



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

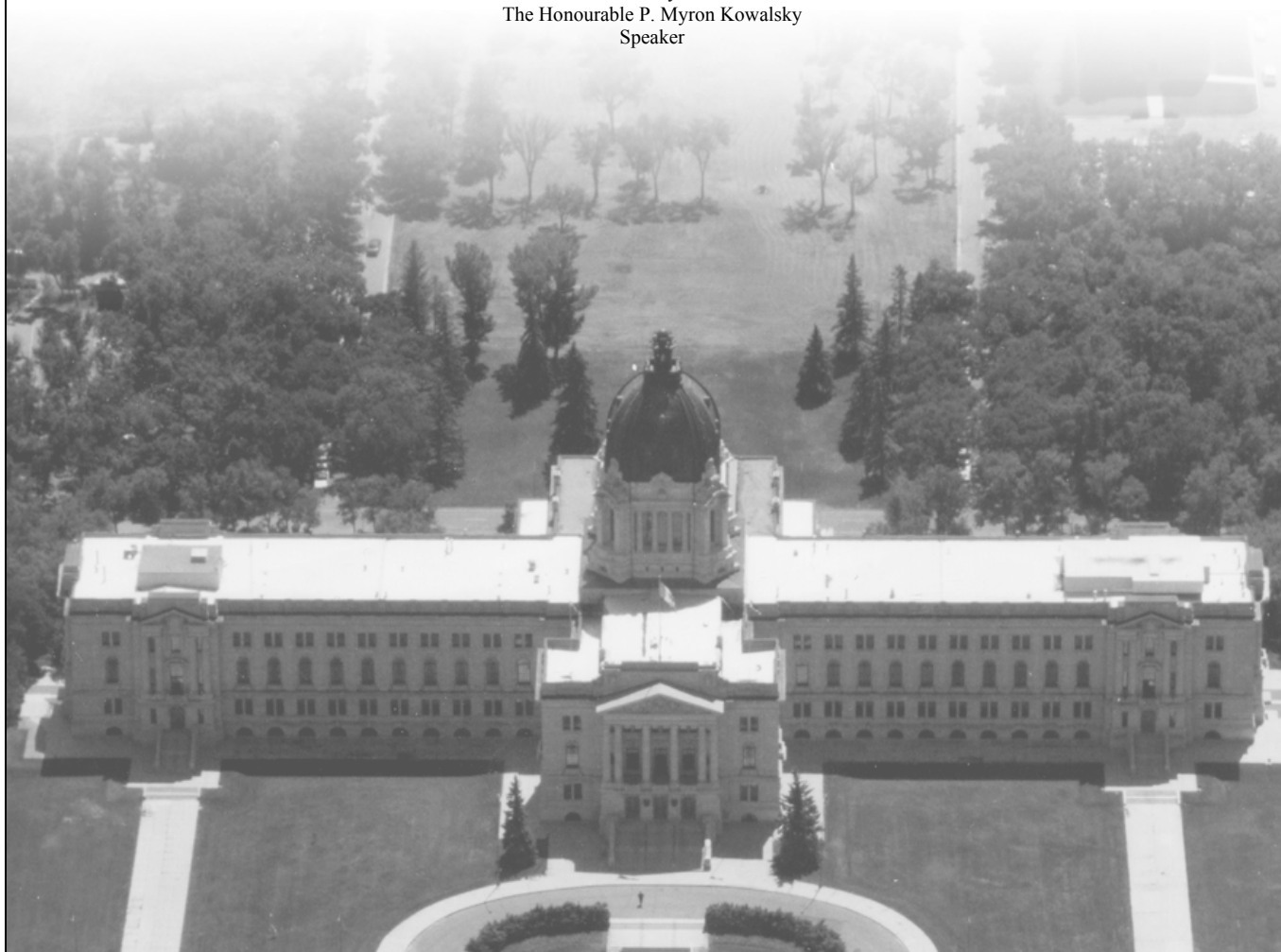
---

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

---

(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky  
Speaker



# MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky  
Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert  
Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Addley, Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken Lackey, Brenda	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Hon. Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantefoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Ben	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Ted	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Prebble, Hon. Peter	NDP	Saskatoon Greystone
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise on behalf of constituents of Cypress Hills who want to raise their concerns about the condition of Highway 32 to the government. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and to make necessary repairs to Highway 32 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, today's three or four pages of petitions are signed by individuals from the community of Leader, the community of Sceptre, Abbey, and Lemsford. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

**Mr. Wall:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of constituents who are concerned about the lack of group home spaces in my constituency of Swift Current. 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 take the necessary steps to provide the funding required for additional spaces for Swift Current residents with lifelong disabilities.

And, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are all from the great city of Swift Current. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have another petition to halt the forced amalgamation of school divisions. And, Mr. Speaker, people are concerned that the proposed school division is far too large to retain any local input into the education system. The prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

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

Mr. Speaker, a number of signatures on this petition, and they are from the communities of Rosetown and Elrose. And I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Estevan.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I present a petition regarding crop insurance. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all necessary actions to reverse the increase in crop insurance premiums and the reduction in coverage.

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

And this is signed by citizens of Radville and Regina. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are very concerned about the quality of health care throughout the province. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that facilities providing health care services in the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy are not closed or further downsized.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Weyburn, Colgate, Radville, Minton, and Gladmar. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens that want to improve SaskTel's cellular service in rural Saskatchewan:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all the necessary actions to install the technical equipment necessary to ensure that all rural areas of Saskatchewan are protected by reliable cellular phone coverage.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Jansen, Lockwood, and Lanigan, Colonsay. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present another petition to revisit effects of the TransGas Asquith natural gas storage project. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately address the concerns of all individuals affected by this project, pay 100 per cent of the costs involved to rectify disruptions to water supplies, produce an environment assessment study encompassing a larger area outside the scope of the project, disclose the project's long-term effects on these areas, and consider alternative sources of water for the project.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Grandora and district. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Kindersley.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today and present a petition on behalf of the citizens of west central Saskatchewan opposed to the rerouting of Highway No. 51. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that Highway 51 is rebuilt to go through the town of Kerrobert so that local businesses may be given the opportunity to promote themselves to and gain business from patrons passing through Kerrobert.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by citizens of both Kerrobert and Saskatoon. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Batoche.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring a petition from the citizens of our area, and they are concerned with the terms of the consulting contract to former CEO [chief executive officer] Jim Fergusson. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the consulting contract is immediately terminated.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good people of Cudworth, Humboldt, Middle Lake, and Saskatoon. I so present.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14 are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 72, 106, 107, 666, 715, 798, and 808.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 114 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Rural Development: how much money did your department give to Ducks Unlimited in 2004?

I also have a similar question for the Minister of Environment, the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy, SaskTel, SaskPower, and the Minister for Agriculture. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 114 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: what is the policy regarding smoking in schools or on school property in the province of Saskatchewan?

**The Speaker:** — And the Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 114 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Immigration: how many businesses were notified about the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program in 2005?

And I have the same question for the previous six years. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Shellbrook Turtleford.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 114 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs: how much money has the provincial government invested through grants, loans, subsidies, debt guarantees, and other in the Saskatchewan Cooperative Fisheries Ltd.?

And I have another set of questions. I give notice that I shall on day no. 114 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs: how much money did the provincial government invest through grants, loans, subsidies, debt guarantees, and other in the Northwest Communities Wood Products Ltd., 2004?

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I and some of my colleagues had the privilege of attending a Centennial Medal presentation by Her Honour, the Hon. Dr. Lynda Haverstock, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan.

Twenty-six Aboriginal women who live and work in Saskatchewan communities were recognized for the roles they have taken on and for their achievements in building a better society. How very appropriate, Mr. Speaker, in the year that's been designated as the Year of First Nations and Métis Women. The women who received these awards are outstanding leaders in their communities, women who have worked hard to increase cross-cultural understanding and to improve the lives of the people they touch.

Mr. Speaker, these women are in your gallery. And I would love to introduce them today, Mr. Speaker. And I would ask them each just to stand when we read their names.

The Centennial Medal recipients were Ms. Linda Anderson, Ms. Erica Beaudin, Chief Constance Big Eagle, Dr. Maria Campbell, Ms. Bev Cardinal, Ms. Samantha Dustyhorn, Ms. Victoria Gubbels, Ms. Louise Halfe, Ms. Donna Heimbecker, Ms. Shirley Henderson, Ms. Rose Hudy, Ms. Gloria Kaiswatum, Ms. Ivy Kennedy, Ms. Rosalie Kinistino, Ms. Kay Lerat, Ms. Andrea Menard, Ms. Laureen Musqua, Ms. Sandra Opikokew, Marilyn Poitras, Joyce Racette, Lil Sanderson, Dr. Theresa Stevenson, Ms. Erma Taylor, and the Hon. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Candace Wasacase-Lafferty, and Dr. Winona Wheeler.

Mr. Speaker, it was a remarkable ceremony this morning. It is a remarkable group of Saskatchewan women. It was a pleasure to be there and watch the ceremony. All women in Saskatchewan are extremely proud of this group. And, Mr. Speaker, all people in Saskatchewan are very proud of these women. Congratulations to all of them.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join with the minister and all members of this Assembly and on behalf of the official opposition to welcome these remarkable women to their Legislative Assembly — 26, as the minister highlighted, honoured today with the presentation of a Centennial Medal. And once again when we heard the brief citations read by the chief protocol officer, it was just a reminder of the amazing calibre of people that this province is blessed with.

We thank them for being role models. We thank them for their leadership and for their contribution to their communities and indeed to this entire province in this the Year of First Nation and Métis Women.

So, Mr. Speaker, again on behalf of the official opposition we want to welcome these remarkable women to their Legislative Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Dewdney.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a very special guest, the daughter of one of the recipients, Linda Anderson. But the daughter's name is Jessica Miazzyk. And she's a close friend of one of our Pages, Jonathan, and he wanted me to let you know that he loves you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to welcome many people from the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres that are here from all across Saskatchewan. They represent some 70 member agencies that are throughout our province who provide an invaluable service to persons with disabilities. And we applaud them for their dedication to improving the lives of people with disabilities. And I would like to name the agencies if I might, Mr. Speaker, and ask those that are here representing the different agencies to please stand and be recognized.

We have Mallard Diversified Services from Wadena, Yorkton Adult Independent Living, Rosetown Wheatland Regional Centre, Weyburn Group Home Society. We've got them dispersed throughout the galleries. Rail City Industries in Melville, Cypress Hills Ability Centre, Nipawin Handi-Works, Moose Jaw Diversified Services, and Cheshire Homes in Regina.

I'd like all members of the legislature to help me welcome them to our legislature today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Community Resources and Employment, the member for Regina Rosemont.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Very good, Mr. Speaker. And I want to join the member opposite in welcoming our guests to the legislature today. I was handed materials when I was out visiting with the folks that reminded us that these organizations provide supported living programs, community kitchens, day programs, car wash, SARCAN, activity centres. So again I want to join the member opposite in welcoming you here today and thanking you for the work that you do.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Once again, the Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I might, I missed a couple of groups. We had more and more people

joining the rally outside and as they were coming we were adding the names to the list. And my apologies for missing a couple. So I'd like to, if I could, introduce them at this time.

Chip & Dale homes from Regina and Redvers Activity Centre. The member of Cannington made sure that I knew that. He recognized you there and that I had missed you. So welcome.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Athabasca.

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great day today. We have many visitors and of course northern Saskatchewan is not to be forgotten.

Today we have 11 grade 5 students from Turnor Lake, Saskatchewan, which is a long ways from the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And with the group of students we have a number of chaperones that I want to thank for bringing these students all this way. There's Rose Desjardin. There's Frankie Morin and Christine Morin, Doris Moberly, Doreen Morin, Cheryl Morin, and Brian Grocholski, Mr. Speaker. And Brian is originally from Regina here and he went all the way with his wife to teach in Turnor Lake, which is very much appreciated by the northern people.

Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to recognize the youngest of the group. Her name is Alia Morin. And Alia wouldn't sit on my chair in my office, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to take a picture of her because certainly the Year of First Nations Women and Métis Women certainly want to prove that there's a lot more very intelligent and capable females coming up through the ranks. And I wanted to especially welcome her here to the Assembly today.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great day and I want to ask all members of the Assembly to welcome this fantastic group of grade 5 students from Turnor Lake.

And I would say in Dene . . .

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Dene.]

Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to the members of all the House here, I'd like to introduce a fellow that's visiting here today from South Dakota, sitting behind the bar, Mr. Paul Dennert. He's a legislator from the state of South Dakota, where he sits as a house of representative. Today he's job shadowing myself and also the member from Batoche, at that end of it. Mr. Dennert has been serving 13 years in South Dakota, also in the House of Representatives and as state senator at that end, and from what I hear doing an excellent job up here.

So I would like to . . . I think he's been enjoying his stay here with us and I know he's looking forward to question period which they don't have in South Dakota. And I know this one today will be . . . I think you will exceptionally enjoy this one, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if the government will or not. But with that I would like to welcome him here for his stay and I hope it's enjoyable.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Dewdney.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a friend of mine by the name of Dan Cameron sitting up in your gallery. Dan and I knew each other very well in our previous lives. Dan now teaches at the University of Regina and spends his time trying to shape young minds to move forward in the challenges we have in the future. And I'd just like to introduce Dan to everyone. Would you wave, Dan?

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's that time of the year when Rosetown Central High School sends their grade 8 class to the legislature. And we have 31 students from Rosetown sitting in the east gallery to our left and to their right. Mr. Speaker, they are accompanied by teacher Richard Berezowski and Miles Bennett and they are chaperoned by Mrs. Farrell and David Brigham.

And David has a special connection to the opposition because he is the brother-in-law of the member for Saskatoon Southeast. And also his son Greg, I believe, is one of the grade 8 students. So perhaps they'd just give a little wave so that Uncle Don can see. There we go. Thank you very much.

I have the pleasure of meeting with these students following question period and they're going to put their MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] on the hot seat and we would expect to have a good time discussing the legislature together.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I want to also just point out that from the Wheatland Regional Centre, the CEO, Shanno Lidster is here. And I've been presenting many petitions calling for support of the SARC [Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres] human resources plan. And Shanno was the driving force behind that petition and I'd like to also have the members welcome her along with the Rosetown students. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly a group of grade 8 students from the community of

Cabri. We've got 12 with us today.

