

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about the government's intentions with respect to long-term care fees. 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.

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

The first petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by citizens of Porcupine Plain, Somme, and Hudson Bay. Then I have a further 30 petitions, Mr. Speaker, signed entirely by citizens of Saskatoon. Thank you.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition signed by the good people of this province who've been responsible for building this province, Mr. Speaker, 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 will ever pray.

And this is signed by seniors from Warman and from the city of Saskatoon.

I so present.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I present a petition from citizens of Saskatchewan who would like to see a comprehensive strategy to address assisting children of the child sex trade. 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 signators on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the community of Rose Valley.

I so present.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by residents of Saskatchewan, and the prayer of the petition reads:

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 health care services in Saskatchewan.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these signatures are from the fine community of Elrose and I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of citizens who continue to be concerned about the proposed long-term care fee rate 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.

Mr. Speaker, signatures on this petition today are all from the community of Melfort.

I so present.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to do with care home fees. The prayer reads:

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.

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the cities of Yorkton, Melville, and from the community of Theodore.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well to present a petition. Reading 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 is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, the petition I present is signed by people from the communities of Weekes and Porcupine Plain.

I so present.

**Mr. Wakefield:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by citizens concerned with the long-term care fees.

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 in Saskatchewan.

And this petition is signed by citizens of Regina. Thank you.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a

petition signed by citizens concerned with proposed fee increases for long-term care services. And the prayer reads:

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, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Briercrest and Moose Jaw.

I so present.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition concerning crop insurance premium hikes and coverage reductions introduced by the government this year. The petition reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by producers from the communities of Sceptre, Prelate, Leader, and Mendham, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens of the province regarding the deplorable condition of our highways. 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 and loss of life and to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in the area, Mr. Speaker.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition is signed by many people in the Francis area.

I so present.

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the removable . . . removal of the deduction for prescription drugs. And the prayer reads:

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 Saskatchewan.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Weyburn, Pangman, Regina, and Ogema.

I so present.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens who remain concerned on the issue of long-term care fees and the increases in the province. And the prayer of their petition 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.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the communities of Yorkton, Hudson Bay, Carrot River, and Mistatim, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens concerned about the increased long-term care fees.

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 service in Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, the petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition this afternoon presented by the people of Saskatchewan who are very much concerned that the government is going to be gouging those who are most vulnerable in our society. And the petition reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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 will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by the good people of Prince Albert.

I so present.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from citizens concerned about the increase in long-term care home fees. The prayer reads:

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 is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Yorkton and Melville.

I so present.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it'll be no surprise that I have a petition today with citizens concerned about 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 Saskatchewan residents.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Watrous, Young, and Manitou Beach.

I so present.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens concerned with the government's plan to change . . . increase the long-term care fees. 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Drake, Foam Lake, and Jansen.

I so present.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan concerned with the long-term care fees. And 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.

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

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Paradise Hill and St. Walburg.

I so present.

**Mr. Peters:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by residents of the province that are concerned about the long-term care increase fees, and 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.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by people from the community of Unity.

I so present.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise with a petition from citizens of Saskatchewan with reference to the long-term care who obviously feel it is not the right thing to do. And the petition 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.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed in total by citizens of Saskatoon.

I so present.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 11, 18, 23, 24, 31, and 59.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature, a group of 23 members of the public service that are in your gallery today.

And this is part of a work experience program that goes on to assist people in understanding the various roles of both the elected and the public service people in our representative democracy. And today we have employees from the departments of Government Relations, Finance, Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization, Health, Industry and Resources, Social Services, Justice, Public Service Commission, Environment, Highways and Transportation, and the Legislative Assembly financial services branch.

So I would like all members to join me in thanking them for all the good work they do, and welcoming them to the legislature — our place of work — today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome civil servants to the Assembly today. I hope you enjoy the proceedings; that it's educational for you and interesting. And we look forward to meeting with you later on today.

Thank you very much.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

seated in the west gallery are 49 students who are looking to see if they want to have politics as a life career when they graduate from grade 12. And I say this because these are 49 of the sharpest minds that I know.

These are fine students from one of the finest schools in the finest city in this province. Mr. Speaker, they are students from Lakeview Elementary School, and they are accompanied by their teachers, Joan Block and Shirley Widenmaier. As well, Lois MacPherson and Mrs. Cooper are two-thirds of the chaperones.

And there is also one very special chaperone, Ann Metz, who is the sister of the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Watrous.

I would ask all members of this Assembly to welcome the students, the teachers, and the chaperones.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the member from Saskatoon Southeast in welcoming my sister, Ann. But I would also like to get one particular fine mind in that class that's very special to my heart. And one of the students is Andrea Metz. And so if she could stand and wave, that would be wonderful.

And if everyone would welcome her here.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(13:45)

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My introduction is joined today by the member from Saskatoon Greystone and Saskatoon Nutana in welcoming Wendy Manson from Conquest to the Assembly today.

Wendy is a member of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union and is here today having met with me this morning, along with other farm groups from APAS (Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan) and the stockgrowers and the Saskatchewan Feeders Association and the Wheat Pool and the Chair of the Saskatchewan Safety Net Review Committee and SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and the Saskatchewan Rally Group.

They're all here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, or this morning, to talk about the agriculture policy framework and the significant trade injury that farmers in Saskatchewan are experiencing.

And Wendy, of course, is someone who provides a great deal of policy direction on behalf of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union in helping us deal with this very difficult issue.

So I ask all members of the Assembly to join with me today in welcoming Wendy to our Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce to you Mr. Rod Gopher of Saulteaux First Nation near North

Battleford. Mr. Gopher is in the government gallery today.

And he is working very hard on the issue of fetal alcohol syndrome, fetal alcohol effect, and trying to reduce the scourge of that on our society and working to reduce its incidence. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming him today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, the president of the Canadian Western Bank, Mr. Larry Pollock, who's in your gallery.

And he lives in Edmonton. He's visiting Saskatchewan today, accompanied by Mr. Wayne Bamford, who lives in Calgary and is the vice-president and regional manager and also Ken MacDonald, who lives here in Regina and is the assistant vice-president and branch manager here in Regina.

And I've had the pleasure before of meeting with these gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, and I had the pleasure today also of meeting with them. And I know all members of the House will be very happy to know that they're quite optimistic for the prospects for the province this year. And I'd like all members to join with me in welcoming these people here today.

Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As you may know and everybody in the Assembly knows that I'm one fantastic hockey player. But I want to introduce another fantastic hockey player in the government gallery and that's the mayor of Buffalo Narrows and also chairman of New North, Bobby Woods.

And His Worship Bobby Woods is here with the director, Al Loke, and of course Al is the CEO (chief executive officer) of Bobby's organization. And I just want to point out then, Mr. Speaker, that he is quite a goaltender, but when it comes to me he's unable to stop a beach ball.

And I'd like to welcome His Worship to the Assembly as well as the CEO, Mr. Loke.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Prebble:** — Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to add my greetings to Wendy . . . to welcoming Wendy Manson to the Assembly.

And I want to introduce to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, to all members of the Assembly, Don Cody, who is, as I think all members will know, the mayor of Prince Albert.

And I had the privilege of serving with Don in the Assembly for a term from 1978 to '82 and we've become good friends. And Don, it's very nice to see you here this afternoon. Join me in welcoming him . . .

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**CommunityNet Expansion**

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, from A through W, CommunityNet is growing in Saskatchewan communities.

Yesterday it was Assiniboia. Today the Premier joined the students and staff at Weyburn Comprehensive School to celebrate its connection to CommunityNet. Soon CommunityNet will connect more than 366 communities, 834 educational facilities, 310 health facilities, 86 First Nations schools, and 256 government offices, and provides opportunities for access to high-speed Internet for thousands of individual households and businesses.

CommunityNet gives Saskatchewan people the tools needed to succeed in the new economy. It also creates an excellent launch pad to deliver improved public services. Soon programs like telehealth will allow doctors and patients to consult with specialists on-line. Students everywhere will gain expanded access to quality education.

Mr. Speaker, CommunityNet is making high-speed Internet more accessible in rural Saskatchewan than in centres like Toronto, New York, and Los Angeles. Technology like this is the cradle of innovation and is leading to entrepreneurial opportunities. For example, NuTok technologies, an Internet firm started by a 17-year-old in Swift Current, is now talking with customers from all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, widely available access to high-speed Internet puts Saskatchewan people at the leading edge of a technological revolution and gives us — us — an advantage in the new economy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Melfort Doctor Receives Rural Service Award**

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to be able to stand in the House today to tell you about a doctor who has been practicing medicine in Melfort for 37 years.

In the past, he's been honoured many times for his outstanding contributions to his profession, his community, and his faculty. Recently, Dr. Lionel Lavoie was honoured again when he was recognized by the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada. He was 1 of 64 doctors in Canada to receive a Rural Service Award for long-term commitment and contribution to a rural community.

In an era when most rural communities have difficulties retaining doctors, our community has been fortunate to have a doctor who is not only committed to his profession, but is also seriously committed to our community.

Dr. Lavoie has served on many medical association boards — locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally — and he has still made time to volunteer and lend his support to several of our community organizations. Because of his contributions

on many different levels he has made a difference, Mr. Speaker.

Members of the legislature, please join me in congratulating Dr. Lionel Lavoie on the receipt of this award, and in thanking him for the dedication to both his profession and to our community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**World Catholic Education Day**

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today a special educational event takes place in Canada and around the globe. World Catholic Education Day is noted annually as a day on which Roman Catholic schools across the world engage in some activity that celebrates their international associations. These activities take various forms from perhaps a prayer in the classroom, to engaging in an Internet hookup with other Catholic schools of the same name in several other countries.

In Saskatchewan and in our communities, we are proud to recognize the contribution and the role that Catholic schools play in the lives of students in our 12 urban and 6 rural Catholic school divisions.

Mr. Speaker, Catholic schools contribute a great deal to the scholastic, spiritual, and social aspects of life wherever they exist.

I'm sure all members of this Assembly will join me in celebrating this day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Two Saskatchewan Youth Receive Awards**

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to inform all members about the recent success of two Saskatchewan students.

Two of our province's brightest and best were recently honoured with 18 other young people at a national ceremony on Parliament Hill. The Toronto Dominion Bank Financial Group recognized Elizabeth Pryor of Hawarden and David Radie of Regina for their strong commitment to their communities.

A member of the Saskatchewan Youth Orchestra, Ms. Pryor was instrumental in raising funds for a designated heritage building that was in need of repair.

Mr. Speaker, for Hawarden's homecoming, Elizabeth researched the historical background of her village and dressed in historical dress and offered up public tours.

David Radie has done extensive public speaking to raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease. He has also been involved in fundraising for this worthy cause and has personally offered his support to those who are caregivers for Alzheimer's patients. David knows first-hand how hard this can be as he helped care for his grandmother who also suffered from Alzheimer's. David

was also involved in the successful lobby for getting an anti-Alzheimer's drug placed on the province *Formulary*.

These two students were recognized for their community spirit and hard work with the TD Canada Trust Scholarship. Elizabeth and David will receive full tuition to the Canadian college or university of their choice, and annual additional funds for living expenses, and guaranteed offer of summer employment at TD Canada Trust for four years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join with me in recognizing Elizabeth and David on receiving this prestigious scholarship. We sincerely hope that they stay in Saskatchewan to help us grow the province.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### SaskTel Receives National Award

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. SaskTel recently received the National Award for Learning Technologies in the Workplace. The award is sponsored by the Office of Learning Technologies, Human Resources Development Canada, and the Conference Board of Canada.

The award recognizes achievement in employee learning through effective use of learning technologies, and SaskTel won on the strength of three major corporate learning initiatives — e-learning, a home computer purchase program, and internet concession.

Commenting on the award, SaskTel's VP (vice-president) of human resources, Byron Pointer, stated that, and I quote:

Developing a corporate culture that embraces technology enhances our ability to deliver the systems, products, and services that enable our customers to capitalize on e-business.

Judging by the award, Mr. Speaker, the men and women at SaskTel have done a capital job in this regard. They have demonstrated very clearly that public enterprise is not standing still. Rather they have shown that Crown corporations like SaskTel are very much on the move.

And SaskTel is on the move, Mr. Speaker. It's a corporate leader with a solid commitment to community, customers, and employees. This last fact in particular led to SaskTel being named one of the top 100 employers in Canada as reported this past fall in *Maclean's* newsmagazine.

So to the hard-working men and women at SaskTel, please accept our congratulations and keep on embodying the ethos of: we shall learn, we shall adapt, and we shall lead.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Ford/CAA Student Auto Skills Winners

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize two constituents for their great

work in last month's 11th Annual Ford/CAA Student Auto Skills event held in Regina.

Carl Dahl and Mike Unger of L.P. Miller High School in Nipawin finished second place, qualifying themselves for the nationals.

Ten deliberate malfunctions were placed in a 2002 Ford Taurus for grade 12 teams from around the province to diagnose and repair. Mr. Speaker, Carl and Mike had little difficulty in solving the puzzle — driving a perfect car out of the CAA (Canadian Automobile Association) shop after about 45 minutes.

Estevan's team finished just moments before them for the first place award and will be joining Mike and Carl at the nationals in Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested that a modern car is the most advanced piece of technology that a person will own. By creating competitions like the Ford/CAA challenge, Ford hopes to attract young technicians who are ready for the challenge of diagnosing and repairing today's technology.

