, why did the NDP not consult with their own steering committee about using the fund surplus before they emptied it from underneath them?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Mr. Speaker, I will of course have to go back and review very carefully what the *Hansard* record said. But what I believe I was trying to communicate to the members opposite was that we consult with the steering committee on the broad, general programs that are funded through the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund.

Mr. Speaker, the question of a budget is an extremely complex one and it is one that is revealed on budget day by the Minister of Finance of the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. I want to be able to hear what the minister has to say.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, on budget day the Minister of Finance of the province of Saskatchewan revealed the budget. That very same day when the budget came down, I spoke with representatives from the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation and said to them that we would have to talk about the Wetland Conservation Corporation and the wildlife . . . Fish and Wildlife Development Fund.

As well, that very same day, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Dennis Sherratt from my department contacted by telephone or in person several members of the steering committee. He subsequently sent a letter out . . .

The Speaker: — The minister's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, members of the environment committee or the development committee feel that they are a steering committee without a steering wheel.

By draining the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund surplus, the NDP have wiped out any habitat or endangered species projects the steering committee was planning and proven, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP will go to any lengths of jiggery-pokery to fudge a balanced budget.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, Elmer Henderson on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Radio this morning said, and I quote: "This really comes very close to being fraud."

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Once again, members, I ask you . . . Order, order. Members, I have asked repeatedly to be very careful with the language that is used in the legislature and you can no . . . I would also bring to the members' attention that you cannot do indirectly what you should not be able to do directly, which involves quotes.

Mr. Toth: — . . . Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the budget briefing document informs steering committee members that this fund will now have to pay the annual grant to the Wetlands

Conservation Corporation, and this year only will cover the salaries of 18 full-time staff members in the Environment department.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP are borrowing from this fund and cancelling the plans for wildlife projects to keep other areas of this department going.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will the minister explain how this can possibly benefit the department and wildlife habitat protection efforts in the long run?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Mr. Speaker, I can assure you and all members of this House that this government and Saskatchewan Environment care very much about the environment and about habitat protection.

Mr. Speaker, there was a surplus in the Fish and Wildlife Fund. Over the last five years, in each of those years, in excess of \$300,000 was not used. So therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have transferred that . . . we have used that money this year for the salaries of 18 employees, and to pay for the \$503,000 for Saskatchewan Wetlands Conservation Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure you that the good works that are funded through the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund will continue. All that members need to do is obtain a copy of the current hunting and fishing guide — Hunters' & Trappers' Guide, and the Anglers' Guide — and they will see the . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Water Quality

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely nothing in the \$2 million water inquiry report concerning the province that the government hadn't previously been told in its own CDI (cabinet decision item) of September 2000.

At that time the government was told that there were at least 121 communities in rural Saskatchewan with inadequate water systems and it was told it could be sued by people getting sick from unsafe water. One of the proposals in the CDI was that the province start a new \$15 million fund to finance water projects.

This fund was asked for by SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) as far back as 1994 . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Members, I'd ask you to come to order, please. The member has a strong voice but I'm still having trouble hearing him.

Mr. Hillson: — This year the Finance minister started a new \$90 million corporation to finance new schools in the cities. The Minister of Finance says this was a great time to borrow. My question is for the Minister of Finance.

Why was the proposal for a \$15 million water finance program killed by the Treasury Board? Why, if this is such a great time to borrow for new schools in the cities, is this not a good year to provide money for communities with substandard water treatment plants?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see that that member, and perhaps some of the other members and some people in the media, finally have realized what we've been saying for weeks. And that is the kind of financing that is being made available to school boards and universities is available, Mr. Speaker, to communities to work on their water and sewer systems.

I want to reiterate again, Mr. Speaker, 100 per cent financing for sewer and water projects is available through the Municipal Financing Corporation. Any community in this province, Mr. Speaker, that wants to upgrade its water and sewer, we will work with that community through the Municipal Financing Corporation.

And my question to the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, is if they truly believe that communities should be assisted in this way, why are they opposing this same method of assistance for school boards and universities, Mr. Speaker? One minute they're saying it's a good thing to do; the next minute they're saying it's something we shouldn't do, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, the proposal the Minister of Finance killed was for 50 per cent funding to the municipalities, not for debt. In September 2000 the government was told we had at least 121 communities with inadequate systems. With beefed up inspections, that can only increase.

Now the government says that municipalities that knowingly operate substandard plants are liable for prosecution. But we know communities are doing precisely that because they have no money. They have no money because the government refuses to follow its CDI of 2000.

The government said it has followed all recommendations in the Laing report but it has not. The report says that along with inspections and enforcement, we need adequate funding.

My question is for the Minister of Justice: what is his advice to the mayors of towns with poor water systems? Should they remain at their posts and do what they can or should they resign quickly before the Minister of the Environment has them arrested?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — You know, Mr. Speaker, this is how phony this opposition is. One of them gets up at the beginning of the proceedings today and quotes from *The Melville Advance* saying: we're spending too much money; we're in deficit.

Then another one gets up and says, why don't you spend some money on water? Then one of them gets up and says, why don't you let the municipalities borrow money, make this available to them?

I get up and I say we will do that, Mr. Speaker. And I want to say to that member from North Battleford, who last week said, why don't you go to North Battleford — I've been there twice

in the last week and I met with the mayor of North Battleford and I met with the chamber of commerce and community representatives.

And this is what I said, Mr. Speaker. I said let's work together and fix the water system. We will make the funding available on a 100 per cent basis through the Municipal Financing Corporation, Mr. Speaker.

And instead of playing politics, let's all of us in the community of Saskatchewan borrow the money, fix the water system, and we will pay for it over time together but we'll have clean water, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 24 – The Powers of Attorney Act, 2002/ Loi de 2002 sur les procurations

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 24, The Powers of Attorney Act, 2002 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

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

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

The Speaker: — Would the member state his point of order.

POINTS OF ORDER

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, during question period the Agriculture minister, the member for Yorkton, I believe used some unparliamentary language in reference to members on this side of the House, in particular the member from Saltcoats.

Beauchesne's 6th Edition, rule 489, clearly outlines the words that are and are not allowed to be used in this House, including the word "misuse" which was ruled in 1958, 1960, 1964, and 1966 as being unparliamentary.

I ask that the minister both withdraw the use of that word in reference to the members of the opposition and apologize for the use of that word, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — To respond to the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Would the member of Moose Jaw respond.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member correctly refers to the rule of the Assembly. However, what he fails to mention, Mr. Speaker, is that when looking at the precedents and the rulings that he references, that all of those have been made by looking at the context within which the language is used. That's a long-standing practice, Mr. Speaker. It is not the word itself which causes the violation of the rule of the House, but the context and the intent, Mr. Speaker.

And I would humbly suggest, Mr. Speaker, that when you review the remarks made by the Minister of Agriculture and Food that you will recognize that he was referring not to comments made in this House in debate. He did not make that reference and he was not, he was not making reference to intentional misleading, Mr. Speaker. And therefore, I would ask that you would find the point of order out of order.

The Speaker: — I thank both members for their comments in bringing this to my attention and I will review the record and bring back a ruling.

Why is the member for Cannington on his feet?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order.

The Speaker: — Would the member state his point of order.

(14:30)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's been the tradition of this House to permit quotes from various publications as part of the deliberations of this House.

The quote used by the member for Moosomin regarding fraud by the Minister of Environment was broadcast this morning publicly on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Radio. And, Mr. Speaker, it is part of the general record, the public record of that interview that took place this morning where the word "fraud" was used.

And I ask that the ruling deal with that, Mr. Speaker, and the use of quotes in this Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, to speak to the point of order.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, when referencing the use of quotes in this House, it is, it is a precedent which has been long established that the rules of the House here are guided as well by the rules of the House of Commons. And the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* says on page 517, and I quote:

Generally, the reading of articles from newspapers, books, or other documents by a Member during debate has become an accepted practice and is not ruled out of order provided that such quotations do not reflect on past proceedings in

the House, do not refer to, or comment on or deny anything said by a Member, or (and I quote here, Mr. Speaker, I underline this) or use language which would be out of order if spoken by a Member.

Mr. Speaker, it has long been the practice of this House that members are not permitted to use language which . . . or to conduct themselves in a way which they demonstrate that they are doing indirectly which is not permitted directly.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I humbly suggest that you would find the member out of order in his language that he used while using that reference to a quote.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, I would like to make a comment on the request on the point of order just recently raised by the member for Cannington and spoken to by the member from Moose Jaw, for clarification.

In the first instance, a ruling once made by the Speaker stands. I would like to make a brief explanation of my ruling for purposes that might help clarify.

I did indicate that it was a matter of not using . . . of the language use indirectly rather than directly through a quotation. I believe that has been the practice of this House and it is a practice I intend to continue with the one exception to that rule, and that has been over a long-standing practice where members have been allowed to quote names of other members or use members' names in quotations.

But in terms of parliamentary language, I will continue to use the, to use the interpretation that I did today.

Why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Bakken: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you four gentlemen who are seated in the east gallery. The gentlemen are here attending a gaming summit. They come from the province of Quebec, and some of my colleagues and I had the pleasure of having dinner with them last night at the gaming awards. And so we'd like to welcome Guy, Kevin, Carol, and Denis to the Assembly today and to the province of Saskatchewan. We hope you enjoy your stay.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Also permission with request . . . with leave to acknowledge a guest, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like

to say on behalf of all the members, bienvenue à Regina. As the minister for Liquor and Gaming, I too would like to add my welcome to these gentlemen to our great city of Regina and this great province of Saskatchewan. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move that we convert question no. 88 for debates returnable.

The Speaker: — Question 88 has been converted to orders for return debatable . . . motions for return (debatable).

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 15 — The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 modifiant la Loi de 1988 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment will provide the same protection from disclosure for statements made during the pretrial settlement conference conducted by a judge, as exists for statements made during mediation.

The Queen's Bench Act, 1998 provides that evidence of statements made in the course of mediation is not admissible in any court proceeding. The Queen's Bench rules of court provide that all communications in the course of the pretrial conference are privileged and should not be admitted as evidence in any proceeding.

That rule, Mr. Speaker, has been called into question in recent court rulings. This amendment will codify that rule and ensure that pretrial settlement conferences can continue to operate as they have in the past.

Mr. Speaker, the pretrial settlement conference conducted by Queen's Bench judges in Saskatchewan provides an additional opportunity for parties to resolve their legal disputes without a trial and in a manner that the parties agree with.

