

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
May 12, 1995

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It pleases me to rise again today to present petitions on behalf of the people of the province. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, recognizing that gun control and crime control are not synonymous, and allowing provinces to deal with gun control legislation on a provincial basis.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the Gainsborough, Storthoaks, Fertile, Redvers, Melville, Weyburn areas of the province. I so present.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present to the Assembly this morning, and I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, recognizing that gun control and crime control are not synonymous, and allowing provinces to deal with gun control legislation on a provincial basis.

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

And these petitions are signed by individuals from the Punnichy area, from Saskatoon, Kindersley, Rosetown, Fiske, Eston. I so present.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have several pages of petitions referring to the same subject. Therefore I would like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to the legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, recognizing that gun control and crime control are not synonymous, and allowing provinces to deal

with the gun control legislation on a provincial basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioner will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these are signed by people from Canwood, Shellbrook, Mont Nebo, Prince Albert . . . we go into Weyburn, Weyburn, Corning, Estevan. As a matter of fact, they're scattered all over the province, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present them now.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again it's my pleasure this morning to present petitions on behalf of the Saskatchewan people, and I'll just read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, recognizing that gun control and crime control are not synonymous, and allowing provinces to deal with gun control legislation on a provincial basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioner will ever pray.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to bring forward people from the communities of Wynyard, Dafoe, Rosetown, Saskatoon, Kindersley, Fiske, Saskatchewan. People from all over the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with my colleagues this morning to present petitions to the Assembly. And it's a similar petition, Mr. Speaker, and therefore I will simply limit my remarks to reading the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, recognizing that gun control and crime control are not synonymous, and allowing provinces to deal with gun control legislation on a provincial basis.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitions that I present this morning come largely from Lake Lenore, Saskatchewan; from Kindersley; from Rosetown, Mildred, Harris; in fact, La Ronge as well, Mr. Speaker. And it gives me a great deal of pleasure to present these on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present and the prayer says:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, recognizing that gun control and crime control are not synonymous, and allowing provinces to deal with gun control legislation on a provincial basis.

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

The signatures come from Rosetown, Milden, Harris, Evesham, Arelee, Outlook, Kindersley, Morse, D'Arcy, Lacadena, and various other places across the province.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to oppose changes to federal legislation regarding firearm ownership.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, 19 grade 7 students from the town of Wilkie. Wilkie of course is in my constituency and it's a long drive and we don't see a lot of school kids out this far, so it's an extreme pleasure for me today, Mr. Speaker, to introduce you to those students.

Their teacher is Bev Barth, and the chaperons, Mrs. Cathy Weinkauff, Mrs. Gloria Bajema, and Mr. Rob Barth. And of course, Mr. Speaker, I will be meeting with the students and hoping to answer and inform them as to what they might have saw here today in their short stay, and we'll be having refreshments.

And I would ask the whole Assembly to join me in welcoming these students from quite a ways away.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great pleasure to introduce to you 41 grade 7, 8, and 9 students. They are sitting in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker. And they are from the Loreburn Central High School from Loreburn, Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, they're accompanied by their two teachers, Donna Reaburn and Grant Abbott, and chaperon Nordice Wankel.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate this large group of students to come so far this morning. I see by their schedule they were here shortly after 9, much earlier . . . about the same time they'd have to be in school in Loreburn. So they must have

got up real early this morning, with the chickens when they crowed this morning.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be visiting with them for drinks and questions at 10:15 in the members' dining-room and I'm looking forward to visiting with them. And I ask all members of the Assembly to welcome my group from Loreburn and wishing them a very good day in Regina and the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Bergman: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with my colleague from Arm River to welcome the students from Loreburn Central School, and especially one student, Robbie Forrest, who's dad is helping our candidate in Arm River, Harvey McLane, in the coming election. I'd like to ask the members in the Assembly to join with me in welcoming them again.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my distinct pleasure this morning to introduce to you and through you to members of the House, the 38 grade 7 students from St. Philip School in Saskatoon. They're accompanied, Mr. Speaker . . . they're in the west gallery, accompanied by teachers John Bundgaard, Petra Lesychen; and chaperons, Shirly Giasson, Kim Krienke, and Bev Shedden, if I have interpreted these names correctly.

I'm looking forward to meeting with the students in a few moments. They are having a tour of the legislature, and we will be meeting for discussion and pictures. And I hope that you have a wonderful day here and safe trip back to Saskatoon. I look forward to seeing you in a few minutes. I know all members will want to give this group a warm welcome and it's good to see you here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you and through you to my colleagues in the Assembly, two very fine people seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. They are Ethel Morden and Russell Lee. They are from Fort Qu'Appelle and they are with the Bahai community there.

Mr. Speaker, the essential message of the Bahais is world unity, and Ethel and Russell are certainly doing their part to ensure that that message is getting out. We had a very good visit this morning. Please join me in giving them a warm welcome. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Rolfes: — If I may this morning, I would like to join my colleague from Saskatoon Eastview-Haultain. St. Philip School of course for many, many years was in my constituency,

and it still is my parish church that I attend. Also I had the privilege of being the principal of that school for three years back in 1965 to '68, so I know it was well established at that time, had a good foundation, and it's keeping up the good reputation that it received at that time.

I would like to welcome them here. I know many of them very personally, of course. And I hope you enjoy your stay here in the legislature, and I would like to ask all members again to welcome you here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Urban Park Agreement

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday I was pleased to be at the signing of a historic agreement between Environment and Resource Management and the Association of Saskatchewan Urban Park and Conservation Agencies, a voluntary organization dedicated to the improvement of urban parts.

This agreement, Mr. Speaker, will be of great interest to city dwellers who utilize urban parks. Under the agreement, the government will work together with urban park managers on development and education issues. Some of the programs which may be an initiated under agreement are interpretation, reclamation, Dutch elm disease prevention, environmental protection, and corporate environmental management.

There are six urban parks which will benefit from the agreement: Meewasin Valley in Saskatoon, Wakamow in Moose Jaw, Chinook Parkway in Swift Current, Battlefords River Valley in North Battleford, Tatagwa Parkway in Weyburn, and our lovely Wascana Park.

Mr. Speaker, this is a time of year when all Saskatchewan people leave their winter cocoons. Given our short summers, I think it important that we maximize people's ability to enjoy and utilize their parks. Thus I find it highly appropriate that this agreement to protect and enhance urban parks be signed now.

I wish to congratulate both SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) and SUPCA (Association of Saskatchewan Urban Park and Conservation Agencies) for their efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you. I rise today to congratulate one individual and pay tribute to another. At its annual meeting in Saskatoon this week, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce elected a new president and bid farewell to another.

Brian Kinder, a Regina partner with Deloitte & Touche, has

been chosen to replace Sonya Prescesky of Saskatoon as chamber president. Everyone in Saskatchewan knows the important role the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce and its members play in our province. They are the leaders of one of the key engines to our province's economy.

Chamber members provide vital advice and guidance to government in the creation of economic policy. While the chamber and the government don't always agree on everything, the cooperative atmosphere between our government and the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce has played a key role in the resurgence of Saskatchewan's economy. The leadership of people like outgoing chamber president, Sonya Prescesky, has also played a large part in our recent economic successes. Our government and the Saskatchewan people thank her for the fine job she has done during her term.

Finally I want to say congratulations and good luck to the new chamber president, Brian Kinder. Our government looks forward to the same kind of good working relationship with the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce under Brian's leadership as it had in the past. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPMC-NGO Cooperation

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to report on one more common sense government initiative that greatly benefits non-government organizations and taxpayers.

For some time now, it's been the practice of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation to offer its services to outside government organizations, namely those that receive part of their funding from provincial tax dollars.

Under this system, SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) can use its purchasing power to buy supplies and services in bulk and lower the cost to NGOs (non-governmental organizations). Some examples of these savings include participation by SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations) in government food contracts, saving 15 per cent. A 25 per cent saving in the cost of photocopier, laptop, and office supply rental; \$62,000 saved in the area of mailing equipment, and delivery.

Mr. Speaker, this collaboration between government and the NGO sector has resulted in savings of over half a million dollars in the last fiscal year. By helping NGOs stretch their dollars, the benefits to NGOs are obvious but the benefits to government should also be noted. By reducing the costs to NGOs, the pressure on government portion of funding can also be reduced, meaning more savings to the taxpayers or money freed up for other programs.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank SPMC for continuing to offer this very valuable service to the NGO sector.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Recognition for Heroism

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize in this Assembly four brave Saskatchewan citizens who have already been recognized by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan.

On April 29 of this year, at the annual meeting of St. John's Ambulance, the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan presented the bronze medal for courage to Mark Anderson of Prince Albert, Roman Kushneryk of Wakaw, and David Conlon of Rosthern. As well, a meritorious certificate was awarded to Sheryl Anderson of Prince Albert. All four awards were presented, Mr. Speaker, because in July of 1992 these brave people saved the life of and rendered first aid to Jeanne Farwell after a terrible car crash on the highway through Rosthern.

Jeanne's parents were both killed, and if it were not for the efforts of the three men to pull Jeanne from the burning car, she too would've been lost. Sheryl Anderson rendered first aid to Jeanne while the men attempted to rescue the parents.

The St. John's Ambulance life-saving medal is sanctioned by the order titled Grand Prior of the Royal Order of St. John, an order that traces its history back through the centuries in England. We of course are familiar with its modern work of providing care and first aid at both public events and in private homes.

In this case, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) recommended the award to recognize those who stop and render aid at considerable risk to themselves.

These four are truly good Samaritans, and I join in applauding their heroism. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mother's Day

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sunday is Mother's Day. And although this Assembly is not the place to do the business of Hallmark Cards, I think we would be remiss if we did not take a moment to honour our mothers. After all, Mr. Speaker, even politicians have mothers — mothers who love us for who we are and not for what we do.

One day is not enough of course, but it is good, I believe, that we do take a moment to pay special attention to our mothers or to, where necessary, honour their memory.