And ordinarily, Mr. Speaker, when I introduce school groups I have the distinct pleasure of saying they've come the furthest. I'm not sure that that's true today given the fact that we have a school group from Athabasca and one from Rosetown. But this is a very loyal group. They try and make this excursion annually and if not annually, every other year. And I appreciate the opportunity to meet with them.

We have with the students today the teacher, Denise Andreas. We have Judi DeNysschen and Dr. DeNysschen and Leanne Cherkowski accompanying the students. As well we'll be meeting with them a little later on today and we're looking forward to the opportunity to discuss what has transpired in the House and how come I represent them and in what capacity I do that. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to this Assembly today an individual who's no stranger. Mr. Jack Goohsen served the constituency of Cypress Hills. And I notice his wife Jeanette has joined us as well.

Mr. Speaker, I think for those who didn't have the pleasure of being in the Assembly when Mr. Goohsen was here, you won't know, you didn't have the pleasure of seeing an individual in action. And as a former colleague, when we needed to call on someone who could tie up the clock for a little while, Mr. Goohsen did an excellent job as a former reeve. And those of us who were here will know how well he did. And we want to welcome him back to his Assembly and his wife Jeanette as well. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Kindersley.

#### Canadian Named Most Valuable Player

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week was a great week for Canada. For the first time ever, a Canadian was named the Most Valuable Player to the National Basketball Association and that player was Mr. Steve Nash. Steve Nash plays for the Phoenix Suns and I'm also given to understand he's the shortest individual ever to receive the MVP [most valuable player] Award for the NBA [National Basketball Association], standing only at six three.

The reason I'm bringing this before the Assembly today, Mr. Speaker, is I have a connection with Mr. Steve Nash. He attended St. Michaels University School in Victoria, British Columbia which is my alma mater, and he was indeed actually a classmate of my younger brother, Bryce William Dearborn. Steve was an amazing athlete. It is almost a shame that he ended up playing basketball because, in my brother's words, he

was the best rugby player he had ever encountered. He was fully ambidextrous and, at the end of the day, just an amazing athlete.

Now I am given to understand that Mr. Nash will be signing a \$65 million contract for his basketball abilities, and he joins the likes of Michael Jordan, Larry Bird, Magic Johnson, and Charles Barkley. And it's really a feather in the cap to Canada, and to basketball in general, and also to my high school, St. Michaels University School, which continues for God, Queen, and country as a preparatory school, preparing people for leadership in basketball or just preparing Tories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

#### Recognition of First Nations and Métis Women

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Earlier today we had the privilege of attending a ceremony to honour 26 First Nations and Métis women with centennial medals for the many contributions they have made throughout the history of our province.

For generations First Nations and Métis women have worked to ensure the well-being of their families, their communities, and their country. More and more First Nations and Métis women are pursuing careers and playing pivotal roles in our province. With their accomplishments in such areas as the arts, health, education, athletics, law, and administration, today's recipients of centennial medals serve as role models to all Saskatchewan citizens. These women work tirelessly for their communities.

In 1996 the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples stated that First Nations and Métis women share an overriding concern for the well-being of their children, their extended families, communities, and nations. The commission also said that First Nations and Métis women share a common vision that represents a future in which the values of kindness, honesty, sharing, and respect are part of everyday life. That vision represents a future that we should all aspire to.

I'm sure my colleagues will join me in congratulating the women who were honoured this morning and acknowledging all the First Nations and Métis women of Saskatchewan for their strength and courage and determination and their efforts in building a strong Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

#### Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to rise today in this Assembly and to congratulate Bob Pringle, the director of the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre, and his dedicated team for continuing to provide exemplary service to the citizens of Saskatoon.

For over a decade Bob Pringle has dedicated himself to the cause of providing food assistance to Saskatoon people in need. In recent years the centre has added basic literacy and life skills, a clothing depot, and pre-employment workshop for clients.

Mr. Speaker, last year the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre distributed 1.3 million kilograms of food to help meet the needs of countless individuals and families. The centre directly fed 72,000 children over the course of last year. And, Mr. Speaker, the number of people seeking help in the past year has risen by a staggering 12 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre is able to survive financially due to the generous nature of Saskatoon citizens. Donations of money, goods, and services has enabled the centre to meet ever-increasing demands. Support is provided by individual citizens, the city of Saskatoon, and business community, churches, and service organizations.

I would like to ask all members of the Assembly to join with myself and the official opposition in congratulating Mr. Bob Pringle and his team for outstanding services to the community of Saskatoon.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

#### **Women of Influence Exhibit**

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Saskatchewan's centennial and the women who helped shape this province, a Women of Influence exhibit will be on display at the Regina Plains Museum from July 23 to December 3.

Mr. Speaker, women's historical contributions are significant, however their stories and achievements have not always been recorded. This exhibit will highlight women who have made a difference in Saskatchewan and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, many First Nations and Métis women are among those who have made significant contributions to this province. Some Aboriginal women highlighted in this exhibit are: Maggie Soonias of the Red Pheasant First Nation near North Battleford, who was a lifelong inspiration to her accomplished artist grandson, Allen Sapp; Toniya Wakanwin "Holy Breath" Elizabeth Ogle, an elder of the Lakota First Nation who ranched at Wood Mountain. Elizabeth Ogle, or Lizzie, as everyone knew her, was well known for her traditional knowledge, community involvement, and her skill in beading and quilling.

Mary Margaret Amirault lived at Onion Lake and Fort Pitt. She delivered home care in the early 1900s and followed her mother as a midwife, delivering approximately 200 babies; and Dr. Lillian Dyck, a member of Gordon First Nation, an advocate for women and Aboriginal people, a professor and neuropsychiatrist at the University of Saskatchewan, and most recently a member of the Canadian Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to visit the Plains Museum to learn about the great influence these women have had on our

province.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Cannington.

[14:00]

#### **Centenarian Celebrates Birthday**

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 5, 1905 was Napoleon Hamel's birthday. Napoleon was the oldest of a large family, and he was raised on a farm in the Manor, Wakaw, and Cantal areas of southeast Saskatchewan. He farmed and later became a blacksmith. He was most noted for being able to fix anything, but his particular expertise was in building very fancy windmills for lawn ornaments. These 10- to 12-foot windmills were very brightly painted, and the vanes actually worked like a windmill should, Mr. Speaker.

Napoleon's birthday was celebrated at the Moose Mountain Lodge in Carlyle. He's not a resident there but takes some of his meals there as he lives in low-cost housing and gets Meals on Wheels from time to time. The party at the lodge, Mr. Speaker, had many of his friends and family present as well as a band. Napoleon sat right up front next to the band, his foot was tapping away, and he appreciated the music, Mr. Speaker, as only an old musician can.

Mr. Speaker, while Napoleon is unusual, he's not unique. Some of his siblings were there awaiting their chance, Mr. Speaker, to get a centennial medallion. And fact is, Mrs. Cruywels came up to me with a twinkle in her eye and said, can you take a message for me to the Premier: I'd like to get my medallion a little bit early, Mr. Speaker; I'd like to enjoy it longer. Well, Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Cruywels is still a youngster. She's only 93.

Happy birthday to our centenarian, Napoleon Hamel.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

#### **Progress on Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women**

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 2005 is the Year of First Nations and Métis Women in Saskatchewan. This government understands the social and economic challenges that many Aboriginal women face every day, and we are working to address them in a meaningful and responsible fashion.

In the fall of 2003 we released the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women, a document that is ensuring women's issues are integrated into government planning and decision making.

Mr. Speaker, this past March the government updated its response to the action plan. And I'm pleased to report that we have progressed well in many areas and have a direct impact on Aboriginal women including: affordable housing and other



support initiatives targeted to low-income families; a significant increase in child care spaces and parent subsidies; a number of specifically designed programs that help Aboriginal women access jobs as well as education and training opportunities; the piloting of the new domestic violence treatment option court in North Battleford; and a variety of health initiatives including integrated alternative and traditional healing practices, supports for diabetes and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and the expanded role of nurse practitioners.

Mr. Speaker, this government is working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to build capacity, to better identify need, and to develop and deliver effective programs. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

### Weyburn Hosts 2005 Royal Bank Cup

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, junior hockey is alive and well in southern Saskatchewan. The 2005 Royal Bank Cup is now under way in Weyburn and the Saskatchewan team, the Weyburn Red Wings, are giving fans much to cheer about.

Five teams are taking part in this year's championship: the Camrose Kodiaks from the Pacific region, the Portage Terriers from the Western region, the Georgetown Raiders from the Central region, and the Hawkesbury Hawks from the Eastern region. And of course the host team, Weyburn Red Wings. The teams will play a round robin format this week with playoffs on Saturday and Sunday, and the final will be broadcast live on TSN [The Sports Network] on Sunday at 5:30.

In addition to the games, a tremendous host team and hundreds of volunteers have organized many additional events which will once again show why Weyburn is the hospitality capital of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in early tournament action Camrose needed overtime to edge Weyburn 2 to 1. However the Red Wings roared back and beat the Georgetown Raiders 4 to 3 on Sunday night. The Wings play tonight and Wednesday night. Myself along with several of my colleagues are looking forward to attending Wednesday's night game and cheering on the Wings. Mr. Speaker, the last time this event was held in Weyburn, the Red Wings won the tournament, and in 2005 we are looking forward to history repeating itself.

Mr. Speaker, through you I would like to ask all my colleagues and hockey fans across the province to join with me in congratulating Weyburn as the host team, or as the host city, and to wish the Weyburn Red Wings victory in the 2005 Royal Bank Cup.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for

Weyburn-Big Muddy.

### Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres' Human Resource Plan

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, workers and clients from a number of SARC agencies are here at the legislature today to tell the Minister of Community Resources and Employment that they are angry her government failed to address a crisis in the human resources that they are facing.

Mr. Speaker, these agencies cannot pay their workers competitive wages and end up losing employees to health and education jobs. The staff turnover rate is an alarming 28 per cent, and as a result, the quality of life for people with disabilities is suffering.

Last fall SARC put together a human resource plan at this government's request that called for \$3.5 million to bridge the wage gap. Mr. Speaker, why did the government refuse to put the necessary funding in place to achieve this plan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order please. I want to extend a welcome to all visitors in the legislature, but I would ask that they not participate in the debate in any way. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources and Employment.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would say that my department and all of the departments of government certainly appreciate the work that's done by the agencies, all the CBOs [community-based organization] around the province and particularly the ones that are with us today — the SARC agencies. And I would say that in every budget we look at the whole range of priorities. And this year certainly our department got a huge increase in a number of areas, but many of those resources were directed to people with families who are service recipients as well as to people directly . . . people with disabilities.

Now we did in fact provide additional resources this year. I know it was not as much as people were hoping for. But we greatly appreciate their work, and this is a priority for myself and my colleagues here, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Mr. Speaker, according to SARC, 85 per cent of the people who work in its member agencies are women; many are single mothers. Thirty per cent work two jobs, and the majority are considered to be low-income earners or working poor. Their request is simple, Mr. Speaker. They want to be able to pay their workers competitive wages and by doing so enable single moms to only have to work one job. Mr. Speaker, why is the government refusing to address these concerns?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for CRE [Community Resources and Employment].

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Speaker, again we are not at all refusing to address it. In fact it is very much alive and on the table and under active consideration.

And I do want to clarify one fact for people who are interested in that . . . is during the last budget we provided a 1 per cent increase to all the CBOs in the province but added an additional 50 per cent or 500,000 directly to SARC so that they would get a larger increase than the other CBOs in the province.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Linda Cuell, the chairperson of Cypress Hills Ability Centre, has come all the way from Shaunavon to voice her concerns. She says the \$500,000 announced in the budget was, quote:

. . . a slap in the face. We are shocked and now we are angry. We feel betrayed by a government whose very foundation is to defend and support the weak, vulnerable, and working class.

Linda Cuell is upset because, quote, “. . . 500,000 distributed among 70+ Agencies does nothing to address the crisis level of funding for their CBOs.”

Mr. Speaker, does this government plan on implementing SARC's human resource plan, or will it continue to ignore the crisis?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for CRE.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Speaker, I take this issue very seriously, and because of that I was trying to avoid pointing out some of the errors in the members opposite's logic. But every year since 1995, we have put additional resources into salary to the tune of 28 million. Is it enough? No. We still need to do more for these workers here. But the fact of the matter is in all those years since 1995, only twice in this Assembly has that opposition ever asked about this.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Mr. Speaker, what also angers SARC agencies is the fact that this government has settled outside of its 0, 1, and 1 wage mandate with teachers for 2, 2, and 2. SARC member agencies compete with the education sector for workers. They are angry that while teachers will get 2, 2, and 2, there are no funds available to implement SARC's human resource plan.

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order. Order. Order please. The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Mr. Speaker, Linda Cuell says, quote, “It has become clear to us that this NDP government only pays lip service to the issues of the disabled.” She is frustrated because, quote, “The difficulty that we face is that those who we serve are a silent minority.”

Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis facing these agencies. What is the minister prepared to do to fix this crisis?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for CRE.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I'm very aware of the important work that the agencies do. When I've been around the province to open new housing that we've provided, supported housing programs and whatnot, I've seen very much the environments that people work in, the very challenging environments they work in, and I very much appreciate the work they do. And because of that, I'm working very seriously on moving this ahead as quickly as possible.

But I want to reaffirm that since 1995, there has been 28 million put specifically into wages. This year in the CBO sector, child care workers got 3 per cent. SARC agencies got 2 per cent, and the rest of the CBOs got 1 per cent.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Mr. Speaker, agencies and their workers are not the only ones speaking up on this issue. Dawn Desautel is the president of SARC's Board of Directors. She says inadequate government funding means it is increasingly difficult to provide adequate services for persons with disabilities. She says there is a crisis in staff recruitment and retention. In a letter to the Premier, she writes:

We sincerely believed that you and your cabinet had clearly heard our message about the impact that high staff turnover has had on the lives of the individuals served by our members.