Mr. Speaker, this is the eighth time that L.P. Miller High School has taken part in this event and it has placed first or second in six of them. Since the challenge was offered at a national level, Nipawin has sent students to four of the five Canada-wide events; tying for second in 1997, and first in 1998.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to join with me in wishing Carl and Mike the best of luck at the nationals.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Investiture Ceremony Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're all aware of the excellent and vital work done in our communities by the volunteers of St. John Ambulance. Their work in providing first aid services at public events, their training in first aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), their therapy dog visitation programs, these are just some of the things they do to improve the health, safety, and quality of life in our society.

St. John was founded in Canada in 1882 and in Saskatchewan in 1911. What we may not know, Mr. Speaker, is that the roots of this fine organization date back to the early Middle Ages in Britain, and that St. John Ambulance is one of the oldest sovereign Orders of Chivalry in the British Commonwealth and is the oldest health and welfare organization in the world.

This last Saturday I attended the investiture service ceremony of the Saskatchewan Council held in Moose Jaw. And the full name of this organization, Mr. Speaker, is The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. Its founding purpose was the care of the sick and injured, and throughout its near millennium of service, it has never lost sight of its original principle.

The investiture ceremony is steeped in antiquity. Its purpose

now, as in the past, is to recognize and honour individuals who through their work from St. John uphold the motto of the Order, In the Service of Mankind.

Our congratulations go to the 21 members from across our province who were recognized at the ceremony and our gratitude goes for the over 29,000 hours of volunteer work they perform in Saskatchewan in the last year. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(14:00)

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Long-Term Care Fees

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Premier because it has now been 10 days since the Premier announced that he was putting the NDP's (New Democratic Party) long-term care fee increase on hold.

But we are still getting petitions and correspondence from concerned people about long-term care fees, because they are still worried about how much the NDP is going to increase the fee.

People right across Saskatchewan heard the member for Regina Qu'Appelle when he said that he believed that 90 per cent of a person's income for long-term care fees was the right thing to do. Mr. Speaker, they want to make sure . . . people in Saskatchewan want to make sure that the NDP get the message while this policy is under review.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier tell us whether or not the NDP has got the message or if the NDP still believe that hiking long-term care fees is the right thing to do?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues will find out that answer tomorrow. And I'm sure that he will be very interested to know what kinds of things that we are going to do.

Mr. Speaker, this government works with people, listens to people, attempts to develop policy that provides good health care, education, social services for the people of Saskatchewan. We'll continue with that model because we know that it works for the people of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier announced that this policy was temporarily on hold and then he said Department of Health officials would review the policy and that they would come up with some new options for the NDP to consider.

Well we all know, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP cabinet met on Tuesday, which should mean that by Thursday they should have made a decision. Mr. Speaker, we've reached the Premier's own self-imposed deadline of 10 days to inform the people of

Saskatchewan what the NDP is going to do about long-term care fees.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Health tell the Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan what that decision is that we know that they have already made? Will he cancel the unfair fee hike proposed for long-term care users in the province of Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, earlier in the week the Premier said that this information would be provided tomorrow and I urge the member opposite to wait until tomorrow.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously there is some concern, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier wants to sit on this decision and not announce it until tomorrow because we all know that the premiers and we know that opposition leaders are coming into Saskatchewan tomorrow to talk about a response to the US (United States) farm Bill that we can propose to the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, that's really not fair to the families of Saskatchewan who are worried about long-term care fee increases. Mr. Speaker, we believe that the Premier has made the decision and perhaps the news is not good — fees are going to increase.

Can the Minister of Health assure us that when this announcement is made tomorrow it will not include a fee hike for long-term care users?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, it's only one more sleep. I think that everybody can wait.

I guess . . . All I would say, Mr. Speaker, is that it appears that the basket of questions that those people have developed has gone empty and that they now have to ask us about things that we've announced we're going to say the day before to see if we will actually maybe give them a little bit of hints about what we're doing.

Mr. Speaker, we said that we'd say tomorrow what's going to happen and they can wait until tomorrow to get the answer.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Water Quality Concerns at Last Mountain Lake

**Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Environment minister. As you well know, Last Mountain Lake is . . . my constituency runs along the west side of it. And I've had calls to my office and to up here about residents that didn't know that sewage was being pumped into Last Mountain Lake.

Mr. Speaker, my question is: when did the Environment minister contact the mayors, the councillors, the residents, cabin owners of Last Mountain Lake and tell them that sewage water from Regina was being pumped into their beautiful lake?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the members opposite that it is important when we're dealing with public health safety issues that they should not be playing cheap politics.

I'm going to again . . . Mr. Speaker, last April cottage owners contacted Saskatchewan Environment and Sask Water expressing concerns that the lake level was so low. They asked us to divert water from the Qu'Appelle River into Last Mountain Lake. We did that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that people understand . . .

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

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — Mr. Speaker, the city of Regina treats its sewage to a very high standard — not primary, not secondary, but tertiary treatment, the highest standard that is expected of cities. That treated effluent leaves the Regina plant, flows into the Wascana Creek, the Wascana Creek flows into the Qu'Appelle River. The Qu'Appelle River also receives water from Lake Diefenbaker. Eighty-six per cent . . .

**The Speaker:** — Member's time has expired. The next question.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Yes. The residents last April were concerned about the low levels of water and they approached the government. But they didn't . . . at that time the government . . . it didn't tell them that they would be using water from Regina's sewage system to pump it up. They thought that water would be coming from Lake Diefenbaker. That was their understanding, Mr. Speaker.

Is this the NDP's new water management strategy, is telling the residents of Regina to flush twice so Regina Beach can have water?

So my question is: when did you tell them . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. I would ask the member to restate his question through the Chair, please.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Environment minister. When did you . . . when did she tell the residents and the mayors, councillors that you would be putting sewage water into Lake . . . into Last Mountain Lake, not just straight water from Lake Diefenbaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — Mr. Speaker, 86 per cent of the water in Qu'Appelle River comes from Lake Diefenbaker, 14 per cent of it comes from Wascana Creek and that includes the treated effluent.

Mr. Speaker, this whole issue arose as a result of some tests done by CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation). CBC results on one test show 1 coliform; on their second test show 17 coliforms.

Mr. Speaker, the drinking water objectives are zero coliform for treated drinking water. For contact recreational water, which is what we're talking about, the standard is 200 coliforms, and for non-contact recreational, the standard is 5,000 coliforms.

Mr. Speaker, absolutely the people of Regina Beach on Last Mountain Lake can feel very safe in doing their recreational activities this summer on the lake.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Brkich:** — A question to the Environment minister. Does she realize that Last Mountain Lake is a closed water system? You're pumping in 14 per cent of sewage water into that lake.

Has Sask . . . has SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management)/Sask Water did any long-term studies of what the effects of pumping that much sewage water into a closed water system and what the results and dangers could be down the road — five, ten years from now?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — Well perhaps the member thinks that Last Mountain Lake is a closed lake but, quite frankly, it is often used flowing in reverse and going back towards the Qu'Appelle River to control flood for the farmers in the area.

Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize the CBC test results said maximum 17 coliforms per 100 millilitre. Mr. Speaker, two geese flying over that lake would create more coliforms than they got out of these tests samples. This water is very good for surface water.

I want to emphasize again, as I said yesterday, no one should drink untreated water. It is imperative that we all become very much aware of the need to only drink treated water. But for boating, for swimming, this lake is a very good quality lake.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Brkich:** — I agree with the minister that it is a good quality lake and the residents and mayors and councillors and cabin owners want to keep it a good quality lake, and that is the concerns with them.

This minister and this government did not tell them that they would be putting 14 per cent of raw — or not raw — sewage water into that lake. They were not told. I talked to mayors today; they're having a meeting tonight.

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — My question is: when and if did you — a yes or no question — contact . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Would the member please repeat the question.

**Mr. Brkich:** — My question, Mr. Minister: when did she tell the cabin owners, the mayors, reeves, and residents of that lake that they would be putting 14 per cent of treated sewage water into their lake? Yes or no, did she contact them?



**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving the member opposite time to clarify his question because, quite frankly, he was misleading the House beforehand.

It is not raw sewage that is going into that lake. Treated effluent, treated effluent, treated to a gold quality standard leaves the Regina sewage treatment plant, flows into the Wascana Creek, from there into the Qu'Appelle River. The Qu'Appelle River gets water from Lake Diefenbaker and the Wascana Creek on a year-round basis.

Mr. Speaker, this is good quality water that is in Last Mountain Lake. As I said, 17 coliforms, that is certainly higher than our standard for treated water, but for contact recreational, the objective is 200 coliforms per 100 millilitre.

It is important that we keep in mind that the issue here is public safety and properly treated drinking water, and the members opposite shouldn't be scaremongering.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Brkich:** — Obviously the answer to my question is, she did not inform them of sewage water being pumped into their lake.

I also want to ask her, that Terry Fleischaker . . . Yesterday government officials admitted that they tested the water in Last Mountain Lake and then they told Terry Fleischaker there was no problem with the lake water. But according to the results of the independent Saskatchewan Research Council test of the same lake, some parts of Last Mountain Lake have potential dangerous concentrations of fecal coliform and other bacteria.

Mr. Speaker, why did the Environment department officials tell Terry Fleischaker the lake water was safe when independent tests show that the lake has some extremely high levels of fecal coliform and other dangerous bacteria?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — Mr. Speaker, this is very distressing. Because he will say one thing when he's forced to put a question properly, and then try . . . he's back to talking about it as sewage water. This is not sewage that is going into Last Mountain Lake. Treated effluent that is treated to a gold quality standard flows into the Wascana Creek.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that there will be the possibility of taking samples in that lake and getting high coliform counts. Mr. Speaker, it's because there are geese that land in that lake.

Well, you know, perhaps the members opposite want to laugh, but two geese can create . . .

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(14:15)

**Mr. Brkich:** — It has been tested over the years and these problems have not arisen, so I imagine there's been geese around this lake for many, many years.

Turns out that the Environment department official saw the results of the CBC water analysis two weeks ago. And the CBC also says the Environment minister refused to speak with reporters about the test results.

Mr. Speaker, Environment department officials conducted their own water analysis in February and they saw the CBC analysis in April. What steps has the minister taken to warn residents of the Last Mountain Lake area and users of the lake that the lake water may have dangerously high concentrations of fecal coliform and other dangerous bacteria?

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to say again, the department does regular, routine testing of the surface water in this lake. And as soon as the ice is off, we will be going back and we will be testing again.

However, based on what we've seen about the CBC samples, people should not be worried about this surface water. If they want to drink it, they need to boil it and they need to disinfect it. But we're not talking about drinking water here, Mr. Speaker; we're talking about surface water.

And, Mr. Speaker, this water . . . this . . . We have for years, Mr. Speaker, diverted water from the Qu'Appelle River into Last Mountain Lake at the request of the cottagers. Is the member opposite saying that he doesn't want any more water from the Qu'Appelle River to be diverted into Last Mountain Lake? Is he saying he wants to have that lake level drop?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Brkich:** — Well I'll tell you what the residents want, Mr. Speaker. They don't want sewage water being pumped into their lake. And no matter what the problem is, the NDP just keep telling you . . . people, everything's just fine.

You know, what's the response of the NDP's E. coli in North Battleford drinking water problem? Don't worry, we'll handle it. Sewage being pumped at Last Mountain Lake — hey, don't worry. Don't worry about it, everything's fine. Well in the meantime an independent expert says he wouldn't wash his hands in Last Mountain Lake.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister release the results of the government's analysis of the water in Last Mountain Lake? What level of fecal coliform and other bacteria did the Environment department officials find when they tested the water at Last Mountain Lake in February?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't have those test results here with me in the House today but I can assure you that if the member opposite wants to see them, I will make them available for him. He is right. And I did tell, and my official, Mr. Joe Muldoon, did tell the media yesterday that in February there was a spike; that the coliform level was slightly higher.

Again though, Mr. Speaker, that water meets the objectives of our surface water objectives all across Saskatchewan. The water in Last Mountain Lake is of an acceptable quality for contact recreational use and general boating recreational use. The people of . . . who live along Last Mountain Lake should not be concerned about this.

And the member opposite should not be scaremongering and trying to whip people up into a frenzy. As I said yesterday, it is important not to drink untreated water.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Brkich:** — In fact, Mr. Speaker, officials told CBC Radio they didn't test for dangerous bacterial levels in Last Mountain Lake because they didn't have the right equipment with them that day.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm that her department never actually tested the lake water for bacteria. Another question to the minister: do you treat the water different . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I just ask the member to once more try to remember to keep his remarks to the Chair.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is, to the Environment minister: did they test . . . In fact because they didn't have right equipment with them that day, Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm that her department never actually tested the lake water for bacteria?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — Mr. Speaker, we test on a regular basis. The treated effluent that leaves the city of Regina sewage treatment plant is tested daily by the city of Regina . . .

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

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — The city of Regina tests their treated effluent — treated effluent, Mr. Speaker, not sewage, not raw sewage, treated effluent — they test it daily. And they have to meet the guidelines that we have set for their operating permit.

In addition, downstream from that, Mr. Speaker, we test on a monthly basis. And our tests, save for the one February test that showed a slight spike, our tests indicate that that water is well within the surface water quality objectives.

The issue, Mr. Speaker, is public health and safety. The issue is, does this water meet the surface water objectives? And the answer, Mr. Speaker, is yes.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Investment in Ethanol Industry

**Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Speaker, as we all know, it's a career limiting move for a cabinet minister to disagree with Frank Hart. First, it ended Janice MacKinnon's 11-day stint with this government.

More recently, the minister of Energy was shunted over to jails and prisons after he said that ethanol was being developed through a strictly private investment. He didn't know that discussions had been going on for an entire year through a consulting firm with cosy ties to the NDP for a plan that would see tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money invested.