More importantly perhaps, we should take this day not only to pamper our mothers but to think for a moment about what the term, mother, has come to mean in our society, to think about this in a hard, non-sentimental way. After all, selflessness is a virtue that is not restricted to those who are defined by gender or parental status. We could all use a bit more of it. The same goes for understanding, tolerance, and love that is freely given and not earned.

I was proud on VE (Victory in Europe) Day to say a few words about my mother. I am happy again to honour her and all mothers on this and on all days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Designated Driver Program

Mr. Knezacek: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although there are many advantages to living in a province where there's lots of space for us to move in, our vast distances do present some problems.

One is that for many of us home is a long way from town, especially if we've been to town for an evening at the pub. Many people across Saskatchewan do not have access to buses or taxis, so Saskatchewan does not have the best record for drinking and driving.

Given that unfortunate fact, I am happy to report that yesterday the province's first designated driver program was announced. This program, co-sponsored by the government and by the Hotels Association of Saskatchewan will improve options for people to get home safely after overindulging. This will be a relief to the individual and particularly to the driving public.

The first stage of the program begins immediately. All establishments will be asked to join this voluntary effort, and it is expected to be in full operation by July 1.

Mr. Speaker, this is a partnership effort between the private and public sectors, because both have an obligation to see that our roads are safe and our citizens protected from drinking drivers. And of course we also want to see all people get home safely.

The designated driver program is an excellent way to achieve this goal. I urge all servers and users of alcohol to find out more about it. And I congratulate the hotels association and government for their initiative in reducing the danger of drinking and driving on Saskatchewan roads.

Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Crown Construction Tendering Agreement

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following on the comments from the member from Saskatoon Wildwood, the message from business to government was loud and clear: get your fiscal house in order and get out of our business.

Mr. Speaker, that was the first paragraph of a story in today's paper regarding the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting held in Saskatoon. From tax increases to labour legislation, the message was loud and clear — get out of our way.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier or his designate. Mr.

Premier, you seem to be getting in the way at every turn, especially when it comes to rewarding union supporters. Larry Seiferling said your union preference policies could cost taxpayers between 50 and \$100 million — 50 to \$100 million a year from taxpayers' pockets. And the Minister of Economic Development says that this is a middle-of-the-road approach.

Mr. Premier, how does taxing the people of Saskatchewan an additional 50 to \$100 million a year to pay union halls represent the middle of the road? How about just getting out of the road and allowing contracts to go to the lowest bidder?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to the hon. member by saying, first of all, I did have the opportunity to attend, I believe, my fourth annual meeting with the chamber of commerce. And I can say very clearly that there were a lot of debate. There was a lot of debate about the role of government and the balance between union and non-union. And this has been a debate that has gone on for many, many years and will continue on into the future.

I can tell you one thing this government will not do is get the province into the position that it was during the 1980s, where the policy of the then government, of the Conservative government, was to divide management, owners of companies, and working people for political benefit. We won't be doing that.

I can say to you very clearly that the comments by the newly-elected chamber president, Mr. Brian Kinder, after the debate and the discussion, when he said that what we should do with the fair wage policy announced by the government was to allow it to work for a year to see whether or not there were problems or not problems . . . and we would see whether it would work.

Well the members opposite say they know it won't work. That was not the position of the new president of the chamber, who said we should let it work for a year and see whether or not . . . the rhetoric of the members opposite who said if we changed Workers' Compensation, if we dealt with occupational health and safety, if we made changes to The Trade Union Act, that the world would come to pieces.

Look at the announcements by companies like Cargill, CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce) announcement . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, when the government is holding a loaded gun to the head of business, no wonder they want to cooperate with you, Mr. Minister. The thing that you are dividing people from, Mr. Minister, is you're dividing non-union workers in this province from a pay cheque. That's what you're dividing them from.

Mr. Minister, even your Workers' Compensation changes are

costing taxpayers money, and likely jobs as well. Mike Carr of the chamber labour committee said that your changes have caused a \$12 million deficit and a \$24 million increase in payments.

As you finally admitted Wednesday night — the Premier admitted — this kind of premium represents another tax increase. Mr. Minister, instead of toeing the line thrown out by your union leader buddies and political supporters, how about doing something for job creation? How about doing something that creates a positive business climate like the one next door in Alberta that has created 80,000 new jobs in the last two years? How about just simply getting your government out of the way of business like they are requesting you do?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I want to tell the member opposite that one thing a number of the chamber members were saying in advance to their questions was congratulating the government on balancing the books of the province. You can check the record. You can check the record and you will see that a number of them congratulated the government in balancing the books after 10 years of mismanagement by the members opposite.

I want to say to the members opposite that we heard you cry gloom and doom. I remember the statements in the House that if we passed The Trade Union Act amendments or Labour Standards or Workers' Compensation or Occupational Health and Safety, that that would be the end of it. And there'd be no more jobs, and no companies would move to the province.

I can tell you that compared to the hundreds of millions of dollars — billions of dollars — that the former premier and his rascals tried to bribe companies to come to this province with very little success, driving the debt to \$15 billion . . . I can say the announcement of CIBC, the removal of the 1-800 E&H (education and health) tax, the balanced budget, the announcement yesterday of Thomson's Meats doubling their expansion . . .

You can insult all those people by saying, what did you give them? And I'm going to be sending *Hansard* to them, and I'll send a letter to Mr. Lorne Thomson, saying that the former premier said about Thomson Meats, what did you give them? You can say that from your seat. And you can accuse Flexi-coil of taking something from the government, but I'll say that they will reject Tories in the next election as . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Union Certification Drive

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Premier or anyone over there that has the courage to stand up and answer it. It deals with the same kind

of capitulation, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier's need for union support for the next election.

In Drinkwater, Saskatchewan, just outside of Moose Jaw, there's a going concern called Brown Industries which manufactures Raider fiberglass truck caps. In January the RWDSU (Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union) began a union certification drive using questionable tactics and hiding behind the protection afforded them in The Trade Union Act provided by the NDP (New Democratic Party) government.

When a majority of the employees heard of this drive, they signed a petition saying they did not want this union in any form and wished to have a democratic vote taken. The Labour Relations Board refused their request because the employees — get this, Mr. Speaker — because they faxed their petition in instead of sending in the original; and then forced union certification on all the employees.

Mr. Premier, do you think that this is fair? Do you think that employees should be forced into unions that pay the union dues as you've set up the Act, sir?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I really would have to look at the facts. I will not take as gospel the statements by the member from Thunder Creek, because so many times the information they bring to this Assembly is not accurate.

I would say that the process of certification for unions in Saskatchewan, as it is in any other province and in most developed countries of the world, is not only necessary but is believed to be in the best interest of union and business. And that's why unions were certified under the previous administration and decertified. There's a process whereby people get together, sign support for unions, and if they don't want unions they opt out. And there's also a process of appeal.

But I want to say to the members opposite that this idea of dividing people of the province, I thought you had got over it. But recently the attempt to divide aboriginal people against non-aboriginal people, welfare people against non-welfare people, union people against non-union people, is despicable and I say is the reason you ended up as a rump party. And if you haven't learned anything from your experience . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, here are the petitions with the names on them; this is the employees. So maybe the minister is legitimate in talking about the Liberal Party bringing in false facts. The facts are right here on the paper, Mr. Speaker.

One of the employees, Mr. Minister, wrote us saying that many of the employees were signing union certification cards, thinking that they were attendance cards. When the employees discovered that many did not understand what was going on,

they got a majority of people to sign a petition in opposition of certification and asked for a vote. Just asked for the right as democratic citizens to have a vote. That was denied by your Labour Relations Board, sir.

Mr. Minister, they're asking for a secret ballot on the question — a secret ballot — the fundamentals of democracy in this province. What could be more fair? Why is there no provision for a secret ballot in consideration of union certification, Mr. Minister? Why not allow the employees at Brown Industries or anywhere else? And then, sir, maybe you would have the right to brag about what's going on in this province.

But when you take away democracy from the very people that are affected, sir, that is oppression. Why do you oppress people in this province with your labour legislation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite in his high rhetoric is exactly what is not needed in situations where people are working out certification or decertification of unions.

But it doesn't surprise me because that is the tactic that was used for 10 years in the province of Saskatchewan. And I can tell you the majority of people in this province were sick and tired of pitting one group of people against another, and they're not likely to go back in the near future to that approach that rips the social fabric of the province apart.

And I tell you, your economic development strategy is just as flawed as the Liberal strategy. And I have here an article, I believe from today's *Star-Phoenix*, that says: Liberal economic development proposal flawed.

Now this is an individual with high credibility, Jim Yuel, whose viewpoint as the writer is as president of PIC Investments Group in Saskatoon. And he says about the Liberal strategy: although this is a laudable objective — he's talking about economic development — it has some serious flaws. And he goes on to say that the idea, the main thrust of the strategy will . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can appreciate the minister's wont to wander off somewhere and castigate the Liberals for the foolishness they talk about in their election strategy. But, sir, the question today that we deal with in this Assembly is the democratic right of people to have a vote. The petitions are here. The names are on it. And your Labour Relations Board says, well it came on a fax instead of the original. I mean how weak, Mr. Minister.

If your legislation denying people democratic rights is so flawed that a fax is different than an original letter, then I

suggest, sir, that you are just looking for means and tools to take away the democratic rights of people in this province.

Why, Mr. Minister, would you not want people to have the right of a secret ballot to determine their future in the working places of this province? Why would not want that, sir?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say again that in these situations where there is a process or a dispute between management and union or even within the certification units or decertification unit, you will have those individuals who want the process to go one way or another. But I'll tell you very clearly that the Labour Relations Board in this province is an independent group, and you can argue whether they make the right decisions or not. And it may have been the case when you were in government that the minister or the premier went and made decisions for the Labour Relations Board and forced the issue as to one side or the other. But I would argue that would be a shameful process.