It's essential that parties be able to discuss settlement options candidly without fear that their statements might be later used in the evidence against them. Codifying the existing rule will ensure that candid discussions can continue to occur, and this will result in more settlements and fewer trials.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act, 1998.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I

believe that the intent of this Bill is indeed very appropriate. The use of pretrial conferencing and mediation services is extremely important in trying to come to a fair and equitable solution to the difficulties that are being faced by the parties involved.

Mr. Speaker, any time that you can settle this outside of the court it can only be of benefit to the parties because it starts the healing process to take place, Mr. Speaker. Not only does it start the healing process, but it also saves costs — costs to the parties involved, both sides, and court costs, Mr. Speaker, to the province. All of those things are very beneficial and worthwhile, Mr. Speaker.

But we need to investigate this further, Mr. Speaker, to determine if there are not any hidden pitfalls in this particular piece of legislation, that those involved are in agreement as we believe they will be but we still need to investigate that procedure, Mr. Speaker.

So I would move at this time that we adjourn this debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 16 — The Independent Officers' Remuneration (Amendment) Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Independent Officers' Remuneration (Amendment) Act, 2002.

The proposed changes to the legislation confirm the current salaries of the Ombudsman, the Children's Advocate, and the Chief Electoral Officer and provide a formula for future salary changes.

Mr. Speaker, in the spring of 2000, at the direction of the Board of Internal Economy and cabinet, a committee was established to review the salary levels of certain independent officers of the Legislative Assembly. The review responded to the lack of a common standard for determining the salary levels of these officers and the resulting ad hoc approach that has been in place for setting some of the salary levels.

It was determined that a consistent and transparent approach to setting salary levels of the independent officers is desirable. The resulting report on independent officers' remuneration provides the first comprehensive analysis of how current salary levels are determined and makes recommendations for how the salaries should be determined in the future.

The committee recommended that the salary levels of independent officers be linked in their respective Acts to an appropriate salary level within the Saskatchewan public service. The committee recommended that the salaries of the Ombudsman and the Children's Advocate be linked to the average of all deputy ministers' salaries as at April 1 of each year.

The committee recommended that the appropriate linkage in the public service for the position of Chief Electoral Officer is at the maximum of the senior executive 2 range. The proposed changes to the legislation will confirm their current salaries and

provide a standard for future salary changes.

Mr. Speaker, the committee's report states that setting out the formula for determining the salary level of independent officers will ensure that the salaries are reasonably fixed and supports the principle of independence. The public nature of the statutory provisions ensures that salary levels are easy to determine and that salary can only be changed in a very public manner through legislative amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Election Act, 1996 and The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act for the purposes of ensuring the independent status of certain officers of the Legislative Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pleasure I'd like to speak on Bill No. 16, An Act to amend The Election Act, 1996 and The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act for the purpose of ensuring the independent status of certain officers of the Legislative Assembly.

I understand that the Board of Internal Economy has looked at this and we would like to just check the wording of the Bill and make sure the intent of the Bill is what was discussed. And at this time I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 5 — The Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Amendment Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan Learning connects Saskatchewan people to opportunities through quality education and training including apprenticeship. The Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Act, 1999 was proclaimed in October 1999 to establish the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission or ATCC.

The Act was designed to ensure apprenticeship training and certification meets the needs of industry and labour. Amendments are required, Mr. Speaker, to help the commission meet the needs of employers and apprentices in a rapidly changing labour market.

Mr. Speaker, the ATCC board and commission has reviewed and identified amendments to the Act which are required to number one, help industry meet its need for skilled workers; and two, help apprentices gain the knowledge and skills they need for jobs.

These amendments update the Act to ensure the proper authorities are in place to administer the apprenticeship and training certification system in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We are amending the Act to allow employee and employer representatives, not just employees and employers, to sit on the ATCC board. This amendment strengthens the board because employers and employees will have the flexibility to choose the person they believe will best represent their interests.

Mr. Speaker, we're also proposing amendments to enhance public and occupational health and safety by tightening up the rules for compulsory trades or sectors. With the amendments, only qualified people can work in compulsory trades, Mr. Speaker. Businesses in these trades must hire journeypersons, special permit holders, or apprentices. There are also changes that allow us to make regulations that require employers of designated trades to hire only certified employees.

Another proposed amendment will allow us to make regulations that ensure there is an appropriate ratio of apprentices to journeypersons in compulsory trades. This will ensure that employees are properly trained and that the public and occupational health and safety standards are maintained. This amendment also ensures timely designation of trades.

Another proposed change, Mr. Speaker, deals with who can work in compulsory trades. These changes will allow the commission to issue special permits to comply with the agreement of internal trade. It is also consistent with the current regulations which allow people wanting to become an apprentice to be on probation in a compulsory trade before they become an apprentice. This period will help them determine if they have the skills and aptitude needed for that trade.

(14:45)

We are also proposing some housekeeping amendments to clarify the commission's authority to enter into agreements to administer benefit programs, such as the skills training benefit to apprentices and tradespersons. This change will ensure efficient service delivery, Mr. Speaker.

Other proposed changes include making regulations that allow workers in one trade to perform similar work in a similar trade. For example, barber or stylist and a cosmetologist, or electrician and refrigeration mechanic — they do a lot of similar things and this would allow for cross-referencing for that.

This amendment will increase the span of opportunities for skilled workers and still maintain public and occupational health and safety standards.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, there is an amendment to repeal all references to the Provincial Apprenticeship Board which no longer exists since the ATCC Board was set up in October of 2000.

Mr. Speaker, apprenticeship training and trade certification is one of the cornerstones of our post-secondary education system in Saskatchewan. I commend the commission for their diligent work to move this important initiative forward. These amendments will help the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission to better manage a training and certification system that responds effectively to Saskatchewan's changing and future needs in the labour market, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore I am pleased to move that Bill No. 5 to amend The Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Act 1999 be now read a second time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 5, the Act to amend the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Act looks like it's moving in the right direction. There are a couple of questions, though, that just listening to the minister that I think I would have along with a number of people in private business, and how that's going to affect them.

Mr. Speaker, I think if you look in our province today that private business is the main engine to our economy. It is significant that any time that there is an Act that comes forward that may affect them, it is only appropriate that we give it enough time so that people in business can get back to us and let us know how the Act will affect them and whether it's good, in their interests, Mr. Speaker.

But I think any time . . . Again, the Act looks like it's moving towards getting more people into the workforce and giving them the lead time, the training time to move forward; we think that would be a good idea. But until we're able to check with other interested parties, Mr. Speaker, we have to hold it up for a little bit.

The other area that I was interested in is when the minister was talking about professionals, tradespeople in one industry being able to move over into another industry. And he mentioned the electricians and refrigerator electricians and how they can overlap, and there's some overlapping there.

And I think . . . I know talking to a number of people in the different business areas, where it seems funny that they can't go anywhere past their boundaries. They can't move over even though there is lots of overlap. Because it may not fit into their exact category, they can't operate in that area.

So, Mr. Speaker, that on first blush, looks like it's probably moving in the right direction. But until we're able to check out a number of these concerns and see how it does affect the people in the province, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 17 — The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, this plan was established in October 1977. It is a defined contribution pension plan. The member contributes to the plan and so does the employer. At retirement, the member purchases a retirement benefit with his or her pension money, consisting of employer contributions, member contributions, any voluntary contributions made by the member, and accrued investment returns on those contributions.

About 39,000 active and inactive members participate in the plan. The total value of the Public Employees Pension Plan at December 31, 2001 exceeded \$2.5 billion.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the proposed amendment to The Public Employees Pension Plan Act is to allow the ex-spouse of

a member to purchase a retirement benefit at age 50 under the plan's marital breakdown provisions.

The plan was amended in 2000 to allow the member to purchase his or her retirement benefit at age 50. The difference in the provisions is not justifiable and it is desirable to amend the plan accordingly so that the ex-spouse of a member of the plan would have the same right as the member of the plan himself or herself.

Essentially, Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendment allows the ex-spouse of a member to purchase his or her retirement benefit as early as age 50, just like the member can do.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend The Public Employees Pension Plan Act, 2002.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the move by the Minister of Finance to reduce the age at which access to the pension plan would be accomplished from 55 to 50, I think is a very good move and gives people the opportunity then to direct their pension funds in a manner they feel is appropriate which would, perhaps, be leave it with the Saskatchewan employees pension plan or do some other thing with it — move it into a different kind of financial instrument perhaps.

There is one concern though that I do have with it and it is mentioned a little bit in the explanatory notes, but I'm not sure how it fits in with the Bill since the only change that's really taking place here is moving it from age 55 to 50. And that is how does the employee's pension plan deal with the pension in case of marriage separation? How is that dealt with? Is there the availability of a member of this pension plan to split that pension with their spouse? Can they do that and move that over to the spouse's name without incurring any penalties?

And that's one of the areas I think that the government and the Minister of Finance should be looking at on this particular Bill and perhaps that could be introduced as a House amendment at some time if it's possible to do it.

I know that there are some legal implications in dealing with that. But it's one of the areas that is causing problems with members of the pension plan, those that are unfortunate enough to be going through marital difficulties and a separation, that they be able to split their pension. The assets of a person involved in the pension plan, in a lot of cases, Mr. Speaker, has to be split 50/50 with account being taken for the children involved in a marriage.

So how do you divide those assets when a part of your assets is your pension plan and there's no provision made to split that pension without withdrawing the entire amount, paying the tax penalties that would be involved which, at the end of the day, then reduces the pension plan to almost a useless amount, Mr. Speaker?

So if the Minister of Finance could look at some sort of a provision that would allow for that transfer between spouses in the distribution of assets, I think would go a long way to aiding

this particular plan.

So until we get a chance to talk to the minister about that kind of a situation, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 18 – The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I also rise to move second reading of a Bill to amend The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Act.

The Saskatchewan Pension Plan has almost 30,000 members and \$197 million under trusteeship. This plan is an integral part of the retirement savings plans of many people in Saskatchewan. The plan is a tax deferred plan available to anyone between 18 and 69 years of age.

Member funds are professionally managed and the plan has generated a competitive rate of return averaging 10.7 per cent over the past 10 years. There are no minimum contributions or fixed payment schedules. The money is protected from seizure, claim, or garnishee by creditors.

The Saskatchewan Pension Plan is administered by a board of trustees appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and presently consists of five members. Two of the trustees are plan members.