Mr. Speaker, does this government have the political will to make positive changes in the lives of the people with disabilities by funding SARC's human resources plan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for CRE.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, I will say that I've had a thorough look at the SARC human resource plan. I've met with representatives who were involved in developing it and from their agency. I think it's such a good plan in fact that we certainly hope to . . . As we move forward this year with the child care initiatives for the province, I certainly intend to combine the information with SARC human resource plan with the work that we need to do in child care and hope to have an overall plan for the entire CBO sector. I'm very optimistic, and I thank the SARC agencies for doing this very necessary work.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Mr. Speaker, SARC has completed a participant impact study which points out that low wages mean, quote:

the practice of hiring staff members that are not qualified or trained to provide services to people with disabilities is common place and should be considered unacceptable.

The report also suggests that hiring unskilled people can put people with disabilities at risk. The report authors state that, quote, “An increase in wages is imperative and is only a start.”

Mr. Speaker, this government talks about how it wants to ensure full citizenship for people with disabilities, but when it comes to action, it fails miserably. Mr. Speaker, when will this NDP government start fulfilling its obligations to people with disabilities instead of continuing to put them at risk?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for CRE.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have to say again that I totally accept the SARC human resource plan. Certainly we’re working on it. We will move it forward. But I will say at the same time that I hope that the sentiments that I’m hearing voiced today indicate that the opposition is prepared to support a little more action on minimum wage and on part-time workers in this province.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Mr. Speaker, SARC agencies are tired of non-answers and excuses from this government. In a letter to the minister after our last exchange on this issue, Linda Cuell ...

[14:15]

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order please. Member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — And I quote:

Your responses on the floor of the legislature were nothing more than political finger pointing and posturing, smoke screening your answers by laying blame on others. This is not a game to us. We have waited patiently ... How wrong we have been to trust this government.

Mr. Speaker, we once again see exactly the same thing happening today. Mr. Speaker, will this minister finally give these people a reason to trust this government? Will she commit today to implementing the SARC human resource plan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for CRE.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, I’ll introduce the facts again into the discussion. Since 1995 even in the absence of a human resource plan, we put an additional 28 million into wages in this area, in the CBO sector. In the last budget, I received, I received the SARC plan in October. In the budget, recognition was given in the sense that SARC received a larger increase than other CBOs received.

This plan is a very good plan, and I take it very seriously. And I hope we can make progress on it together.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

### Treatment for Drug-Addicted Youth

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 30, I wrote a letter to the Minister of Community Resources on an urgent matter. Of the hundreds of families that I’ve dealt with on crystal meth in the last six months, this letter focused on a young man in Saskatoon requiring immediate help with his crystal meth addiction. Can the minister inform this Assembly what action will be taken as a result of this letter?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for CRE.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Speaker, as you know I’m not specifically responsible for addictions treatment. What I am responsible for is, where youth is in a particular age range, to help get that youth in a position where if it’s warranted by the various authorities to receive the right information to go into treatment or to receive help. And certainly any youth that fits that requirement, we’re very willing to look at using our ability to apprehend as a method of addressing that problem.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well as a member of cabinet I thought she might follow up on this. In my letter I stated this was a critical situation. I said this young man’s life ... it may be his last chance. And his frame of mind leads me to believe that this should be looked into immediately.

Mr. Speaker, it’s been over a month. What help has been offered to this young man and his family, or is he still waiting?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for CRE.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — The member knows that I can’t speak about a specific case in the legislature. And what I will say is that I will again check on the matter that he’s raised and ensure that the appropriate actions have been taken.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for

Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Mr. Speaker, this is an emergency case. It's extremely critical situation. The minister has shown some willingness to use the child and family service protection Act to help a family get their daughter back. It was good enough for that family. Why isn't it good enough for this family, Mr. Speaker? Can the minister or any minister over there assure me that she will now give this attention the matter it deserves?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for CRE.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Speaker, I do want to bring to the member's attention that we respond to over 1,000 inquiries every month on behalf of children that may be in need of protection. If the member feels strongly that this person is an appropriate person to receive that kind of an intervention, then certainly he can phone me directly, and we can do that.

But I have to say that this is one of many people who all have some very substantial needs in this province, and it would be very good as well as compassion to demonstrate some maturity and co-operativeness in this . . . [inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maturity, Mr. Speaker, we'd also like to say about courtesy and courtesy of responding to a letter. I took the liberty of calling the minister's office yesterday to make them aware that I'd be bringing this issue up, so there's no excuse, Mr. Minister, not to answer the question. This is a critical situation involving a young man's life, and I'd like an answer to the question.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for CRE.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Speaker, I will confirm to all of the members opposite that any issue that they raise that's personally brought to my attention that I will definitely make sure that it is looked into and that a determination is made if the young person in question is a suitable candidate for the use of section 18.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Carrot River Valley.

### Centennial Celebrations

**Mr. Kerpan:** — Well, well, well, Mr. Speaker. The definition of plagiarism, Mr. Speaker, is to take one other person's ideas and use it as your own. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to accuse the NDP [New Democratic Party] of plagiarism today. But I am glad to see that they're following our lead because, Mr. Speaker, idea number 67 in the Saskatchewan Party's *100 Ideas* says that it's to give every student in Saskatchewan a centennial tree to plant.

And, Mr. Speaker, I see tomorrow that the government is making a centennial announcement involving students and trees. Mere coincidence? I think not. Mr. Speaker, could the

government confirm for me today that they're going to use idea number 67 of the Saskatchewan Party's plan and give every student in Saskatchewan a centennial tree to plant?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Culture, Youth, and Recreation.

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question. And the member from Moose Jaw North will be making an announcement tomorrow, and there will be details available.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

### Labour Legislation

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we saw something very bizarre from this government. They delayed the passage of one of their own Bills.

Yesterday the Saskatchewan Party gave its full support to Bill No. 122, the Bill that will end government-directed hours once and for all. We were prepared to let that Bill pass second reading yesterday, but the NDP member for Saskatoon Fairview stood up and adjourned the debate.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP promised to repeal government-directed hours. The Saskatchewan Party said it fully supports the repeal of government-directed hours. But now the NDP is stalling passage of its very own Bill. Why?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, in case the member has missed, this Chamber . . . I mean one of the attributes of this Chamber is to be able to stand and debate many issues. Mr. Speaker, it's not only the opposition that has the right to voice their opinion. Members within the government would like to make comment on . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order please. Order please. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, there are members who would like to make comments on the Bill, and it's quite appropriate in this House. Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite think it's a big joke. Well, Mr. Speaker, in a democracy every member has the right to make comments and to speak freely. And if they think that's funny, then they're out of line.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we'd

like to quickly review that long debate that the member from Saskatoon Fairview had, and I'll quote again. His speech, Mr. Speaker, his speech said:

Mr. Speaker, amendments to The Trade Union Act are important but as well we have Bills 86 and 87 that are important, and at this time I would move to adjourn debate.

Mr. Speaker, that's the whole speech. That's the whole speech, Mr. Speaker. You know I would venture to say the NDP must be having some problems with its decision to repeal government-directed hours. Either the NDP is having second thoughts about keeping its promise, or they are worried all of their members won't support this Bill. Either way it's very strange to see the government delaying its own Bill especially when this Bill has the full support of the official opposition.

Mr. Speaker, why is the government delaying its Bill to get rid of the job-killing monster? Why don't they just keep their promise and pass the Bill?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, while the member opposite may not like the idea that government members have the right to make comments on Bills also and he would like to see this just shut down right away, Mr. Speaker, his members have dogged some Bills along for a long time, Mr. Speaker, and not made any particular witty comments.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's beneath him to make comments on something that a member here feels they should debate. But, Mr. Speaker, we will continue the debate, and our members will have the ability to make comments that they wish to make.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago the Labour minister promised to repeal government-directed hours. There were no strings attached when she made this promise. But all of a sudden there seems to be a catch.

Yesterday when the member, the NDP member for Fairview adjourned the debate, he linked the passage of this Bill to passage of the NDP's two other labour Bills. What's that all about, Mr. Speaker? The minister promised to repeal government-directed hours. Why is that promise suddenly tied to the NDP's search and seizure Bill?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order please. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find it hard to believe that the member opposite would

understand that there was some kind of a link or to perceive there was some kind of a link. Mr. Speaker, what he should do . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, the member should go back and read some of their speeches that the members opposite have made. They have dragged in Bill 86, Bill 87. They have talked about additional hours. They have talked about policy in the Department of Labour. They have just muddled it all together. So I would find it hard to believe that they would understand and make assessment on some comments that the member had made.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Labour is so intent on having her members speak on Bill No. 22, isn't it ironic that the House agenda that we see before us today, under orders of the day where there are 14 Bills in adjourned debates, does not contain Bill No. 122?

It's not on the order paper, Mr. Speaker. So if the minister is so adamant that Bill No. 122 is not linked to any other Bills, if that's what she's indicating, that the member from Saskatoon Fairview was incorrect in implying that it was linked to Bills 86 and 87, surely the minister would follow up on her press release of February 18 that says, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

Higgins also announced the government's decision to withdraw the draft regulations and repeal the unproclaimed Additional Hours section of The Labour Standards Act.

That's from her press release. Will the minister move Bill No. 122 forward and let's get on with business.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order please. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker, and we will do it soon.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Highways and Transportation.

## Year of First Nations and Métis Women

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, today is a very special day in Saskatchewan. The honouring of a group of First Nations and Métis women with Centennial Medals this morning . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order please, members. I would invite the Minister Responsible for Indian and Métis Affairs to start over.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thanks again, Mr. Speaker. The honouring of a group of First Nations and Métis women with Centennial Medals this morning in the legislature is I think a fitting way to celebrate this special Year of First Nations and Métis Women.

Mr. Speaker, this year was proclaimed the Year of First Nations and Métis Women for some specific reasons. It is a way to give formal recognition to the historical and contemporary contributions, strengths, achievements, and struggles of First Nations and Métis women.

Today and this entire year we are celebrating the positive changes that are occurring through the work of First Nations and Métis women in their homes, in their work, their communities, and their province. More and more, Mr. Speaker, First Nations and Métis women are becoming doctors, lawyers, nurses, artists, athletes, and teachers. They are continuing to play key leadership roles in their own communities and in society as a whole.

First Nations and Métis women have been held with highest regard within their communities. They are the givers of life and the keepers of cultural traditions. Mr. Speaker, today First Nations and Métis women continue to command respect, sometimes in the face of difficult circumstances such as poverty and family violence.

As First Nations and Métis women groups across the province organize to plan their own recognition of this year, I am pleased to announce a small one-time grant to celebrate it and to help in the celebrations. The Department of First Nations and Métis Relations is partnering with the Status of Women office to provide grants to various First Nations and Métis women's organizations. These grants will be similar to those given for International Women's Day events.

We expect organizations will use the funds to help organize activities that will celebrate the achievements and contributions of First Nations and Métis women and increase awareness and understanding of issues facing First Nations and Métis women in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to join in the general congratulations to First Nations and Métis women who were honoured earlier today with Centennial Medals. They should be very proud and so should their communities. They are all true role models.

Mr. Speaker, this year is still young and I advise all of you to stay tuned and participate in any celebrations of First Nations and Métis women that occur in or near your community. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

**Ms. Draude:** — I'd like to start by thanking the minister for the advance copy of his statement. And I'd also like to congratulate on behalf of the entire Sask Party, Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, all the women who received Centennial Medals this morning. They are a diverse group of women, all very deserving of the honour of being recognized for their achievements. It was very humbling to be in the presence of so many women who've had an enormous, positive influence on their communities.

The minister has made an announcement on a program designed to help celebrate the year 2005 as the Year of the First Nations and Métis Women. I believe that funds will be invaluable in spreading information on issues facing Aboriginal women, as well as celebrating their achievements and their accomplishments. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is a one-time grant to coincide with the Year of the First Nations and Métis Women. And my concern is obvious. It's one-time money.

And what is their plan to ensure that the information and education on First Nations and Métis women is carried out after this year? What is the plan to ensure that First Nations and Métis women will have their history and their accomplishments understood? And what is the plan to ensure that the future of the First Nations and Métis women is enhanced through education?

The Status of Women secretariat has the responsibility to ensure that each and every year the accomplishments of women are celebrated and, more importantly, that women have the chance to excel.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the initiative to support Aboriginal women and I look forward to a commitment that will support all women, every year.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Orders of the day. The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with leave to move to government orders, adjourned debates item no. 20, Bill No. 122, The Miscellaneous Labour Statutes Amendment Act, 2005.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The member for Canora-Pelly has requested leave to move directly to Bill No. 122. Is leave granted? Leave is not granted.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table a response to written question 1,217, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Response to 1,217 has been submitted.

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

**Deputy Clerk:** — Committee of Finance.

**The Speaker:** — I do now leave the Chair for this Assembly to go into Committee of Finance.

### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

#### General Revenue Fund Agriculture and Food Vote 1

#### Subvote (AG01)

**The Chair:** — Committee of Finance. The first item before the committee is consideration of estimates for Department of Agriculture and Food, vote 1 found on page 28 of the Estimates book. And I would recognize the minister to introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am happy to introduce the very committed and hard-working staff officials of the Department of Agriculture. To my right is Doug Matthies who is deputy minister of the department, and right behind me is assistant deputy minister, Hal Cushon. Next to Hal is Dave Boehm who is director of financial programs branch, and behind Dave is Rick Burton who is director of the policy branch. And next to Rick is Karen Aulie who is director of the corporate services branch, and to my left is Jack Zepp who is acting assistant deputy minister. I welcome them to the Chamber.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much. Central management and services (AG01). Is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome to Mr. Minister, to your officials here today.

Last week we had a couple of calls — in fact two separate calls — from farmers that still are going back to the CFIP [Canadian farm income program] program, which I found amazing. Can you tell me how many applications from the CFIP program that are actually still ongoing and haven't been dealt with one way or the other?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — We don't have the exact number with us. We can get that. I'm told that there are only a very few and that those would relate . . . The only ones that would be open would be the ones that would relate directly to those who have filed appeals.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. I'll wait for those responses to those numbers.

Mr. Minister, I want to go to something that we had touched on in question period one day, and it's the Beef Initiative Group.