And if you were doing it while you were in government, if the member from Estevan was injecting himself and taking positions on the side of business or on the side of labour, that is not a process that this government advocates or will become involved in. And I would argue that you as individual members, when there's a process of certification or decertification, you would stay away from it, leave it alone and let the independence of the Labour Relations Board work because in the long run it does work unless it's politicized the way you're trying to do it here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Gaming Addiction Treatment in Prince Albert

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of gambling. Madam Minister, the Prince Albert Mental Health Centre is the only gambling addiction treatment service in that area recognized by Saskatchewan Health.

Why is it turning away people who are coming for help with their gambling addiction problems?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, given that responsibility for delivering of programming around addictions to gambling and other addictions falls to the Department of Health, I'll speak to the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the facts that the member brings to this House. If he will share with me the facts that he apparently has, I commit that I will take those facts from him — or those allegations from him — and have them investigated.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, maybe you should phone your

1-800 gambling line for help that's referred to the Prince Albert mental health clinic and find out exactly what has taken place.

We have been informed that people are phoning, and they are being turned away. They are being turned away by a program funded by Saskatchewan Health. Mr. Minister, one has to ask themselves, why is this happening? Is it because the case-load is too large? Is the government counselling service underfunded? Mr. Minister, why is your government's counselling service being forced to turn away gambling addicts who really need your help?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let's not presume for one moment that allegations made in this House always reflect the truth, particularly when they come from either the Tories or the Liberals.

Mr. Speaker, I've committed to the member I will investigate the allegation that he makes here this morning, but I would remind that member and all members that in the province of Saskatchewan we offer a \$1.5 million contribution to the program of gaming addictions, of treating gaming addictions.

That, Mr. Speaker, is per capita by far the highest amount of money dedicated to this important work of any province in Canada. And that, Mr. Speaker, in a province where the gaming opportunities are somewhat less, if I may say, than are being offered in Tory Alberta or Tory Manitoba or Liberal New Brunswick, Mr. Speaker.

Why is that? Because we've known from the beginning that this is an important issue and we have dedicated very significant resources to it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the minister would stand and accuse this opposition of bringing facts that aren't factual.

What did the minister do just a week ago? He told us there was a \$15 million loss in health care centres; then the auditor tells us there's 30. So who's got his facts correct?

What we've been informed is that the P.A. (Prince Albert) Mental Health Centre has started refusing to serve new patients and is instead referring them to the Metis Addictions Council and the Diakenew Counselling Centre.

Mr. Minister, it appears again that when you initially established a \$500,000 funding for addictions and then had to bump it to 1.5, that you still have it underfunded. You claim to have the best addictions services in the country, yet you're turning away people who are coming to you for help and unloading your responsibilities on volunteer organizations.

Why, Mr. Minister, or Madam Minister, or Mr. Premier, were

you so willing to rush into expanded gambling before you had any idea of how you were going to address the problems that would come with it? Why were you willing to do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, as that member well knows, when we discussed any expansion of gaming in this province, what did we do the very first thing? We established a Minister's Advisory Committee on the Social Impacts of Gaming. That committee worked well in advance, preparing a groundwork and recommendations which we have followed almost to the letter, Mr. Speaker. Now if that member is criticizing the work of that group of people, then let him say so.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is passing strange that on one day that . . . well the same day, for that matter, they stand up in the House and say they've got to shrink the size of government, we've got to cut, cut, cut, shrink the size of government; then another member stands up and says, but you should be spending more, you should be spending more. Well, Mr. Speaker, we can't have it both ways.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that we are dedicating to this very important work a substantial level of resources. We believe the programs are valuable. I commit to the member we'll follow up on the allegations that he's made here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Education Programs Advertising

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week we noted the unseemly pre-election propaganda issuing from the Health department communications staff, at a cost of half of the department's '95-96 advertising budget in the first six weeks of the new fiscal year. Now this pre-election extravagance pales in comparison to the Education and Training department's advertising in this highly touted job creation efforts.

To the Premier: for the past two months your government has flooded the province's newspapers and TV and other media with JobStart and Future Skills advertising. How much has your government spent on this pre-election advertising?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to advertising and getting ready for the election, I can't imagine why the Liberals opposite would be clamouring for election given their recent success in Manitoba.

But I want to say to you that the work of government agencies has to be told to the public, promoted. And that is why, on the one hand, members of the Conservative caucus are saying spend more to communicate what government policy is. You're telling us that we're not communicating well enough, and then on the other hand when we communicate you say you shouldn't be spending the money.

But it's interesting, at the same time as you're very critical, I

have here a brochure from the member from Regina North West that has the name on it, that goes in in great detail about issues that you want to promote. And I believe this is all done at taxpayers' expense. It includes a nice picture of the member from North West and the Liberal Prime Minister and the Liberal leader from Saskatchewan. And I quote, it says: Anita recently met with the Prime Minister and took the opportunity to discuss federal budget and how it affects you. She also conveyed your personal concerns to the Prime Minister.

And I say to you that you have every right, I would imagine, under the rules. And maybe you don't; maybe you're saying you shouldn't be doing this. But you obviously can't have it both ways. You can't spend taxpayers' money to promote your position and be critical of others doing the same.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Bergman: — Mr. Speaker, the government has spent a lot of money advertising its 1-800 JobStart number, but as I understand it, as many as half of all training jobs in both Future Skills and JobStart are being filled by people the participating business has designated. As a result a great number of jobs, including those announced recently, are not and will not be available to those who call into the 1-800 line.

To the minister: how can you promote the government as a job creator when you can't even match those who have accessed the system through your highly advertised 1-800 number, and so many . . . when so many of those jobs are being filled by business-designated trainees who have not even tried to access the program themselves?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the hon. member that there are obviously many people trying to use the programs. They are very, very popular, and they are working very effectively.

And the issue here is, is the government has come forward to try to facilitate the need of business, and I use the example of welders. We indicated and had indication from the private sector with the wrapping up of Bourgault Industries and Flexi-coil that we would need . . . and the pipeline construction in Saskatchewan about a year ago, we would need 2,000 extra welders in the province of Saskatchewan. There were no programs in existence that could move quickly to fill the gap from the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, the government has moved quickly. And the reason that the phone lines are ringing off the wall is because government, acting as a facilitator to move people from changing workforce into the new economy, has a role to play.

And that's why when right-wing parties like Liberals and Tories say there's no role for government to play, they're absolutely wrong. Many legitimate business people are saying you have a role to play; it's to facilitate people moving from the old economy to the new economy. And if there are glitches in that process, we want to know about them. But I can tell you that

they are very, very popular programs and working very well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Bergman: — Mr. Speaker, the name of one of the programs is Future Skills. That gives the impression that they will create jobs for the future, Mr. Speaker. Any applicant can access Future Skills and JobStart through a 1-800 number. But as late as the end of April, there was no database set up to coordinate the inquiries, the applicants, and the jobs across the province. And in fact I confirmed today there still is no database set up — some future, Mr. Speaker, when officials are scrambling to produce jobs in time for an election and they don't even have access to an elementary database to match job seekers and jobs.

To the minister: you announced Future Skills in November and JobStart in January. How can you justify your pre-election hype of these programs when you don't have the basic job skills yourself to produce a database?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite is that she is absolutely wrong once again. And it's a tradition that has only become too common in this House for members of the Liberal Party to stand up and bring information that isn't accurate.

The programs she referred to are working and working very, very well. Hundreds of people are accessing and using the program. And the member shakes her head. She knows nothing about what she speaks. The fact is these are two of the most popular government programs going. Now you can argue about some other government programs, whether they're necessary or whether they're working. But these are two programs that are working.

And it makes as much sense to believe what you're saying as when your leader talks about getting in the Texas auditors to audit health care and cut 5 per cent which would lead to \$80 million being cut out of the health care budget. What \$80 million does the Leader of the Liberal Party want to cut out of health care as she Americanizes the health care system? Your question today makes as much sense. It makes no sense.

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

Ms. Lorje: — With permission, to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your tolerance and your great ability to enforce the rules of this legislature.

I would like to, on behalf of my colleague from Saskatoon River Heights, introduce to you and to all members in the

Chamber, a group of some 50 grade 12 students from Marion Graham Collegiate in Saskatoon. They are accompanied today by teacher, Heather Hearn, and they have been sitting patiently and politely through question period watching the performance in this House.

On behalf of the member from Saskatoon River Heights, who is attending to important and pressing matters in Saskatoon, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to welcome you all to the legislature today and I ask my colleagues to join with me in that welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as it would relate to question no. 80, I move it be converted to motions for return (debatable).

The Speaker: — Question no. 80, motion for return debate.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 56 — An Act to amend The Provincial Emblems and Honours Act

The Chair: — I would ask the Provincial Secretary and Deputy Premier to please introduce the official who has joined us here today.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the gentleman with me today, who will help in this committee, probably needs no introduction, but I'm pleased to introduce Michael Jackson, the Chief of Protocol for the province of Saskatchewan.

Clause 1

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman; welcome, Mr. Minister. I'd like to welcome Mr. Jackson to the Assembly today. I believe that this is the first time Mr. Jackson has been in here in this particular capacity in this legislature . . . this session of the legislature.

My question to the minister is: how was the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal concept developed prior to the introduction of this Bill? Was it based upon recommendations made by other volunteer groups, or was it based on a concept by the department official?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We have an advisory council for the Order of Merit, which has been in existence since 19 . . . I think in 1985. The advisory council throughout the years has been recommending the people who would be nominated for the Order of Merit. And in that process, has received many, many recommendations for people to be part of that who are

some of the volunteers, which number in the thousands in Saskatchewan, who certainly are deserving of some recognition. And in a province like ours, where volunteerism is higher than anywhere else in Canada on a per capita basis, we think it's important to do that.

The advisory council also received many submissions from volunteer organizations and individuals recommending that this recognition be developed and put into place. And we have taken the advice of the advisory council and have therefore introduced these amendments to this legislation which is before us today.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Well indeed the volunteers are the backbone of our society, especially when we look at various groups — those dealing with children, such as Boy Scouts or 4-H, those are all volunteers and they carry out a very excellent program in this province.