The changes announced in this Bill are administrative in nature. They will clarify the duties and powers of the board of trustees, clarify the payment frequency of small pensions, allow death benefits to be transferred tax-free to a dependent child or grandchild, and eliminate the six-month revoking period for new retirees. Elimination of the six-month revoking period will give members more options at retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Act.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to enter into, I guess debate on An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Act, Bill No. 18.

And just listening to the minister it seemed like it was more of a housekeeping issue. Looking at some of the explanation notes it talks about some of the provisions that were left out perhaps when the Act was last amended in the year 2000. So it does look like it's pretty much a housekeeping piece of legislation.

I think any time though that we start talking about Saskatchewan pension plans . . . And this plan was set up many years ago to help a lot of people such as myself that may have been on a farm — only income was farming, not really having any sort of a pension plan available to them — and that's why this . . . one of the reasons why this plan was set up.

It's interesting now, Mr. Speaker, since the last budget though, how people are certainly a lot more aware of their pension plans, what they have in the pension plan, and how much

income that is going to garner them on a monthly basis.

And, Mr. Speaker, in particularly a number of seniors in our province that are in long-term care homes are finding it ever increasingly hard to survive with the recent increases in long-term care fees. Fees that have gone from 50 per cent of their income through pensions up to 90 per cent, leaving them with virtually very little money to survive, Mr. Speaker.

So any time we start talking about pension plans and Acts that alter them at all, I think it's of great interest. And it'll be very interesting to see in the near future how much money is left in some of these pension plans with the way that the government is dipping into the seniors' pockets a little bit more to fund the long-term care, Mr. Speaker.

So without giving this more thought, and allowing a number of people more discussion on this plan, the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, Mr. Speaker, I'd move to adjourn debate on this.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 19 — The Superannuation
(Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2002**

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to move second reading of The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, this Act pertains to the following defined benefit pension plans — the Liquor Board Superannuation Plan, the Power Corporation Superannuation Plan, the Workers' Compensation Board Superannuation Plan, and the Public Service Superannuation Plan.

The Public Service Superannuation Plan also encompasses the Anti-Tuberculosis League Superannuation Plan and the Saskatchewan Transportation Company Superannuation Plan.

Each pension plan has a board of trustees that oversees the operations of the plan.

Mr. Speaker, these plans were closed to new employees in 1977. Over 80 per cent of active members are now between the ages of 45 to 59. In 20 years, all active members will be in receipt of their pension.

(15:00)

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments to this Act do not result in any policy or procedural changes for the pension plans to which the Act pertains. The purpose of the amendments is to provide clarification on specific provisions in the Act to ensure continued compliance with the federal Income Tax Act. It is imperative, Mr. Speaker, that the pension plans comply with the federal legislation in order to sustain their registration under that Act.

It is necessary therefore, Mr. Speaker, to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act to clarify that any severance payments and retiring allowances paid to a member on retirement are payments made by the employer and not payments out of the pension plan. Provisions regarding

severance and retiring allowances are included in the pension legislation to consolidate retirement information. Alternatively, participating employers would need to amend their governing legislation to provide for these payments.

It is essential, Mr. Speaker, to clarify that the term disability has the same meaning under The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act as it does under the federal Income Tax Act. To retire due to ill health, the member must be totally and permanently disabled in accordance with section 8500 of the income tax regulations.

Upon the death of a pension plan member, Mr. Speaker, the member's surviving spouse is entitled to 60 per cent of the pension allowance the member was in receipt of or entitled to as at the date of death. In addition, each dependent child of the member under age 18 is entitled to 10 per cent of what the member was in receipt of or entitled to as at the date of death to a maximum of 25 per cent on behalf of all dependent children.

The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency has requested that the Act clearly identify that the maximum benefit payable to the spouse is 60 per cent and that the additional benefit payable on behalf of surviving dependent children is payable to the spouse on behalf of the dependents. In addition, it is necessary to clarify that where a spousal benefit is to be paid to a dependent child in the absence of a surviving spouse, the benefit payable cannot exceed the maximums provided under the Income Tax Act of Canada.

Essentially, Mr. Speaker, the amendments as proposed do not result in any policy or procedure changes for the pension plans to which the Act pertains. The changes are a result of discussions between officials of the Public Employees Benefits Agency of Saskatchewan and officials of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. Pursuant to these discussions, clarifications in the Act were deemed necessary to ensure that the pension plans continued to comply with the Income Tax Act of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend the Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act, 2002.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak on Bill 19, the Act to amend the Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act. It seems like it's a . . . merely a housekeeping Bill which just updates things to suit the federal income tax department but I noticed that the amendments, one of the amendments, 21.2 is striking out the word disabled and substituting total and permanent disabled. And I worry that some of these changes like that do not take into account the individuals and the families that they may affect negatively.

And I also notice that when the Bill comes into force that there are provisions to come into that are retroactive that . . . section 6(1) and (2) are deemed to be in force from December 31, '91 and (3) section 5 comes into effect retroactive to June 28, 2001.

And this government has a history of not looking into the details and the effect of certain Bills have on people, particularly pensioners. And I'd just like to make a comment concerning what has happened in the past about the disenfranchised widows. And this Bill seems to really bring up

that matter where the government did not do its homework, did not contact the Finance department and get a waiver concerning their compensation package and left the widows short over \$5,000 because of the effect it had on their pensions.

And I'd like to discuss this further with my colleagues and individuals that this Bill affects and also the effect this would have on the superannuation pension and the whole system of the pension plans.

And at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Justice Vote 3

Subvote (JU01)

The Chair: — I recognize the Minister of Justice to introduce his officials and make a brief statement.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me introduce and ask the House to welcome familiar faces, I think.

On my left, the deputy minister of Justice, the Deputy Attorney General, John Whyte. To my right, Doug Moen, who's executive director of public law and community justice. Behind him, Murray Brown, who is the acting executive director of public prosecutions. Behind me is Elizabeth Smith, the director of administration. To her left is Colleen Matthews, who is the executive assistant to the deputy minister. And to her left, Betty Ann Pottruff, who is the director of policy, planning, and evaluation.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And a welcome to the minister and especially to his officials.

I think this is the first estimates of the year, and so I guess we get the chance to set the stage. Having gone through this with the minister in the past numbers of years, I must say I've always appreciated the adequate answers that we received on at least the majority of the questions that we asked.

I would like to start off, Mr. Minister, with asking you to outline the purposes behind the sort of dividing up of some of the part of your Justice department. You now have created Corrections and Public Safety and just to basically . . . a mission statement as to why you've done this and what you see each one doing. And possibly also what you hope to accomplish through those changes.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. In response to the member's question, I think he's probably referring primarily to the taking of adult corrections out of Justice and placing it into the new department, along with youth justice and some other public security areas.

And I think the member could . . . can probably gather that

there was a thought that it would be better to have all corrections under one ministry — that there would be benefits, one to the other, in terms of programming and in terms of capacity and expertise and so on. And the hope and anticipation is that this new department, comprising all of corrections as it does, will be . . . will provide a stronger, a stronger focus on corrections and end up with a better Corrections department in the process.

And the . . . in that process the decision was made to ensure that in order to minimize costs, Justice and the new department will share administrative services. And so there will be the ability not only to be efficient but also to have some continuation of expertise and participation in the overall scheme.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. There are these two parts to your answer that I would like for us to expand on a little bit. You mentioned the concept of terms of capacity and I'm wondering if you could just enlarge on that and specifically what you're referring to by that phrase.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well I think we have as a result of pulling adult corrections and youth corrections together, a larger cohort of expertise focussing on corrections in one department rather than two departments; the opportunity to more easily share issues.

We know that we tend to respond rather differently to young people in a correctional facility for the first time over those in adult facilities who might have been there on a number of occasions. But to share that kind of expertise and to really to pull it all in one place and I think, you know, we can see that there is the possibility then of having an even better correction facility, a service.

I would say that the people we have running our correction facilities are really top-notch people. Don Head, for example — you'll be able to deal with this with the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety — but he is frequently called upon to provide advice to other correctional services. He is a former member of the . . . of Corrections Canada. There are always links between the two, and his expertise and links with those . . . with his former colleagues, obviously very useful. But I would say that he's frequently called upon to share our experience in other places.

And of course we can always make our system better, but we do have a well-regarded system across the country. And I think the same goes for our youth facilities in which we have Maureen Lloyd, who's the acting director.

But I'm sure the member can pursue some of those more specific matters with the Minister for Corrections and Public Safety.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. And you mentioned a part that I'd like to just comment on briefly and that was the quality of people in some of the facilities, people that are working there.

I had the opportunity this last summer and fall to visit the corrections centre in Saskatoon and had a tour of the place. It was a short tour. And it was probably a rather enlightening situation for myself, not having been there before and also

hoping never to get back there again, unless it's for a visit.

But I think some of the concerns that have been out there that have been voiced in many cases as far as a crowding situation and people not being able to get into some of the rehabilitation programs that are there, I think those things were very obvious to me as I had the tour, as well as the security.

(15:15)

You will recall probably a year or two ago when there was an escape made through the one corner of the fence and some of the escapees skedaddled across the highway into part of the city of Saskatoon. That created quite some concerns.

I had an opportunity to sort of look at what was happening there and why that had happened. And also had expressed to me, by the people doing the tour, that there's still some definite concerns for safety and security of the people that work there as well.

I guess the one part that became most obvious to me is when individuals come in they're waiting, sort of in a . . . almost like a holding area to get into their rooms, to get into their programs, and those sorts of things. And that was a very stark situation just to see four or five military cots in one small room. Not that there was a lot of sympathy on my part, but it obviously wasn't accomplishing what we hope that will happen there, and that's rehabilitation. It was just a holding cell, and obviously wasn't going to accomplish much in that particular area.

The ability to go ahead and share expertise, as you mentioned, I think is definitely a positive on the changes that are there. And to date, I haven't heard anyone voice any concerns about the direction that changes are going. I think it'll be something we'll have to watch and see how it works out. But I think the concept and the philosophy behind it is probably good.

In this sharing of expertise that was mentioned in your answer, is there a possibility of some cost savings in that area or is that not really a part that will exist in this sharing of services?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well I'm glad that the member had the opportunity to visit one of our correctional facilities. And I think he could . . . he's voiced some of the challenges that exist in any correctional facility, and we certainly have them in our own.

He asks specifically the question about cost savings. I hope he won't think of me as shirking any responsibility here, but the minister responsible will be more than happy to explore those issues with the member.