Mr. Speaker, it isn't just Ottawa that has problems with public relations firms run by friends of the government.

My question for the Premier: why does he allow government policy to be set on the other side of the lake? How is it that civil servants can keep ministers in the dark about what's going on?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying I'm glad that the member from Battleford can, in fact, recognize a career limiting move. I would suggest to him, as a member of the Liberal Party in this legislature, he is an expert.

What I want to say to that member as well is that government policy is set on this side of the lake. It's set by members of this government and it's set, I think, in a very positive and a proactive way.

Now it isn't enough, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Swift Current comes in and misrepresents the facts as he has. Now it's even rubbed off to his friend from Battlefords, to the point where he misrepresents the facts, Mr. Speaker.

The former member responsible for ethanol development made it very clear what our position is, that we would look at this on a case by case basis — which we will, sir.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Speaker, I was . . . I was present, I was present at the news conference in which Bill Boyd asked again and again and again, is this going to be public investment. And the then minister of Energy, now the minister of jails, said no, no, no.

Mr. Speaker, why would the government not look into potential investors besides the one proposed by the NDP's polling firm?

The government announced an ethanol strategy less than two months ago. Now that strategy has been reversed, apparently because its consulting firm of choice wants us to team up with a company that will invest in Saskatchewan, providing the money comes from the government.

Why would the government abandon any hope of attracting investment to this province after a mere six weeks? If we invest 80 million, who will be holding the real risk? Is it the government's position that there is no hope of attracting investment to this province without sweetheart deals from the taxpayers?

Or is the government only interested in investors who have been introduced to them by friends of the government?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I would want to say on behalf of government members and behalf of the people of Saskatchewan that the member from Battlefords might be effective in this House and in this province if he were to spend some of his energies trying to convince his federal cousins in Ottawa that we are fighting in this province one incredibly unfair trade imbalance created in the United States of America and in Europe.

And I want to say as well, Mr. Speaker, that his representation of the facts is somewhat flawed. Firstly we have not signed any agreement with any company. We are looking at investment opportunities, investors.

And I want to say to that member, and to every one of those members opposite who seem to hate good news, we have an opportunity to develop an ethanol industry in this province. We have an opportunity to create job opportunities for Aboriginal people, for rural people; to create business opportunities for Saskatchewan people; to create an intensive livestock industry that will parallel anywhere else in the world.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to do it with them — with their support or without it — but I guarantee you it's going to happen. Because the people of Saskatchewan want it to happen and we're going to help them make it happen.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### **Bill No. 43 — The Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation Act**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 43, The Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation Act 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. Toth:** — With leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, I notice one guest in the west gallery, Mr. Bill Reader, a long-time civil servant who has led a prestigious career in the service, now retired. Currently trying to, I think, bring some real direction to SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency). And he's joined us this afternoon and I'd like to invite members of this Assembly to welcome Mr. Reader.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member from North Battleford on his feet?

**Mr. Hillson:** — By leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues. I think many members of this House will remember Mr. Reader as deputy minister of Municipal Affairs, and now as president of SAMA.

What they may not know is that he is also the backbone and guiding light of the Cochin theatre group, a position in which I know him better. And I would ask all members again to kindly join with me in welcoming Bill to the House today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased to stand today and respond on behalf of the government to written question no. 172.

**The Speaker:** — Response to 172 is tabled.

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### **Bill No. 40 — The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2002**

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2002.

This Act regulates road use in Saskatchewan. The proposed amendments to the Act will clarify some of the existing laws and make the Act more consistent and fair, while continuing to make our roads safer for all Saskatchewan motorists.

The first group of proposed amendments I'd like to outline deals with the rules of the road. Regulations like these are needed to ensure safety and to promote safe and efficient traffic flow. The changes also eliminate confusion and enhance fairness.

(14:30)

The proposed amendment in this section will free up valuable police resources by limiting their involvement in reporting of traffic accidents. Currently individuals involved in a collision are obligated to report an accident to police, Mr. Speaker, if there is property damage in excess of \$1,000, if anyone involved in the accident sustains an injury or there is a fatality. In short, the vast majority of motor vehicle collisions in Saskatchewan must be reported to police.

Law enforcement in Saskatchewan have raised concerns regarding limited police resources and the time involved in collecting these accident reports. The proposed amendments will limit police involvement to collisions involving injury, death, hit and run, an impaired driver, or when vehicles have to be towed from the scene.

As a result, only about 25 per cent of the collisions will now have to be reported to police. We estimate that these reporting changes will make available the equivalent of 10 full-time police officers who will be able to be used more effectively throughout our province. While all accidents involving damage will still have to be reported to SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), eliminating a stop at the police station also means less red tape for motorists.

SGI is working hard to improve service and this change will expand one-stop service for SGI's customers by making the claim process more convenient.

The next proposed amendment in this section adds an . . . adds an offence, I should say, for speeding in excess of 50 kilometres per hour over the posted speed limit. Concern has been raised that current fines are not sufficient to provide deterrents and that this high-risk behaviour places Saskatchewan motorists in jeopardy.

In consequence it is felt that another fine level should be introduced for speeds in excess of 50 kilometres per hour over the posted speed limit. Saskatchewan's new fine for travelling 51 kilometres above the speed limit would be \$379 compared to the old level which was just 197. This matches the fines for not slowing to 60 kilometres per hour when passing a highway worker or parked emergency vehicles.

The proposed change arises from law enforcement's concerns for road safety and deterrents and is another step towards improving the safety of Saskatchewan's highways.

The next proposed amendment to the rules of the road concerns the use of amber beacons or flashing lights. Presently the Act restricts the use of amber beacons or flashing lights on tow trucks, highway maintenance vehicles, snow removal vehicles, and other service vehicles to times when that vehicle is creating a potential hazard on our highway. As many other vehicles on the road also use amber beacons, the proposed amendments . . . or amendment I should say, adds the same restriction on using amber lights for all road users. Without specific restrictions on the use of these lights, abuse may occur thus reducing the effectiveness of amber lights in hazardous situations.

Another proposed amendment is aimed at aligning legislation with current technology. Some vehicles are now equipped with video or computer displays. The concern is that these images distract the driver and create a safety hazard.

The proposed amendments simply update the legislative provision dealing with television sets to indicate that these devices must be installed and used in a manner that avoids interference with the driver. The exception is where the video or computer use is designed to assist the driver.

The last proposed change in this section details the removal of the exemption for seatbelt use when travelling at low speeds. Removal of all seatbelts exemptions is a key recommendation of the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators national occupant restraint strategy which is aimed at increasing safe seatbelt use rates and reducing injuries and fatalities due to motor vehicle collisions. In line with this strategy, all jurisdictions including Saskatchewan have committed to work

towards removing all of these seatbelt exemptions.

In this . . . it is, I should say, recognized that certain industries such as garbage collection will continue to require the exemption.

The second group of proposed amendments I'd like to outline involves the areas of driver's licensing and vehicle registration. The changes will eliminate unfairness, red tape, and confusion regarding these two areas.

Currently there is a discrepancy between the Euro licence and the Saskatchewan class 5 driver's licence. The discrepancy is causing confusion for tourists. The proposed amendment will allow visitors with Euro licences to have the same privileges as Saskatchewan's basic class 5 driver's licence. This change will improve Saskatchewan's reputation as a tourist destination by removing red tape for European visitors.

The next proposed amendment aims to eliminate confusion regarding the registration of vehicles that are being towed. The change eliminates a loophole where trailers can be moved in certain instances without being properly registered.

Another proposed amendment clarifies recent amendments that provide a seven-day grace period for vehicle registration if an individual sells their existing vehicle and purchases a new one. Current legislation allows for the use of the old vehicle's plates on the newly purchased vehicle for seven days, Mr. Speaker.

The wording of the legislation contains a loophole that allows an owner to use a replacement vehicle that has very large differences in registration and insurance costs. The proposed amendment . . . amendments, I should say, clarify that this seven-day grace period applies only to a replacement vehicle of similar class, gross vehicle weight, and use.

The following group of proposed amendments concern vehicle impoundment. First, pursuant to provisions in the Act, a peace officer who has reasonable grounds to believe that a vehicle is being operated by an unauthorized driver may impound that driver's vehicle for 30 days. The proposed amendments add to the definition of an unauthorized driver. It will now include those individuals who are not able to operate a vehicle as a result of a 90-day administrative suspension and those whose driver's licences are suspended as a result of certain prescribed offences relating to the sex trade. Enhancing the Act to allow for vehicle impoundment in these situations is further evidence of the hard work being done to make Saskatchewan a safer place.

Currently those individuals who are unhappy with the impoundment of their vehicle may appeal to a hearing officer. The hearing officer has the authority to uphold the impoundment or in limited circumstances release the vehicle.

Further proposed amendments provide a hearing officer with greater discretion when it comes to releasing a vehicle or shortening the period of impoundment.

The final proposed amendment to the Act will work to reduce traffic and create safer neighbourhoods in those areas of our communities that are high traffic zones for individuals exploited

in the sex trade, Mr. Speaker. The proposed amendment establishes an offence for driving a motor vehicle repeatedly in an area frequented or known to be frequented by individuals exploited in the sex trade. This offence is based on recommendations of the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade.

This concludes the outline of the proposed amendments found in The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2002. These amendments work to streamline and clarify the existing legislation and to make our roads safer for everyone in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Highway Traffic Act.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, this proposed piece of legislation, Bill No. 40, has some good points to it and it has some very bad points, Mr. Speaker. And it has some points that have good intentions but don't fulfill those intentions, Mr. Speaker, and need to be changed.

Mr. Speaker, on the first part, the what is perhaps good in this Bill, is the changes to allow people with driver's licences from the European Union to operate vehicles in this province providing those licences are recognized by all members of the European Union, I think is good. We need to encourage people from Europe to come to Saskatchewan for tourism, for business purposes, and allowing them to utilize their licences and drive around our province can only benefit Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in Europe — as opposed to Great Britain — at least they drive on the proper side of the road, which always concerns me when people from Great Britain or Australia come to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and utilize our roadways. I do have some concern that in a panic situation they may choose the improper side of the road, which is the one they are most comfortable in driving, the one they naturally tend to react to, Mr. Speaker.

So a person coming from the European Union, however, is driving on the same side of the road that we do here in Saskatchewan; therefore, in a panic situation will drive on the proper side of the road, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the changes that the minister is talking about making though, in relationships to accidents, I think, is seriously flawed. This is simply an attempt, Mr. Speaker, to — through other means — meet one of their campaign commitments which was to hire 200 new police officers.

They have failed to meet that commitment, Mr. Speaker, through funding. So now what is going to happen under this particular piece of legislation, the minister says they're going to free up 10 officers to carry out other duties — other than the traffic Act, Mr. Speaker. But that cost is going to be borne by the people who insure their vehicles through SGI which, Mr. Speaker, is every one of us that has a vehicle.

Because what happens, Mr. Speaker, now that the police will no longer be investigating accident sites, the determination as to

who is at fault — the right and the wrong of the situation — is going to be left up to SGI. SGI is not going to be investigating the accident site because the report is going to take place after that vehicle has been removed from that accident site to a location to be repaired, Mr. Speaker. So there will be no on-site investigation.

But what does it matter to SGI? As long as someone is found to be at fault, they can charge one of the parties the penalty fees. So for SGI there is no loss.

But for the individuals involved, the ones that have to pay those penalty fees, there can be considerable loss involved, Mr. Speaker. That loss, when investigated by the police, were an impartial body. They didn't care one way or the other who was at fault. As long as the facts of the case were determined, those were reported to SGI and SGI then made the determination based on fact; who was at fault for the accident so that the charge — the penalty charges — would be laid against the proper person, the person at fault.

In this case that's not going to happen, Mr. Speaker, because there will be no third party investigations. And that is a serious, serious flaw in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. And it's only being done to cover up the NDP's failure to hire the police officers they stated they would hire under their election campaign.

Mr. Speaker, under section 94 dealing with the powers of police officers, dealing with the ability to stop motorists that the police may feel are involved in the prostitution trade, I think is flawed, Mr. Speaker. As we discussed the other day with the Minister of Social Services when Bill No. 2 was moving through this House, that there is a flaw in The Highway Traffic Act in allowing or in assuming, Mr. Speaker, that police officers have the authority and the power to simply stop a vehicle because it happens to be in the area that they or that Justice or that Social Services has designated as being a stroll area for child prostitution.

Mr. Speaker, I've done a little investigation in this area with the help of the Law Clerk. And, Mr. Speaker, the police seem to have a problem, Mr. Speaker, in dealing with this area. And I have some quotes, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to put forward from a book called the *Charter's Impact on the Criminal Justice System*, edited by Jamie Cameron, Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Cameron goes on to state, and I quote:

Territorial or spatial privacy has also received strong protection, as evidenced by the Court's condemnation of perimeter searches, whether conducted at a dwelling or at a (place of) business . . .

So, Mr. Speaker, the courts are making it very clear what powers authorities such as police have, to do searches of persons either in their dwellings or in their places of business. And, Mr. Speaker, that also as well carries on to their vehicles.

(14:45)

Mr. Speaker, further on in this tome, is a section called "The Right to be Left Alone," and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

The common law wisdom on the right to be left alone is simple and clear:

Although a police officer is entitled to question any person in order to obtain information with respect to a suspected offence, he has no lawful power to compel the person questioned to answer. Moreover, a police officer has no right to detain a person for questioning or further investigation. No one is entitled to impose any physical restraint upon the citizen except as authorized by law, and this principle applies to police officers as to anyone else. Although a police officer may approach a person on the street and ask him a question, if the person refuses to answer the police officer (if a person refuses to answer, the police officer) must allow him to proceed on his way, unless, of course, the officer arrests him . . .