But sometimes we see the volunteer system diminished by government action. A good many of the people who were on the local hospital boards prior to this administration were volunteers. And now that's all changed. That volunteer work has been discounted and we've gone to a paid service.

So, Mr. Minister, at times we don't perhaps give the recognition to volunteers that they deserve for the very important works that they do. And it does affect them in a negative manner when somebody else comes forward to do the same work and then is paid for it.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could go over the process involved for this special recognition. For example, if someone in one of our constituencies wanted to nominate an individual for the recognition of a Saskatchewan volunteer, how would they go about doing that and what particular criterias would be involved for that nominating individual or for the person who was being recommended?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to hear the member speak of hospital boards who were at one time volunteers, and I think in many ways people in public service, in many cases, are volunteers. There may be small per diems or expense allowances because they have to leave a job or maybe lose some income to do that.

And they play a very important role. That's one of the reasons why we think — I certainly, personally . . . are very much supportive of the need to provide for some recognition for people who have, in many ways, been the backbone of the development of this province since its beginnings and continue to play a very significant role.

The process is one in which individuals, any member of this House, any member from the public, an organization, where it is an organization of volunteers, can propose and submit the names to the advisory council, the Order of Merit Advisory Council — which will also be renamed as the Saskatchewan

Honours Advisory Council. Names can be proposed to this council — it's done a very commendable job in the past — and that council then will go through that and make its decision to the Lieutenant Governor and the appropriate ceremony will take place to award the medals to the people who have been chosen.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. How many medals will be awarded each year? Is there a finite number or is it open ended? And will the people chosen to be recognized for their special volunteer work, will it be simply an at-large system or will there be some regional representation within those selections?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I thank the member for the question. There is a maximum of 10 medals that can be awarded in any one year. As is the case with the Order of Merit, it's not a matter of distribution on any regional basis or there's no quota system. It's simply a provincial honours system and the advisory council will look carefully at all of the recommendations and nominations that are made.

These requests for nominations are very public; in fact I believe they're advertised. I've just received at my home, a couple of days ago, the request for nominations for the Order of Merit and the . . . So there is no quota system of any kind. It's a provincial honours event and it has a maximum of 10 that can be awarded in any one year.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if you could please give us an outline, or a breakdown, of the members of the advisory council.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the people who are on the advisory council — I'll break them down into two groups. There's the ex officio members: the Chair is Margaret Gallaway from Estevan; Chief Justice Bayda is on there; Mrs. Ivany, the spouse of Dr. Ivany . . . oh sorry, Dr. Ivany, president of the University of Saskatchewan; Sandra Morgan, the Clerk of the Executive Council; and Trevor Powell, the Provincial Archivist.

People who are appointed: Fred Martell from the Waterhen reservation, a representative of our first nations; Evelyn Johnson from Estevan; Anne Szumigalski of Saskatoon, a very prominent poet in Saskatchewan; Linton MacDonald from Regina, a former, I believe, Sergeant-at-Arms in this Legislative Assembly; and Bert Salloum from Saskatoon; and there's one vacancy at the present time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well I think the volunteer award is a very worthwhile award. I believe these people do need and deserve the special recognition that this type of an award would afford them. I think it gives them . . . allows their communities, their neighbours, and their friends, to recognize the special work that they have done. And I think it would be a very appropriate measure for the province to recognize the hard work and diligence that they have put into supporting our communities and our social fabric.

The other part of this Bill, Mr. Minister, deals with provincial emblems, and I'm wondering why was it necessary to make an amendment regarding our provincial bird?

(1100)

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm not going to pretend to be the expert on this, but there is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, when I went to school we took French and not Latin. But there is a group of people that I think are called ornithologists — they're bird experts. And there has been a change in the definition and interpretation of the Latin word for the provincial bird. It's the same bird — we're not changing the bird — but we're making sure that we are technically and correct in the use of the language and that's why that amendment is here.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. I know that the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow would prefer that we had birds without feathers on them, but I think that would not be appropriate in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could perhaps give us an outline on what this change will mean in costs. What will have to be changed, and what kind of costs are associated with this change?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — No costs at all. Whenever new material is printed, we'll just make sure that appropriate language is used, but I am told there will be no costs involved.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, that's all the questions I have today.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to again thank the minister and Mr. Jackson for coming in today and answering our questions.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to express my appreciation to Michael Jackson for his assistance here today, but more than that, for his assistance in all of the matters of protocol and other responsibilities that he has year in and year out where he's done a commendable service.

I also want to express my appreciation to the member opposite for his support of what I know we all agree is very important legislation. It's not tax legislation. It's not this kind of stuff . . . But from the point of view of recognizing some tremendous and important work that Saskatchewan citizens do as volunteers, because they think it's important and because it's a way to contribute to their community, to the young people, to their old people, to Saskatchewan as a whole.

I think that recognition is long overdue, and I am very happy that we are able to be able to do that and that we have the support, I think, not only of all the members of this House, but that the support is there from all of the public of Saskatchewan as well.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 56 — An Act to amend The Provincial Emblems and Honours Act

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

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32

The Chair: — I would ask the minister to please reintroduce to us the officials who have joined us here today.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I'm happy to do that, Mr. Chair. With us today, seated right beside me is Mr. Duane Adams, deputy minister of Health; Ms. Kathy Langlois, executive director of finance and management services; Lois Borden is here who is our executive director, district support branch; Mr. Steve Petz is here, associate deputy minister; Mr. Lawrence Krahn is here who is our executive director of medical insurance; and also with us, Maureen Yeske, executive director, health planning and policy development; Jahzi Van Iderstine, assistant to the deputy minister; and Carol Klassen, executive director of strategic programs.

Item 1

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Mr. Minister, and officials. Mr. Minister, I have some questions today that I'd like to deal with, the district health boards and their relationships with their employees. In particular, I'm interested in their relationships with the out-of-scope employees and the mechanisms that are in place if an employee has a complaint either with some of the board policy or with some of the internal mechanisms of employee relationships, etc.

Does the department and do the boards have in place some form of mechanism to deal with employee concerns as they relate to the board, as they relate to the executives of the board?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I think if I heard the member correctly he would like to discuss at this point, in any event, out-of-scope employees of district boards.

Mr. Chair, we have had a circumstance in Saskatchewan where there have been up to 400 different district boards each with

their own administrations and out-of-scope personnel; we've now moved to a situation where we have 30 district boards who take an umbrella responsibility.

Within those district boards, however, there are certainly some institutions that will have their own internal administration and so on, some affiliate, religious-owned institutions who have their own administration.

And so, Mr. Speaker — or Mr. Chair — it's a difficult question to answer because we're talking about a wide variety here of institutions and 30 different board structures. Now each of them are charged — and expected — with setting in place management structures and administrative structures, which I hope would provide routes of communication for people in out-of-scope positions as I hope they place for people that are within in-scope positions.

So I find it a little difficult to address the member's question specifically. If he has a specific example of a problem that he's aware of, perhaps we could come at it that way. But let me just say with the 30 district boards and all the variety of institutions and programs that exist within that, you will find I would hope in every district, some mechanisms of communication between staff and the boards.

Now all of that said, of course there are the other, by way of legislation, be it human rights legislation or access to the Ombudsman; these programs too are available to all citizens of the province. But perhaps if the member wanted to be more specific about a certain concern or a certain situation.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Mr. Minister, when an employee out of scope has a concern about some of the duties that they are requesting to perform or some of the procedures that they have to go through or if they have an individual complaint with a . . . as an personnel complaint with a supervisor, what avenues for solutions are in place to deal with that circumstance? Do the boards have in place a procedure for appeal if an action has been taken by a supervisor against another out-of-scope employee? What mechanisms are in place to resolve these kind of issues and these kind of complaints which come forward — and they do come forward from time to time within any or every board in fact.

So what mechanisms are in place? Are you telling us that the boards do not have a procedure in place to deal with the internal concerns of their employees?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, again I'm going to have to ask the member, I think, if he can be, to be a little more specific. This is a very broad question that he presents to the minister in the House this morning, so again, let me try and address it in broad stroke. But if he wants to be more specific about a certain situation or a certain issue, I think we could perhaps more easily address it.

It's not clear to me whether the member here is talking about issues that may be raised by administrative or out-of-scope

individuals. If the issue relates to a clinical issue or a medical practice, if there is some dispute or an issue surrounding a clinical practice, then of course there will be the professional bodies and so on who are charged with hearing that kind of complaint and dealing with it.

(1115)

If it is a question of management or decision of internal management, each of the organizations will have their own operational policies, perhaps an operational manual. Each of our district health boards will have a personnel department with policies and procedures.

If the member has a specific district or it's a specific issue, whether it's a clinical issue or a management issue or perhaps it's a salary or wage issue, if you could be more specific, I think we could address the problem more clearly.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well, Mr. Minister, at this present time I do not wish to provide you with a specific example.

But if an employee has a concern, who do they take that concern to if they are in conflict with their supervisor or with the chief executive officer of the district health board? What's the mechanisms in place to deal with these kind of circumstances? Because they do happen, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I'm sure they do. I'm sure they happen in any human organization. I'm sure they do. I'm sure they happen over at General Motors, in the plant at General Motors. I'm sure it happens in a small hardware store in a small town. Where people work together, there is the potential for conflict.

But I think all that I can say in response to the member is that each district and each institution will have its own policies and procedures and personnel. And those who are on the site will know where it is.

Now in a typical circumstance, I think, if you have a difficulty with an immediate supervisor, you would likely move to another level of the administration and try and address the problem. But without a specific here, Mr. Chair, it's very difficult to speak generally to the issue.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Mr. Minister, it would have been my hope that the department and the district health boards would have a set-out program of the steps to follow. That if you have a complaint against your supervisor or against the CEO (chief executive officer) . . . not the CEO, the chief executive officer or the executive officer of the health district board, that there was a procedure to go through; that you could go to the board or you could go to some place within the department to have an appeal process to make a determination on the decisions that have been made in their employment circumstances.