And I think you're well aware of that group, one of the groups in the province that sees the need and has been trying to provide an alternative to our slaughterhouse numbers that we have right now. And they had their plan out there that they'd like to see go ahead. It's a check-off program, as you know.

But I'd kind of like to . . . Their concern, I guess, is that they feel that a promise was made, number one by the Deputy Premier. And I believe in some of the quotes, Mr. Minister, you have also touched on it — although I don't believe quite to the depth that the Deputy Premier touched on it — about a feasibility plan and a business plan. Would you maybe like to comment on what you will be doing or what you plan to do to help groups such as this. What you've done to this point I guess would be my first question.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Well I think it's very important to understand the ongoing relationship, the length of time that we have had in terms of our discussions with the Beef Initiative Group.

When they first came to the province and started initiating discussions, I met with them in Saskatoon and we talked about the concept that they were putting forward. Their concept — and I expect the member knows relatively what the concept is — basically they want to do a large slaughter processing facility. They want it to be owned by producers. They want to have the upfront money to build that and get that plant up and going come from the federal government. And then they want to fund that with a . . . pay the monies back through a check-off program that would apply to all cattle that would be sold in the country. There have been some modifications, discussions of that plan with a wide variety of groups.

[14:45]

They have met with groups throughout the province and indeed they did meet with the Deputy Premier. And the Deputy Premier, in outlining the kind of directions that we were moving in, talked about the feasibility study and indicated that we would be moving forward with such. And I think there was clearly some misunderstandings in terms of what the Deputy Premier was thinking of and articulating and what was heard by some of the members of the Beef Initiative Group.

In an attempt to clarify that, I spoke individually with members. I talked to them about what we could and could not do and was unequivocal in the fact that we do not do business plans for any group. And that through the application to the CARDS [Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund in Saskatchewan] program, they might be able to find some funding. But they would have to be responsible ultimately for making sure that their plan would move forward.

There was some insistence that there had been a commitment made to fund a business plan and, Mr. Chair, that clearly was not the kind of commitment that was made. What we were looking at is trying to set a situation where communities and community groups would not end up spending a lot of money doing plans without having an overall picture of how slaughtering and processing might work in the province.

And therefore in order to aid those communities and those

groups, to help them understand what it was that they were contemplating getting into, we did — with the department — put together a plan to have a pre-feasibility study done. We had that study done and that really laid out, for any of the groups that were interested into getting into slaughter and processing, what the essentials were that could enable them to succeed in that endeavour.

But as far as the Beef Initiative Group is concerned, we have continued to speak with them, to talk to them about the concept, about the kind of work that they needed to do, the groundwork that they needed to do within their organizations. If they wanted a check-off program they had to work with the various organizations, cattle organizations and get agreement from those organizations for a check-off in order for that to be considered.

But I can say clearly that in our discussions with them, certainly in my discussions with them, there was . . . I could not have been clearer in terms of what the provincial government could and could not do, would and would not do with them. I was unequivocal we were not doing a business plan for them, so any hint or comment outside of that is based on misunderstanding. And that's as far as I can go with that. Thank you.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well thank you, Mr. Minister, for that answer, because I find that somewhat amazing. And I can certainly believe that there's certainly misunderstanding here then, but they have good reason to believe what they believe.

And I just want to . . . From a meeting that they had held in Saltcoats on I believe it was last October, Mr. Minister, that the Deputy Premier attended, and I just want to quote, read you a quote from a lady from the audience that got up and asked this specific question, and I quote:

To Clay Serby — will your government provide the funds necessary for these people to complete their feasibility study and business plan?

And I repeat, complete their feasibility study and business plan.

Mr. Minister, this is the answer that these people got from Mr. Serby when the Deputy Premier, when he got up and spoke:

In answer to the question asked earlier, . . . [the Deputy Premier] stated that the Government of Saskatchewan will not only support this group and it's concept but will also fund the feasibility study and business plan needed to push this concept forward.

Mr. Minister, can you explain where the misunderstanding comes from? This is what they were told in front of — and I was there, I was at the meeting — in front of probably 150 farmers and ranchers at that meeting that night. And this group was very positive about what they wanted to do but were very positive about what the Deputy Premier had promised that night and took his commitment seriously.

So can you explain to these people who they should listen to? On one hand they're getting this kind of a response; on the other hand you're saying that's not what you said. And I believe you're right, Mr. Minister. I believe I have quotes here where

you've talked about a feasibility study, but nowhere in your comments did I ever see about a business plan. And that's fair. I believe that's what you had said and what you hadn't said.

But I guess when it comes to the Deputy Premier, and the Deputy Premier should have definitely a fair amount of clout within government, these people took him at his word. Can you respond to that, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Well there's a couple of things that I will say around the comments, your statement about quotations. Given some of the news releases that your party has . . . that the member opposite's party has sent out, Mr. Chair, with quotes of things that I have said which are partial quotes, portions of quotes out of *Hansard* that certainly distort the picture of what I was actually saying — and all we have to do is go to the record in *Hansard* to be clear about what I was saying — I do have some questions about the context and the content of the so-called quotes that are coming forward.

That said, I want to also be very, very clear that I — having not been at that meeting — I cannot comment further on what the Deputy Premier may have said, not said, what he was thinking when he said it or was not thinking. That will be up to the Deputy Premier to deal with.

What I can say is that the department and myself have been completely unequivocal in our discussions. We have met with the Beef Initiative Group, both the prime movers from Alberta and a number of their members from within Saskatchewan. We have continued to be unequivocal in making clear that we do not fund business studies, but in trying to also find those people a route to be able to work, to lay out for them the kind of work that they needed to do.

And I am happy to say that when we did, after we had done the pre-feasibility study and we had the gathering to explain to groups that were interested in going forward, there were members of the Beef Initiative Group at the workshops and they were able to gain from the information that was provided there as well. But again, the department and myself have been unequivocal. And the Deputy Premier I'm sure can at any time, can talk about what he said, what he meant, what he was thinking when he said it. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well, Mr. Minister, you'd talked about what the Deputy Premier was thinking or not thinking. Well I know exactly what he said that night because I was at the meeting. And what these people have quoted him as saying, he definitely said. I heard it. He went on . . . The Deputy Premier stated that the government is keenly aware of the crucial role that agriculture and the beef industry in particular plays in the economy of Saskatchewan. He went on to say the government is tired of seeing its brightest and best leave the province for better opportunities elsewhere. And I agree with him.

But when he makes a commitment for something like that . . . And this group left the meeting that night very positive and feeling that your government was going to be behind them. They had took the Deputy Premier at his word that this would happen and now, as we see, that's not the way it is at all. So whether this was political fodder to make everybody happy that night, I'm not sure. But it's definitely not something that your



government seems to be following through on. And I guess my disappointment with . . . is if you're going to make . . . a representative of your government makes commitments like that, I would think that you would stand behind them and honour them.

You talk about doing a pre-feasibility study. Well I think common sense will tell us all that one study does not fit all. Every plan, I think we have three or four or five fairly serious plans out there and a number of others that are maybe as far in the works, but they've done a lot of work . . . everyone has done a lot of work on what kind of a project they think they need to go forward.

But as you said, every project needs money. And I think with this commitment they felt that their feasibility study for their check-off plan and the money from the federal government, it was a way to get off the ground and get started, a way to deal with their business plan, that that would be funded. And now they're finding out that that isn't going to happen.

So, Mr. Minister, I guess, what explanation would you give to the Beef Initiative Group of where they go now? Because really I think in some respects — or most respects — they're at a standstill at this point and don't know where to turn, when they had a commitment from your government and now they don't seem to have that commitment.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Well a couple of things I would like to note. First of all, in *Hansard* April 22, if the member opposite would like to review, the Deputy Premier did respond to his questions directly. What we have continued to say right from the very beginning with the Beef Initiative Group was that we would put together this feasibility study that would help all the groups that were moving forward, that we could not fund any one individual. We can't pick out one and say yes, we'll fund you. The implications would be that all would have to be funded.

What we did do in terms of that group and talking about their concept and what they could do, we did encourage them to put together some capital and to work with CARDS to put in an application for a business plan that could be funded. We also said to them very, very clearly that they needed to do some homework with regard to the stock growers, the other cattle produce associations across the country to get a consensus so that they could move forward with the idea of a check-off, which is absolutely fundamental to their plan. Without a check-off, this plan was not going to move anywhere.

Now I will reaffirm the concept itself of the producer ownership, of funding that through a check-off, all of that sounds very, very good. And we think that the feasibility study, the pre-feasibility study that we did, that we put forward for all the groups to work with was very helpful.

As far as that group being at a standstill at this point, all I can say is that we did — to the best of what we are able to do — encourage them to take the next steps in terms of moving forward. And that is to work with the various cattlemen, cattle producer organizations and to gain that consensus or to at least to find out whether the support was there for them to go forward and try to get a check-off approved.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a number of questions concerning the egg marketing board in light of, you know, the change in The Agri-Food Act last fall and the fact that the province has been granted new quota. Again we have another situation where the Deputy Premier made a commitment, and it's another commitment made by him and another commitment broken.

In 2002 the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization, who's now the Deputy Premier, commissioned Mr. Eugene Bendig to perform a review of the Saskatchewan Egg Producers' marketing plan, regulations, and operations. And the reason for this review is explained in the report on page 2 of Mr. Bendig's report. And it states, and I quote:

Individual unregulated producers, frustrated because Saskatchewan Egg Producers . . . and the Agri-Food Council rejected their requests for an increase in the maximum number of layers on an unregulated farm, have launched serious allegations regarding the operation of Saskatchewan Egg Producers.

So in light of the fact that (a) the most recent CEMA [Canadian Egg Marketing Agency] report states that the industry is trying to come to grips with the fact that quota prices discourage new farmers from entering the system as there is an increasing realization that it will be necessary to pave the way for new entrants into the supply management system. And (b) we are very conscious of the fact that we must do whatever possible to encourage rural development, and yet we've realized a steady decline in the number of producers involved in egg production in our province. And (b) in 2004 Saskatchewan did receive 57,900 . . . or 57,927 new units of quota.

I would like to ask the minister a number of questions about how the unregulated egg producers are being dealt with in this province. The Bendig report states that:

Saskatchewan Egg Producers have operated consistently over time in what they considered to be the best interests of . . . [the licensed producers].

So who sits on the egg marketing board, and does it consist entirely of licensed egg producers and the employed manager? Are there any unregulated egg producers on the egg marketing board?

[15:00]

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Just so that members understand the kind of process that we go through in terms of public policy around this, the Agri-Food Council — which is not directly related to the egg marketing board but has oversight of supply managed areas — does advise us on public policy, was a part of the public policy development here. The board itself is made up of those who are part of the egg producers, the supply-managed egg producers.

And the last sale that we had, there was a specific amount of the quota that was designated for those who wanted to be new entrants coming into production. To the best of my knowledge

— and I could have my officials correct me on this — but to the best of my knowledge none of the people who might be considered interested or new people bid into the auction. It was existing producers were the only ones that were bidding on that. Is that accurate . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh I'm sorry. That isn't accurate. I had heard that . . . I'm sorry. I had not heard that accurately. There were some new producers who did bid in and did get some quota.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you for that answer. And I will be getting to that area quite frankly because I'll be interested to know if any of those new producers were not a Hutterite colony or a break-off from a Hutterite colony. Were there any new producers that were single producers, single farm entity producers that were able to bid on the new quota? I am going to get to that question as well.

But I think if I'm not mistaken, I can answer the question I asked earlier, and there are no unregulated producers on the egg marketing board. And so in essence they are unrepresented. And I know the minister said that, you know, the Agri-Food Council is to oversee policy for the egg marketing board. However returning again to the Bendig report, he recommended that the Agri-Food Council or other appropriate body should basically be granted more powers. Because although they were a body in existence to oversee this, they have no power to do anything about any of the policies that were being practised by the egg marketing board without intervention by the minister. And yet the minister doesn't seem to know what's happening either.

So returning to the unrepresentation of the unregulated producers — who are either in direct competition with the regulated producers or at the very least are perceived to be in competition with the regulated producers, yet they are under the restrictions and regulations of the egg marketing board — who would ensure that their interests are looked after? Who's going to ensure that the egg marketing board decisions are fair and not detrimental to the unregulated producers?

Because it stands to reason if the producers on the board choose to be self-serving, it would undoubtedly be in their best interests to eliminate the unregulated producers entirely because they would gain the quota allocation that's set aside for unregulated producers. And it would also be in their best interests to ensure that the unregulated producers find it difficult if not impossible to gain access to any quota.

So the question is, if the . . . And Mr. Bendig stated that the Agri-Food Council did not really have any authority. And that is on page 6 of his report. It says:

I recommend that government increase the power . . . [to] the Agri-Food Council to the extent that it can regulate the . . . [activity] of [the] Supply Management Marketing Boards . . .

So if it does not have that ability right now and the minister refuses to look at this portfolio, who's going to look after the interests of the unregulated egg producers?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Well there are a number of comments and questions in what the member said, and I'll try and address

those fairly. But I think overall what Bendig was recommending is that we try and get broader access to the unregulated producers. Those unregulated producers could operate with 300 birds or less than 300 birds. And so the recommendation was that we try and set a structure that would give broader access.

Now you'll know that there's also national regulation that we work with, work under. The Agri-Food Council does not direct but they do advise in terms of policy direction. So when we looked at this and we were trying to set a system that was fair, that would provide broader access to the non-regulated producers, we came up with the auction system. And now that I do have the information in front of me, the producers that won in the open auctions were a combination of 11 existing producers and three who came on from the waiting list. And I think that there was one new producer who also came on as well.

So it has provided some access and we think that as we move forward, as people become more familiar with the system, as more quota is freed up, that we'll see more access for new producers to come into the system.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I think the minister interprets the Bendig report differently than I do because there are some things said, some recommendations made in the report that in essence is saying that we should change rules, regulation, and legislation to accommodate the licensed producers. And it talks about restricting the number of birds that an unregulated producer can have. So I don't think that Mr. Bendig was trying to bend over backwards to accommodate the unlicensed producers.