Well that seems to be pretty clear, Mr. Speaker, that the police have no authority to demand information from a citizen out on the street. They can ask the question but they cannot compel the answer, and they cannot restrain that individual unless they wish to arrest them at that time.

Which flies in the face, Mr. Speaker, of what the Minister of Social Services was saying the other day about Bill No. 2 — that The Highway Traffic Act allows police officers to detain, to question people, and extract evidence from them simply because they're in a particular area of the city, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think the government needs to clarify that situation in this Bill and make sure that Bill No. 2 is included in the definition of the powers of police officers under The Highway Traffic Act to stop and question people. And that is not in The Highway Traffic Act, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this book goes on to say:

This prohibition on “random virtue testing” places a significant obstacle in the way of arbitrary police intrusion into the lives of Canadians . . .

The upshot of these cases has been that arbitrary detention is justifiable if an officer has stopped a vehicle to check the mechanical fitness of the vehicle, the insurance and licence of the driver or the sobriety of the driver. In light of the fact that vehicle stops tend (tend) not to be highly intrusive, the Court may have arrived at a justifiable conclusion. (May have.) However, the Court has forgotten that in the *Charter* era, its judgments, for better or for worse, serve as . . . (quasi-legal) guidelines, and, as such, the Court must consider the implications . . . (to) its decisions in future cases . . .

The carte blanche granting of a power to stop vehicles, on a random basis, inexorably leads to the ability of the police to make pretext stops, in which they purport to be checking mechanical fitness, but are in actuality investigating crime on less than probable cause or reasonable suspicion (Mr. Speaker).

This seems to indicate that just because you had the pretext to stop a vehicle because they're in a certain area, that you may very well not have a reasonable right, Mr. Speaker, to charge a

person in that vehicle with a crime. And that if you did so, the courts may very well throw it out as having been an unreasonable stop at the time.

It goes on to say, Mr. Speaker:

Random stop programs must not be turned into a means of conducting either an unfounded general inquisition or an unreasonable search (Mr. Speaker).

So, Mr. Speaker, the legal text, the *Charter's Impact on the Criminal Justice System*, seems to be indicating, Mr. Speaker, that the blanket powers that the police have under The Highway Traffic Act will not be sufficient to allow for the enforcement of Bill No. 2, Mr. Speaker, under The Highway Traffic Act.

So what the government needs to seriously consider, Mr. Speaker, and do is include in The Highway Traffic Act that that Act applies to Bill No. 2, Mr. Speaker; Bill No. 2 which is the emergency protection of victims of child sexual abuse. If that particular Act is named under The Highway Traffic Act, Mr. Speaker, then that protection, those powers of police will extend to that Act.

But failing to name that Act, Mr. Speaker, under The Highway Traffic Act, I think will have a serious implication in disallowing police to have those powers to stop and to investigate the possibilities of crimes being perpetrated under Bill No. 2, Mr. Speaker.

So I strongly suggest that before this Bill moves ahead, that the government go back to the drawing board and reconsider the text that they are placing under the wordings of The Highway Traffic Act here, Mr. Speaker, and that they include a reference to Bill No. 2, the emergency protection of victims of child sexual abuse, Mr. Speaker.

And I think that would go a long ways to helping protect children in this province. And should the government fail to do that and their power . . . the powers of police be excluded from the protection of those children, I think will not be a positive note for this government.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 6

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Serby that **Bill No. 6 — The Horned Cattle Purchases Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the horned cattle Act, the amendment presented in Bill No. 6 to The Horned Cattle Purchases Act seem innocuous enough on the surface. And I would assume that on first reading, one might think that this should be given easy and quick approval. I think

that was the opinion of a number of the members of the official opposition when we first saw this. And I don't believe that there has been substantive change in our view as to the contents of this Bill except for a few exceptions that I want to address this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I came to this part of the world, moved to southwest Saskatchewan about 20 years ago. And I took up farming with my brother. As part of the experience of moving from the city to rural Saskatchewan, we decided that having a few head of cattle around that small farm might be an advantageous addition.

So we took our collective inexperience and bought our first eight head — eight head of cows. And we were on top of the world; these cows were our own — our very own — cow herd. They were the start of what was going to be a great herd, we were absolutely convinced.

Well looking back on it, Mr. Speaker, it was a motley crew. It was a crew of eight cows that didn't match in any way, shape, or form. We had brown ones. We had white ones. We had grey ones. I think we even had a black one in there. And while we were very proud of that small herd of cattle, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't very long until we realized the reality of the cattle market.

When we took our calves to market that fall and we had an equal variety of colours in that small calf crop, we learned very quickly that the buyers of cattle don't take kindly to having individual calves of different colour come through the ring. And we suffered a pretty serious financial penalty because of that.

We had to learn lessons of that nature quickly because we couldn't afford to have to learn them over and over and over. But one of the things about the cattle industry, Mr. Speaker, is that if you don't make the right management decisions, you don't make the adjustments necessary early in your experience, you're going to pay a significant price.

One of the other lessons we learned very early, Mr. Speaker, was the importance of having your calves dehorned at marketing time. And as unpleasant as that experience is for a cow-calf operator in terms of dehorning the nubs or using paste on the newborn calves, as unpleasant as that experience is, it's essential to the benefit of the herd in the long run to have that process undergone.

We learned that after the second or third year, frankly, Mr. Speaker. But we learned the lesson because it cost us \$2 a head on those dehorned . . . or those calves that we hadn't dehorned the first year or two. And we learned the lesson painfully.

Now when you only have 8 or 9 or 10 calves, \$2 a head isn't very much money. But if you're alert and astute and conscientious, you're going to take that kind of a penalty seriously and you're going to make adjustments to your management style and your operation so you don't pay that penalty again.

Part of the, part of the changes introduced in Bill No. 6 is to take that \$2 penalty that producers are charged for letting their calves go to market or their cows go to market with horns, and

now charging — by law, not through regulations but as part of the actual Act — a \$10 fee. And I just want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that a \$10 fee is 500 per cent more than the \$2 fee that has been charged historically for that very same problem.

Now going from \$2 to \$10 may not seem like much, Mr. Speaker, but the reality is that a 500 per cent increase is significant and it's onerous. And I believe that the organizations that came together to support this piece of legislation brought to us by the Minister of Agriculture were in agreement that \$10 per head was the right figure. It would be punitive enough to compel producers to make the necessary changes in their management style and to proceed with dehorning on a regular basis.

While this fee was agreed on generally, as I understand it, by the various associations working in the cattle industry and by other agricultural associations generally, I want to make one point clear here today. These organizations, these groups come together to represent unique and special interests in their, in their industry. And they do a lot of good work to advance the cause of their industry. They take the issues affecting their industry very seriously, and they try to accomplish solutions that are workable and advantageous and will benefit everybody in the long run. Nobody disputes that, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to point out today, very clearly, that the majority, the majority of producers in this province are not members of the organizations that were represented in this decision. While we would not dispute the ultimate value of this particular piece of legislation or the intention of it, I want to make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that far more producers in this province are not represented by these associations and organizations than are represented.

And somebody has to speak for those individual producers. I was one of those independent producers who, at the early stages of our farming career, did not belong to these organizations. And there are many, many producers, in my constituency and in rural areas around the province, who are not members of the organizations that are represented as the supporters of this particular piece of legislation.

So I want to make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that while there might some good purposes proposed here — some good intentions will be developed through this particular piece of legislation — there is, there is a large segment of our farming population that are going to be not just offended by these changes, but hurt financially by these changes.

If you have 10 or 15 head of cattle going through the ring and the fee is \$10 apiece, that represents a significant amount of money. If you have 100 head, and they're penalized at \$10 a head, that is a very significant amount of money. So I think that we need to, we need to balance off the interests of the industry with the interests of the individual producers.

And the reality, Mr. Speaker, of this piece of legislation is that it's so much like many other kinds of legislation that come into being. They're advanced by . . . with very good intentions but they have a serious impact on many people down the line. And in this particular case, once again, it's the end producer who bears the financial brunt.

There are some other elements in this particular Bill that cause me some concern, Mr. Speaker. I read through the Bill, I read through the explanatory notes, and on the surface, as I said earlier, there didn't seem to be too much to worry me about this particular piece of legislation. But I have come up with some questions that arise as a result of this particular piece of legislation not being written clearly, or maybe being written inappropriately, or maybe being written by somebody who doesn't understand the industry.

(15:00)

I'd like to refer you, Mr. Speaker, to item no. 3 on page 2 of this particular Bill, under the headline, "Deduction by dealer on purchase of horned cattle." I'd like to read into the record some of the wording in this particular piece of legislation. Under that section it says:

Every dealer who purchases horned cattle, (and then sort of as a sidebar) other than purebred cattle being purchased for breeding purposes, shall:

First of all shall:

purchase the cattle at the current market price for cattle which are polled or have been dehorned, and pay that price to the vendor . . .

Mr. Speaker, this wording does not reflect the realities of the marketplace. The reality of the marketplace, Mr. Speaker, is that when cattle come through the auction ring with horns on them or improperly dehorned, no buyer, no buyer pays the full price for that particular head of cattle as opposed to other cattle that might come through there.

The cattle that come through with horns or improperly dehorned are penalized by the buyers. They are discounted by the buyers. The price paid for those animals might run 2, 3, 4, maybe even 5 cents a pound less than equivalent animals without horns.

So the person who owned those cattle is actually going to be penalized twice. He's going to be penalized by the buyer of the cattle in the discounted price he's going to receive for his animals, but he's also going to be penalized by this legislation which is now going to charge him \$10 a head.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the \$10 a head as we talked about earlier is stiff enough, but when you're penalized \$10 a head plus the discounted value of the animal, that's an exceptional penalty for anybody to have to pay. But the legislation, the legislation here, the wording of this legislation suggests that the buyer of the cattle, the buyer of the cattle will pay the market price.

Now I defy this legislation . . . or this legislature to compel any buyer to pay more for something than he intends to pay. But the wording of this piece of legislation is very clear: the purchase of the cattle must be made at the current market price for cattle which, except for the polled or dehorned cattle, would be the market price.

So I don't think whoever wrote this piece of legislation really understood what they were saying, or the consequences of this particular piece of legislation.

Now I go to the explanatory notes and I thought I might get some enlightenment as a result of this particular little conundrum that arises here. And it says here in explanation that this particular section is:

To allow for the exemption of purebred cattle, (and to) establish the purchase of cattle at current market price . . .

To establish the purchase of cattle at current market price — I don't think this legislature can accomplish that, frankly, Mr. Speaker, in spite of what the law says.

Moving on to section no. 5 . . . And I want to read this into the record too because I don't find this clear at all, even having visited the explanation that accompanies the Bill. In this particular section, it talks about approved auction market and gives a definition as follows:

. . . (An) '**approved auction market**' means:

(a) in the case of an auction market in Alberta, an auction market that:

(i) is operated by a livestock dealer who holds a prescribed licence; and

(ii) has entered into an agreement with the minister to deduct from the proceeds of sale of horned cattle and remit to the minister . . .

Da da, da da, da da, so on and so forth.

What this is suggesting is that this can only be charged by auction markets in Alberta that have entered into an agreement with the minister. What does it say about auction markets in Alberta that may not have entered into an agreement with the minister? Or does the provincial government, the Government of Saskatchewan have some ability to extend its legislative powers to all auction markets in the province of Alberta? I'm not at all clear on that.

Moving on with this particular section, section 5:

(b) in the case of an auction market in Manitoba, an auction market in which Saskatchewan inspectors are permitted to carry out inspection services on horned cattle that originated in Saskatchewan and that are delivered to the auction market for sale in Manitoba.

So it sounds to me as though Alberta auction markets have to be . . . have to meet certain prescribed requirements with the province of Saskatchewan. But in the province of Manitoba, Saskatchewan is free to send inspectors to auction markets in Manitoba. And why is there this differentiation? I think that explanation ought to have been made at least in the explanatory notes.

Going on with section 5:

(2) Subject to subsection (3), no person shall deliver horned cattle to any point outside Saskatchewan . . .

And this kind of bothers me, Mr. Speaker, because it's not clear



at all. And I would really appreciate some thorough explanation by the people who wrote this legislation.

... no person shall deliver horned cattle to any point outside Saskatchewan unless:

(a) prior to transporting the horned cattle outside Saskatchewan, the owner of the cattle or the owner's agent pays to the minister, or an inspector on behalf of the minister, the deductible amount ... (of) each head of horned cattle to be delivered outside Saskatchewan ...

Mr. Speaker, this basically is going to make it illegal, in my understanding, it's going to make it illegal for cattle producers on the west side of the province, who might own land on either side of the province, to move their cattle from one province to the other. That's not an uncommon occurrence in the Southwest. There are many producers who own land in Saskatchewan or lease land in Saskatchewan and have similar land right across the border in Alberta. But according to this piece of legislation, it would be illegal for anybody to transport their cattle outside of Saskatchewan without paying that horned cattle fee.

Now, Mr. Speaker, transporting them sounds like loading them on a truck and hauling them away. But if I go to the explanatory notes for that particular section, the prohibition reads as follows, in explanation:

No owner of cattle shall, by himself or by his agent, transport or drive on foot any cattle with horns to any point outside the province, except an approved inspection point in Alberta or Manitoba ... unless he has remitted to the minister the amount mentioned in section 3 for each head of cattle with horns transported.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this basically rules out the movement of privately owned cattle to any point in Alberta or Manitoba that isn't an auction market. And, you know, to make those fine differentiation points to any officer of the Crown that might be there to enforce this legislation would be pretty difficult.