And that doesn't seem to be the case. What you're telling us is that it's up to every board to do whatever they want about it. And, Mr. Minister, I believe that's simply not good enough, because some of the boards do not have a procedure in place to deal with these circumstances.

In fact some of the management team within the district health boards have been going around asking employees to sign confidentiality forms which would deny them the opportunity to discuss anything within that facility with another employee, with a member of the board, with a member of the legislature, or anyone else.

And I believe that's totally beyond the pale, Mr. Minister, that you would be asking or the district health boards or some of the management people within the district health boards would be asking employees to sign confidentiality forms that would deny them the opportunity to discuss with anyone some of the circumstances which are occurring within their facilities. How do you address that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, if the member could provide for me such a form and if — and I underline the word if — if it is as he claims, it prevents people from any ability to speak about an issue to anyone else, then I tell you, Mr. Chair, I would want to follow that up and see that that's not the case. But I can't do that in general on the word of the member that somewhere perhaps this is happening. If he could provide for me some documented evidence that this is a fact in any one of our health boards or institutions, Mr. Chair, I will personally follow up on that because I do not believe that to be appropriate. But I need to know some facts here before we go off here on some kind of a tangent.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Mr. Minister, in this particular case I cannot provide you with the documentation because the individual that was asking employees to sign that would not release that document out of their possession. They simply had to sign it right there on the spot and then away it went.

But I can provide you with anecdotal evidence of that, and I will provide you with the names of the individuals that you can contact to discuss that particular issue with because it is wrong, because people should have the opportunity to address their board members on these particular issues or to address members of the legislature. We deal with confidential information, Mr. Minister, on a regular basis. And to try and provide blankets of silence over issues, Mr. Minister, is inappropriate within our health care system if there are concerns and problems which arise.

But that's one particular issue in this matter. The other issue is, how does such an individual who has been asked to sign this kind of a form appeal through the process, because some of the district health boards do not have mechanisms in place.

Say you have three levels of management within the district health board that are out of scope before you get to the board itself. And the person at the lowest level is asked to sign this

form by the person above them who has the agreement by the executive officer to have these forms circulated. Who do you appeal to? One would have hoped or expected that it would have gone to the board for approval, but who knows? So who do you appeal to in those kind of circumstances, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, again we're talking here kind of hypothetically. Most, if not all, of the district boards will have a personnel committee, which it seems to me would be the appropriate place.

But I tell you, Mr. Chair, we can't deal with an issue like this in some kind of hypothetical sense. Would the member please, if he is making these accusations in the legislature, please here in the legislature identify the districts which he believes do not have the appropriate mechanisms in place, or the district where he is aware that people are being inappropriately asked to sign some kind of a confidentiality arrangement.

Mr. Chair, you cannot expect the Department of Health to follow up with a shotgun approach. We need to know where the concern is. And so if the member would please even just identify the districts, we can follow up.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Mr. Minister, perhaps you can supply some information in this particular matter. Which boards have personnel committees in place to deal with the complaints?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we don't have that specific information here. I would expect that each of the district boards would have a personnel committee, someone on the board responsible for personnel. But, Mr. Chair, we'll do a search of the boards and provide the member with the list.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. They may be in place now, but in the past, and not the too far distant past, some boards did not have these committees in place.

Mr. Minister, if there is a complaint, what opportunities to rectify the situation, to negotiate, to mediate, would the personnel committee have of the board; and how would those personnel committees be structured?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well again, Mr. Chair, it would vary according to the kind of complaint. Again if it's a clinical complaint, if someone in a health — let's use a for instance or a hypothetical — if someone in a health care institution feels there is a clinical practice that is inappropriate or dangerous, then there are appropriate professional bodies and structures to deal with that complaint.

If the complaint is a complaint, for instance, over one's scheduling or one's working conditions or office space or responsibilities or wages, then there would be another and here more internal process.

Now this is not different, Mr. Chair, than the way it has been, I'm sure, in health care delivery in Saskatchewan for the last 50

years. Each and every institution would have had its own policies and procedures to deal with these kinds of issues.

I don't think the member would suggest that the Department of Health, that the centre of government, should impose on each and every district and on each and every institution an identical policy and procedure manual to deal with these kinds of issues. We have always entrusted this kind of management to the local communities, the local institutions, and now the local districts. I don't think he would want us to establish a system where the Department of Health wrote all the management practices for every institution and every district in the province.

Again I'm asking the member if he wants us to follow up, if he knows of some specific violations which he's concerned about, if he could please direct us in a more specific direction and we can follow up.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm not prepared to provide any names in the legislature because these people are concerned about the positions they currently hold, but I will give them to you in private because these circumstances are indeed occurring, Mr. Minister, and there are indeed some problems out there.

And you say, what has changed? Well your district health boards are what has changed. You now no longer have people from the communities that are involved sitting on these boards which was the case before. And so you're moved away from the local community effort, and now you've become that amorphous them.

So, Mr. Minister, there is some needs here for some solution and some directions to move through the system when there is a complaint. And you seem to keep talking about hypothetical . . . we can't deal with it because it's hypothetical. Well, Mr. Minister, whenever government brings anything forward, it's always hypothetical until it starts happening. When the Minister of Finance brings forward her budget, it's all hypothetical until they start to spend the money.

So, Mr. Minister, there needs to be in place some bodies within each board to deal with the complaints of the management, and that has not occurred in every circumstance. It may be in place now, but it wasn't not that long ago. So those need to be in place.

But if these personnel committees are in place, what kind of a structure do they deal with? Do they make recommendations to the board as a whole? What do they do with the complaints that come forward to them? What procedures do they have to investigate any complaints that come forward to them?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, again there are a significant number of institutions in our province, each with their own management policies, each with their own policy and procedure manuals and practices and traditions and so on. There are 30 districts in our province each again with some variations — I'm sure — their own policies, and procedures. I'm

confident that most, if not all, of those district boards will have personnel committees. I'm confident that most of those district boards and all of those district boards will have a human resource staffing as do yet some of the institutions.

Now is the member suggesting that I, as minister through the Department of Health, should impose on each of the districts or on each of the institutions common sets of policies and procedures? Is he suggesting that the department should micromanage the system?

Now I hear his concern, and it may well be a valid concern, but it cannot be dealt with in a generic kind of form unless he takes the position that he wants us to begin to impose internal detailed policies on each of the health institutions and each of the health districts in the province.

Now I just want to, before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say for the record . . . the member talks about when the Minister of Finance stands up and talks about a budget; it's hypothetical. Not in the case of this government, Mr. Chair. When his crowd was over here and the minister of Finance stood up and gave a budget, it was hypothetical, hypothetical to the tune of \$800 million. The last one I think we missed the mark by \$800 million. I shouldn't get into that discussion I know, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the member for his willingness to provide us names. And when the specific names are here — and I assure him that they will be kept confidential — that we can then follow up if there are specific issues that he's aware of.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Mr. Minister, you question whether or not there should be some generic outlines as for dealing with these concerns, and you seem to suggest that somehow that is wrong. Well, Mr. Minister, your whole health plan is based on those kind of generic implementations and directions for the health districts because you limit the number the number of acute care beds that they can have based on some formula. You limit the number of long-term care beds they can have based on some formula.

Now if you're going to say that generic is wrong, well then take those limits out of there, and let the district health boards provide the care that they need within their funding structure. But you don't allow that. You say you have so much population; you can have so many acute care beds. You have so much population over a certain age; you can have so many long-term care beds. So you are telling them what and where and how they can do it, Mr. Minister. So if generic is wrong for dealing with the employees, well then generic is wrong when it comes to the bed structure. You can't have it both ways.

So, Mr. Minister, you make the determination. Are you going to allow the health boards to make their own evaluations on their needs and supply that within the funding available, or are you going to be telling them exactly what to do?

(1130)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, of course, of course as that level of government responsible for health care being the province, of course the province will set program standards. It has always been thus, and it should always be thus, in my view, that the province under its responsibility should establish program standards.

Now that formerly, formerly had been done through budgets to local institutions and single institutions. That's how it was done before. It was in approval to budgets to small institutions.

We've moved from that to a much better way of funding the health care needs of our province. And that's to base that funding on population, on need, on demographics, and so on. Now, Mr. Chair, the funding is provided to the district in some global amounts with standards that each district and core services that each district must provide.

Mr. Chair, I would never want us to move away from that responsibility at the provincial level because it is through that responsibility that we can maintain universal and quality and accessible services for all of the people of our province.

Now the member should not confuse the matter of establishing program standards and the matter of financing health care with the matter of managing in an institution specific or in a district specific. In this regard, Mr. Chair, we want to be moving out of the way to let people make their decisions locally, appropriate to their programs and appropriate to their communities and appropriate to their needs.

Now again I ask the member, what is he asking us to do here? Is he asking us to micromanage? And if that's the case, he should just say so because if we get into micromanaging, then we're going to get into the matter of regulating equally.

Now again I go back to where I think the member began this discussion, and that's with a concern of about the ability of health care providers to have input into decision making and have roots of access to the policy setters and so on. On this, Mr. Chair, he and I share a concern. And I tell you it's a concern not just for out-of-scope but concern for in-scope health care providers. And I am anxious that in each of our district circumstances there be mechanisms in place and there be roots that health care providers themselves can have influence and be part of decision making. On that I'm sure we agree. And if he has specific case again where he thinks there is a violation of someone's rights in the system, I'll anticipate him providing the names, and we'll follow up.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, welcome, sir, to you and your officials. I wonder if you could outline for me the process that individuals would have to go through to have the boundaries of a district health board changed?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the process is described, I believe, in the legislation. Essentially it would be that the affected districts . . . there would need to be agreement among

the affected districts. There would need to be some process of public education or public consultation. If agreement is reached and the public consultation has been done, then the request is made to the department, and the district boundary in fact can be changed by an order in council. And there have been a number of examples where that has happened.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Minister. I'm going to send over to you a letter and a copy of a petition which I'm sure you . . . somewhere has showed up in the Department of Health . . . that is from residents who live north of the Buffalo Pound valley and were included in the Regina Health District. And they, as they explain in their letter, don't wish to be there. In fact they've taken and spent the effort and time to have more than 80 per cent of the households within this area canvassed and make their wishes known. They have the RM (rural municipality) of Dufferin supporting their initiative, and they very much want to be part of the Thunder Creek Health District for all sorts of reasons — mostly tied to busing of children for school, where they do their majority of their shopping, all this.