And certainly over the years in which I was responsible for corrections, we certainly did our best to hold costs down as much as possible. But there clearly are drivers outside of our control. And we have to do the best we can to ensure that the public security is protected; and there is the opportunity for those people spending time in the facilities to be able to have access to programs to improve the likelihood that once they re-enter our society they will be more responsible and contributing members of that society.

But the member quite rightly identifies some of the challenges that exist in those facilities and in fact in those facilities across the country.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. I'd like to go down that road a little bit further. The areas that have been set up there for what you said are rehabilitation or training programs — welding shops, carpentry shops, and those sorts of things — weren't being utilized in a very efficient sort of way. There weren't any particular programs going on — major programs, long-term programs.

And I'm wondering if there's any view to sort of making some changes there so that individuals coming out after their time are somewhat better qualified to go ahead and apply for jobs and do those jobs well enough so that the tendency to get involved in a crime situation and get back in there are lessened.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member again, I think, identifies an interesting challenge within the facilities. Most of the inmates are there for a very short period of time and so the opportunity to do a whole lot with them is not there. But they go through significant needs assessment, significant programming opportunities while they're there.

We've reinvested and invested more in programming over the years. And wherever possible, they have access to the kinds of programs he was talking about — welding shops and short-order cooks and so on. And we have significant success amongst those inmates who spent time there.

The challenge of course is to have access to supports and the kinds of things that will enable a person to have the opportunity to be a more functioning member of society before, like in the society, and then if they happen to find themselves in a correctional facility, there too, and then once they leave, to continue their rehabilitation. And plainly it's a lot more effective to attempt to work with someone in a rehabilitative way when they're in their community rather than when they're in an institution.

But the . . . primarily the inmates are there for a relatively short period of time and we provide as much as we possibly can during that time.

And the member might be interested to know that up in Prince Albert, the welding shop there when I visited, they were making bars for prison cells — not their own prison cells but other people's prison cells. But they were providing a, providing a service there to the correction facility. But they also, as you know, compete with others outside and on a competitive, fair, competitive basis, and provide services to the community at large.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. It's good to hear that the minister has also spent some time in a corrections facility.

The one thing that was somewhat frightening when I was in there and did that visit is that as we went out into the outer playground area, the various activity areas had coloured ribbon tied around them. And when that was explained to me, it was that a certain gang had sort of identified this was their territory and they had sort of taken over, this sort of thing.

And I'd like for the minister to comment how, how serious a challenge gang activity in corrections is. And specifically, what the department's doing to sort of lessen that.

Because somebody coming into a situation like that, not being involved in one gang or another is obviously going to have a lot of pressure put on them to sort of join one side or join the other side. And I don't think that's what we send people to corrections for, to become involved in gang activities. But it was definitely obvious as to what was happening.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well the member identifies another serious concern for us both in correctional facilities and outside — the size and the impact and the seriousness of gang involvement amongst, amongst our offenders.

And again we know that not only is it a challenge dealing with those particular people, but it's also a challenge in dealing with those on whom they prey, both in the institutions and outside. And it's, it's, as I say, another challenge which we have to meet. We certainly take it seriously and have various mechanisms to ensure that we keep tabs on what's taking place and to ensure that it is not being expanded into other, into other people in the institutions.

But I would, if I could, urge the member to ask . . . to deal with the specifics of these kinds of issues with the new minister who will plainly be able to help him.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. And as you sort of clarified at the end, it'll take us probably this session to get used to the dividing of authorities that have taken place there.

The people of the province, I think, have become used to a certain system, and that's a system that has existed in Saskatchewan for a long time. The one that the new department that is now taking over.

And I'd like for the minister to explain how the people of Saskatchewan are going to be informed. Like, what system or what way or method have you devised to clarify how this system is going to operate now? How are people going to know what's happening? Or when they get involved, are they going to be frustrated again by saying I thought I had the right door and now there's two doors where they were one.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — It's an interesting question to ask how the public can know that these changes have taken place and how would they know they've been . . . they'll be better served and how will it affect their contact with the various institutions, both physical and human which exist within a range of departments in the government.

We, of course, have communicated with all of the stakeholders so that they will know the extent of the changes and how they should proceed. As for individual citizens, basically in this context, there will be one kind of door of entry into Corrections — youth and adult — but it will be one kind of place . . . I mean one office regarding these issues. So they should notice some efficiency there.

But primarily if a person has a child at the Paul Dojack Centre, they will not notice significant differences in the way in which

they can contact that person and the way in which services were provided to that person. But there will be, I mean, there are plenty of administrative efficiencies and other things. But certainly at the beginning, the services will be provided by the same people in the same way as they were before.

So hopefully citizens shouldn't notice anything . . . shouldn't come across any complications as a result of these changes. Plainly if they have an issue and they phone the office of the Minister of Justice, they'll be passed onto the appropriate new minister.

So that perhaps is the extent of any uncertainty that might exist. But we'll certainly make sure that any kinds of concerns about who to go to and how to fix any issues will be addressed as quickly as possible.

But I thank the member for reminding us of that.

Mr. Heppner: — What process has been set up between your department and this new department and how much contact do you plan to have with each other? Is there something definite in place or is it just going to be a troubleshooting kind of a situation — if something flies apart, you'll do a cross contact?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well I'm sure the member didn't expect it to be just an ad hoc troubleshooting relationship, that he would have known that we would ensure close, close relationships between our departments. The new department is . . . the senior administrative officials from the deputy ministry on down are headquartered in the same building as the Department of Justice.

There are joint policy . . . there is a joint policy committee and there's shared human resources, systems work, communications, finance, administration. So there's a very close relationship between the two departments and that's likely to continue.

Mr. Heppner: — Going down further, a little further down that road about the two departments, the Youth Criminal Justice Act has received Royal Assent but won't be implemented for a while. And one thing that does is change that age limit, as you know, and moves that down.

And I'm wondering if you'd like to comment . . . I'd like for you to comment on . . . You now have two departments, one that's going to be dealing very . . . in a very definite way to try and keep youth out of the justice system and another one that's going to want to be very . . . you know want to be sort of hard over and say, okay you've committed a crime; you're going to serve some time for this. So it seems you could sort of be going down two different roads on this. How will you be able to dovetail that kind of activity?

(15:30)

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member's quite right that the Youth Criminal Justice Act has been . . . will come into effect April 1, 2003. And that extension or that delay is as a result of pressure brought to bear by provincial ministers in order to get ready for the new provisions and also to ensure that we can put the appropriate amount of pressure on the federal government to

ensure that resources are available for some of the provisions they have put forward.

The member will note too, that prior to the establishment of the new Department of Corrections, youth corrections was housed under the Department of Social Services and so there always was a need to work together with other departments. And certainly that took place in all of the presentations to the federal government with regards to our concerns over the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

And that kind of collaboration — working together — will continue with the new department. And indeed processes are in place already to ensure that we will be developing joint responses which will, of course, on things like the age question to come to this Chamber. We also will have some continued contact — the two departments — with Social Services as they have still some role to play in some of these questions.

But whether youth corrections and the Department of Justice were in the same department or not, there would always be the need to make sure that we pay careful attention to the different approaches that are proposed, that in fact take place in different institutions, as the member indicated. Different approaches perhaps are wise in adult facilities versus youth facilities.

But you can be assured, the member can be assured that there is a close working relationship on these policy questions with the new department and that this Chamber will have ample opportunity to discuss those policies.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. I think your own department and stats indicate there's about 1,200 adults in the province's four jails. And a little more than double that — I believe 2,800 youth involved in the justice system.

So again from a policing and a prosecution standpoint, how will that split or that division of those two departments now impact on those numbers and in what way do you plan on dealing with those?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well again, the likelihood of anything in general terms being all that different is fairly small. The police and prosecutors have worked with both the adult and the youth facilities in the past and will continue to do so.

But I would point out something the member is familiar with. In the strategy developed to address car thefts in Regina, there was a close working relationship between the two . . . between then, the two departments involved — Social Services and Justice — the police, and indeed, the city of Regina. And on the Justice side, of course, there were issues respecting prosecutions and policing which came to bear on that work.

And perhaps that's a good illustration of how we can effectively work together so that we do know what each . . . we firmly know what each component of our system is doing, how it's responding to these issues, how it can better respond, and how we can all better work together to achieve a particular goal.

And I think the member will be aware that to date we've had some success in reducing . . . some significant success in reducing car thefts in Regina. We've got more work to do of

course, and we're more than prepared to all work together to ensure that we have an even better strategy.

So I think you can see that also with child prostitution in Saskatoon — a very close working relationship in operation help between police and Social Services, legal aid. And indeed every component — Health — every component of our supports for young people.

So I think we see now a firm . . . a firmer commitment to integrated, holistic approaches and to every aspect, every component of the system being prepared to work together even more effectively for a common goal.

But I think the member asks an interesting question about, how do you ensure that everybody's on the same page, moving in the same direction, has the same information available to them, and essentially are pursuing the same goals? But we're working very hard to ensure that that, in fact, is the case.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. I'd like to leave that area and turn to something a little different. But before I do that, there are a number of sort of specific issues that have been brought to my attention, some by my constituents and some by some people from other constituencies, that I'd just like to deal with.

And the one is the sharing of traffic and Criminal Code fine revenues with towns and RMs (rural municipality) and cities.

And I am wondering if you could just start off by giving a rundown of how that sharing takes place and what the percentages are, and then we'll go from there.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me, if I may, introduce John Baker, who's our head of policing services and other things, who as you know works on these issues and others in a continual way.

If I understand the member's question properly — and we can explore other aspects of it if I don't — the province administers . . . supposing an offence is committed within a municipality and a fine is paid. The province administers that fine collection process and 25 per cent of that collection . . . fine goes to the province. And if it's a Criminal Code offence, say on the highway or something of that sort, then the province would take all of the fine revenue.

I might say, and the member will know this, that in terms of the provincial government's commitment to policing and enforcement in the province, the commitment is presently at \$88 million — about an \$18 million increase since 1999. The member will know about the numbers of police officers in the province, both municipal and RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), and he will no doubt know about the challenges of generally funding this police component. He will know of the long-standing approach of ensuring that municipalities pay for some of their policing costs which has been in place since the beginning of the province and he will know of the significant new commitments from the province to policing. He will know that we have in fact record numbers of dollars going to policing in the province.