The legislation is clear. You can't move cattle out by transport or on foot to any point but an auction market. What about moving cattle that a guy owns, a producer owns, on one side of the border to land that he might own on another side of the border? Or what about the possibility of moving it to ... some animals to a bull test station or some place where they're going to test animals for comparative weights? What if they're taking animals to, well maybe to a bull sale or something of that nature?

You know, this legislation brings about encumbrances to the agriculture sector that are unnecessary. They're certainly not clear. And unfortunately for enforcement officers, if the legislation and the explanatory notes aren't clear, how are they supposed to deal with these kinds of situations without inevitably making error that's going to cost somebody a lot of time and a lot of frustration?

Mr. Speaker, those are some of the, I think, most pressing areas of confusion in this piece of legislation that need to be attended to.

I would say, just looking at the whole issue again, that when a producer takes his cattle to a market, he gets the market price. The law now says that the buyers can't pay less than the market price — which I'm not sure is enforceable in any respect — but when the producer gets his cheque after the animal has been sold, he's going to be faced with deductions from his cheque for brand inspection fees; he's going to have insurance fees deducted as well. There's going to be the selling commissions. And now there's going to be a 500 per cent increase in the fees charged for horned cattle. And on top of that he's going to have to pay GST (goods and services tax) on the commission of the sale of those cattle. So by the time the producer gets his net cheque, there's going to be a lot more money missing from that sale than he anticipated.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I haven't seen any increase in fees in any area that even approaches the 500 per cent mark, with the possible exception of the nursing home fee increases that we heard about, about two weeks ago but ... (inaudible interjection) ... well maybe crop insurance too. But we have a 500 per cent increase in the fees being charged to these producers, and while the objective may be laudable, while the intentions might be good, the impact for many independent producers will be fairly serious. And I want to go on the record today, Mr. Speaker, as having supported their concerns as well.

I have a couple of other questions I want to ask in connection with this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. I noticed the Act is going to have, as part of the process, the appointment of the horned cattle producers Act advisory committee. Now, Mr. Speaker, I just read through the list of organizations and associations that will be part of the Horned Cattle Purchases Act Advisory Committee. It includes groups like the National Farmers Union, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, the Saskatchewan Cattle Breeders' Association, the Dairy Association of Saskatchewan, the Stock Growers' Association in this province, the Western Cow-Calf Producers Association, and one non-voting representative of the minister — somebody that the minister gets to appoint gratis to this board. But there's another organization that's listed here which I find peculiar. It's the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, there is no such organization as the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture. There may have been at one time but to the best of my knowledge there is now no such organization.

Now I know there were amendments made to include new groups to this particular advisory Act, but who is the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture? Is there a representative that the minister can provide us the name of for this particular group, that will sit on this? I'm beginning to wonder, Mr. Speaker, if this isn't a freebie for the minister to be able to appoint a second member to this committee.

However I would like that clarified. I would like that particular group identified. And I'd like to know how, if that group no longer exists, how they managed to make it to this particular list? Since there were amendments made to include other new groups, why was this one, this defunct group, not removed from the list?

Mr. Speaker, one other, one other question I have to ask is: in

the definitions of this particular piece of legislation, a fund is defined as the Horned Cattle Fund, established under section 6. Now you know, I think we're all reasonably familiar with the Horned Cattle Fund and we suspect that some of the money has gone to a variety of good purposes. We take that on faith, Mr. Speaker.

But I do think that we need to know more clearly what the Horned Cattle Fund is all about today: what its purposes are, what functions it tries to fulfill, how many researchers are sponsored by it, how many dollars go to organizations such as the Beef Information Centre — those types of endeavours that are . . . that have been funded and probably still are funded by the Horned Cattle Fund.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, one of the things I'm slightly suspicious about today is the fact that the Horned Cattle Fund has been running low on resources. And maybe part of the reason for moving that \$2 fee to \$10 is to help accelerate the funding levels for the Horned Cattle Fund. Maybe they decided that they just didn't have the resources.

But the other possibility that has occurred to me, Mr. Speaker, is that maybe the government ran so short of funds in their budget this year that they borrowed money back from that Horned Cattle Fund to underwrite some other endeavour. And now they have to replenish that particular fund with this highly . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. I would ask the member if they would take their replays of question period to behind the bar or someplace so that we could hear the member clearly here.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, I've only raised, you know, two or three concerns about this particular piece of legislation that I think are legitimate concerns.

And I think if the Bill had been written properly, a lot of the language that is very confusing in this particular piece of legislation would have been either written in more simplified, plain English, or it may have been written in a way that there would be no question about the intention of this particular piece of legislation.

(15:15)

But it clearly, it clearly is inappropriate. It tries to accomplish one thing — one thing — and it fails at doing that. And the thing that they were trying to do was increase the fees for this particular deduction, and on the other hand streamline and kind of clarify the way this particular legislation would affect producers. But it's failed on all counts.

Now I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that the groups that we have talked to — the various producer groups and other cattle organizations that have provided input to this particular piece of legislation — have virtually unanimously supported the increase to \$10 per head for non-dehorned cattle. That has been generally accepted among all the groups. And while I made my opposition to that quantum leap clear earlier in my comments, I think that nothing would be . . . nothing would detract from that

particular intended benefit if we moved gradually to that \$10 rate.

And I have talked to a number of independent producers, people who are not members of these organizations, and even a number of people who are within the organizations that supported this Bill, and suggested to them that instead of making one big jump from \$2 to \$10 a head, that we move possibly from \$2 to \$5 for one or two years until the message is sent, and then at a third year possibly go to the full \$10 rate. I think, I think what would be achieved is exactly what is intended by this particular piece of legislation without the punitive, onerous impact that this might have on many independent producers.

So having made these points, Mr. Speaker, I would move that this Bill go ahead, proceed to Committee of the Whole. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I'm in error. I defer to the critic for Agriculture.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in general — as the member from Cypress Hills said — the intent of the Bill we agree with, which the intent is twofold in the Bill, from my understanding. The problem is, is that sometimes the intent of something and the detail are not always on the same page.

And I won't go through all of the detail that we have questions about, or concerns, because the member from Cypress Hills did so very, very well. But I do want to add a few things and that's that I quite agree with including the Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders on the Cattle Purchases Act Advisory Committee. And I believe this is in a positive amendment which I shall have no problem supporting.

In his initial explanation of this Bill, the Minister of Agriculture stated that this allowed for an update on the organizations that advise him, and that's why I believe it's a very good thing that we add the cattle feeders. And there's probably a number of other groups that could be added, because I think our minister needs as much advice as he can get.

Another provision in the Bill, however, that has been raised by a few members on this side of the House that has caused some concern, and that's by the point that the fee that will be charged for dehorning cattle at the point of sale is going from \$2 to \$10 all in one leap. And that is a 500 per cent increase, and that is definitely a concern to some producers and a concern to ourselves on this side of the House.

Some producers have voiced their opinion to us that they feel that this is rather a drastic increase to go from . . . basically a fivefold increase all by the stroke of one piece of legislature.

We realize that the fee has remained at \$2 for a number of years, and we're not questioning the need for some sort of increase. The \$2, I'm not even sure of the history, the exact history of it, but I know it has been a great number of years that the \$2 has been in place and never been increased. So I guess the question is, do we need to increase it by 500 per cent?

The stakeholder associations and the cattle industry have been lobbying the producers within their own industry to dehorn cattle when they are calves. And to a degree their efforts, Mr.

Speaker, have had some results. I think there are a lot less horned cattle going through the market rings today than there were 20 years ago. And I do believe that we have to keep moving in this direction. And I know the stakeholder associations and the cattle industry definitely feel that we must keep moving in this direction and they would like to see it move at a more rapid pace than it is.

The reasons that they're giving us is that the horns on cattle create a great cost to other cattle producers who have their livestock in the same feedlot or the same market ring or in the same shipping vessels as non-horned cattle because there's damage to the other producers' livestock caused by the horns searing the other animals. There's damages to the hides and there is bruises on the meat. So it's fairly costly if you've had an animal damaged by one that has horns.

And there's also a cost of time and money that we have to take into consideration because . . . And the industry incurs this cost because there is time and labour that's needed to dehorn the animals once they hit market weight and they wish to have them dehorned at that point.

When a feedlot or a large rancher puts a number of animals through the chutes, they vaccinate and they brand. And this procedure just takes a matter of seconds and the animal's through the chute. But they said that the time is increased quite considerably if they also have to dehorn the animal. So they find if there's a number of horned animals coming through the chutes, that it's quite costly and labour intensive to them.

The other thing that I think that we should have to consider here is the humane element in this issue. And it is known that it's quite considerably more dramatic and dangerous to the animal if it needs to be dehorned once it's reached market weight, rather than being dehorned as a calf. So that is another thing that I think we should really consider and do support this Bill in its intent.

So though there can be no question that we recognize the importance of dehorning the cattle for the cattle industry of this province, we also have to be mindful of how the actual Bill is worded and so that it serves its purpose without causing all sorts of other rules, regulations, and inhibitions to the industry. And I think that's where we need some clarification and that clarification, Mr. Speaker, a number of the issues like I had mentioned before, was pointed out by the member from Cypress.

And so we will be looking for some clarification on all those points and so we will be more than happy to pursue that in Committee of the Whole.

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

### Bill No. 12

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Serby that **Bill No. 12 — The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak on Bill No. 12, The Farm Financial Stability Act. This speaks to the livestock associations and the livestock loan guarantee program that was established in 1984. And these associations were empowered to borrow money from financial institutions in order to purchase feeder and breeder cattle on behalf of their members. And a part of the loan guarantee was the government's guarantee of up to 25 per cent of the loan in case of a default.

The feeder loan guarantee has been and will continue to be a very important part of the livestock industry and the growth of the livestock industry in this province. And it's essential that we make sure the loan guarantee program is looked after and kept up to date on all the laws concerning the banking industry and as well as the tax side of the farming and livestock industry.

As someone who has used the feeder loan guarantee, and a number of my constituents use it, it's very beneficial to the industry as I'd mentioned.

When a person wants to use the feeder loan guarantee, they have to join the association. So initially the member has to apply to the association to become a member and the board of directors vote on whether to accept that member . . . that person as a member.

When they . . . part of that process is they get a credit check. They ask the bank that the loan guarantee program deals with, or the local association deals with, to do a credit check on that individual. And both the board of directors and the bank that the association deals with, makes a decision on membership based on the viability of the member's financial situation and past lending practices. So there's a number of checks and balances in the system right now that attempts to protect the loans when they're taken out.

And of course when a loan is taken out, whether it's in the feeder or the breeder side of the association and the loan guarantee program, the cattle that are being purchased have to be free and unencumbered.

And there's a process involved in that. The cattle have to be purchased through a licensed dealer or through an auction market or a livestock sales establishment that is also a licensed dealer, and so that there are no other encumbrances placed on the cattle and the cattle are free and clear. And so the loan would be given out to the individual or to the feeder loan association. So if there were any problems, they would be addressed at that point by going through a licensed dealer.

Now this Bill is clarifying who is the owner of the commodity — who is the owner of the cattle. In the past the feeder loan association basically held . . . was a trustee of the cattle and it was accepted that the individual actually was the owner of the cattle but the association was the trustee of the cattle. And this practice was accepted by everyone — the legal community as well as the banking community.

And in case of a default there was a process to take place. That's . . . the assurance fund is there . . . (inaudible) . . . the feeder side 5 per cent of the value of the animal was to be put into the assurance fund and 10 per cent is to put on the breeders

side of the association. And in case of a default, that assurance fund would be used to pay off the potential liability to the bank.

And of course, the members of the association, if there was still money outstanding, would have the opportunity of helping to pay off the debt of one of its members if they chose to. If not, the association would be wound up and that's when the . . . after the bank had taken legal action against the individual who was owing the money and could not recoup it, then the government guarantee of 25 per cent of the . . . basically the loss of the loan would come into effect.

Now we have seen that through various legal actions and decisions by the courts that the banking community has now been able to seize cattle from an individual with a feeder association brand on to pay off an individual's debts that are unrelated to the feeder association. And in some cases, cattle that are actually owned by other people have been seized to pay off that particular individual's unrelated debts. And this has put the whole feeder loan guarantee program at risk and this is something that is not acceptable.

This Act really speaks to changing, to clarify who owns the commodity in the producer association. And now with this Act, the ownership of the cattle will be the feeder association and not the individual. So that issue hopefully will be dealt with by this Act.

(15:30)

But an unintended — I believe an unintended — consequence of this change is concerning the tax implications and . . . of the individual that is using the feeder association and the implications it has on that individual's farming and ranching practices.

And as we know, the agriculture community is on a cash basis when it concerns the taxation department. And so, producers in the past have been able to use . . . to purchase cattle and to use that as an expense in their operation and thus deferring potential tax liability to another year.

And as we know, in agriculture there's many ups and downs, so in a year that there is profits you're able to defer the tax liability to another year when the tax situation . . . well, when profits aren't as adequate or possibly even money has been lost in farming in future years. So it is a great benefit to the agriculture community and the livestock producer to have that option.

Now this Bill is . . . I'm afraid that this Bill has taken that option away from livestock producers. Now the feeder association actually owns the cattle and the individual does not own the cattle. So when it comes time to purchasing cattle in the fall one of the aspects of purchasing cattle, naturally is to make money, but also the tax implications have to be taken into account as the year draws to a close.

And this is something that the producer associations have looked at and they felt that having to deal with the ownership aspect was the most urgent one, and I have to agree. It really has put the whole loan guarantee program at risk because of the fact that the courts have allowed banks to seize these association cattle to pay off debts of an individual.