And they have been, to say the least, very frustrated by the bureaucracies involved with both of the health districts, evidently and hoped that it wouldn't come to the fact they had to bring this issue to the Legislative Assembly for your perusal, so I'm wondering what you say in the face of this situation. And this, Mr. Minister, as you can see by the dates, has been going on for some goodly long time. What you would say in response to all of these good people?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I trust that they have been in contact both with the Moose Jaw/Thunder Creek District Board and with the Regina Board. We'll want to follow up to our discussion here in the House. We'll want to find out if in fact that has happened, where the contact has made, and what has resulted at the district board level. To my knowledge, there has not been a request put formally to the department from these district boards or either of the district boards in this regard. And so we will check with both of those boards to see where it is from their point of view. Now if there is a dispute, we'll do our level best to facilitate it.

If I may say just in reference to the member for Thunder Creek and the remarks that he's made here, I think I can understand the feelings of those individuals who will be living on the north side of Buffalo Pound Lake. I will know some of them personally, and I know many of their traffic, school, and shopping patterns bring them to Moose Jaw as opposed to into Regina. So if there is a dispute or a block in the system, we'll do what we can to facilitate that and follow up as a result of our discussion.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, will this process which you just outlined to the Assembly, will this stay in place even after the health boards are elected? Will it still require an order in council of the provincial government to change boundaries, or will there be more self determination amongst boards once they are elected by the people that they're charged with representing?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — It would be my expectation, Mr. Chair, that the order in council process will still be required as I believe it is with school district changes that may occur over time. There is not a sense here that the Department of Health or government would want to do anything but facilitate changes where they're desirable and desired on the local level, but to maintain our overall responsibility for the legislation. I believe it's appropriate that there still be the final order in council procedure.

Mr. Swenson: — I anticipate, Mr. Minister, from the conversations I've had with people around this province, that you're going to run into a lot of this. Can you tell the Assembly who you have designated in the Department of Health to be the lead person in this situation? Who is the individual that will be in charge of redrawing all of these boundaries as things come along?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, from the drafting of the original legislation and concept around the district boards, it was understood that over a period of time there would likely be some change in district boundaries. We went through a process of community discussion to establish those district boundaries. They weren't carved out here at the Department of Health; they were carved out in meeting halls across Saskatchewan. But it was understood from the beginning there would likely be some change. To date there has not been an overwhelming desire for boundary changes; some, and we've accommodated those. It hasn't been overwhelming.

The member may be correct that there may be more in the future. However we think that the process that is in place — it was designed to be and we think it is — is a relatively simple process and cheap and not involving a long, detailed sort of process when there is local agreement.

Now in the case where there may not be local agreement, that may be more difficult. In that circumstance we do name then someone individually to be out there and trying to facilitate and help it through. We would rather see this as sort of a normal course of business, so we haven't named one individual particularly in the department to handle this. But it becomes part of the district support branch work. What paperwork was needed by terms of order in councils, they would flow the paperwork through to government. And our goal is to make this process simple and inexpensive. And to date, it seems to have worked fairly well.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, who would that be? Who is in charge of the district health support group that you . . . the working group that you have inside the Department of Health?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — If fact . . . the two individuals probably who would give leadership to this are here in the House with us today, which is Mr. Steve Petz, associate deputy minister, and Lois Borden, who is the executive director.

Mr. Swenson: — I appreciate that, Minister, because we have taken the opportunity to discuss district health boards, and

governance particularly, with a lot of individuals in the last few months and how that governance is going to evolve and who really is going to have the say in delivery of services within those health districts. And there are a lot of people out there on the bigger question who aren't that comfortable yet with the philosophy of your administration. They feel that it is still driven from the top, that there is a lot of imaging going on here that people aren't totally happy with.

And I think it's important for us to understand who are the lead people in issues dealing with district health boards and dealing with issues of governance because I say to you over the next four or five years that that issue of governance will become one of extreme importance, of who controls the tax dollars, who has access to the taxing capabilities. And I believe, Mr. Minister, that you have a responsibility from within the Department of Health as the minister to put this governance issue at the top of the agenda . . . And that the views of people, particularly in rural areas, not be ignored when it comes to issues of who is going to determine which services and how many and to which clients will be delivered within certain health districts.

So I'd like your response to that.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I recognize the issues that the member raises, and we are into some pioneering here in the province with the regional delivery of health care services. And when one is pioneering new approaches, as we move forward, we encounter new challenges.

I can report to the member today that about two to three weeks ago I put together a group of people from the districts and from our department, and we've described this group as the roles and responsibilities committee. And it will be their task to look at many of these issues, the ongoing relationship between the districts and the department; the roles of the districts, and the roles of the department. And this group of people very much reflects the totality of Saskatchewan in terms of who's there to work through some of these issues. So I'm looking forward to good work there.

(1145)

We have restructured the Department of Health to more precisely match this now regional delivery of health care services. And so we have an entire branch within the department, which we describe as integrated services, that works with the districts. And we have put in place one person to act as a consultant with each district, that one person being their primary contact with the department. And so each district may feel they have direct access to the department at its most senior levels and, through the most senior levels, to the minister. And so we're hoping that that line of communication can help in these discussions as well.

We are pioneering. Many other provinces in Canada are also moving — if not all — moving to a more regionalized concept of health care delivery. We know that's happening in Alberta. We've seen it happening in New Brunswick. And we're all now

struggling with some of the issues around the importance of maintaining provincial responsibility for standards and program delivery and so on, while permitting and enhancing the local committee and regional decision making.

I think key to this will be part of the work of the roles and responsibilities committee as they struggle with some of these issues.

Mr. Swenson: — Quick question, Minister. These liaison people that you have designated, are these all current or former employees of the Department of Health, or have you gone outside to appoint people into those positions?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, to the member, all of these people have been put in place through the Public Service Commission process. The vast majority of them will have been employees of the Department of Health and who have been working through the process. And we'll be very pleased to provide for you a list of the names of . . . we describe them as consultants. So each district has its own consultant, and we'll be very happy to provide you a list of the names of the consultants and the districts that they're responsible for.

Mr. Toth: — Yes, Mr. Minister, a question that comes back to a discussion we had — oh, about two weeks ago I believe it was — regarding private care homes. I'd like to know what the status is regarding the application from the town of Avonlea for their private care home in view of recent announcements you've made.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I can report there have been discussions between the community, I assume, and the department. But there is nothing yet formally presented from the town of Avonlea.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, I have a question regarding supplementary health cards. Our office has received a copy of a letter from Mr. Donald Turner from Estevan to Mr. Ronn Wallace, the director of health insurance registration.

Mr. Turner had applied for temporary assistance through Social Services. Because of a production error at Sask. Health, Mr. Turner received five supplementary health cards instead of one and he was covered for three times the coverage approved by the social worker. Saskatchewan Health noticed the error and retrieved the cards from Mr. Turner.

This incident led Mr. Turner to ask the following: one can only wonder what the production error has cost, especially when considering the cut-backs in the health care system due to rising costs. How many hospital beds could have been saved if it wasn't for production errors?

Can you provide an answer to Mr. Turner's questions? How often does this occur? How much does it cost the taxpayer? How is this problem detected?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the member will know that

this department of government has responsibility for, and knowledge of, of every citizen of our province. This department of government needs to deal with, I'm pleased to say, more than a million people now. I can also report that these kinds of — I'm not sure how to describe — production errors I'm told, are very, very small given the great volume of work that is done by the Department of Health. In fact it is widely recognized across Canada that Saskatchewan probably has the best health registration system of any province in Canada.

And while I'm on my feet — and I may not often do this — I think there is some credit due to the former government in this regard, who worked hard to see some of this health registration work done and some of the health card work done. We have a very, very small rate of production error.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, while you've indicated you have a small rate of production error, is there any cost, would there be any cost, associated with the production errors? And secondly, and just a comment regarding the cards, is the department looking at ways in which they can expand the use of health cards?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we're endeavouring to get for the member the actual error rate that is tracked; we're having somebody trying to find that right now. When there are errors, of course there are some costs. They're not large. Where there is an error that has had some cost attached to it, we on occasion will attempt to secure recovery if there's been a mistake. But in each case it has to be dealt with on a very individual basis. I believe the illustration that you began with would not involve significant costs.

In terms of the health card itself, we are looking at a variety of ways that the health card might serve us better in Health, whether it be for verification or audit or access to health services. We've not come to any real conclusions around any of those questions. We do know that with every passing year that technology seems to offer more and more possibilities. So we are looking at a variety of suggestions that have been made that might see the health card prove even a more valuable tool in health care delivery, but we've come to no real decisions at this point.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, I have a number of questions here from other residents that we just haven't had the time to raise in "Mr. Premier, I want to know" and I'd like to get a few of these out of the way. This question comes from Susan, and I believe it's Heaman, from Weyburn.

I want to know why residents in nursing homes cannot be moved to other areas. The lady I have in mind moved from her home to be with her daughter. She was then put into a care home with the idea that she could return to her home town when the daughter retired there. Now after four and a half years, they still won't take her.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I don't of course know the details of the individual's circumstance, but I would want to assure that

individual and make it very clear to our districts that there should be no sense that someone is resident of a district and therefore bound to receive services within that district. We want our districts to work together. And so that if someone may be more appropriately cared for in a long-term circumstance closer to their home community or closer to family, we would want it to be possible that a district boundary wouldn't interfere with that process.

Now I know that in our communities it varies. Some communities have waiting-lists; others have very few on waiting-lists. And the availability of a long-term care bed may be an issue here. But what should not be an issue for any Saskatchewan person is that your care can be provided where it is most appropriate.

Mr. Toth: — I have a question here, Mr. Minister, from a J. Adam from Cupar.