If in the first part I didn't answer the member's question, we

certainly can pursue the specifics.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. I believe I got part of my answer and we're going to try and work at the rest of it.

Twenty-five per cent of the fines go into the province, but if I understood correct, that all traffic fines went to the province. It was my understanding that the ones in the towns and the ones that took place in a close proximity to the towns, that the town got a good portion of those, at least I believe it was that case when I was on town council some time ago. Wonder if the minister will want to expand on that?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — I hate to say it, Mr. Chair, but I think the member is right: that Saskatchewan Highway offences revenues would come to the province, Criminal Code offences revenues would come to the province, and municipal bylaw offences, 75 per cent would go to the municipalities, 25 per cent to the province.

Mr. Heppner: — In those communities where the highway is very close to the community and they very often have a different speed limit — and I would think Chamberlain would be an example of that; town of Hague would be another example of that, and we have a few of those — any fines levied on that stretch of highway would then go to — what? The province would get all of it or would that be a split situation there as well?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — That's right, Mr. Chair. While I'm on my feet, can I introduce Linda Hahn who's another one of our officials working in this area on courts.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, and welcome to your new official.

And I think we'll get back to this cost sharing of the fines in a minute or two.

At this point, I'm wondering if the minister would briefly outline how the amount of sharing of policing that's levied, how that is assigned as far as the towns and villages are concerned and the RMs? Or are they under the same formula where it's so much per person or on what basis is that policing costs levied?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. In response to the member's question about the allocation of costs by municipalities for their policing: urban municipalities with between 500 and 5,000 people with an RCMP detachment in their community will pay \$57 per capita; urban municipalities with between 500 to 5,000 people without an RCMP detachment will pay \$42 per capita; urban municipalities with less than 500 people but with an RCMP detachment in their community will pay \$40 per capita; and RMs and urban municipalities with less than 500 people without an RCMP detachment will pay \$20 per capita.

And I might say, as I'm sure the member knows, that this matter of municipal contributions to the costs . . . to the provision of RCMP services, payment for those services — which I say, which I have mentioned earlier, has been in place since the beginning of the province — is never an easy question.

There is, as the member knows, a task force which made up of Justice officials and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) officials which meets on this matter from time to time and proposes a formula to apply to the municipalities.

It's of course never easy when, when you make a change. One municipality's costs will go up and another's will go down. My guess is that we hear from those municipalities whose costs go up, but not from those whose costs go down. But nonetheless the formula is worked out in conjunction with SUMA and SARM officials and is arrived at with their, with their support and then is implemented.

What has happened over the last while is those formula . . . formulae have generated, as I say, winners and losers and some who are concerned about the cost. And then there is very often searching for another formula which would be more desirable to those who in fact are paying a little, a little more.

(15:45)

The member will know that by contrast to the cost of policing services in the urban municipalities — the larger ones with their own police services — that these are costs which are substantially less than you would pay if you lived in Regina or Saskatoon or Prince Albert.

But we do know that this is a burden on our municipalities, on RMs and urban municipalities. And as I say we seek to find the best solution possible through the task force. But it is our view that municipalities should contribute as they have done since 1905 to the policing costs of their communities.

And I might say also that where there are concerns raised about the amount of policing, the amount of RCMP coverage in an area, that Assistant Commissioner Boucher, the head of "F" Division, the RCMP here in the province, is always prepared to meet with municipalities to try to address their concerns and I think has been successful in many respects. And certainly is very, very committed to ensuring not only community policing but also that communities get the kind of policing they want, and that his assessment of the needs of the community are discussed with those communities to ensure that they also know his concerns. And through that route we have generally been able to meet these challenges.

I might say too, just to remind the member, that we do have 147 RCMP officers more than we had in 1999 and we have significant . . . (inaudible) . . . extra policing in the province. And we're committed to ensuring that the people of the province have the kind of policing to ensure the appropriate level of safety and security in their communities. We know it's an issue for citizens and I think in the last budget we've indicated again, once again, a major commitment to safety and security in our communities all across the province.

There will be further discussions with SUMA and SARM about municipal contributions, beginning April 17. And if we can find other formula that is acceptable to RMs and urban municipalities, then of course we'd be only too happy to implement them.

Mr. Heppner: — I thank you for that answer. And I . . . Minister, I should inform him that I do not intend to get in a debate with him about the formula. So we won't have to stand here and argue about what should be less and what should be more and those sorts of things.

I would also like to underline the statement that you made about the quality of policing that takes place out there. I know in my community of Rosthern we had a substantial increase in crime a number of years ago and the present people that are involved in policing have put a lot of effort into reducing that and have been fairly successful. So I think that's a plus.

I know the communities always have a concern about the fact that they don't see the police car in town as often as they would like to see for the amount they pay for it. But as you also mentioned, they do have their superior officers that do come out to the town councils and meet with the mayors and councils and discuss those concerns with them. And my experience and the time that I spent on town council was very positive with that, and I think that's a good system, and it gives the councils a feeling that they can go to someone and say, I have a concern, and then those concerns are worked through.

When you gave the numbers or the amount of cost sharing that every community has to do based on population, and I was writing these down and I missed the one number that I wanted and that was the contribution from RMs.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The RMs, Mr. Chair, whatever their size of population, pay \$20 per capita.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. As we discussed earlier on, the towns, villages do share in fines from traffic costs. RMs, I believe, do not get any revenue from that.

And that seems somewhat unfair when you have the breakdown of \$20 per head from certain size communities and from the RMs, and yet those communities could benefit if they happen to have a highway going close by that has a reduced speed limit that works out excellent for a speed trap. And yet the RMs never get a chance to share in any of those revenues.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member is right that the RMs would not recover any of the fine revenue from highway offences or Criminal Code offences. But they would, in the same way as other municipalities, keep 75 per cent of any RM bylaw offence fines.

But I think it's worth bearing in mind too that the RMs contributing just \$20 per capita for RCM police servicing is, certainly in contrast to other municipalities, you know, I think a reasonable fee.

And so those RMs do not pay a huge amount for RCMP services, but as I . . . and as I indicate, they do get a share of any RM bylaw fines.

I appreciate the member's point about concerns about how often the patrol might come by a particular community, and as he mentioned, there are always mechanisms to ensure that concerns raised about that can be addressed.

The RCMP will initially decide, based upon their criteria, what kind of service they think is needed in response to the crime in a community, but are always prepared to reassess and work with the community to address their concern.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. In the rate structure that you presented, there . . . if there happens to be a detachment in the community, the rates are somewhat higher. And I'm wondering if the minister would like to explain. Is that because the thought is they'll get a better service because the people are residing right there, and that will be a deterrent in itself? Or is it because of the economic benefit of having the detachment in the community? Which one of those two is it?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — I think it's generally regarded that an RCMP detachment in a community is a valuable thing for that community; that it has both an economic component with officers living in the community, paying their taxes there, spending some of their earnings there, and participating almost invariably in community life — softball, hockey, coaching and so on.

In terms of policing coverage, the RCMP, indeed any police service, would assess the kind of coverage needed based upon the crime rate and the amount of this social challenge in that community, which may or may not be affected by the presence of a detachment in that community.

So it wouldn't be right to say that they get more policing because that would be worked out on the basis of need. But it is I think likely to be the case, and I think we generally regard it as the case, that with a police presence right there in the community, there is greater access which may benefit the local community.

So in general terms, I think everyone would recognize the benefit of having an RCMP detachment in that community. What I imagine is at stake is the amount, the dollar value to that community about which there can always be disagreement.

Mr. Heppner: — I think that the concept that there's a psychological advantage to having a detachment in a community is probably there in most cases. I know in the detachment that I'm involved with, it just happens to be that the community that they live in, the detachment resides, is also one of the ones that has a fairly high crime rate. And the ones around there, where the detachment doesn't exist . . . So the correlation isn't always perfect.

Now the RMs do not gain from any psychological benefit because the detachments aren't in the RMs. They also don't gain any economic benefit because these members, with very few exceptions, all live within the community, pay their taxes there, support the stores over there.

So I guess my final question then would be, if the RMs do not gain anything from the detachment over there, they also don't get any of the benefits from those traffic offences, any of those fines that are being paid through that. That in the minds of the RM people is somewhat unfair, in fact is maybe substantially unfair.

Like we try and keep everything fairly even. I don't think

there's a lot of arguments as long as the communities through SARM and SUMA can come to an agreement on the cost sharing, and I haven't had any letters from RMs complaining about the cost of policing. But I have had the concerns raised that that doesn't seem to be offset by any revenue from the traffic component, and they don't gain any benefit from the detachment being in the specific area.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — I think that's true. But I think that it's worth bearing in mind that at the \$20 per capita fee, that is half of urban municipalities with less than 500 people; and if you consider larger communities, that's about a third of that total fee per capita.

So I think the member is right that they don't get huge extra benefits, but they are, I think, paying a cost which is, relative to other communities, really not too bad.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. And I think what'll happen is, as you mentioned, there's another meeting coming off between your department and SARM and SUMA when these fees will be debated, and I'm sure a lot of the RMs will have a concern about the one that I've just raised about not getting any of those particular fees.

On another particular topic, and this one I'm just going to read part of the letter, because you may understand it better if I read it rather than if I present it.

And it comes from a credit service company and it says:

I would like to voice serious concerns I have with regard to section 33 of The Trust and Loan Corporations Regulations, 1999. (And the question is,) I would ask that the policy be reviewed to change the filing date from the last day of February of each year to the last day of March. To require companies such as this one to have completed audited statements prepared by the auditors in what amounts to less than 60 days of their year-end is an unreasonable requirement. Every year we must make a special request for this priority handling of our audit which definitely creates some unique costs to their company.

And I'm wondering if any consideration has been given to making a change in that particular system.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well like the member opposite, I have section 33 of the trust and loans regulations at the tip of my tongue.

But I think it's a useful recommendation by the member. If we've received the same letter then we will have been looking at this proposal and certainly I'll take the member's suggestion. Maybe he has a copy he could let us have and we'll have a look at this in the immediate future.

Our goal is to ensure that we facilitate the filing arrangements, the filing requirements and so on, that we make life not more difficult but more straightforward to business people in the province. And anything we can do to improve that we certainly will do.

So we'll look at that right away and I want to thank the member

for his suggestion.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Welcome to the minister's officials.