As a safeguard to allow for a number of producers to be involved in egg production so that it does not become the protected monopoly of only a few producers, other provinces have a ceiling of a maximum quota that any one producer can have. And for example, and I could be corrected here, but I believe there are a number of provinces that have restrictions such as no one producer can have more than 5 per cent of the province's entire quota allocation. Does Saskatchewan have such a policy and if so, what is it?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — At the current time Saskatchewan does not have a cap. One of the realities of supply management of course is that it is about regulated production to make sure that the producers get a return for their operations.

And I don't think I would characterize the Bendig report as bending over backwards to try and give non-regulated producers a new opportunity. But there is certainly within the recommendations, and certainly within the changes that we have made, opportunity for those who are unregulated to bid in through the auction and to become a part of that system.

As I started off saying, we do not have a cap in the province of Saskatchewan. And at this point we don't see that there's a particular reason for a cap in that the industry itself and those players within the industry will be trying to find the right size that'll give them a balance of efficiency in operation.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I know the minister is very busy, but there should be someone in his department that is looking over this

portfolio. And the fact is the CEMA report states that there is going to be . . . the future for supply management is being jeopardized because of the very thing that the minister is advocating. Because of the selling price of quota is too . . . It's not achievable. It's not economical. It's not financially possible for someone who isn't already in supply management.

So therefore the auction that he mentions, when you're competing with regulated producers, it isn't feasible for the unregulated producers. It's not going to be something that they can afford to do. So the very thing that the minister's advocating is what CEMA is now recognizing as a problem with the supply management system.

Returning to the safeguards that other provinces have in order to ensure that smaller producers can still be involved in the supply management sectors, prior to 1998 we did have a ceiling in Saskatchewan — my understanding it was 30,000 quota restriction for any one producer in our province — and in 1998 that restriction was lifted. It was a decision made by the egg marketing board and it would be to the advantage of the existing licensed producers.

Now they did not . . . The reasons that they gave, to my understanding, was the economics of egg production at that time. However they did not recognize the economics of the unregulated producers and they did not also raise their cap. Their cap was kept at 299 birds. At that time if they were looking at the interests of the unregulated producers and realizing the economics were changing, and that it took more birds to realize the same profit, they would have indeed increased the unregulated producers' egg limit as well. They could have increased it at that time to 500 — and I'm just choosing that number without doing the math on it — but they chose not to.

So that returns again to my belief that the unregulated producers here are not being represented. This is our family farms. This is our producers who have an add-on income. This is rural revitalization. This is what rural Saskatchewan needs. And yet they have no representation on the board. The minister has stated that he doesn't believe there should be a cap; there shouldn't be any restrictions. And yet other provinces do have restrictions on any one producer and the amount that they can have.

Another complaint that the unregulated producers brought forward is that they could sit on the waiting list for literally decades but they'd never be allowed the option of obtaining quota. Yet some of the existing quota producers have increased their flocks over time quite substantially. Somehow they were able to access more quota. In fact since 1974, although some regulated producers have exited the system, only one new producer was allowed to enter the system and that was in 1998.

In 1974 there were 101 regulated producers and now there are only 68 regulated producers, which shows that we're getting fewer and fewer producers who are producing more and more of the eggs. To my understanding of how supply management plan was supposed to work so that it remained an opportunity for more than just a select few, was that it was mandatory that a percentage of new or returned quota must be allocated to new producers who were not already in the system. The creators of

the supply management plan wanted to have a safeguard in place to prohibit a select few from monopolizing the system.

Can the minister tell us if in the regulations that any new or returned quota must be offered to a new entrant and, if so, what percentage?

[15:15]

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — I appreciate the member's comments and I think view that the system was closed. And in fact that is why Mr. Bendig was hired to do the research and to provide the report — recognition that there was very, very little opportunity for anybody new to get into the system.

And so with what we have done in terms of taking any new quota to an auction, any freed-up quota to auction, really does provide the opportunity for new people to get in. And the auction that we held previously shows that new people will bid into the auction and can be successful.

Will people who are in and have systems in place have more opportunity? Possibly. If they're getting good return, they're efficient, they will have opportunity to purchase. But who knows what kind of capital resources people who are coming into the industry may bring with them? I mean we know that there are people who have come into farming in the last decade who have come from other places and brought significant capital with them.

So from our point of view, this is a move in a direction of opening it up so that we can get new quota. And certainly that is resisted by some within the system who feel that any freed-up quota should be sold within the system. But we think by taking it to auction, by providing the opportunity for new people to get in, that we will see expansion.

In terms of the size, again we think that for those who are within the system there is currently no cap. And we look to the south of us into the US [United States] where there is no supply, no direct supply managed and we see huge, massive operations that are hugely capital-intensive. And they have to do that just to get by. They have to have that size of operation just to survive there.

So we think that the system here, I mean as far as supply managed system is that this works. It does provide opportunity for new people to come in because of the changes that we have made. And we hope that as we move forward we will see new players come in and bring new ideas and help develop the industry further.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Again I'd like to remind the minister that he should perhaps read the most recent CEMA report. The article that I have on that report, because I also have not read the entire report but the article that is written on it states, and I quote:

The industry is also trying to come to grips with the fact that quota prices discourage new farmers from entering the system. There is an increasing realization that it will be necessary to pave the way for new entrants into supply management system [says the CEMA report].

So I think there is becoming a realization that it's becoming cost-prohibitive.

It's my understanding that the intent of the supply management plan was . . . that quota itself was a public trust. And it did not have a value, and it was controlled by the various marketing boards. This trust could never be bought, sold, or transferred. So anytime new quota was acquired or existing quota became available because of a producer discontinuing production, the quota allotment was intended to be returned to the board who in turn would reallocate this quota on a percentage basis.

Now the minister didn't answer my last question which was, is that indeed the case? And if so, what percentage is in the Act to be given to new producers? And although this was the intent of the Act, I don't think it's the practice of what's been happening. And Mr. Bendig noted this in his report. And on page 4 he stated:

SEP and its legal council, review the agreements [meaning the agreements of sale or transfers] between the parties to ensure that reference is not made to [the] purchase or sale of quota or to quota value.

So in other words, as long as we don't call it a quota sale or give quota a value, money can still change hands. He went on to say:

SEP accepts that a price may be paid for business value or good will associated with the sale of layers.

Again I state money changed hands even though they didn't call it quota, but the quota and dollars changed hands. No allocation in any of those transactions was offered. No percentage of allocation was offered to new producers on the waiting list.

Later on page 6 of the report, Mr. Bendig states this:

I recommend that [the] Government make changes to the legislation, regulations and . . . marketing plan under which SEP operates to reflect the realities of the industry today . . . [and] I recommend that Government make the necessary changes to allow for the purchase and sale of the quota.

Now my interpretation of that is, let's make the changes to the legislation to make the practices legal.

Did the regulations that were written to The Agri-Food Act passed last fall do just that? Did the minister change the Act to legalize the sale of quota?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — The member asked earlier with . . . or made a note earlier that she didn't think that there were any . . . or that she thought that there were provinces that did have a cap. To the best of our knowledge, there are no provinces that do have a cap. We did have one previously, but that was taken off.

And I think that a number of things that we have done . . . I mean first of all in terms of hiring Mr. Bendig to give a report, we wanted to . . . I mean, there was no direct, at least acknowledged sale of quota. What was happening is people

would sell the barns. The value of the quota was there. You'd get inflated price for the barns.

And so we think that it's very, very important to have this system as transparent as possible. That's part of what we were asking Mr. Bendig to provide in the report . . . is some sense of how we could get there. And that's why we have, in our recommendations, moved to the auction system for any quota which is freed up or new quota that is brought forward. And we think that this system does provide opportunity for new people to move in as well.

There may have been some other questions that I haven't got the answer to, but you can ask again. But those are a couple that you are asking.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you. I will ask again. The question was, did the regulations written to The Agri-Food Act passed last fall allow for the legal sale of quota?

[15:30]

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Well a couple of responses I'd like to give. First of all just to note that our egg expert is not here with us today, and so what we will do is undertake to get a summary of the actions that were taken and get that to you.

But I do want to say that what the regulations allowed for last year was they allowed for the auction of new quota. And they allowed for the continuing sale of existing businesses which was the practice that was happening before businesses that had quota attached to them. And that is basically the process that exists in other provinces as well, where the businesses with quota attached are being sold.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Maybe I can help the minister a little bit in answer to a written question that I submitted through his department some time ago. The question was, "When an egg production unit is sold, where does the money go?" And the answer was, in 2003 the regulations in place did not allow for the sale of quota. So the only way that I can see that this quota is being sold is if the Act allowed for it.

Can he tell me when the Act came into effect? This is The Agri-Food Act that he introduced last . . . I believe it was last fall session.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — The amendments were put into effect last year so that they would be effective for '04.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Could I get a date on when they came into effect?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — We'll get that for you.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Okay. The final question that I have quite frankly is in the sale of the quota. Initially to . . . Oh I suppose I have two more questions. There was 35,693 units, the quota that was sold to existing registered egg producers. I have been told that the existing registered egg producers have the option to buy new quota for half of the going market price. Is that true?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Could you repeat that?

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I was told that the existing registered egg producers could buy any new quota that came to the province for half the going regulated price . . . or half the going market price, I'm sorry. Is that true?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — With new quota coming into the province, it is auctioned to the highest bidder. That is the process that is in place. That's the way that will work. There are probably some other issues around rate of lay. And again I would want to have our egg expert here with us to be able to consult her.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I do think the minister should have his egg expert here because in fact there was . . . yes, there was 35,693 units that were not auctioned off. When they received them, the province received 7,927 new units; 35,693 of those units were not auctioned off. They were sold to the existing registered egg producers. I would venture to guess that a number of those producers that bought that are sitting on the egg marketing board and that there was \$974,000 generated from that sale of those egg quota units.

So you know there's a number of things that really gives rise to question here as to the money, where the money goes, who controls the money, what is the regulations by which this money can be spent because just the initial sale to the registered egg producers generated nearly \$1 million. Now with the auction money that's been generated, there probably is closer to \$2 million that is sitting somewhere.

And if it's in the sole control of the egg marketing board, the minister's department does not seem to be aware of what the egg marketing board is doing. The Bendig report has stated that the Agri-Food Council doesn't really have a lot of control or a lot of teeth to do anything other than to make recommendations. So there is a lot of concerns here that I hope the minister will take some serious look at.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — I will note that the numbers that the member opposite is talking about were for a 2004 sale. And what I was explaining was that in our latest sale which is . . . I think it's . . . see if I have the date here. In this spring the latest sale, all quota that was freed up, all that came to the province, all was auctioned and highest bidder took it. In the transition period in '04, there were indeed some other options that were provided, but not in the latest and not ongoing.

With regard to the funds, the funds for new quota sale go to Egg Producers' Trust Fund. The egg marketing board might make some recommendations. Those recommendations are about how it is spent, would be around how can you enhance the whole of the industry. And the Agri-Food Council does provide for the minister recommendations about how that might be used. And the minister in consultation with the department and Agri-Food Council does have significant suasion in terms of how that money would be spent.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Minister, in the last time you were in this Chambers reviewing spending estimates of your department by us, a question about the CAIS [Canadian

agricultural income stabilization] review committee . . . and you had indicated that a couple of Saskatchewan representatives have been appointed to that committee. I wonder, could you provide a timeline as far as the review process, when the committee will commence meetings, when will they be issuing their report. And also, Minister, will producers or producer organizations have an opportunity to make representations to the committee?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — The first meeting will be held this week, Wednesday and Thursday. And there are options in terms of reporting for the committee. I think it will, you know, depend on what is asked of the committee, how quickly they will report, or how regularly they will report. They're required to report annually, but they could report more often if that is needed or desired.

**Mr. Hart:** — I would think that the purpose of the review committee would be to review the CAIS program and recommend adjustments, changes, whether they be minor changes or significant changes. But in order for the committee to fully understand some of the problems with the program, I think it's important that producers or at the very least producer representatives, representatives of producer organizations have an opportunity to make presentations to the committee. Will those producers or producer organizations have an opportunity to make representations to the review committee?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — I think, as indicated previously in our discussions about the CAIS review committee, that we do have producer members on the committee from across the country. But also we have in Saskatchewan the Farm Support Review Committee which is made up of representation from a wide variety of producer groups and farm organizations. And they do give us analysis and advice on how to improve the program, challenges that there are within the program. And certainly that advice is funnelled through the department, and our members on the CAIS review committee clearly get the information from the groups represented on the Farm Support Review Committee, as well as through other contacts in the community.

**Mr. Hart:** — So what you're saying, Minister, is that there really will be no opportunity for some of our major farm organizations, whether it be SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] or APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] or any groups such as those, to make direct representations or presentations to this review committee. What you're saying is that they need to work through the Saskatchewan producer member of that committee. Is that what you're telling us?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — I think it is important to know that since the review committee has not met yet, and they do have the opportunity to set some of their terms, they could determine that they want to have input from different farm organizations. But certainly we have representation from APAS, SARM, a number of groups on the Farm Support Review Committee. And they do make their organization's view known when we gather and that is clearly articulated to our members on the committee. So that's one avenue through which they make it known. And also I think committee members from across the province, across the country, certainly are well aware through the public discussion of a variety of different positions that

different farm groups take as well.

[15:45]

So whether or not any particular group or any group that desires will have opportunity to speak directly to the review committee, that is yet to be determined by the committee itself.

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Minister, will you make a commitment to this House and to the producers of Saskatchewan that the Saskatchewan representatives on this review committee will ask and put forward the case to have . . . at the very least representatives of the major farm organizations of this province be given the opportunity to make presentations to that committee? Will you make that commitment to have Saskatchewan reps ask for that opportunity?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — No I won't make that commitment. We already have the Farm Support Review Committee, as I said. Each of these major groups do have representation on that Farm Support Review Committee. They also, several of them may also have representation in national groups which may have a chair on the overall Farm Support Review Committee, as APAS does through the CFA [Canadian Federation of Agriculture]. So no I will not make that commitment.

The review committee will carry forward their responsibilities. And if it is their determination that they would like to invite input from one or many or all interested farm organizations, that would be up to them. But certainly I'm not going to twist their arm.

What I am going to do is continue to work with the Farm Support Review Committee to seek the very best of the knowledge and understanding that they can provide as we try and make a program that really is responsive and that works for the farmers in this province.