I want to know why the Plains Health Centre is being considered to close within the next few years. For us rural residents or citizens, it is the easiest and quickest trauma centre to get to and also has unique features which the other hospitals do not have. Monies to upgrade the facility could come from the downsizing of cabinet, the Saskatchewan birthday party, or the profits from SaskEnergy and SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the decision to consolidate the clinical services here in the city of Regina into the two hospitals as opposed to three was recommended by the Regina District Board after considerable study. And I know that the Regina board has done a considerable amount of public hearings and education around their decision there.

The decision essentially, I think, was based on three criteria. By consolidating into the two centres as opposed to the three, there will be an improvement offered in patient care because of the concentration in two of the skills and the technology and the expertise. It will be more cost effective, without doubt, to provide the services out of two facilities rather than three. And there are estimated operational savings of between 10 and \$12 million per year just simply by avoiding the extra building costs and duplication and triplication of equipment, so there are significant savings — which resources then may be available for other appropriate programing.

And with this kind of concentration, the Regina District Board is very confident that they'll be able to recruit more medical specialties and specialists to this community and this province.

It needs to be always re-emphasized, I believe, that in the planning towards 2000 and towards the consolidation of all these clinical services in two buildings rather than in three, that programs are not being lost, that the programing will remain the same, being offered out of two buildings rather than out of three.

Now there are some capital expenditures to accomplish this. In addition to the renovations that we've recently announced to the

Allan Blair cancer clinic, estimates that it may reach to about 86 million to accomplish this rationalization.

But again, I think it needs to be emphasized that programs are not being lost; that all of the existing programing now provided through the Plains hospital will be provided through the other two. There'll be no loss in programing.

I think it needs to be re-emphasized also that the Plains building itself requires some renovation and would have required that renovation even to continue as a hospital. And that it needs to be also emphasized that the Plains Health Centre . . . that building will not stand idle, but there will be, over the years, valuable use made of that property.

But what is achieved by consolidating in the two is a better quality of care for the people of Regina and the people of southern Saskatchewan; significant cost saving — 10 to \$12 million a year; and finally, an ability for us I think better to attract specialists in the future.

Mr. Toth: — This question comes from Marie Heinrichs from Moose Jaw. I want to know why the government keeps cutting hospital beds, staff, etc. Soon we won't have any doctors left because they'll all be leaving for the States. Take some of the million dollar lottos and put them toward health care; get the nurses and doctors back.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I would want to reassure the individual who has written that, in fact in terms of doctor services in our province, we're actually seeing the numbers of physicians in Saskatchewan on the increase.

In March of last year, March of 1994, there were 722 family practitioners — GPs (general practitioners) — and there were 436 specialists, for a total of 1,158 practising physicians in our province. By March of this year, that number had grown to 739 family practitioners and 450 specialists, to a total of 1,189. And that pattern is happening, that growth in the number of physicians, is happening both in urban and in rural Saskatchewan.

(1200)

And so certainly physicians . . . well some do choose to leave our province to practise in other parts of Canada and some will choose to leave the province and practise even outside of Canada and the United States — and we know that our doctors are being recruited actively — that does happen and has happened for many years.

What is encouraging actually, is that in the pattern of the last four and five years, the numbers of physicians leaving our province is declining. In 1992, 118 physicians left our province. In 1993, 104 physicians left our province. In 1994, only 67 physicians left our province. And so in some ways, these are encouraging numbers.

Now we also know that we're working closely with the SMA

(Saskatchewan Medical Association) and the College of Physicians and Surgeons to ensure that we have an appropriate and adequate supply of both GPs and specialists. And this is an ongoing work that we want to work with our doctors, work with our institutions, and work with our communities to achieve.

Mr. Toth: — The question coming from a Joan Reiter from Redvers. What is the government doing to help promote and enforce the World Health Organization's international code of marketing for breast milk substitutes? The more formula-fed infants there are, the more hospitalizations we will have to deal with. It's time the government put dollars where its mouth is in the promotion of breast-feeding as a healthy choice.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I know for a fact, given our own life experience, that our public health nurses that work in Saskatchewan are very active in promoting the benefits of breast-feeding for infants. It is appropriate in my view that they should be doing so. It can be described, I think appropriately, as a good, preventative, long-term medicine.

In terms of the World Health Organization and so on, we're going to assemble what information we have in the department and we'll share that with the member. But I know our public health nurses are very supportive of breast-feeding and do as they are able to do in the communities to encourage and train and educate.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, this question comes from Linda Lisa Jones from Frontier. I want to know what you are doing to protect the lives of pre-born children?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — In terms of protection for the unborn, one of the things that we're working diligently to achieve in a variety of forms across Saskatchewan would be prenatal care for moms, both through diet and lifestyles. We know that the prenatal work with mothers will have a direct influence on the health of the newborn child and the long life and health of that child. And so what is key to us in programing these days is to work with mothers in prenatal care.

Mr. Toth: — This question comes from Marceline . . . I believe it's Millette, from Nipawin. I want to know why abortion is the leading cause of death in Saskatchewan even after a majority of Saskatchewan voters voted no to tax-funded abortions?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker we had quite a long, I think, discussion in this regard the other evening. I can repeat some of the comment I made at that time. The therapeutic abortion procedure is provided in Saskatchewan in our publicly funded hospitals to this day because of this government's respect of the laws of Canada and the various court decisions which have been made across Canada.

As I indicated to the member last time we discussed this, we took the result of the plebiscite very seriously, although I may say that when the government of the day proposed a plebiscite, I believe that government had exactly the same body of legal opinion that has been provided to our government.

However, following the plebiscite during the last election, we diligently sought out legal advice, both internal to the province and external to the province, all of which would indicate — and this is consistent across Canada as this member will know and as the member of the Liberal caucus will know — that it is not an option for a provincial government to remove funding for the therapeutic abortion procedure lest one violates the charter of rights, lest one violates the Canada Health Act, and so on. And members will know the provinces which have endeavoured to do so have failed in that endeavour.

What then, Mr. Chair, is an appropriate response? We believe that the appropriate response is to provide, within our publicly funded institution, the therapeutic abortion procedure.

Not to do that, Mr. Chair, will mean that it will be provided in private clinics. And that is not something that this government or this political party has ever supported. If members opposite would desire the abortion procedure not to be provided in the publicly funded circumstance, then what they would be recommending is that it be provided in the privately owned clinics. We do not take that view.

Mr. Chair, it has been an important endeavour of our government, never undertaken by the former government, to establish a Family Planning Advisory Committee to deal with all of the issues around the unwanted pregnancy, teen pregnancy, to begin a program of appropriate education and to provide resources, particularly to young people, that they can be making responsible choices in their lives.

It has been an initiative of this government to provide the kind of resources that are going to be required by teen moms, whether it be through pilot projects now in the school setting where there may be day care within the school or closely associated to the school. These kinds of projects, this kind of caring, and this kind of education, Mr. Chair, is the way that we believe is appropriate for government to proceed in these times.

Mr. Toth: — This question comes from Maria Ediger from Saskatoon. I want to know why the health care system will not cover my daughter's speech therapy after six years of age. She attends an independent school. What about a drug plan, even though if only for children? We are a moderate income family and keep paying and paying with no return.

The Chair: — I wonder if at this point the members would grant the Chair leave to make an introduction?

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Van Mulligen: — I want to draw the attention of the members to a group of adult students seated in the Speaker's gallery. There's approximately 50 students. They're studying English as a second language at the University of Regina. They're accompanied by Christopher Gas and Laura Roszell.

This is an annual visit for this class to the legislature. I'm not sure whether it's because they see us as being extraordinarily skilled in the use of the English language, or whether in addition to learning about the English language they are also here to learn about our democratic institutions. But whatever the case, I would ask the members in the universal language to bid them a very warm welcome this afternoon. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32

Item 1

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, in terms of the provision of speech therapy, the Department of Health does provide the program, does provide speech therapists, for preschool youngsters. The service is provided by the Department of Health for preschool.

After school age, that same service is provided through the Department of Education in the public school system. If one opts . . . or the publicly funded school system. In one opts to a private school, one then would recognize whether or not the private school provides the speech therapy.

But up until school age, the programs are provided by the Department of Health; beyond school age, the speech therapy programs are provided through the Department of Education in the publicly funded schools.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, this question comes from Roger Fortier from Debden. I want to know, are you in accordance with the practice of painlessly putting to death persons who have incurable, painful, or distressing diseases or handicaps; in other words, mercy killing?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — No, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Toth: — This question comes from K. Moore from Moose Jaw. I want to know how could you come with 29 million to build that white elephant named Providence Place in Moose Jaw when health care has been cut to the bone elsewhere. I see beds closed and nurses run off their feet because we can't afford to pay and yet we can waste money to replace two good facilities and lose 55 beds and a whole lot of jobs. Common sense has gone from government.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the question of the construction of Providence Place in Moose Jaw has been a project that has been planned and dreamed for in the community of Moose Jaw for many years, for well over a decade. The Sisters of Providence and other health care providers in Moose Jaw planned and dreamed for this project. It was not accomplished in the 1980s; it has now been accomplished.

Mr. Chair, the construction of Providence Place has brought together under one roof, not only the long-term care beds that formerly were available in the Providence Hospital and St. Anthony's Home, but has brought together the most current programing and thinking in terms of geriatric and long-term care.

And so the new facility will offer not just long-term care but will offer geriatric assessment, will offer adult day care and day hospital programs, and consolidates that expertise in a new facility that will serve the community for many, many, many years.

In addition, by consolidating the acute care services, the hospital services, at the Union Hospital, again there have been significant improvements to the hospital; significant improvements to the programing that's being offered in the hospital with the new women's and maternity centre, with the day hospital being offered now at the Providence.