It's my pleasure to be able to stand today and ask a few questions, Mr. Minister, surrounding the upcoming measures that we hopefully can put into place soon to help the children who are being exploited on the streets. And I recognize, Mr. Minister, that the Bill has not received Royal Assent yet and that there may be questions that I can direct later on, but I would really appreciate if you can give me a couple of answers of concern that I have regarding how workable the Bill may be and how soon it may be workable.

Mr. Minister, in as far as the \$300,000 for the safe house that will be established in Regina, I'm wondering whether or not that entire sum will be put forward in the very near future in order to get the operations of the safe house started.

(16:00)

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member will know that this is the government's commitment, and that along with the member opposite and the members of the committee, and indeed all members of the House, we are committed to ensuring that we truly do address what is, as we would agree, really one of the most outrageous situations that exists in the province — the sexual abuse of children on our streets and in our communities.

I would just say on the specific question that it would be perhaps better to raise this with the Minister of Social Services in whose responsibility this falls, but I would say that that is our commitment and we would anticipate delivering on that commitment as soon as possible.

And indeed the provisions in the Act are our best response to the committee's recommendations and that we're always looking for new and better ways to respond to this particular problem.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, can you tell me from which department . . . or which department will be responsible for allocating these funds for the safe house.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — That would be Social Services, Mr. Chair. We will be looking after the police training costs and the kinds of implications that flow from enforcing the legislation. That will be Justice's role. And then the matters regarding the provision of services in response to the young people involved will be under the auspices of Social Services.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, if I recall correctly when yourself and the Minister of Social Services were engaged in a press conference regarding this matter, I believe the media did ask you whether or not you would be putting extra resources towards policing. And I believe the answer from one of you was that no, you wouldn't but you would use the existing officers in order to meet the needs of this whole issue.

So I'm wondering whether or not you are going to be in fact putting extra funding in place for police officers to work

specifically towards the many duties that they will have in order to make this legislation effective.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The first year's budget commitments for the various different justice related programs here — specialized police training, support for DISC (deter identify sex-trade consumers) data collection, vehicle impoundment and so on — comes to about . . . comes to \$367,000.

You asked the specific question about policing. As you know, we did in the last budget provide more police officers for the . . . in particular the cities that are most affected, but also to other communities across the province too.

And while we would anticipate some of those new resources being used for the purposes of enforcing this legislation, it's our view that we should leave policing and policing priorities and policing commitments to those police services themselves. But we certainly would be expressing our support for them expending some of that . . . some of those new resources in this area. And I would have every expectation that they would.

I think at the press conference the member refers to, there was a question about needing new resources in order to effectively enforce this legislation. And I think it's pretty clear that unless some of the new resources are used in this area, that it would be very difficult to effectively enforce.

So as I say, with those new police officers in the major cities and in other communities, we would anticipate new policing resources being used in this area. And it plainly is a priority for not only this House, but for municipalities who are particularly affected in this area and by . . . and for police services who are working with these children.

And I think — and the member will certainly be familiar with — with Operation Help which is, you know, an interesting and valuable approach to dealing with the young people involved, attempting as much as possible to provide alternatives and counselling and supports rather than to charge them and to go through the criminal justice system.

So I think there are many examples out there for doing things differently; for allocating resources, present resources, in new ways; and for using new resources in this endeavour. And I do want to repeat my thanks for the member's support and commitment in this area which will ensure, I think, that in part our police services and our municipalities will do a good job in this area.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, have you done any research into understanding and knowing exactly what kind of money will be needed for the DISC system? And if you have, does this \$67,000 that you're speaking of, is that going to be enough money in order to make sure that we have a workable, effective DISC system in this province?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — I'm not sure if I heard the member right. But the new revenues — the new resources, I'm sorry — for Justice's commitment to addressing child sexual abuse on our streets is \$367,000 and of that about \$30,000 is committed to DISC.

We will of course be prepared to look at other resource needs if that isn't enough to make the system work. But it's our assessment that we should be able to make the system work with that commitment and we've closely looked at BC of course, at their system, and so we think this will be an adequate sum to address this concern.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. So you have made a commitment of \$367,000 from the Justice department, is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Yes, in the first year.

Ms. Julé: — And you have mentioned earlier, Mr. Minister, that the Department of Social Services budget would be responsible for the safe house operations for this year. Thank you.

Mr. Minister, I'm just wondering when exactly there's the intent to start putting this money in place in order for these operations to get started? And have you been in contact with the police services in our major cities at least to be able to discuss with them the plans that you believe are necessary to put in place?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — All these matters are underway or at stages of implementation. Police training, for example, will take place in Regina on March 6, 7 and 8, so very quickly we'll be working on that. So you can see we've been working with the expectation of this legislation coming into force and getting ready for it.

Some forces, as you know, have . . . some police services have DISC up and running at the present time and we'll be working on enhancements for them.

Impoundment is just about ready to go. I think there's some pilots in some communities shortly to just iron out the bugs and make sure it's all going to work well, and as soon as that is done then impoundment . . . the vehicle impoundment program will be in place.

And as soon as this legislation, the new legislation has passed through this House and regulations have been put in place that . . . our response will be effective there too. So essentially we're ready. We're doing a lot of the things that we've indicated we would do already, and the things such as vehicle impoundment will be in place, I think, within the month.

So I think fairly effective and quickly we've addressed these concerns.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I take it that you maybe made a bit of a mistake. You said that police training has been or will be in place March 6, 7, and 8 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . May 6, 7, and 8. All right. It will be in May, not March. Very good. Thank you.

That's very heartening, Mr. Minister. I'm glad to hear that because of course this is an issue that we must move on as quickly as possible.

Mr. Minister, I was wondering whether or not in your

deliberations about the plan that you have . . . or that you intend to put forward to look at the many facets of what needs to be done to assist children in order to have the protection that they need, whether you have considered — and I notice in the Bill that it's not in there, so I'm asking you — why you haven't considered giving the option to parents, as well as outreach workers and child protection workers, etc., to in fact make an application for a stay away order, for . . . towards a john or a pimp that may be constantly harassing their children.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — My understanding, Mr. Chair, is that that provision is in the Act. We'll just have a quick check and see for you. Plainly the member's right in indicating that anyone who has a connection or an interest in ensuring the protection of any particular child, it's . . . it would be valuable for them to be able to instigate a process to protect them, rather than just leave it to police, for example.

But let me just check for a moment, but I'm pretty sure it's already there. But it is a responsibility of Social Services.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you. Maybe while you're double-checking on that, I would like to ask you, Mr. Minister, if there has been any provision made at this point for a director of programming for the safe house that will be coming up in Regina.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well I'm sure this is the case, Mr. Chair. But again, this is something which is under the auspices of Social Services. But plainly they will have to have somebody who runs it and they will have to ensure that that person's in place fairly quickly.

Ms. Julé: — All right. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I'll refer the rest of my questions at the time that we have Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 2.

Mr. Minister, I would just like you to tell the Assembly how many youth court cases have been heard in the past year in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member asks how many youth cases were heard in Saskatchewan. The StatsCanada numbers for — this is 2000-2001 — state that there were 8,999 which is down 1 per cent from the 9,062 cases the year previously. So almost 9,000 cases.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. How does that compare to other provinces, other jurisdictions in Canada.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well the member will know the significant challenge Saskatchewan has with regards to crime and with regards to youth crime. Those numbers would be about double the national average.

Ms. Julé: — So thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, has your department and your government deliberated over any better way of doing things that might, in fact, see that youth have a way to possibly find an avenue to rehabilitation rather than going through the courts?

(16:15)

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well the . . . I think the concern

behind the member's question is really the concern that the Department of Justice focuses on almost exclusively. And what is it we can do and how can we contribute to the reduction in crime in our communities? And conversely, what can we do to ensure greater safety and security in our communities and indeed also a greater perception of safety and security in our communities? And this is in many respects . . . well it is certainly one of our greatest challenges in this province.

And the member will know it's flows from both a mixture personal responsibility — not being what we would wish it to be and a set of circumstances which we all know generate more criminal activity than we would hope for.

Plainly if you live in a dysfunctional home, if you have drug and alcohol abuse challenges, if school attendance is poor or non-existent, if you're facing a whole range of challenges of that sort — poor housing, inadequate nutrition, and so on — that the crime rate amongst people with those attributes will be greater.

It is a mixture though of being tough on those who commit offences and tough on the things that are likely to generate and contribute to generating more offending. And the mix is always a challenging one.

But I might say for example, with regards to car thefts, that over half of the car thefts are stolen by a person who never steals a car again. So it does illustrate the kind of approach we can take that . . . and so alternative measures are used for those offenders. And because they don't steal cars again, I think we can conclude, not conclusively, but we can I think, we can assume that we are having some success in moving them away from a life of crime.

The trick in many respects is assessing which children, which young people, we can be successful with in terms of diversion, and which ones we have to recognize are major threats to society and need to be treated very forcefully.

But of the 9,000 cases each year in youth court, about 2,000 are diverted off to alternative measures, and then that means 9,000 go through the normal route and some, of course, will end up in acquittal, some will end up in guilt and sentencing.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, there has been indeed a great deal of discussion surrounding what kind of measures might be taken in order to, I guess, rehabilitate youth that, as you have mentioned, often come from dysfunctional homes, that don't have parental guidance, that basically haven't been versed in principles, values and guidelines that would lead them to being contributing members of society and that kind of thing.

So, Mr. Minister, I'm just wondering whether or not your government has thought any further about disciplinary camps? I mean, none of us like to use the term, boot camp, but it was referred to as that in fact by your members not too long ago in the media, and it did come from your side of the House from one of your NDP members. It could have been you. I can't quite remember, but I think it was you.

But nonetheless, the focus of this discussion is not what it may be called. I guess the focus of it is do you believe there's value

in, you know, rehabilitating youth through disciplinary measures?

And by discipline, I don't mean punitive measures. I mean measures that would help them understand that there are responsibilities towards society and themselves that they have to learn, and put them through that kind of counselling and rehabilitation. Have you thought about taking any more steps in that direction?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member raises what is, I think, again one of our challenges. What do we do to try to ensure that young people who are in trouble with the law have opportunities not to be — and realistic opportunities not to be. And how do we ensure that, both with a carrot and a stick, we encourage them to make those appropriate choices.

And different things, as we know, work for different people. People are individuals and not one program will fit them all. And plainly, they also have significant challenges perhaps flowing from drug and alcohol abuse and other — maybe physical, sexual abuse in their lives — that make it very difficult to make those options real options for those young people.