**Mr. Hart:** — Well, Minister, I find it very surprising that you wouldn't make that commitment to at least ask the national committee for an opportunity for representatives of our farm organizations to make presentations. These are the people that are dealing with their members and producers across the province. They have a hands-on experience with the program. They know the shortcomings of the program. They know the strengths.

My understanding is that this review committee is the committee tasked with recommending changes to the program. And you're not allowing and asking for the opportunity for the very people who are being directly affected by the program to make representations. I find that very surprising, Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — When I say no I am not going to make the commitment that the member asks, what I am saying is that I am not going to try and tell the committee how to do their job. What I am very appreciative of is the fact that we have very full representation on the Farm Support Review Committee, that those organizations do know that this is a conduit to get their information through. They do make known to the Farm Support Review Committee — through that committee — what the issues are, what their concerns are, what they would like to see done.

I think it is also important for the member to know that the review committee was going to be substantially smaller than what it is currently, that is was not going to have the kind of producer representation that it currently does. And were it not for challenges and push by this minister at Prince Edward Island, we probably would not have the kind of committee that we now have.

And so I am very happy that we've got the producer representation. I'm very happy that we have a system by which we can gain information from the various producer groups around this province. And certainly in my meetings with many of these groups I also hear clearly from them, and I also convey that information to the members on our review committee. It is my expectation that they will also, if there is need and desire, they will seek out input from whomever they choose to do that.

**Mr. Hart:** — Well, Minister, I guess we won't agree on this one. And there are other questions I could ask but our time is getting short, and I have another area that I would like to raise with you very briefly.

When I discussed agroforestry with the Minister of Environment, he told me that the Department of Agriculture was taking the lead on this whole issue of agroforestry. I wonder if you could very briefly outline what that program is and what is being done currently under agroforestry within your department.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — The agroforestry industry is, as you will know, a new development within the province and the forest centre is in . . . forestry centre in Prince Albert has been doing I think some very good work to this point, working collaboratively with the three departments — Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Industry and Resources, and Environment. And there have been presentations a number of places around the province and a major conference here held this spring.

And certainly what is . . . There are a number of determinations that need to be made as they put their plan together. There has to be determination around research component, what is needed there in terms of the type of forest product that will produce best, grow best in this province, and give us good returns. We need to know the kind of end product that we're going to be growing for and certainly through some very exciting possibilities there. Timeline will be an issue as people transition to agroforestry, begin to grow the poplars that will be a part of the industry. We need to know what type of hybrid poplar will give us the best growth rate. So there is that component of research that has to be done.

We see some very exciting developments in Nipawin with their wood fibre ethanol developments and we think that we'll see a variety of different things that will be put forward as possibilities for entrepreneurial development in the future as the agroforestry industry takes off.

We know that there have been also some very high value trees that have been grown in this province that show some potential. In fact we have I think one of the oldest black walnuts out in the Wascana Centre, in the old tree nursery, which is providing seed for us. These trees provide great value and so as a

department we are working with the other two departments, with the forestry centre, to help get a clear plan for how we build into the future. And to make sure that we've got the research components that are essential, that we have the product development that is essential, and markets that are in place. And certainly as we move forward we think our business development offices will be very helpful as well in terms of providing information and support for producers who want to move in that direction.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Minister, for that information. I have one quick question and I really don't need an answer today. Perhaps you could forward that information to me.

I asked you a written question about the number of employees you had over a period of years within your department working on climate change and the whole Kyoto accord. You answered you had two and then went up to four and currently there are six members of the department working. When I asked the second question as to how much time was spent by those employees on this whole issue, I received a political answer.

What I would like, Minister, is I'd like you to identify not the individuals but their positions, and what percentage of their time was spent on climate change and carbon sinks and the Kyoto accord. If you could do that. I don't need that information today if you would just give me an undertaking that you would provide it in the future would be fine.

**The Chair:** — Recognize the hon. member for Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, a couple of quick questions that I'm looking for some information on.

How much Crown . . . ag land in the province is under the Crown, and of the acres how many acres to date have been used to settle TLE [treaty land entitlement] claims? And are the TLE claims totally settled? Have we completed that process?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — There are roughly 8 million acres of Crown land. There are treaty selections which are still in place. There may yet be more that are brought forward. And in terms of the total number of acres that are settled, I do not have that figure at my fingertips but we can get that for you.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I have a question regarding clear diesel and purple diesel. And this question comes from an ag producer who's in the business of cleaning corrals. And because he's operating as under a commercial name — that's his business — he's forced to use clear diesel, which means he then has to pass that cost on to the agriculture producer. But all he does is related to the agricultural industry.

Mr. Minister, is there a means or has your department given thought to allowing individuals who are in the corral-cleaning business the opportunity to use purple diesel? You're quite well aware of the difficulty facing the rural community today and the way fuel prices have increased. And this would certainly be somewhat of an asset to the agriculture producers and to businesses who are struggling.

As I've already been informed this spring, a few of these

businesses actually do a fair bit of work in the spring but already they haven't had calls because of the cost of trying to do the work . . . [inaudible] . . . the work. So this would give them the ability to offer their clients a lower rate. Have you given any thought to that?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — The exemptions that the Government of Saskatchewan provides for fuel tax are for primary producers and the use of those primary producers alone, not for secondary operations that might be in place. If there are further . . . If you have further questions with regard to fuel tax, that is under the Finance department and we can certainly convey to them what the questions are. But for producers, it is for those who are engaged in primary production that they get the fuel exemption.

**Mr. Toth:** — Well, Mr. Minister, it would seem to me that . . . And in this case while the individual does run a farm and works with his dad, he also has this commercial business of just corral cleaning. And it's directly related to agriculture. And nobody else faces effects of the cost of that service. And it would seem to me it's a very legitimate cost that could be looked at, that would be directly affecting the primary producer as you had indicated. And so I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if your department has even talked to the Department of Finance about a way of addressing this issue because of the fact . . . especially with the difficulties in the rural community at this time.

[16:00]

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Yes the question really is about where you draw the line. And certainly in discussions over the past few years, railroads hauling grain would say, well we should be exempted as well, and truckers, and on it goes. So a line is drawn. Finance has clearly drawn the line and said primary producers engaged in primary production do get a fuel exemption.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, another line of questioning — and I may run out of time — but, Mr. Minister, you're very well aware of the Natural Valley Farms and their endeavour to build a slaughter plant and a processing plant in Wolseley. And if I understand correctly, they're in the process of actually moving equipment into their facility in Wolseley right now.

It's my understanding that a request had come to your department — and I might be wrong; it may have gone to the Department of Finance — asking whether or not the department would forgo the PST [provincial sales tax]. And this might be more on the Department of Finance, but I thought I'd ask it of your department in case it came through your department — forgoing the PST at this time, as they're facing some challenges trying to raise the money to complete their project. And the PST is a significant factor in creating their business. We're talking of economic development and value added in this province, and whether or not the request has come through your department, what you've done or whether you've responded.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — We have been engaged in a number of meetings, discussions with the proponents of this what I consider rather exciting development. And certainly there have been a number of plans put forward about how to best provide support, and all I can say at this point is, stay tuned.

**The Chair:** — I would invite the minister to move that the committee report progress.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — I would like to move that we report progress, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — The minister has moved that the committee report progress on the estimates for Agriculture. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That is carried. And we'll take a brief recess while we move to the Department of Learning.

### General Revenue Fund Learning Vote 5

#### Subvote (LR01)

**The Chair:** — Order. The next item before the committee is the consideration of estimates for the Department of Learning found on page 106 of the Estimates book. And I would invite the minister to introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased today to be joined by a number of officials from the Department of Learning. Seated directly to my left is Bonnie Durnford who is the deputy minister of the department. Seated next to her is Don Sangster, the executive director of school finance. Directly behind him is the assistant deputy minister, Gillian McCreary. Seated behind the deputy minister is Darlene Thompson who's a regional director and served as the Chair of our bargaining committee. Directly behind me is Nelson Wagner who's the executive director of facilities.

I am joined by other officials who I will, well I guess I'll introduce them now although they are seated behind the bar. Seated behind the bar is Jane Thurgood Sagal who is the executive director, curriculum and instruction. There she is. Glenda Eden who is the manager of financial planning, Sue Amundrud who is the executive director of e-learning. And Trina Fallows who's the director of finance for corporate services.

Mr. Chairman, I don't have any opening comments, but I would welcome the discussion today.

**The Chair:** — (LR01). I recognize the member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And Minister, and to your officials, welcome here this afternoon to have a discussion about the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] learning system.

First of all, Mr. Minister, I would like to talk about the provincial collective agreement that has recently been ratified and is in the process of finalization. Mr. Minister, in the information that I've received and I'm sure that you have from various sources — certainly the bulletin on the collective provincial agreement, bargaining agreement summary from the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] — there seems to be a bit of a difference in terms of how this whole process is being

calculated.

And I am at a loss because clearly on the description of the highlights of the agreement, for example it clearly says that the terms of the agreement are from September 1, 2004 until August 31, '07. And then it says that 2 per cent economic adjustment to reflect the relationship with CPI in each of the three years of the agreement.

And then as you go further into the grid system, we break this down into this convoluted grid plus adjustment process. I'm wondering, Minister, is this to try to pretend that the 0, 1, and 1 mandate was actually being followed? And if it is, how does that square with the adjustment factors and will the adjustment factors be part of the base grid in subsequent negotiations?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the member for the question. Indeed there has, I think it's fair to say, been a fair amount of confusion in terms of how the agreement itself is structured versus how it is being described as being structured. And I think it really is a case of simply trying to simplify a number of complex issues in explaining what the overall contract looks like.

The contract is in fact structured as a 0, 1, and 1 increment on the grid, as the grid was previously structured and dealt with. During the course of the discussions however it became clear that there was a number of other issues that needed to be addressed with the teaching profession, not the least of which is some disparity in terms of how they rate compared to Manitoba and Alberta, which we need to be conscious of.

And the decision was made at that point that we should look at a supplemental allowance to try and deal with those concerns which, although I wouldn't necessarily characterize them as recruitment and retention issues, I think play more to that sentiment. And that was one of the issues we were attempting to address through the supplemental allowance.

How the STF describes it to their members is something that is beyond my control and beyond our control as a government part of the negotiating team. I don't want to disagree with or take exception to the way that the STF has argued their position. They're free to portray their contract as they see fit to their members. But I would say that the contract was structured as 0, 1, and 1 on the grid. It has a supplemental allowance built in to deal with other issues that we were persuaded were important.

And the question that the member asks about what happens to that supplemental allowance at the end of this contract is something that will need to be negotiated in the next round of negotiations. Whether that continues through as a supplemental allowance or whether they decide to pursue negotiating that into the base grid is something that will take place in the next set of discussions.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Mr. Minister, again quoting from the document — and I trust that you're not taking exemption to the way STF describes this — but it also says in here that all economic adjustments are considered salary for pension purposes. Now do I take that to mean that both the changes in the base grid plus the adjustment or supplemental allowance in total, the sum of those two numbers are what's being considered



salary for pension purposes?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Yes generally that would be the case. I think it's important to also recognize that within this agreement there has been an additional step added into the grid to deal with those professionals who are at 15 years of service, to recognize that. So that is also a pensionable benefit which is added in and may or may not be reflected in the numbers that the member is referring to.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I believe that that 15-year increment occurs during the '06-07 year of the contract, the final year of the contract. And it as well is described as having a salary schedule on a grid and then an adjustment schedule in addition to that. So what I assume that the 15-year increment again is considered as two separate amounts. One that's the basic grid amount and a second amount that is this adjustment schedule which are ... the sum of those two numbers are what will be considered pensionable. Is that the correct interpretation?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — One of the things, and just to apologize to the member opposite and to members as we get into this discussion, we may need to clarify back and forth some of the language because as we've discussed contract versus what those of us who are less ... we're certainly not at the negotiating table. We may switch back and forth between a more vernacular and more technical language.

As I understand the question the member's asking me, he is ... Is the 15th step structured as a grid component plus a supplemental allowance component? In fact it is structured only as a grid component. So there is a 15th, I guess we're calling it a 15th step — it's effectively an 11th step at the 15th year — which is solely on the grid. So there's no supplemental allowance piece attached to that.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Well, Minister, again for clarification I would refer him to the document of 2006-07 from the STF document and it shows the 15th year, the 11th step if you like. And if I could quote and just use an example. A class 4 individual at that time would get 62,173 as a salary schedule, and according to this there would be an additional twenty-four forty-seven as an adjustment schedule. You add the one plus the other to get the total salary.

The minister seems to be saying there is no adjustment or economic increment but it seems on this document that there is one. Can you clarify that please?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The member is correct that that is in fact the way it is, that it is structured. As we were reviewing again, the information as you've portrayed it is accurate.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Okay. If we can just stay on that example for comparison purposes, then my understanding would be in negotiations from 2008 forward or at the end of the 2007 contract that's described here — where again a class 4, step 15 is 62,173 plus the class 4 economic adjustment of twenty-four forty-seven — the minister's response to me before is the sum of these two is not the base salary that's going to be the starting point of the grid in the subsequent year. But the simple one part of the salary schedule is the beginning of the grid. And future

negotiations are going to have to determine if an economic adjustment is going to be included or not. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — We haven't made any determination as to what the future bargaining position would be. It may well be that the parties want ... the three parties may agree that they want to eliminate the supplementary allowance and simply roll it into grid and reflect it that way. It may be that they want to continue on with the supplemental allowance and reflect that, or bury that depending on whatever conditions they feel are appropriate. We haven't presupposed what those future discussions may be. And indeed we haven't formulated a position ourselves looking beyond '07 as to what we would favour.

[16:15]

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Minister, it's my understanding that the recent ratification was something like 61 per cent approval of the agreement as described. One of the concerns that I've heard from teachers is the very issue that we're trying to explore here because there was some confusion.

Many teachers, based on the assumption and the highlights of the agreement as described in this document, were assuming there was a 2 per cent economic adjustment and that that would be reflected in the package that they were receiving and would be part of their grid base going forward into subsequent negotiations. And I think the concern about exactly what you seem to be confirming this afternoon about that these are two separate issues and it'll be up to future negotiations to decide and to agree potentially, or not agree, if there's going to be ... the economic adjustment is going to become part of the grid system is up in the air for the future.