But I believe that the government needs to look into this Act and its consequences as far as the taxation side of the equation and see if the concerns about ownership also changes the fact that an individual cannot use these cattle as an expense in their farming operations which is, maybe not an immediate concern, but it certainly is a concern that has to be dealt with at some point. And I believe people need to know before the end of the year where they stand on that very important issue.

As I had mentioned before, the feeder loan guarantee has been very important and hopefully the government is considering expanding the feeder loan guarantee to include other people that . . . other than individuals, and expand it to business and corporations and feedlots where they can have the ability to borrow multi-million dollar amounts of money to purchase cattle. Because in Saskatchewan it's a great potential, the intensive livestock operation, particularly the feedlot industry, has great potential for job growth and investment in this province. And this is certainly one way that would help that industry along in its desire to grow.

Saskatchewan certainly has the adequate resources as far as pasture land, water, and the producers in this province to grow the cowherd and also develop the feeding industry. And along with the feeding industry comes the potential of expansion in the packing industry which will create jobs in all the sectors and really broaden the tax base and develop more . . . increase the jobs in the province.

Mr. Speaker, as we see in this Bill, as in many other Bills that the government has brought forward, that there's a shift from actual legislation into regulation. And we have raised this concern many times before and will continue to raise this concern. Removing issues from the legislation and putting them into regulation takes away the right of the members of this House to scrutinize such changes on behalf of the constituents.

And this is a concern we've had with a number of Bills that the government has introduced in the past and we will continue bringing up those concerns, because we do not want to take really the right of the people away when it concerns legislation and changes to the . . . to many areas in the province in the agricultural community and elsewhere.

So basically, as I was saying, this really . . . this Bill only changes the . . . or clarifies who owns the commodity. And it's all fine and dandy to have that change, but I'd really like to impress upon the government the need to clarify the tax implications. And a lot of producers know if there is a change in the tax implications of . . . because the clarification of the owner of the commodity, that they do communicate to the livestock industry that there is a potential tax liability in the future.

And I will be raising these concerns as we ask questions in the Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**The Speaker:** — Why is the Government Deputy House Leader on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, to raise a point of order.

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

### POINT OF ORDER

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to review *Hansard* of Tuesday, May 7, as well as Crown Corporations Committee *Hansard* of Tuesday May 7. And I want to bring to your attention an issue to ask for your ruling under the guidelines related to protected persons.

I will refer you, Mr. Speaker, to Beauchesne's, section 493 — Protected Persons — and refer you specifically to subclauses (3) and (4), the relevant parts which say this, that:

(3) The Speaker has traditionally protected from attack a group of individuals commonly referred to as "those of high official station". The extent of this group has never been defined. Over the years it has covered senior public servants . . . (and then some others, Mr. Speaker).

It's the senior public servants specifically to which I refer. And I then also refer you to clause (4):

(4) The Speaker has cautioned Members to exercise great care in making statements about persons who are outside the House and unable to reply.

The issue I ask you to rule upon, Mr. Speaker, has to do with what I believe to be an attack on the credibility of the president of the Crown Investments Corporation, Mr. Frank Hart. And I refer to a statement by the hon. member from Swift Current who, in question period on May 7, said, and I quote:

. . . Mr. Hart also said that the NDP will be picking the winners and losers. Apparently they've already picked a winner — a company from Denver, Colorado. Mr. Speaker . . .

In referring to decision making around ethanol plants.

Mr. Speaker, that flies directly in the face of *Hansard* from Crown Corporations Committee meeting just a matter of — it would have been about three or four hours earlier. And I refer you, Mr. Speaker . . . the *Hansard* I refer to for the member of Swift Current is page 1230.

I refer you, Mr. Speaker, to the Crown Corporations Committee, pages 444 and 445, if I may read those into the record, Mr. Speaker. On page 444, Ms. Harpauer asks the question, I'm quoting:

We've received information from Regina that indicates that perhaps a company has been given exclusive rights. So has CIC given anyone exclusive rights with an investment or involvement with CIC in building ethanol plants?

That's the question.

Mr. Hart says, "No, we have not". I repeat, Mr. Speaker:

No, we have not. We've been asked to invest exclusively with some investors, but we have not committed to doing that.

On page 445 Ms. Harpauer continues:

The information that we have suggests that you have entered into a five-year exclusive agreement with OmniTRAX Broe Industries of Denver, Colorado to produce ethanol in Saskatchewan, and the agreement calls for (a) massive government loan guarantees. Do you agree with that or deny it?

Mr. Hart:

We have not entered into an exclusive agreement with OmniTRAX. We've had discussions with them about that. They've agreed to invest with a number of other investors in the province and have asked us to be a partner, but we have not signed any inclusivity arrangements with them.

Mr. Speaker, I draw that to your attention because Mr. Hart was very, very clear in response to the questions on that subject in Crown Corporations on the morning of May 7. In the House here, in question period then just three or four hours later, the member for Swift Current then represents the comments of Mr. Hart by saying again:

. . . Mr. Hart also said that the NDP will be picking the winners and losers. Apparently they've already picked a winner — a company from Denver, Colorado, Mr. Speaker . . .

I suggest to you, sir, that what the hon. member from Swift Current is doing is attacking a high-ranking official who is unable to defend himself in this House by directly challenging his credibility. And I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you would find that the hon. member is out of order and would ask him to withdraw his statement and make an apology to the House, and I would suggest as well it would be appropriate that he would make an apology to Mr. Hart.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Weekes:** — Mr. Speaker, if I may reply. I look forward to your ruling on this item. I believe that one of the roles of the opposition party is to, in any committee and particularly in the Crown Corporations Committee, is to question the government officials. And if this particular Crown corporation head is there to be asked questions, that it is totally within our right as opposition to ask that person questions, and I don't see where there is any concern with asking that particular member, particular individual, questions about the Crown that that individual is in charge of.

And as far as later on speaking in terms of picking winners and losers concerning another company, it was referred to a company from Denver that may or may not be related to the question that was brought up in Crowns. I understand that it's a . . . it was a company that was totally unrelated to the question that was in Crowns.

And I would like to just ask the Speaker to take that into consideration when he rules on this point of order. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Thank you very much. First of all, I'd like to

thank the member for Moose Jaw — order — member for Moose Jaw North for raising the point of order and for the response from the member for Redberry, the Opposition Deputy House Leader.

Members, in listening to the arguments that are presented, I see two issues. First is a dispute as to the accuracy of factual information, or of the facts as it was presented both in the House and in the committee.

I would like to advise the House that it is not up to the Speaker to judge on the accuracy of any statements that are made and those items that are always up for debate. And that is really the main purpose of this Assembly, and that is to debate issues and eventually that the facts should come out as close to the truth as any person can judge.

The second issue is the issue of protection of members of the public or members of the . . . civil servants in this particular case. Specifically, I would like to refer members to a couple of references.

The first one is on page 151 and that is of Beauchesne's 6th edition where it . . . and I quote, item . . . from section 493, item 3 . . . (3):

The Speaker has traditionally protected from attack a group of individuals commonly referred to as "those of high official station". The extent of this group has never been defined. Over the years it has covered senior public servants, ranking . . . (officials and) armed services . . . diplomatic representatives in Canada, a Minister who was not a member of either House, and the Prime Minister before he won a seat in the House.

And (4):

The Speaker has cautioned Members to exercise great care in making statements about persons who are outside the House and unable to reply.

(15:45)

And in a very similar statement in Montpetit and Marleau, 2000 Edition, from page 524:

. . . Members should avoid as much as possible mentioning by name people from outside the House who are unable to reply and defend themselves against innuendo.

Members of the Assembly, the Speaker of this Assembly has traditionally been very, very strict — I guess that was the word I want to use — in applying this when it comes to officials such as the Lieutenant Governor, judges of courts of law. However when it comes to . . . And members outside of the civil service, members of the public who may be completely unable to have anybody defend them.

However when it comes to issues of policy where members of the civil service are involved, there have been numerous precedents in this House where the names of individuals have used. Perhaps has not been the best. Perhaps it would be better to use the titles of these individuals. Nevertheless they have

been used in the past. The main caution that I would give on that is that no personal slurs or no attacks of the individual person be referred to.

However when it comes to matters related to policy, I believe it is the function of the minister to defend the policies and that that would include the persons who are implementing those policies on his behalf. Therefore the point . . . I do not consider the point well taken.

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### General Revenue Fund Culture, Youth and Recreation Vote 27

#### Subvote (CR01)

**The Chair:** — I would recognize the minister responsible to introduce her officials, and if she wishes, make a brief statement.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. This being the second time we've been here, I'll just bypass making a statement.

But I'll recognize with us today, Angie Gélinas, the deputy minister; behind her, Jill McKeen, executive director of policy and planning; and beside the deputy, David Debono, president and CEO of SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network).

To my right, Emile St. Amand, director of sport and recreation; behind him, Peggy Brunson, manager of provincial heritage resources.

And I'll turn right around behind myself, Melinda Gorrill, director of corporate services, and behind her, Bruce Medhurst, senior policy analyst.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome, officials, and to the minister.

I just want to start off on a little bit different note today from where we left off last time. And you may understand in a few questions of where I'm . . . where I wish to go with this.

But I guess, Mr. Chair, my first question to the minister would be related to youth. And I've spent a little bit of time on the Web site trying to find out the youth issues of the province and where the Department of Youth is going and what actually is being done and if there's an expansion from the Web site that I actually hit on. And I will say unequivocally that I'm not the greatest person on the computer and maybe I have missed something.

So I'd like to ask the minister what involvement her department has in youth issues, in addressing youth issues. Is it all encompassing or is it piecemeal? Is it part issue . . . Or if she could just explain exactly what the Department of Youth dealing with youth issues entails?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much for the question. There's really two perspectives that we have. One of them of

course is to manage all of the programs in the Culture, Youth and Recreation and heritage sectors, but keeping in mind the role that all of these sectors play, both in the development of youth in the province but also the opportunities for youth in the province.

And in some program areas, we have a direct responsibility; in other program areas, we have a responsibility to work with other departments. An example I could give you of that is in the role of culture and fitness in the schools, for example. We work with the people involved in the Role of the Schools report follow up and how we make sure that children in schools have access to the appropriate opportunities for them. How children who may have less access, like Aboriginal children or children of single parents, etc., have access to those kinds of developmental activities.

So there is an emphasis on the youth component of the mainstream responsibilities that we have.

As well, we do have some special duties in relation to things like the centennial summer student employment program, which is meant to provide both an opportunity for succession planning in the public planning in the public sector, but also to provide career opportunities so that youth who do obtain higher levels of education in Saskatchewan have an opportunity to get the work experience that will then enable them to get permanent full-time job following their graduation.

So I could give you more examples but I think those are two examples of an area where we have both a general responsibility and a specific responsibility. And if you're interested in more detail, I can go into some of the other program initiatives that we're involved in.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. One of the issues that I've been spending some time with is youth drug issues, drug and alcohol issues, and I think we have identified it in this province as a . . . very much a youth issue. And I know in my travels and my discussions, I've talked to people that have been involved and wish to get out of it. Some I've talked to are out of the drug and alcohol issue. And I guess for just a simple question at this point is: does the minister's department deal at all with issues of youth related to drug and alcohol abuse?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again, Mr. Chair, to answer the member, the kind of role we play is preventative in making sure that youth have the developmental opportunities that will generally prevent them from choosing negative directions as opposed to positive ones.

There's a great deal of data, I think, that you may be familiar with in the sport and recreation area of the much lesser involvement of youth that are actively involved in sport and recreation programs in drug and alcohol than youth that don't have access to those things. And certainly, for example, the member for the North, the minister responsible for northern, the northern government initiatives, certainly brings it to my attention that we do have a need to do even more, for example, in the northern area. Because there's too many youth there that don't have opportunities to do things and, because of that, fall into a lot of negative activities.

So whether it's in the schools in our relationship to programs like the role of the schools, or programs like In Motion in Saskatoon, whether it's making sure that cultural activities are available . . . And as we move further into a partnership relationship with the First Nations and Métis community, certainly there's more specific opportunities for things like cultural camps — places where people can increase both their pride in their culture and the importance of the values that would lead people to make the choice to lead a life that's drug free, etc.

So I would say that our job is largely preventative. We don't get involved in the treatment end of things, although certainly some people in the culture and recreation sector are involved in music therapy and healing programs, where sport and culture are used as part of the healing and developmental process.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Chair, I wish to continue on this because last year alone, from government records, we had 3,300 youth, 3,300 youth that called for assistance in drug-related, alcohol-related issues. That's a significant number, Madam Minister.

And my concern, my concern is if this number of youth are actually calling for help, where are they going and who do they go to? And as the Department of Youth, to me the very first place with a youth problem, I would think, should go to the Department of Youth. At least for some guidance as to where to go.

And on that, I just wish to relate — I realize it's not your department — but how it gets into a matrix jumble and there's no way out. I know last year — unfair maybe, but to use it as a comparison — one of the communities in my constituency had water issues, very serious water issues. And every time they came to a ministry, they'd say, sorry, that's not under my bailiwick. And they went around the circle about three times before they actually called me. And it was during estimates that we finally got an answer. In fact it was a begrudging answer because nobody wanted to take responsibility for the water issue.

Now I'm a little concerned with the youth drug issue . . . is much the same. And that's why I wish to address it here this afternoon, is if specifically, if it's not addressed through the Department of Youth, if at least you talk to other ministries to discuss as to where they should go, what they can do, and how they can do it.