But we do firmly believe that strict controls, that rules and regulations, that boundaries are important as a component of addressing our youth problem; that some people plainly will respond very well to a very regulated environment. And most in fact of . . . or many of the young people we're dealing with here are people who don't have the kinds of discipline in the constructive way the member talks about — discipline in their home life.

So consequently, we would leave no option . . . we would put no option aside in terms of how we best address the challenges we face.

The young . . . the Youth Criminal Justice Act places now a very firm emphasis on rehabilitation. And I might say that if we look at youth crime rates in Quebec versus youth crime rates here, the contrast is very significant. You know, the youth crime rates are much, much lower in Quebec and the focus on rehabilitation in Quebec is much, much higher than across the country.

So what they have found — and I think what other countries have found — is that if you focus on rehabilitation, you might actually rehabilitate a large number of young people.

If you take a route more common in, say, in the United States where punishment is the . . . more of the norm, you find you're not . . . don't have as much success with that route as you do over the rehabilitation.

On the other hand within a coercive environment, an institution, it is very difficult to engender rehabilitation. It is much more effectively done early in life with early childhood intervention initiatives which . . . of which the province has many, in dealing with supports for families to earn incomes to ensure that they bring themselves out of poverty. And you know, the building independence program has ensured the reduction of the numbers of people on social assistance in very significant

numbers.

But there will always be some of these offenders for whom a period of time away from society is the only solution. It may not particularly be a solution for them but it is a solution for society.

So I guess what I'm saying here is that we would . . . we rule out nothing in terms of how we respond to these young offenders. And we are constantly seeking new ways to make sure that we are constructive and helpful and, in the end, actually reduce crime. Because I think we would all agree that the only way we will reduce crime is ensuring that the kinds of conditions which generate more crime are themselves reduced.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, in respect to your comments on youth addictions to drug and alcohol, this is getting to be a very, very, much more serious problem in Saskatchewan than it ever was before. There is no doubt about it. I have heard from parents who tell me that their children can get the drug of their choice — any one of four drugs for sure — within the high schools of our cities at any time.

And so I'm . . . in view of the fact that the committee to prevent the sexual abuse and exploitation of children has put forward as one of their recommendations that there needs to be a way of looking at how, in fact, we would look at all of the needs as well as the strengths of families, and if the need may be that they need to have addiction treatment, that there should be something put in place.

Now there was one recommendation that spoke of the need to support and enhance the absentee assessment team approach by the police in Saskatoon as well as other cities. It could be certainly that whole idea passed onto other cities and, in conjunction with that, to make sure that we support as much as we can the program that goes with it, which is the Wraparound program.

Now I understand, as you have mentioned, that Operation Help is quite successful. I also understand that sometimes there's not the co-operation from all players in that, that . . . not so much the co-operation, but somehow there's disagreements, I guess, that come to pass. And so I think there needs to be directive from government on co-operating, collaborating with that, and with a focus on getting the job done.

I think the other thing that I'd like to see in regards to the recommendation that I mentioned in reference to the Wraparound program, I'm wondering if you have looked into enhancing that program a bit, using maybe the resources at hand but doing things a different way. I wonder if you have looked into ensuring that there is a collaborative effort, whether your government has insisted on that, and how that whole Wraparound program in your view is working right now.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well, the member is quite right, that there is a constant need to ensure that there is as much co-operation and integration of services as possible, and that individuals and professions within who work in these integrated and coordinated approaches will have different perspectives and different values and different approaches, and perhaps even different priorities. And the benefit of working in this way —

and Operation Help, as the member indicates, is an example — and I think also the car theft strategy in Saskatoon . . . in Regina is an example.

The benefit of working in this way is that people become more familiar with each other's priorities and approaches and become more comfortable with the professionalism of others in the process, and consequently become more comfortable with changes that might be, might be useful. So that is a constant challenge for us — to make sure that we do have as much integration as possible.

I'd also echo the member's comments about the challenge of drug abuse and addictions. The member will know that there's a particular problem in the North, but it's a problem across the province. And the RCMP has been developing some new processes for dealing with, in particular, drug trafficking in the North, and we are talking with them about a more concerted effort. We will hear this at a gathering in Prince Albert — April 24 and April 26, I think it is — where we will hear the call for a more concerted effort from northern communities, which we are working on to provide an appropriate response. We will hear no doubt calls for more resources, both physical, human, and financial, to address this concern.

We would also, I think, agree that almost all of the kinds of crime we're talking about here today has, as a component, drug and alcohol abuse. It's a very common part of the makeup of those people who are committing those crimes. So we plainly need a better approach to this.

I might say too that the challenge is not getting easier as new kind of designer drugs appear on the scene, which are very cheap to make and very easy to make and can do really very significant damage to young people's physical well-being and their . . . and affect their mental, mental capacity. So this is a huge challenge, whether we think about it as flowing from fetal alcohol syndrome right the way through to the kinds of drugs people inject into their arms on the streets. And we've seen and you've seen and I've seen the damage that this does to people and the link to this criminal . . . to their criminal activity.

So I really just kind of echo the member's kind of sense of priority and urgency about this. And we have begun to talk to the RCMP about a really concerted effort to deal with these challenges.

(16:30)

And on the surface many of these things seem relatively straightforward. If there is one road in and out of a community, you would think you would be more successful at being able to control, for example, the drug and alcohol abuse in those communities. It appears relatively complex. It appears to require large amounts of resources in any given time, and of course the . . . and co-operation from communities and citizens.

And of course you can't always have those . . . that huge commitment of resources permanently. And so consequently really we have to work on what is it that makes people choose to use the drugs and alcohol that are available to them in the abusive way they do.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I thank you for your comments. I'd like to just refer you back to the recommendation from the committee that spoke about the need to enhance the wraparound process. And, Mr. Minister, to me that process is one of the best kind of processes, if in fact we could do the right research, the research that we need to do.

And what I mean by that is there is a very workable wraparound process happening in the United States. And it needs to be understood so that we can understand how to address the things that you have just mentioned.

It really focuses a great deal on specific service providers wrapping around a family; for instance, where a young person has been in trouble and then been referred to wraparound and the people in it to help them. And in that process, the young person as well as the parents sit at the table, as well as, for instance if it's Aboriginal people, elders sit at the table, and they speak about their needs, where they're at in life, what those needs are.

Now the great part of this whole program is that they tend . . . or the intention is rather, is to focus on the strengths of those individuals. And every human being does have strengths and qualities about them and talents that need to be developed whereby they can feel proud of themselves and will choose to take a different road than they were on before.

So it seems to me very valuable to recognize that, when you're working on the strengths of youth and you're encouraging them in their strengths, there might be a very good chance that they will choose a different lifestyle along with people that support them.

So I would like to just encourage you to recognize the value of this program and in the days, weeks, and months ahead to please look into how this program — it's not a program really, it's a process — can be enhanced in Saskatchewan. Because I think it's one of the things that would be very, very helpful to our youth and their families and could basically turn around people's lives to enhance their well-being and for the betterment of themselves and all of society.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The approach the member refers to, the wraparound approach, we do have a template for that. We are moving that out across the province. We are committed to ensuring that we do work with families in a holistic way.

These are issues which don't just affect the children. They are issues which affect and are solved by a more, kind of, constructive and resilient family arrangement. I think it's also worth . . . So that approach is there and our commitment is to spreading that out across the province.

I think one thing that is important to remember is that we need, in order to effectively address this issue, functional individuals, functional families, and functional communities. And in many respects, we . . . And across this province, we have many communities which simply aren't functional enough in order to generate the kind of self-sufficient functional people in families within them.

And so in some instances, we simply don't have the underlying

conditions that would enable us to build strong families and strong individuals. That is a serious concern for us in this province. It's one we focus on in terms of more policing activities, because in order to build strong, functioning communities, the rules and regulations, the social values and social norms of a community have to be enforced, and they're enforced in our community by police officers.

Those police officers also spend their time trying to ensure that there is capacity within those communities in order to take advantage of a more orderly environment. We have to ensure that leaders in those communities can in fact deal with the children within those communities, deal with the families in those communities without constantly having to fend off drug dealers and so on in order to be able to do that.

But I would say that there is now — just in the years that I've been the Minister of Justice — there is now a greater sense of urgency amongst, for example, First Nations leadership of the need to address these concerns in an aggressive way. There is a greater commitment on the part of leaders in those communities to address them in an aggressive way and there's a greater sense of what needs to be done within those communities in order to build strong individuals and strong families and those strong communities.

And I'd certainly be happy to invite the member along. We're hoping to go to the North again to see some of the communities and some of the work that is taking place in those communities. And I'd be happy if the member would come along and see some of the very impressive work and some of the very impressive individuals in those communities struggling often in very, very difficult circumstances with . . . just because those communities are remote and suffer from significant problems and have large numbers of young people within them.

So I think with that I share the member's view that we have to work within families, within communities, with individuals, that we have to be more integrated and more holistic. But I do have a sense of optimism that we . . . that we're seeing a greater commitment across the piece to actually resolving, to resolving this.

And before I sit down . . . I can't read his writing though so I'll sit . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well what am I going to say?

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the minister, just a question on land titles if I might. If the minister could outline if there is any work at all or any function out of all . . . of his department related to land titles or if that has moved completely over to the corporation in light of ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan), in light of the fact that the rollout isn't completed all . . . in most of the districts.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The specific roles and responsibilities to . . . of the registrar of titles and the registrar of surveys is now with ISC. But they have a statute . . . Those two persons have a statutory responsibility to report to the Minister of Justice because of the importance of the integrity of land titles in the province.

So the actual administrative functions are with ISC, but the minister retains a residual role as someone who receives reports

from those registrars.

And I might say we're in the process of moving ISC into Saskatoon. Regina, as you know, went relatively smoothly. We have continual challenges here in this very complex process, but I think you can tell too from the lawyers who've gone through the training, address their concerns to ISC, that they do feel that ISC is responsive to their concerns and are dealing with the problems which arise.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could you put a price tag perhaps or assign a budget value to how many resources in your department continue to be utilized for some sort of land titles function as you've outlined, or partial positions or any sort of budget allocations that Justice still faces to do the . . . to play the role that you've outlined it still must play with respect to land titles?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — In dollar terms, it wouldn't be very much. The deputy minister and I are on the board of ISC and there are of course meetings which take place with the registrars and with officials in ISC, but it is not a very significant expenditure for the department.

Mr. Wall: — I wonder if the minister would undertake or the department could undertake to provide some sort of an estimate and send it over at your convenience for that figure.