Mr. Minister, I think that was part of the reason why the turnout was ... or the voting result wasn't as high as it might have been, is this dichotomy between what you're describing as some way of justifying a 0, 1, and 1 mandate and ending up with a 2 per cent economic adjustment in each of the three years of the contract. There certainly is a big difference between 2, 2, and 2 and 0, 1, and 1. And teachers understood that the contract negotiation was going to provide them with a basic benefit of 2 per cent.

It has done that by the terms of this contract with the economic adjustment, but their assumption was that they could count on this being the base part of their grid system going forward to the future. And it seems as if you have described ... The way you've described it today indicates that it is not. It's going to be open for future negotiations. Is that indeed correct?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well I'm not in a position to speculate on how members of the STF may or may not have interpreted what the STF negotiating team was portraying to them.

The question of what the paycheque ... what their paycheque amount is will reflect going out past 2007, both those sums of money. The only question is whether it continues to be structured as two different sets of allowances in this or whether it in fact rolls into one. And that is really an issue that we'll have to take up when we go back to the table.

We believed that in this set of discussions, that given the issues that were being identified in terms of the need to address out-of-pocket expenses that teachers had identified, that certainly government was sympathetic to — they're one of the few professions where there is in fact a direct out-of-pocket expense that they deal with — whether it was to deal with issues that have been identified in terms of retention, particularly teachers at the top end of the grid, these were persuasive arguments. And that was partly why it was structured this way rather than simply adding money into the grid.

The 0, 1, and 1 applied to the base grid. The amount of the other allowance was largely to establish a base and then reflect how it inflated. To presuppose where the negotiations will take us past '07, I'm just not in a position to do today. We haven't had any discussion or thought about that, and indeed we've had no discussion with the STF as to what their intention would be.

I want to just add this other point though. I do understand that there was some concern that in the past where there has been an allowance structure, that was one-time allowances that were not pensionable — is that correct? — not pensionable. There was concern about that. These allowances in fact will . . . these allowances will go forward if they're not rolled into the grid and are different than the previous ones in that they're pensionable. But it was an issue that we were trying to deal with in terms of how do we structure the base amount, how it reflected some of the unique issues that the teaching profession has, and then how it inflates as it moves forward.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — And I would offer to add for the minister, and sort of square the circle in terms of the government's position on 0, 1, and 1. Mr. Minister, in addition to the 2, 2, and 2 economic adjustment that there is in each of the three years of the contract . . . And indeed in the third year of the contract, there is the 15th-year increment, the 11th step. And I understand that there would be potentially in excess of 5,000 teachers eligible for that benefit at the 15th year. Can the minister confirm how many teachers are potentially eligible for the 15th-year increment at the third year of this contract?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I'm advised the number is 5,248.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. Minister, a 0, 1, and 1 contract would result in, I guess simple math, a 2 per cent increase over three years. Two per cent plus two plus two on economic adjustment, plus the 15th-year increment, plus an allowance for principals, vice-principals, and assistant principals. And there is also I believe increased contributions to the health fund and those kinds of increase.

Can the minister outline for us what, over the three years, the cost of this agreement is estimated to be?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The information I have today is that the incremental cost of the agreement in year one was \$16.35 million. In year two, it's an incremental cost of 14.64 million. In year three, it's 26.67 million; which over those three years then is 57.66.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I believe last week in the further estimates amount that were

tabled by the Minister of Finance, it is shown that there is an additional \$24.5 million in the school operating allowance or grant. And in the budget documents that were tabled with the budget, the amount was 527.9 million which was the same amount as the previous year. As I understand from the further estimates that were tabled, that increases the amount for this current year to \$552.4 million.

First of all, Minister, will you confirm, this 24.5 million, I understand that approximately 20 million of it or 19.6 million is for the current year and that 9 almost \$10 million is for the previous year, of this 24.5. Is that the case, the breakdown between the previous year and the current year is roughly correct?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — It sounds to be the case. The one issue that the officials remind me of is that we budget of course on a fiscal year. The school boards budget on a calendar year and there is always this difference. But the numbers that the member identifies sound accurate.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Can the minister now then describe how this money is going to be allocated? By having this amount added to the basic school operating grant, is it a correct assumption that this then will be a part of an increased amount that will be under the foundation operating grant, the FOG? I guess it's better to call it the foundation operating grant because the acronyms get a little confusing. But is this money going to be then added to the foundation operating grant calculation base?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well just because nothing's ever simple, there is a myriad of formulas to work this through. The retroactive money, the money that deals with previous years, will be paid out to boards on what is essentially probably best described as an actual cost basis.

This year that we are currently in will be through a combination of money which will be paid on a payroll-type basis and money that will be paid through the foundation operating grant. It's approximately half and half. In the future year, in the next year, it will be entirely on foundation operating grant basis.

The only caveat I would add to that is to remind members that we are in fact renewing the foundation operating grant formula. And of course as of January 1, '06 there will be no boards in a zero grant situation, in a zero grant position. That, coupled with whatever reforms we do come forward from the reference group on the foundation operating grant, will essentially set out how that grant is paid out. So while we say it will go through the operating grant system, it may not be the operating grant system that we know today.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I realize that in the restructuring that there are going to be technically no zero grant boards, at least for a year or two. There are some boards that are very close to it even after restructuring, as I understand, that when you put all the calculations together, that's very close to the case.

So for the monies that are going into the foundation operating grant there's actually going to be a difference between school boards, even with the restructuring amount, because there's

going to be differences in their assessment base and things of that nature even with these new regional boards. While within the region it will eliminate discrepancies, region to region could still potentially have a difference in the amount that is actually received compared to the actual cost, depending on what the calculations are. So that in some ways, unless you dramatically and radically reform the foundation operating grant to reflect actual costs, we're still in the dilemma that there will not be absolute parity between the regions. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well that is one of the difficulties we have with the existing foundation operating grant formula is because it operates as an equalization formula that takes into account the ability to raise money on the property tax base, it becomes a complication in terms of the amount of money that flows from the provincial treasury to how it manifests itself at individual board levels.

This is one of the issues that we've asked to be reviewed under the foundation operating grant reforms that we are contemplating and trying to model through now to devise a number of different models to see what does happen if we simplify the formula, if we change it to reflect actual costs as opposed to assumed costs. What happens if we move over to a greater emphasis on per pupil funding? Those kind of formulas need to be looked at. We haven't reached a conclusion on that. And indeed we haven't yet, I haven't yet seen working models as to what three or four different options might look like.

This is part of what the reference group is trying to deal with partly to address the very issue that the member has identified which is this discrepancy that we have within the system today. One of the biggest problems that we have within the system is the disparity between have and have-not, rich and poor boards, and trying to sort out how we narrow that gap. So it's difficult to say next year how this money will flow forward until we have the new model, and we're still working with the reference group on devising that.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. You speak of a reference group or a process to review and look at the foundation operating grant. Can the minister describe what that group is envisaged to look like? Is it going to have representatives of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, teachers, etc., municipalities? What is the minister envisaging in terms of the structure of this advisory body, and what are their terms of reference and timelines going to be in terms of presenting to the department some recommendations about an upgraded foundation operating grant system?

[16:30]

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The member has identified the reference group does in fact . . . is comprised of members from the School Boards Association, the Teachers Federation, and LEADS [League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents], and we have . . . oh and SASBO [Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials]. So there are the four key partners and stakeholders that we are working with on this.

They will be working with the department to devise the models and have this discussion about how the future financing of the

education system will work. I would hope to see some set of options by early this fall. And we would anticipate that this model will be decided upon in time for the upcoming budget year.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I certainly don't want to, nor am I sure you want to speculate on what the outcome of that may be, but I think timeliness is very important in terms of this whole process.

Mr. Minister, on Friday I believe there was a statement of claim filed in the Court of Queen's Bench in Humboldt — the location not representing necessarily the participants in this claim — but on behalf of a number of individuals, some school boards, rural municipalities, towns and villages mostly in west central Saskatchewan. There's a generalization, but there's the Melville school . . . Melville-Deer Park School Division is also a part of this.

Mr. Minister, there are a number of concerns that are expressed in this statement of claim. One is, is that there has not been or that these individuals feel that there was proper consultation occurring before this amalgamation process was undertaken. And then a number of other concerns concerning, you know, the ability of the minister or the authority of the minister in order to order these amalgamated boundaries and suchlike.

The bottom line is they're asking for an injunction to stop this whole process. And in a simplified question, what is the department's position and stand on this? And if the injunction is indeed granted by the Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench, how is that going to impact on the amalgamation timetable, including elections?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I have in fact reviewed the statement of claim myself and the Department of Justice will be representing the government in this matter. Obviously we intend to refute the arguments that have been presented and to defend the position that we've identified. I don't want to offer too much commentary on it, although I would simply say that the statement clearly is a reiteration of many of the grievances that have been aired by a number of different boards and municipalities in the past. It's not anything particularly new that I could see in it.

The question that the member asked is, what are the possible outcomes of a judicial response? We'll have to wait and hear what that response is. I don't anticipate, and our advice on just a preliminary look is that the government is on solid ground in defending this. And we'll have to simply wait and see what the courts say.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. I guess while we're on the topic of amalgamation, in the budget I see a line item talking about school division restructuring of four and a half million dollars. Is that amount allocated to offset the costs of school divisions in this new regional restructuring, to cover the additional costs that they may incur as part of this restructuring?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — This is largely transitional money. It's to deal with both the cost of the elections. One of the commitments that we had made is — because we were in an off-cycle set of elections — that we would absorb more of the

costs of that since they won't be held in conjunction with municipal elections. And the second is to deal with some of the additional training costs. One of the things that we were very cognizant of as we move forward with the larger divisions is making sure that we have these new boards coming into the process essentially with the same skill sets and the same set of options identified.

One of the reasons, as the Assembly will know, that we had opted to move with earlier elections was to provide a few months where we could in fact allow for a transition to make sure that we had a more seamless approach to doing this rather than simply disestablishing boards immediately and moving into the new ones.

There are a number of issues that will need to be dealt with. Those boards are going to have to have a certain degree of training, and that's essentially what that four and a half million deals with. So as I understand, about 1 million of that is what we anticipate to be the cost of the election. The other three and half million plus some additional costs are what we anticipate to be, I don't know if you want to call training and transition.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. In the past number of years, there's been an initiative by the Department of Learning to have voluntary amalgamations in the province, as you know. And there have been a fair number and a significant number of school divisions have gone through the amalgamation experience, if you like, and have also then some knowledge of what the costs actually have been. Anecdotally at least, it's the information that I have would indicate that in virtually all those instances the anticipated cost was always less than what the actual cost was for these voluntary amalgamations.

Does the minister have information about how much school boards actually . . . expenses they've incurred in the past on the involuntary or the voluntary amalgamations in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — One of the differences between what is portrayed as the voluntary amalgamations — or perhaps what we would refer to as the initial set of amalgamations — and now the restructuring is that some of the costs that boards were incurring were largely in preparing for amalgamation. And as they were going through the voluntary process, there were a number of costs that they would incur to do that.

Because of the approach we've taken to direct that or facilitate it, force it, whatever members want to pick for the word, we have been able to move aside from that. Now that's not to say that there's not going to be additional costs. Certainly we identify as we move forward that there will be transitional costs associated with this, not the least of which will be related to downsizing the administrative workforce. And there'll be severance costs identified with that that of course, once those costs are absorbed, then go on to become ongoing savings or at least money that can be reallocated to other operational expenses.

It's hard to do a direct comparison between those costs from those initial amalgamations; Sask Valley, Sask Rivers, Qu'Appelle Valley and this set for a number of reasons, not the least of which are a couple that I've outlined now.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. It's my understanding that Manitoba is a little bit ahead of us in this process. And the information that I've received has indicated that the experience in Manitoba amalgamating regions there was as well budgeting, similar to what the department here has done but that the cost factor that actually was incurred as this happened was several times that amount in reality.

Has the department looked at the Manitoba situation to see if what they have allocated is appropriate or not, or are we likely to see a rather significant overrun of this year's \$4.5 million allocation?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — One of the unique situations we have in Saskatchewan is we have province-wide bargaining for teachers. Teachers, regardless of which school they are in within the province, work on the same pay structure.

This isn't the case in Manitoba. And what happened in Manitoba was as the boards came together, they essentially had to re-base the salary grids. And so restructuring cost essentially ended up going to whatever the gold standard was within each of the agreements as they came together. This did, as I understand it, cause an inflation in their cost.

Because we're not dealing with that, because teachers across the province today are paid the same whether they're in Saskatoon or whether they're in Moose Jaw or whether they're in Southey, are all paid the same, we won't see that kind of inflationary pressure on the grids. Our restructuring will be largely limited to administrative costs, and we can get into more discussion about that as to where those are headed.

But we are fairly confident in outlining what we believe to be both the cost and the relative savings as we move into year three of the restructuring.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. While I understand that the basic agreement cost for teachers in Saskatchewan is uniform across the province, there are indeed local agreements for additional benefits and working relationships on a division basis. And in addition to that, there would be the support staff agreements that again would be localized with school divisions. And as the minister described the situation in Manitoba for the teachers, that there would likely be — when these contracts are merged — that there would be indeed the cherry-picking of the best benefits on each of the individual clauses.

Can the minister outline the comparative cost of these side agreements on the local basis for the teachers and for support staff, and what impact moving to amalgamated divisions is going to have in that regard?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The amount of money that is dealt with through these locally negotiated agreements — these link agreements — primarily relate to costs associated with preparatory time, basic work condition issues. About 60 per cent of the overall budgets that are being dealt with are directly teachers' salaries. An additional percentages — I don't have right here — would be related to operating costs of the divisions, things like the power bills, just running the infrastructure.

So the amount that's still discretionary — whether that's busing contracts or whether that is contract costs under the link agreements — is relatively small and certainly very small compared to what Manitoba was dealing with or for that matter what Alberta would look at.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Minister, later this evening when we come back after recess, many of my colleagues want to ask questions that are more specific to their areas, and I am sure that many of them pertain to specific examples of amalgamation. But I'd like to stay on more of the general plane.