And I guess that's my question now is: if you do not deal with it directly — and I know Youth, Culture and Recreation does not deal specifically with the drug issue, but it could be an entry point for youth — and if you would discuss this with other ministries, at least as to where these young individuals can go for help.

(16:00)

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I think the point that the member's getting at is a useful one and that's that although the buck always has to stop somewhere — and in the instance of drug and alcohol treatment, the final buck stops with the Department of Health — the fact is, is that Department of Social Services

and ourselves are involved.

And you know, if I could just make a comment a little bit from a personal philosophy, I was very supportive of the government's move into early childhood intervention because I believe if the tap is on and the house is flooding, the first thing you have to do is turn the tap off. And I very much see kids having developmental opportunities as a way of turning the tap off.

And there may be sometimes more damage at the high end than we can sometimes manage to capture in our services. But my goal would be to make sure that no child reaches that point because I believe — and this is my own personal belief — that once that damage is done, it's very hard to undo.

So in terms of a focus of our resources, we focus on the preventative and developmental end and the buck, in that particular area, does stop at the Department of Health.

Now as much as I say that, we do also meet with various youth advisory groups; the Council on Children, the Youth PACE (Provincial Action Committee on the Economy), the various groups that are advisory to the different departments. And when they raise issues — if they raise issues with us — we do pass them on to the responsible department to make sure that people are aware of the priorities that youth have mentioned.

But I think our belief right now is that, dealing with our core responsibilities of prevention and development, that we have more than enough on our plates to do a good job at that aspect of youth development.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Well I'm glad that you indicated that the buck stops with the Department of Health because I will be asking the same questions to the Minister of Health. And I'm still kind of leery that I'll get the runaround to Social Services and to Justice and to all of the other ministries, and that's why I wanted to address it here first. And it might be something to look at: is having an entry point for somebody that has a problem such as this and they can be directed to the individual where the buck stops.

On the preventive side of the house — and I fully agree with you, Madam Minister — on the preventive side of the house. And I think we understand, I think we as a society understand, that if you can target programs to youth in their early teens, they're most effective at that time.

And with that in mind, I would like to ask a question about preventive measures which I'll probably ask later on in Learning estimates. Have you, Madam Minister, been made aware of or have you ever seen an interactive Web site based . . . a Web-based program called Your Life: Your Choice?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — No, I haven't. But I would be very pleased if the member would provide me with the ident number and we would certainly check it out.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — I don't have it right with me, Madam Minister, but I did have some notes on it and Your Life: Your Choice was recently chosen by the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse as one of the best programs available for

educating young people about alcohol abuse.

If accepted as part of a provincial curriculum, Your Life: Your Choice is available at virtually no cost to students, parents, and teachers. In fact, this program has been accepted in a number of other Canadian provincial curriculums.

Considering the importance of this issue, the no-cost aspect of the program, and the fact that it has received accolades from Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse, would you be in favour of this program being included as part of the province's curriculum? And I understand, again, that may have to be asked of the Department of Learning, but again it's youth, it's youth-oriented, and it's a youth initiative. Would you be in favour of this?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — One of the quite comprehensive activities we're involved in is establishing a youth Web site. And it is under development, so it's, I guess a work in progress is the way you'd describe it at the moment. And what we put on that site will be based on some of our consultations with youth, with some of the programs that are available.

But certainly, an important part of a good Web site is links to other useful resources. And we will take a look at the resources you're talking about. And when we get to the point in our Web site of linking to resources — and we can also bring it to the attention of the minister responsible for Learning, that they have I think a large number of sites for teachers as well, of resource materials — and it could be something we could both look at and consider assisting people to hook up with that site.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'll try and get the exact details of this particular initiative to you. And I would be very interested in hearing your response after you've seen the site and whether it could be incorporated because again, I think we are in agreement. If you get to the . . . The learning area of the youth is an area that we really have to get to.

I'm also extremely concerned — and again I'll talk to the Minister of Health about this — but again, it's a feeling of mine in the Youth . . . Department of Youth where we can get into addressing the problems more as to how and where young people can go. And it's kind of a sad situation when you speak to one of the young people that have been through one of the programs, that they can't get it in Saskatchewan.

And again it may be unfair, tunnelled totally to the Department of Youth, but it's been a fact of life where I've spoke to young people that have had to go out of province basically to get youth treatment. And how do they get there? It's trying the system within the province and finding that they don't work. In fact, I've had two young people that have said they actually consumed more drugs and alcohol while they were in the treatment facilities in Saskatchewan than they did when they were at home where they had the problem.

And again I would hope that the minister would talk to the other ministers that are involved in this whole youth issue where they could . . . you could sit down and actually look at this as a provincial problem and to come up with a provincial solution, rather than just saying well this comes under Department of



Health, or is this Social Services or whatever. Because this is a very, very critical problem.

I'll just give you a little bit of feedback from some of my visits with some of these young people. And one had taken a treatment in Calgary — very much an in-your-face type of a rehab program — and the individual scoffed, basically, at what we're dealing with in Saskatchewan.

Now for him to find that program it came via word of mouth from somebody else that was a youth, that had been through the program, because there is no way that individual . . . his words to me were, there's no way that he could find that out in Saskatchewan.

And here we are again — 3,300 youth last year. And if they hit a dead-end wall, where are they going to go and what are they going to do? And I think that's very much a concern for all of us in this province.

So I would hope that in the ministry of Youth that we would look at something like this. And I think it's more global than just recreation and culture. I think that we really need to have a look at what I've suggested within our own caucus, is designing a matrix where youth who are very in tune to computers could actually log on — I have a problem; what's your problem? — and actually start processing the individual as to how and where he or she may go to find some help.

And I know it's a problem further on, is once they're directed to where that help is, if there's no facilities available to them or if the facilities are not able to cure their problem, then I think even in a Web site such as that, we have to be able to direct them further on, whether it's out of the province or not. Because if something is not working here, I think we have to be open enough to say, if it's not, where are treatment facilities that will work.

So that being said, Madam Minister, I would hope that you would — you and your staff — would look into something. And like I say, I'm going to be asking some of the other ministers the same issue because I think it's a very, very serious problem that we have and it's, and in my view, it's kind of been on the back burner or out of sight where it's not a problem. So I would ask that you would look into this.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — If I could offer a little more comment, I mean every jurisdiction develops its own, if you want to put it, treatment model. And one of the things that's very much a part of the Saskatchewan solution right now is the fact that community schools have been very effective in many instances in working with vulnerable children and families.

And because that has been so successful . . . In the Role of the School report that was done last year it really was a report that brought together court workers, drug and alcohol treatment workers, social workers, teachers, people who work in community coordination roles, and as well people from sport and recreation and cultural organizations, to talk about how they could provide more integrated services to youth.

Because, I mean, it's true. I very much believe in the First Nations or Aboriginal model of development which is spiritual,

intellectual, emotional, and physical. And so when you take an integrated, school-based approach, you're going to capture all of the children who are in school. And I think our model is one of providing integrated services to that youth from a school-based setting.

Now if the youth is so dysfunctional that they can't exist in the school setting, then you have a different kind of problem. But again, I would say that whereas certainly I believe it's important, I think we should look at what resources there are.

There may in fact be people for whom the preventative model that we're building on the community schools model will be very successful. I know it has been at the high school in . . . Nutana high school in Saskatoon. And of course in the last budget and in this budget we've continued support to develop integrated community schools at the high school level as well as the school level.

So we very much have an in-community model of dealing with these issues as opposed to a sending-people-away-for-treatment model, because ultimately you have to live where you are. And sometimes treatment settings could be very artificial, although sometimes can play an important role in someone who's going through a life change.

But when you have very large numbers of children who are experiencing these difficulties, to send them all away is not necessarily the most viable treatment model. So I think we've consciously chosen a model that provides as many supports to young people as we can get on a school-based model.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I don't disagree with the preventative model. However, when we look at the numbers of 3,300 that called the Help Line, the preventative model did not necessarily work.

If you have 3,300 people that have called for help, and then what do we say? We're going to let you go back into your own environment, let you live where you are. We have this panel of people that we'll have and come and interview you at your school or place of residence, whether it be four or five different individuals that wish to come and talk to you about your problem.

Well I think we really have to think about that. That doesn't work. That's why there was 3,300 people that called. They didn't call to say, I hope you send somebody down and visit me because I think I have a problem. They're calling because they have a problem.

And so all I'm asking is, from the Department of Youth, if there's something that could be designed or introduced that would direct one of these people that have a problem — they've identified it as a problem; that's why they call the line, and who knows the extent of their problem — rather than just saying we'll go back and re-prevent it. You can't do that. The problem is already there; that's why these people are calling.

And again I'm looking at some place where these individuals can go — the Help Line, where does it go from the Help Line? — and if there's something in the ministry of Youth that would direct these people, if they could have an entry point to say,

where do I go?

And I know under the current philosophy is, if it's drug related — the way I understand the system now — you go to your health district. Well some health districts are not able to deal with drug issues, let alone youth drug issues.

(16:15)

We also know that there's no issue . . . or there's no facilities for youth that are under 12 years of age. They actually go into the mental wing of a hospital at tremendous cost to the system because there's nothing for youth. And it's kind of like we've turned a blind eye to addiction and alcohol problems for youth that are under 13 years of age. And we know that's not the case. We know that there's individuals at the age of . . . as low as 10 that have substance abuse problems.

And so, although I appreciate what you're saying, we want to stay with the preventative model. What I'm really asking for is if the Department of Youth will look at some way, some system within the Department of Youth that somebody with a drug or alcohol problem can have an entry point and then be directed — not back to where the problem exists, but to where they can go for some help.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again, I would see our role that in being . . . in referring them on to the appropriate resource. Because if we start doing what the Department of Health and the health districts do, then everybody will be really confused. So I think it would be important that we would have the link that would link people to the service. And you make a very good point. And certainly as we move into developing our site, I'm sure that you've raised it to everyone's attention that this is something that we should pay attention to.

But I just will comment that there are services like Ranch Ehrlo that speak to some of the issues that you're talking about. Whether there's enough of them, I guess you can question. But I say, when there's a deep level, as there are in some communities for historic and other reasons, you cannot deal with it by sending the whole community to a treatment centre. So there has to be other models of dealing with these things.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Chair, I move the committee now report progress on Culture, Youth, and Recreation and proceed to estimates on Learning.

**General Revenue Fund  
Learning  
Vote 5**

**Subvote (LR01)**

**The Chair:** — I recognize the Minister of Learning to introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The officials with me today are Dr. Craig Dotson to my immediate right, the deputy minister of Learning; directly behind Craig is Lily Stonehouse, the assistant deputy minister of Learning; to my immediate left is Cal Kirby, the director of facilities planning. To the right of Craig Dotson is Brady

Salloum, executive director, student financial assistance; behind Cal Kirby to my left is Gord Sisson, director, corporate services. Dr. John Biss is to my right and just behind Brady Salloum, executive director, student financial assistance. And of course John is executive director of university services. And at the back of the room behind the bar is Ms. Frances Bast, director, corporate services; and directly behind me is Wayne McElree, who is the assistant deputy minister of Learning.

These are the officials for today, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome, Minister, and your officials.

Mr. Minister, I understand the member from Kelvington-Wadena had suggested that there would be no questions outside . . . or in the K to 12 today, so feel free not to answer this. But I just wanted to bring it to your attention because I just spoke to this issue with the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation and it relates basically to youth.

And I'm not sure if you heard my question on it or not but I'd just like to . . . a quick refresher of where I was going with the Minister of Youth and I want to do it in different departments. And it deals with the alcohol and drug abuse that is going on within our youth in the province. And I think we all agree that the educational aspects of the drug program entered into a school at an early age — and that can be debated at what age to bring it in — would help the problem.

I think it's been shown over the years where models have been used where drug education and alcohol education at the younger levels actually works. And this brings to my question about a Web-based program called Your Life: Your Choice. And my question, Mr. Minister, is if you or your staff have seen this program or if you are willing to answer the question on that.

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Mr. Chair, certainly this particular Web-based program that he's talking about we will look at and get back to him on that. I'm not aware of that particular program, so we will get back to the member opposite on that.

What I would like to say with regard to issues of drug and alcohol abuse and starting at an early age, I think that this looks at the broader perspective with regard to society. But when we look at the initiatives that we have put forward, we certainly do have considerable amounts of drug and alcohol abuse throughout our K to 12 curriculum in terms of the perspectives that are provided from a society point of view.

Our early childhood development program is a community development model and it is well on its way to addressing some of the . . . very much the particulars in high-risk neighbourhoods with regard to fetal alcohol syndrome, for example. When we look at the community partners and some of the agreements that have been signed to date on early childhood development initiatives, it really does . . . and I'm very hopeful that that particular community development initiative will be extremely important in eliminating fetal alcohol syndrome from the province of Saskatchewan.

We're having positive reactions from communities throughout Saskatchewan. We are talking about having outreach home

visits, screening programs, in-hospital prenatal visitation. So that whole timeline from conception to our early learning and our pre-kindergarten programs are addressed specifically with regard to some of the problems we've been seeing in society related to alcohol abuse.

So there are initiatives underway. But I can assure the member opposite that we will be looking at that Web-based program that he's referred to and we'll be getting back to him on that.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I just want to just give you a little bit more of what this program is about, and you've answered my question so this is more of a statement.

Your Life: Your Choice was recently chosen by the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse as one of the best programs available for educating young people about alcohol abuse. If accepted as part of a provincial curriculum, it's available at virtually no cost to students, parents, or teachers. In fact, this program has been accepted in a number of other Canadian provincial curriculums.