And also if there are any staff, especially in the regions that are still on the paper system, if there are . . . if those staff . . . I think they've already moved over to ISC, but I just seek some confirmation of that.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The transfer of employees from Justice to ISC took place some time ago and every single person involved in land titles is now an employee of ISC.

Mr. Wall: — Just to . . . thank you, Mr. Minister. To switch gears a little bit here, there's one fairly unique request or concern we feel regarding land titles and it's related to the automation. But it's the desire on the part of many people in the province to have that original charter or that original piece of paper for various reasons. A lot of it's for, you know, emotional reasons or sentimental reasons.

And it seems as though . . . I know that we were talking about this in Crown Corporations Committee and Mr. Hewitt highlighted that that was also an issue, but it's the original documents of course that are very dear to some people. And I wonder if you could comment at all — understanding that it's perhaps the purview of ISC, but could you comment at all whether or not Justice has any ideas about this, any solutions for this for folks that would like to have that document?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well certainly the member's right that . . . and in fact in any transfer from a paper system to a computerized system, there is always a lot of angst about, well how can I prove that I actually own this piece of, this piece of property. Or, how can I be sure that the transaction that has taken place, in fact, has taken place? What is the proof I have?

And for many of course the transition from paper to computer is not complete, and so that fact that you can find it on the

computer and print it off is not always enough for some people. For those who are much younger than us that, of course, will not be a problem in the future as they're used to computer, computer processes.

If a family has the original land titles paper, of course it's theirs; they can keep it. People who, though, might buy a piece of property that perhaps the family member owned a long time ago wouldn't necessarily have access to those pieces of paper, and I think we should look into how we might provide that kind of, that kind of response to people.

We have many, many very interesting documents from many years ago about land in the province, and we should do our best, I think, to kind of make people feel good about the property they own. And if . . . We'll certainly deal with it shortly. We'll make sure that ISC spends some time looking at how it can address people's needs for original documentation, and documentation today.

Now, if they want . . . if a person wants a piece of paper, they can have a piece of paper. And if they feel better about having that piece of paper then sure, they should have it, and they can get it from their lawyer. But in fact the proof of ownership will be in the computer.

Mr. Wall: — Well, thank you, Mr. Minister, for those responses. And we will give that relatively good news back to those that have raised that concern that it's something that the government will look at. And for the most part, I am referring to that . . . those people that for sentimental reasons are looking for that original document if they can get it.

So we'll pass that along to them. Thank you for your answers.

(16:45)

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. And, Mr. Minister, I'd sort of like to underline what my colleague just said. I think there's a lot of people, particularly in rural Saskatchewan where you have second, third, fourth generation living on the farms, and that title has that unique sentimental value that they would like to be able to keep. And so I think if you can accommodate that it would be very well accepted by a lot of people, especially if other copies are also available to those people who may not have the farm any more but had some link to that in years gone by.

We don't have a lot of time left, Mr. Minister, but I think we're going to get onto a topic that will probably entertain us for the next hour or two.

Back in 1999, there was a promise made of 200 police officers. I would like for you to comment on why the number 200 was picked. Was that a political choice or was that actually a number that came into existence because of need that was there?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well it was a promise, as the member will know, made in an election campaign, made by the former premier to the police association — in fact, police officers from across the country — made in response to concerns people have had and continue to have about safety and security in their

communities and about their own personal safety.

And I think, I think there's . . . well there's no doubt that this government has committed record amounts of money to policing, that we have now significant numbers of police officers in our communities, more than we had before. That if you add up those new police officers provided through provincial resources, in other words, if you add up those who are in the RCMP who weren't there before — as a result of our renewed commitment to the RCMP as part of that \$18 million investment extra this year over 1999 — and if you add the 71 other officers appointed over the last three years, you'll get 132 new police officers paid for by the province who weren't there before.

If you add the federal component to that, you have an even larger number — the 147 plus the 71.

But I think in the context of policing budgets and the context of the fiscal . . . the tight fiscal situation the province is faced with, this is a pretty major commitment to policing in the province. And we intend to continue that kind of, that kind of commitment.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. And, Mr. Minister, I think we'll probably have to get into those specific numbers and see whether we, whether we agree on all the numbers and whether they total up to what they actually should total to.

But returning back to that number, 200, what do you see as the number that are needed just as far as to provide adequate policing?

Because if we look across the province today and we look at the situations that exist in a lot of our cities where we have the dubious record of being the car thief capital of Canada — maybe further than that — we're getting into being the break-in capital; we have some of our cities that have major arson problems; we look at those sorts of things.

I would like to know exactly what the complement of police officers, additional ones, needs to be to deal with those . . . to address those correctly. And I would hope that the department has looked at that carefully. Because just to say, well we'll throw in five more, maybe that's all that's needed; maybe we need 505.

So according to research that your department has done, and keeping in mind where Saskatchewan was at with crime in a lot of those areas that I just mentioned, what number of police officers would be required to deal with that adequately and effectively?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member I think asks, how many police do we need in the province, and do we need more, do we need less?

I mean, in general terms we need enough police in order to ensure effective policing, effective enforcement of our laws, effective crime prevention, and solid kind of community restorative justice policing resources. And we know the kinds of percentage of time a police officer should be spending on community policing work, on working with kids, on doing the

kinds of preventative work that is necessary to actually see crime reduced.

And we also know that the RCMP has a way of assessing, based upon population, geography, amount of crime, and so on — it's called STEER (Standards to Ensure Equitable Resources) — which assesses the numbers of police needed in order to effectively provide those services, that of prevention, community policing, and enforcement.

We are pretty much at that level in Saskatchewan regarding the RCMP. The municipalities follow slightly different approaches. You can see that the police resources in municipalities, this last week they're going up, partly the commitment of the province and partly the commitment of the municipalities.

I don't think you could say exactly we need, you know, one number.

Because of our crime rate in the province, because of the constant pressure we have on criminal activity, obviously we need to ensure that we have the resources in policing we need. And we have, I think, been working very hard to ensure that those resources are there, both on the RCMP side and on the municipal side.

And I might, for example, just say that North Battleford is a good example of where crime has been on the increase. The last two years we provided one extra police officer for North Battleford. And this year, because of the pressure we provided, we've provided two out of the provincial commitment.

So we constantly try to ensure that those resources are available. We listen carefully to the municipalities and to the RCMP and to the municipal police chiefs and respond, I think, pretty effectively over the last short while.

But this is a constant kind of pressure, a constant issue for us to ensure that we have the numbers of police officers we need. And like any occupation in our province, we have significant numbers of senior police officers at an age where they're beginning to think about retirement and we need to bring new police officers in to those police services.

And the member, I think, will be aware, but we, I think, are now . . . we are now in our third RCMP Aboriginal cohort at the depot here and all of those Aboriginal RCMP new recruits have been placed in Saskatchewan. So we also have very large numbers now of new RCMP officers who are from . . . who are First Nations or Métis, which is another important component of addressing the crime challenge in our province because they are able to do the restorative work, the community work in a different way than others.

So we are, I think, focusing in a multi-faceted way in providing these . . . meeting these challenges.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. Well, Mr. Chair, it seems to be that we've had a pretty good afternoon, except we finally ended up with a question with no answer to it. I think the minister and his department needs to be much more specific in this particular area.

And in the communities and the concerns that I listed, I didn't even refer to North Battleford and he brought that one up where there was a definite increase in crime and a concern for public safety.

We had a little incident here some time ago where the department was going to address the amount of cars that were stolen in Regina and they seemed to have addressed that somewhat successfully. But they did it basically by taking a certain number of those 30 to 80, however you define it, hard-core car thieves and took them off the street. And that obviously worked. Now who knows what's going to happen when they show up on the street. We're not sure, and that'll be interesting to see how well what they are doing in the interim works.

But while those particular officers were assigned to taking these particular individuals off the street, there were other areas of crime that weren't being addressed. Because while they were trying to catch those hard-core car thieves and getting them off the streets, the other areas that we already mentioned — break-ins, assault, arson — all of those things weren't being addressed. In fact resources were being taken away from there.

So when we have these dismal records in Saskatchewan and I ask the question: what numbers would be required to deal with that? It is very frightening, Mr. Chairman, to be told by the department in the lack of an answer that they really have never addressed the question: what would it take to put Saskatchewan back where it should be? And that is in a situation where we aren't leaders in cars being stolen, where we're not leaders in assault, where we're not leaders in arson, where we're not leaders in break-ins in homes.

And surely . . . And I know the minister is probably somewhat hesitant in giving out that number because he knows — and yes we would — we would want to hold his feet to the fire and say, now what are you going to do about it? But we still need that answer and surely the minister isn't going to tell us they haven't thought about that.

They must have thought about it. They must have some numbers in place. And my question again is: what numbers are needed to bring those rates of those various crimes down in the province of Saskatchewan? Because the public security is very critical on this issue.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well in the short response to the member's question, in actual fact the member should note that the car theft strategy has not only reduced the numbers of car thefts in the cities significantly but it has seen also a commensurate increase in break and enters, and theft. So there appears to be a dampening of crime in the city in general.

The issue about car thefts in the view of the chief of police, which I think is quite right, is that there needs to be every effort made to make a break in these thefts to ensure that they do get back to the national average. And of course we would prefer to be even less than that.

But this is a constant challenge for us. We constantly seek measures to reduce crime and I think the car theft, in fact, youth crime strategy in Regina has been successful. We look forward

to it continuing to be successful but we'll need new measures in order to make sure that that's the case.

The committee reported progress.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask for leave to move a motion with respect to committees of the legislature.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Substitution of Members on Standing Committee on Agriculture

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Chairman, I move seconded by the member from Saskatoon Fairview:

That the names of Ms. Carolyn Jones, Mr. Ron Osika, and Mr. David Forbes be substituted for those of Mr. Jim Melenchuk, Mr. Clay Serby, and Mr. Mark Wartman on a list of members composing the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, with leave to introduce two motions dealing with the composition of committees with opposition members.

Leave granted.

Substitution of Member on Standing Committee on Agriculture

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Indian Head-Milestone:

That the name of Wayne Elhard be substituted for that of Bill Boyd on the Standing Committee for Agriculture.

Motion agreed to.

Substitution of Member on Standing Committee on Health

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Indian Head-Milestone:

That the name of Arlene Julé be substituted for that of Bill Boyd on the Standing Committee of Health.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 17:02.