Has the department outlined some guidance or criteria or direction, if you like, for how these amalgamated boards are going to function administratively? And I'm thinking of things that, you know, where are the best opportunities for office locations. When you have large geographic distances now involved, what are the ramifications of having assistant directors located strategically throughout these larger districts, or will they be centrally located? What are the ramifications going to be of time spent and expenses of travelling, those kind of administrative issues? Is there going to be direction and guidance from the department as to how this will be dealt with?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — There are a number of bulletins that have been prepared and are either being issued or have been issued to assist in preparing for this restructuring. I want to be cautious in saying that, while they'll have gone out under the department's logo and letterhead, they were largely dealt with through the restructuring coordinating committee. That committee was comprised and continues to be comprised of members of the STF, the school boards, the administrators, SASBO, the parents' council, CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] . . . is there. There's a number of these stakeholders and partners who have been dealing with this set of issues. Their objective is to provide advice to boards on how to deal with this.

My hope is and our hope is that there will be a greater, perhaps a closer relationship between the differing boards, that we will not have the same degree of disparity. But at the same point, we still have locally elected boards with their own tax base that will be in a position to make their own decisions. The question of where head offices are is really something that they themselves will need to sort through. The question of who their directors are is something the individual boards will need to deal with.

[16:45]

The advice that's being provided is really that — is advice. There are a certain number of directives that we are trying to work through in terms of some standardization within the system which goes along with what we have done for decades in terms of building on a best practices model.

So this is the process that we're in today. I just wanted to remind everyone though that these are democratically elected boards with their own property tax base and will be in a position to make their own decisions about these issues. At this point what we're doing is offering some advice and, as indicated in the previous answer, providing some money to help bring everyone to the same starting point as we move into these new boards.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Minister, the time for elections are approaching fairly quickly. And I'm wondering is the department, sort of through their regional directors or whatever right now, sort of getting a sense of the participation rate, if you like, of people that are putting their names forward.

You know there's sort of a general comment and a concern that I've heard expressed that the distances are quite huge and the travel times, etc., of going to board meetings are potentially going to be much different than what the commitment level was for board members in the past. With a smaller school division, geographic school division, it was quite conceivable that board members might give an evening or two a week to their commitment to the boards of education because travel time was minimized. They could go to a meeting in reasonable driving distance, have a board meeting, and then get home that evening sort of thing.

Is there some assessment of what the uptake is going to be from people that are willing now to make a whole new level of commitment to these regionalized boards of education?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The nomination period hasn't opened yet. So at this point we are not in a position to speculate as to how many people may or may not be seeking seats. Certainly any of us who look at our own school boards that we deal with . . . I think the ward I've lived in for years now has largely been acclaimed.

I mean it just depends on how the local electorate feels about the representation they're getting as to the amount of participation that we may see at a candidate level. In many cases I would anticipate that what we are going to see are existing members of boards sorting out amongst themselves who are running in which wards, which subdivisions, and who is interested in pursuing this. A lot of this discussion is what's going on today.

I haven't heard as much discussion about concern about travel time and the rest of it. I think that there is an understanding that these boards are going to be primarily policy oriented, that they will have available to them the resources to deal with administrative matters, and that as such their time commitment will not be as daunting as perhaps some may expect.

It's just too early to say what the rate will be. And part of it will depend on how many of the existing trustees sort out amongst themselves who's going to run, who's going to retire, and who's going to compete with each other. And that's something that they'll need to sort out locally.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. I think that one final issue on this general amalgamation issue is related to the administrative structures. In terms of . . . and I recognize you saying boards are autonomous organizations that will be making these decisions. But again is there guidance about what might be the best way to have a framework for administrative leadership in these new amalgamated districts?

Logically there is a director of education and there may be one, two, or three or whatever number of assistant directors. Is it going to be best to have them all centrally located? Is it going to make sense that if you have support staff, speech language

pathologists, and things of this nature, would they be centrally located or would they be geographically located? Would there be auxiliary offices throughout the area? And just sort of the question related to how does the administrative structure going to fit into these geographically large areas where significant amounts of a person's day is going to be spent travelling.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — There are a number of different models that can be employed throughout province and in the divisions. Individual boards will again need to decide for themselves what model they prefer. Part of that will be dictated by geography. Where you have potentially two or three large centres within that, they may well work as regional bases to work from. Certainly our regional directors will be working with the newly established boards to help them select directors who then will help the boards guide the process forward to find one that works best for them.

Despite the fact that these boards are going to be relatively uniform in terms of size of student population and in terms of the resources available to them, geographically they still have unique characteristics to them. And I can think as we look around the province — from the southwest where you have Swift Current largely in the centre of that one, to the west central where you have Rosetown and Kindersley both in and Davidson also — that they may want different models.

The one surrounding Saskatoon may have a different model again that it wants to pursue. We're going to try and work with them to identify the best practices that have been in place, looking at Sask Rivers, looking at Qu'Appelle Valley, looking at Sask Valley and what we've seen elsewhere in terms of what fits for them. But we're trying not to be particularly directive, rather to be simply assisting them in finding an administrative model that works.

If I might add one other point though, and that is to understand that within the agreements that are in place there are in fact limitations on the number of administrative staff that are within the . . . that can be within the divisions. And this will have some impact on the structure that boards will decide. So it's not a case that we'll necessarily see them have one director and six or seven assistant directors or superintendents necessarily. It will depend on the teaching base that they have. And the member of course knows this but I say this largely for the benefit of others in the Assembly.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you very much, Minister. Minister, I'd like to turn my questions to the announcement, I believe in March, of the department's anti-bullying program that had five main components in it. And it's, you know, certainly is a critically important initiative for the department and for the system. And I would ask the minister, you know, is there some tracking in terms of the amount of bullying incidents that have been recorded and is there going to be ongoing tracking to see if these initiatives as outlined are indeed having a positive effect on the system?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — We haven't undertaken to do a census or a benchmark of the number of incidents, partly because it is difficult to define the different types of bullying. What we're trying to do is establish a package of resources that individual boards can work with and, more importantly, individual schools

can deal with. We are working through the regional directors to make sure that we are able to monitor what the process is.

One of the things that I have found frustrating about this is that there has been a response by a number of boards saying, we already have a policy in place. And they resent the fact that we have said that we need to go back and take a look at that and develop that at a site-based or school-based position.

I know that we all believe that what we have in place is very good. What we have been saying to boards is go back, take the policies off the shelf, and make sure that they're in practice, make sure you're working with the communities. And that we need to do that on a regular basis because the student population changes, the parents change, and what we need to make sure is that we are doing this on a continual basis.

I certainly heard from a number of directors that they believed that this was, the anti-bullying strategy was a criticism of what was in place around the province. In fact that was not our intention was to be critical, but rather to try and be proactive on an issue that parents had identified.

I have been truly impressed by the number of parents who have contacted my office, who have contacted our department, who have written us to share their concerns that they have seen and where they have seen the system fail them and their children. And we have learned a lot from that and it is helping us I think to work with individual boards on what the approach is.

There's no off-the-shelf kit for this; there's no anti-bullying two point oh that we can simply issue. This is really a process that needs to work itself through. And I am impressed by the number of school divisions who are responding and the number of unique programs out there. I think there is a . . . because of the heightened awareness that has come about this issue largely because of the tragedy with the Sleeva family, that the system is going to be stronger, that we are going to have a better response for parents and for children in this province. And I congratulate those boards who have met this strategy with that kind of an approach.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I think you have keyed on an issue that is indeed valid. I think when you look at individual schools I think every school in this province has a anti-bullying policy. But is it current and is it up to date, and is it understood by (a) the parents, the students, and an administration who may indeed have changed since the policy was first initiated?

Minister, I'm sure your office has had concerns expressed, as you've outlined, from parents about this issue. Certainly we have heard those kinds of concerns as well. Can the minister outline for a parent that is in a school in a community in this province who has a child that is being bullied, according to the parent's perspective on a consistent basis, what are the progressive steps that that parent should take? And I'm suggesting that perhaps it's meet first with the teacher and the administration at the school, but could you take a parent through the steps that they should follow if they are finding that they are not getting satisfaction at each of the previous steps?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The member has certainly outlined the

initial steps. Part of the problem that I have seen in reading the correspondence from parents is that there is a breakdown in communications in many cases between the parent and the teacher. And what the perceptions of the two different individuals are is often quite striking in terms of what the situation that the child is experiencing.

The advice that we have been offering to parents is first, start with the discussion with teachers. Have that discussion with a teacher. It's not always in a school that this happens. Sometime it's a discussion that has to happen with the hockey coach, the soccer coach or the, you know, playground supervisors. Those discussions are the best places to have it.

If there's no satisfaction though, then we encourage them to deal with the principals, if there's . . . again to deal with their trustees, to deal with the superintendents, and essentially to work through what might be described as a chain of command to work on this.

Most of what I have seen and some of the most really compelling and tragic letters and conversations that I have had with parents really goes back to the fact that the issues weren't dealt with early enough. And if they were raised by parents, they were often dismissed as being inconsequential. It's that dialogue that is really key to this. And what we try to do is throughout the system . . . And I know that teachers and principals, vice-principals, directors, and the department try to facilitate that discussion.

I have also been suggesting to many parents that if they feel that they are not maybe being heard out as they would like to be, that there a number of different things parents can do themselves to take a more active role within their schools, to take a more active role in preventing bullying. One of the initiatives that I'm particularly fond is the League of Peaceful Schools, which is a good parent-based initiative. Certainly that's in place in a number of schools in my constituency and throughout the province. It's a good way for parents to become more involved in this issue and to take some ownership and to take some control of this situation that I think they often feel they don't have enough involvement with.

So there are a number of different ways to go at this. There is in fact the chain of command approach. There is the dialogue. There are parent ways to go at this. There's traditional school council approaches. There's really no wrong way of dealing with this. But what we're trying to do is encourage a measured, reasoned dialogue.

And in cases where there is extreme, systemic, aggressive anti-social behaviour being demonstrated, we certainly encourage parents that they should deal directly with law enforcement officials. There are unfortunately a number of horrific events that I think we all are aware of in this province that have occurred that are outside of the schoolyard that have been, whether they are classified as bullying or simply violent behaviour, need to be addressed. And sometimes the best response really is going to the appropriate authorities and then involving the youth justice system.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. Before we recess, I would like to touch briefly on the School<sup>PLUS</sup> program. Minister, I think we are all in agreement that this is a very positive initiative to integrate various aspects of a child's life, coordinated through the school. I notice in your budget that there is approximately \$2 million allocated to School<sup>PLUS</sup> but I haven't noticed that there is a similar allocation of commitment of financial resources from, for example, Justice or Health or Social Services, from different departments.

And I'm wondering, Minister, are we going to end up with a situation where the objectives of School<sup>PLUS</sup> of integrating these various components of the support base for children are going to be coordinated through the schools? And I think that makes an awful lot of sense. But are schools and the Department of Learning and conversely local property tax payers going to be the people that are carrying the entire cost from this, or do you see that there's going be allocations from other departments to support this program?

**The Deputy Chair:** — It now being 5 p.m. this committee will recess till 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

[17:00]

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Elhard .....	2959
Wall .....	2959
Hermanson .....	2959
Eagles .....	2959
Bakken Lackey .....	2959
Brkich .....	2959
Weekes .....	2960
Dearborn .....	2960
Kirsch .....	2960

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk .....	2960
--------------------	------

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Brkich .....	2960
Bakken Lackey .....	2960
Weekes .....	2960
Allchurch .....	2960

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Higgins .....	2961
Wall .....	2961
Yates .....	2961, 2962
Bakken Lackey .....	2961
Crofford .....	2961
Belanger .....	2962
Brkich .....	2962
Hermanson .....	2962
Elhard .....	2962
Toth .....	2963

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

<b>Canadian Named Most Valuable Player</b>	
Dearborn .....	2963
<b>Recognition of First Nations and Métis Women</b>	
Atkinson .....	2963
<b>Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre</b>	
Merriman .....	2963
<b>Women of Influence Exhibit</b>	
Borgerson .....	2964
<b>Centenarian Celebrates Birthday</b>	
D'Autremont .....	2964
<b>Progress on Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women</b>	
Morin .....	2964
<b>Weyburn Hosts 2005 Royal Bank Cup</b>	
Bakken Lackey .....	2965

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres' Human Resource Plan</b>	
Bakken Lackey .....	2965
Crofford .....	2965
<b>Treatment for Drug-Addicted Youth</b>	
Merriman .....	2967
Crofford .....	2967
<b>Centennial Celebrations</b>	
Kerpan .....	2968
Beatty .....	2968
<b>Labour Legislation</b>	
Krawetz .....	2968
Higgins .....	2968
Van Mulligen .....	2969

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

<b>Year of First Nations and Métis Women</b>	
Sonntag .....	2969
Draude .....	2970



**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Yates.....	2970
The Speaker.....	2971

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

**General Revenue Fund — Agriculture and Food — Vote 1**

Wartman.....	2971
Bjornerud .....	2971
Harpauer .....	2973
Hart .....	2977
Toth .....	2979

**General Revenue Fund — Learning — Vote 5**

Thomson .....	2980
Gantefoer .....	2980

## **CABINET MINISTERS**

Hon. L. Calvert  
Premier

Hon. P. Atkinson  
Minister of Crown Management Board  
Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. J. Beatty  
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation  
Provincial Secretary

Hon. B. Belanger  
Minister of Northern Affairs

Hon. E. Cline  
Minister of Industry and Resources

Hon. J. Crofford  
Minister of Community Resources and Employment  
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues  
Minister Responsible for Gaming

Hon. D. Forbes  
Minister of Environment  
Minister Responsible for the Office of Energy Conservation

Hon. D. Higgins  
Minister of Labour  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. J. Nilson  
Minister of Health  
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. P. Prebble  
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety

Hon. F. Quennell  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. C. Serby  
Deputy Premier  
Minister of Rural Development

Hon. M. Sonntag  
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations  
Minister of Highways and Transportation

Hon. L. Taylor  
Minister of Government Relations

Hon. A. Thomson  
Minister of Learning  
Minister Responsible for Information Technology

Hon. H. Van Mulligen  
Minister of Finance

Hon. M. Wartman  
Minister of Agriculture and Food