So, Mr. Minister, I'll get more information for you on it, the actual Web site on it, and I would just ask that you take it under consideration as viewing it as a possible curriculum item for the province of Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I'd like to welcome your officials here this afternoon and my questions will pertain to post-secondary education, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, both universities, the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, are both undergoing the exercise of setting their budgets for the upcoming academic year. I believe the University of Saskatchewan, according to a recent publication *On Campus News*, they indicate that they may be finalizing their budget as early as tomorrow.

I understand that there is still some negotiations going on with your department over the Saskatchewan university funding mechanism and I was . . . I guess my first question would be is where . . . what stage are those deliberations at and when can the universities expect a final decision?

And while I'm on my feet, I may as well ask you to provide some . . . me with some information. I understand that this is the last of a three-year agreement or program. And could you provide me with the amount of funding under the . . . under this mechanism that was provided to each of our universities in the last two years.

So if you could tell me where the discussions are with regards to this current year and how much money did each of the universities receive under this mechanism in the last two years.

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. And to the member opposite, thank you for the question.

Certainly when we talk about the setting of budgets, of course, between the universities and more specifically the funding mechanism for our universities, there is a process that has been involved with both universities for some time. And if we look

at, for example, how this all started with the recommendations from the MacKay report and later DesRosiers and the funding formulas that DesRosiers outlined, that there has been negotiation and discussion between the universities and department officials for some time.

There was agreement in terms of providing dollars on a phase-in basis that we will provide the member opposite with those numbers over the past three years — I don't have them with me right here today — to indicate how that phase-in over those three years was provided. But he is correct in stating that this was the last year of the phase-in or catch-up related to the new university funding mechanism.

(16:30)

I would also like to point out that there is ongoing discussions. Consultations have occurred between both universities and department officials. The department has provided some options recently that are being reviewed by both universities.

And I have had an opportunity to meet with the president of the University of Regina recently, and I will be meeting with the president of the University of Saskatchewan tomorrow in Saskatoon. And these are some issues that we will be discussing, Mr. Deputy Chair.

But I believe that whatever that final resolution is that it will be a consensus agreement. And I believe that we are probably closer today than we ever have been in coming up with that agreement, Mr. Deputy Chair.

**Mr. Hart:** — So, Mr. Minister, if I heard you correctly you're saying that the final decisions will be made within the very near future and then both universities will know the exact dollar amount as to what they can expect under this particular funding arrangement. And I know that both universities will be very happy to have the process concluded.

Mr. Minister, in the estimates there's an amount budgeted for universities, federated and affiliated colleges, and educational agencies, and this year that's \$221.368 million. I wonder if you could very briefly provide me with a . . . provide a breakdown of that number — how much are the two major universities going to receive out of that figure, and what the . . . where the remaining dollars will be allocated.

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. And with regard to that specific budget line item of 221,368,000, we're looking at the universities' total would be roughly 207 million of that. The federated colleges and affiliated colleges would be approximately 9 million of that. Then we have our Aboriginal and northern education funding of close to 5 million, and then there's some miscellaneous with regard to, example, the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy for the balance of that 221 million.

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Minister, could you provide the breakdown on that 207 million. How much of that will be going to the U of R (University of Regina) and how much will be going to the U of S (University of Saskatchewan)?

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair.

With regards to the University of Regina, we're looking at approximately 54 million for 2002-2003, but there will be some refinements once we have the final agreement on the funding mechanism. But that would be the ballpark.

And the University of Saskatchewan would be in the range of 153 million, again which will be subject to refinement once there's an agreement on the overall funding mechanism.

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Minister, I am told that the actual amount of money that's available to both universities as a base operating grant, and the increase this year is approximately 2.3 per cent. I have in my hands here an *On Campus News* from the U of S and the headline reads: "U of S faces shortfall after 2.3 per cent provincial budget hike".

I know during the budget preparation the University of Saskatchewan provided your department with a document, *Building a Nationally Competitive University, 2002-2003 Operations Forecast*. And in that document, I believe they talked about a . . . they needed a 5.7 per cent increase just to kind of keep doing the things they have been doing in the past. And then I believe they also indicated that . . . and they called that, I believe they referred to that as a sustaining budget.

And then they also talked about an investment budget to achieve some of the . . . reach the goals and move the university forward so that it will remain a nationally competitive university. And I believe, if memory serves me, that they were talking more in the neighbourhood of 8 and 9 per cent increase in funding.

I guess . . . I've heard President MacKinnon speak on several occasions and outline and articulate his vision of the university and I must say that I certainly find very little to disagree with in that vision.

I guess the question is how . . . We know where we are, we know where we want to go. And the same applies to the University of Regina. They have a plan and it's a very good plan but to enact that plan and to move down the road to reach the goal that they've set for themselves they need more than 2.3 per cent in new money.

Now that leads me to believe that we'll be seeing some fairly significant increase in tuition fees in this upcoming year. Perhaps not of the magnitude that we saw last year, but still fairly significant increases, Mr. Minister. And these increases will come on top of, as I said, significant increases last year and significant increases the year before. This sends a pretty tough message to our students and our universities, Mr. Minister.

And I realize, we all realize that Saskatchewan is in a bit of an economic difficulty and dollars are a bit tight and that sort of thing. And we've discussed the reasons why in this Assembly many times and I'm sure we will continue to discuss them.

But, Mr. Minister, how do you answer the universities' requests when they're, you know . . . I feel they're on the right track, I'm sure you do. And now as both universities have said, with a 2.3 per cent increase, it's going to make things pretty tough and they're going to have to make some pretty tough choices, one being most likely a tuition fee increase.

What kind of a message is your government sending with this type of an increase, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Well thank you. Thank you again very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. The member opposite did relay some good information with regard to their support, but also our support, for both the directions of the universities with their strategic plans.

We believe that the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina have done a commendable job in working out strategic plans and business plans for their future. And we're excited about the future of both universities.

When we looked at the opportunities that have been provided by the visions of both presidents of both universities, we can see that there has been not only an improvement in the direction, but I think we can also see that there has been some significant uplifting in terms of the student population and staff morale at both campuses.

I had an opportunity to visit the University of Regina today and had a chat with the vice-presidents of academic and administration. And they're excited about their strategic plan; they're excited about the future of the University of Regina; and they believe that they have a very good working plan.

Also with regard to the funding mechanism and the funding that was provided in this budget: first off, last year the universities received a base grant increase for operating of 3.5 per cent, and then additional dollars with regards to phase 2 of the phase-in on the funding mechanism. This year the base was 2.3 per cent but there was also additional dollars provided, with regard to the funding mechanism, also additional dollars provided to the College of Medicine, an increase for Physical Therapy; there was also increased dollars provided for Nursing to expand their program.

So the offshoot was that the numbers were actually closer to three and a half per cent in terms of the increase on the operating side. And both presidents on budget day indicated that they recognize the economic circumstances that the province was under at the time that it set its budget and believed that, obviously, that education was indeed a priority for this government considering that many departments did not receive any increase, and in fact some were rolled back.

So the priority of the Department of Learning is to make sure that we do provide dollars. We've always felt that accessibility was important for students to our post-secondary system.

And when we talk about tuition it's my understanding that because of the increases that we have provided this year and the increases we provided last year, that the University of Saskatchewan has indicated that they won't be proceeding with the 15 per cent increase in tuition but will be having a tuition increase probably less than 5 per cent which, considering that students were being faced with a 15 per cent increase, I think is quite a large improvement.

The other thing to mention is that when we're talking about tuition, it's only one component in terms of the affordability of post-secondary education. We do have a very generous student

financial package available to students in the province of Saskatchewan. We do have costs of living in both of the major urban centres in Saskatchewan that are considerably less than their competitors.

And we also recognize that both universities have engaged in a policy of moving their tuition fees closer to the Canadian average norm. And that particular policy of moving tuition into a provincial average setting is one that the universities have engaged on, despite any grant improvements that we might provide. So we believe that is also the right policy to adopt.

I understand that there will be some adjustments in terms of some professional colleges, upwards from that 5 per cent tuition, and I'm expecting that announcement in the near future. But I also recognize that there are some schools that have been having tuitions higher than their provincial averages that will also be rolled back with the upcoming announcement.

So this is part of some strategic initiatives that both universities have adopted, but I believe — and I think the majority of people in the province of Saskatchewan would agree — that we do have affordable post-secondary education in this province, Mr. Deputy Chair.

(16:45)

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Minister, seeing that our time is somewhat limited here this afternoon, I guess I'm just going to touch on a few areas and we will . . . sure we'll have opportunity to come back to them at a future date.

I've been in conversation with both universities and they tell me that they really haven't got a whole lot . . . don't know a whole lot about your new program to fund capital projects. They say there's a real dearth of information from your department. They really have no news at all. And they are becoming somewhat apprehensive.

They have a whole lot of projects that they would like to get underway and all those sorts of things. Your government has said you're going to make \$50 million available for capital construction in post-secondary education and they are certainly eager to access that money.

I guess my question to you, Mr. Minister, is: when can the universities expect some details on that program? And could you briefly outline how the program will work for the universities and for all those involved in post-secondary education that may be able to access that funding?

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. We are currently in the process of receiving the prioritized capital lists from both universities. It is our plan to look at those lists and then provide the very specific information to both universities. And we should have that available to them within the next two weeks, Mr. Deputy Chair.

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Minister, I've discussed this new structure with you in our last session of estimates. I guess I will ask a question as it pertains to post-secondary education.

Will the arrangement between the universities and the

Department of Learning and this new Crown corporation, will it be the same as for those people involved in the K to 12 system?

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Well, thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. The processes for prioritizing capital projects within the post-secondary system and within the K to 12 system will be no different than they have been in the past.

And we have made the commitment that there will be 50 million available to the post-secondary sector with regards to capital this year, and the prioritization of those projects is not . . . is completely unchanged. And we have made the commitment that the component that the government would normally provide to universities and federated colleges is . . . will be the same. And that component will be fully covered off with dollars to cover the principal and interest payments, that will be provided to the universities from the Education Infrastructure Financing Corporation.

So really in terms of what projects will be approved, that process won't change; that process has been in existence for some time in both the university sector and the K to 12 sector. And the dollars are obviously substantially increased and will allow for considerably more projects to be approved this year, because I think we're looking at approximately a 65 per cent increase from the dollars available last year, Mr. Deputy Chair.

**Mr. Hart:** — So, Mr. Minister, I take it from your answer then that the universities and federated colleges when they access funds through this structure, they will be assuming the loan as such, and you . . . what you're telling me . . . telling us is that you will be providing them with the money to make their interest payments and their principal payments.

Could you provide some details as to what type of a term they may be looking at, if it's over a period of five years, ten years, that sort of thing? And then I guess maybe I'll just put this as a part of the question. Why wouldn't you have structured it in such a manner that your department would assume the liability for the loan and loan the money or borrow the money from this new corporation, and thereby not adding additional liability and risk to the universities and federated colleges?

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. The period for amortization of these loans would depend on the particular project. If it is a new construction — a new university building, for example — that would probably be amortized over 30 years. If it was for the purchase of a piece of capital equipment, the normal time frame would be to amortize that loan over a period of five years.

Because the Crown corporation, the Education Infrastructure Financing Corporation is providing the funds to the university in the form of a loan . . . but it is in the form of a guaranteed loan. So the government is basically stating that they would incur any, obviously, infractions related to that in terms of the guarantee. But the asset that is created belongs to the independent institution. If that was a university, for example, they would own the asset.

So what we're saying is that the funds are provided in a guaranteed way, the asset belongs to the university, and the government will provide the dollars to pay the principal and the

interest for acquiring that asset.

Thank you.

So I think it really is a good way of allowing for not only a boost to our economy but for definitely needed with . . . providing needed infrastructure to our university campuses. And I think that the details, when they come out in terms of the amount of projects and the number of projects that will be approved in the very near future, will show that there will be some significant impacts in not only our universities but throughout the education facilities in Saskatchewan.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Minister, I know when we discussed this in prior estimates, you indicated that you will be guaranteeing the loan, I guess, and those sorts of things. And, I mean, we on this side of the House don't have a problem with this new structure. The only concern we have — and it's been expressed to us by boards of educations and other people — that they feel that perhaps sometime down the road if this government should find themselves in an even tighter squeeze, that they're concerned that this money will be coming from their traditional operating grant; that at one point in time that the budget line item may be erased because other municipal governments have seen that with budget line items. The rural municipalities — there was a budget line item for policing and it was there for one year and then it was gone. And that's where the concern is.

So, Mr. Minister, this applies equally to boards of educations and to our universities and affiliated colleges. They're asking for ironclad, I guess, guarantees. And what type of guarantees can you make to them that they don't have to worry in the future that, in the case of boards of education, that the property tax owners . . . the property owners will have to pick up these additional payments because they have . . . because the boards of education have more liability?

The same applies to the universities, that students may be asked for . . . are looking at higher tuition costs because there's a breakdown in the structure of this financing proposal that you're putting forward.

**Hon. Mr. Melnychuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I can assure the member opposite that the commitment is solid, 100 per cent. And we can say that in terms of, you know, our provision in terms of the General Revenue Fund to cover the principal and interest payments.

But I also would indicate — and I think I've indicated this before — is that each one of these capital projects involves a signed agreement and it's a binding agreement. And certainly when we commit to providing the dollars for a particular capital project in this way, that that commitment is 100 per cent solid.

Certainly when we look at future years in terms of whether the same dollars might be available in a given year it may be more, it may be less. But certainly the dollars that are available this year will be accompanied by signed agreements for each project and the principal and interest payments will be covered.

And I think we're getting close to the end of our time, Mr. Deputy Chair, and I thank the member opposite for his questions today and also for the officials for providing the information. And we look forward to the next time we can debate estimates.