It is a large investment of money — \$22 million from the province of Saskatchewan and \$7 million being raised locally by the Sisters of Providence and the Providence Place committees. It is a large investment of money, but I would indicate to the individual who has written the letter, this expenditure of money will, number one, save significant dollars in terms of annual operation costs and has provided a facility that will serve Moose Jaw, and particularly the seniors of Moose Jaw and the pioneers of our province, for many, many years into the future.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, this question comes from Kinga Duchin from White City. I understand the government is trying to legislate smoking at the workplace. I have great concern and wish something could be done to adults who smoke in their vehicle and in their homes with children present. I think there should be more concern for the innocent children.

(1215)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, as the member will know, and I'm sure he will inform the writer, we have taken some steps as government in terms of smoke in the workplace when it pertains to government. And we have felt that it is appropriate that we always begin at home. And I know that all members of the House have supported some of the initiatives of the dangers of smoke in the workplace and in confined spaces.

We are not, at this point, looking at the kind of legislation I think that your writer would desire, which would legislate right down to the interior of a car. We approach this, I think appropriately, through education — through public health education — whether that education comes through the media or through the schools or through other forms, like the health update that we provide, or so on.

It is our view at this point that it's appropriate that we do the kind of education that should be done, recognizing that there is a significant danger for anyone who is exposed to second-hand

smoke.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, this question comes from Orville Tallon from Lafleche. When ambulance service is more essential now than ever in south-west Saskatchewan, why is road ambulance so relied upon? Is air not more efficient, even in cost, than all the road equipment necessary?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the road ambulance system that we do have in Saskatchewan is certainly one of the best in Canada. There's no doubt about that.

And we've had the long and proud history in Saskatchewan of an air ambulance, an air ambulance service. That air ambulance service continues today as it has from the late 1940s. It is now based in Saskatoon. And in recent years, months and years, we have struck a new arrangement with St. Paul's Hospital who are now staffing the air ambulance. And it is an extremely valuable service to the people of Saskatchewan.

There has been some discussion about the provision of helicopter service. Each time that that discussion has been looked at, it is concluded very quickly that helicopters are not appropriate service, both by virtue of their limited, their limited coverage in terms of the distance they can travel, the intense expense.

We have a great system of road ambulance and we do have our continuing air ambulance, which there have been improvements in. And now in addition to those emergency services, we've now built the first responders program across Saskatchewan with literally, literally, hundreds and hundreds of people volunteering of their lives and time to become first responders. I'm told that the total now has reached 1,200 first responders across the province.

We're beginning to look at the importance of communication for emergency services. I was very happy to announce just a couple of weeks ago two pilot projects, one in the north-west of the province, one in the south-west of the province, in terms of the ambulance and emergency personnel communication using the newest technology from SaskTel called Fleet Net. Emergency services are key to our security, no matter where we live in Saskatchewan. And we're working hard to ensure that we have the best emergency services that we can provide.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, this question comes from M. Parchewsky from Saskatoon: I want to know how the Saskatoon Health Board is allowed to spend \$5 million to renovate the old portion of the Royal University Hospital to accommodate moving maternity services. The west side public deserves to have these services remain at St. Paul's Hospital. More seriously, in these economic times, how can they justify this kind of expenditure?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I am well aware that the Saskatoon District Board studied all of the issues around provision of services, of acute care services, including maternity and emergency and the various services desired and

needed by the people of Saskatoon. I think that question is better directed to the Saskatoon District Board who I know have done a fair bit of public education around these issues but could, I'm sure, provide complete and detailed explanations to the individual.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, could you allow me one more "Mr. Premier I want to know"? This is the last one I have here. It comes from P.J. Lakeman from Regina.

I want to know, if Saskatchewan has such a good health care program, why do I have to take my son to Alberta in order to have proper care? My son has neurofibromatosis, I believe is how the word is pronounced. I was not only talked down to but I also failed to get an accurate diagnosis in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I think all that I can say in this regard, because it is an individual case and it sounds like a clinical issue, that we'll just have to look into it and try and get back to the individual. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I move we report progress.

General Revenue Fund Labour Vote 20

The Chair: — Before we proceed to item 1, I would ask that the minister please introduce the officials who have joined us here today.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Directly behind me is Jeff Parr; to his right is Graham Mitchell. To my left, in the front row, is Janis Rathwell; and to my right is Brian King, the deputy minister of Labour.

Item 1

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to the minister and his officials. I'm not the normal critic, Mr. Chairman, on labour issues, but have a number of things which I wish to ask the minister about today in consideration of his estimates.

Mr. Minister, earlier today I raised an issue in the Assembly dealing with the rights of individuals to have a vote pertaining to union certification and have received some considerable correspondence and phone calls from individuals working at Brown Industries at Drinkwater, Saskatchewan, who are very unhappy with the way that the Labour Relations Board has implemented union certification there through the retail, wholesale workers' union. And they have provided a list of names. In fact, 56 out of 81 in-scope employees . . . people have been unionized, and they are quite upset with the way that they've been handled.

And I guess the basic point is here, as you were warned and others in your government during changes to The Trade Union Act last year, that this is what would happen when people were

denied the right of a free and democratic vote, a secret ballot in fact, to determine what their future should be. And it seems that there are technicalities that have been used to make this process go forward. And I don't believe, Mr. Minister, that it's right and proper that technicalities should get in the road of people being able to express their free and democratic will.

So, Mr. Minister, why, in the case of these employees, why would they be denied a secret ballot vote to determine the future of their working place?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — I point out to the hon. member that there's nothing unusual and nothing new about the way the certification occurred. It's happened in this same manner for many, many years in Saskatchewan under various administrations, so there's no change that has taken place in The Trade Union Act or the policy of the Labour Relations Board that caused this situation that you referred to as being something newer or something different.

The Labour Relations Board determines support at the time of the application. In this case, over 50 per cent of the workforce signed cards of support. The union took those cards of support to the Labour Relations Board. And based on time-honoured traditions and policies of the board, they allowed certification for the particular workplace that you refer to.

There are provisions that if employees who have contacted you obviously are concerned about this, there's a period called an open period in which this can be reviewed, which is 30 to 60 days before the anniversary date of certification. And if these people are contacting you with concerns, that would be the proper process in which to proceed, so that those that are opposed to the certification of that particular workplace have an avenue of recourse. But their avenue of recourse is not the one that was described. In terms of the petition that they put forward, the Labour Relations Board in this case acted properly in accordance with the rules and the policy.

Mr. Swenson: — Well my understanding, Minister, of the dates involved here are that that 60-day window of opportunity may already be gone by — that there is no opportunity for these people. The union applied on January 16, '95 for certification and then the date was set for a hearing. Mr. Minister, can you tell me if this situation still has an open window for people to make application under the current legislation?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Yes, as I described in my first answer, the open period occurs, as I understand it, 30 to 60 days before the anniversary date of certification, so that period has not even arrived yet. That would be some point into the future. So yes, there is an avenue for those employees.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, would you think it proper that people were asked to sign an attendance card, and only afterwards were told that this wasn't an attendance card but was in fact a union certification card? Would you consider that to be a proper process?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well that's speculation. I don't know whether that occurred or not. But if someone misrepresented a situation, I don't agree with anyone in any situation who would misrepresent a situation. I don't know whether this happened or whether it didn't happen. If there is a case of fact where misrepresentation has been made, I, along with all people, should be appalled with misrepresentation. That's what you describe. If in fact that was beared out, yes, I would have trouble with that and I would not support misrepresentation of facts.

(1230)

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, why, as I understand the process took place, that on the day that this particular certification order took place, that 10 individuals indeed notified the board — which clearly would have meant that there wasn't a majority in place — but were told that because they faxed in their complaint that that wasn't proper?

And I am told in legal circles that a fax is considered a legal document. You and I as ministers have to constantly be aware of the fact that when we put a fax out that that indeed is our . . . if our signature is on it it's considered to be something we take very, very seriously. Why would the board not wish to accept something which in most areas is considered a legal document?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — My officials tell me that what you relate is not quite the case. The issue is not one of whether it was a fax or whether it was not a fax. The issue is that the petition arrived at a later date than the actual application had arrived. And I suppose the theory behind this is, if you have a petition which happens a good deal later than the actual application or leading to the certification, that it would give the parties some advantage, other parties a disadvantage, in terms of the due process of arriving at whether or not the workplace should be certified.

I believe that in this case the Labour Relations Board acted in a diligent and fair manner as per the historical democratic rights that they would look at, as well as board policy and past cases that have come before the Labour Relations Board. And so I don't believe that the situation you described is in fact what transpired. The reason for the rejection was not because it was a fax.

Mr. Swenson: — Could you tell the Assembly, Mr. Minister, then, what time lag we're talking about here between the issue as you outline it? What kind of time frame are we dealing with here, given that you've already told the Assembly that this is not an automatic certification, that indeed there is a trial period and that there is a period of time where employees can be dissatisfied with the process and in fact have this process changed.

Can you tell us what time frame, then, we're talking about here?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — The only time that the Labour Relations Board, as I understand it, would accept a petition from workers

who do not want to be certified by the union, is in fact during the open period. And that period would be 30 to 60 days before the anniversary date of certification. And so this is, I said before, a period into the future whereby they can make their views known to the Labour Relations Board.

In this case, it's been a long-accepted practice that whereby there are valid cards signed by more than 50 per cent of the employees, that the certification will in fact be granted. And that's exactly what happened in this case.

So the recourse of the employees that you're representing here today by your questions, would be in that 30- to 60-day period before the anniversary date of certification. So if you took the certification date and counted into the future so that you have one year from the date of certification, then you count back 30 to 60 days, that is the period in which they can have their objections be known by the Labour Relations Board.

Mr. Swenson: — That's not the question I asked you, Minister. I asked you, from the time that the board had made up its mind until this — in the view of the board — illegal petition came forward, I wanted to know what the time frame was. The employees tell me that some of them attempted on the day of certification to have the board notified that they were not happy with the process. So I think you should tell me when this petition came in and why it was disallowed.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well I understand your question more clearly now, but the answer is in fact the same. Unless there was evidence of fraud, evidence of misrepresentation, the open period is the only time in which the employees who do not want to be certified would be able to petition for decertification of the union.

For example, the four people that I introduced here today, plus myself, if we all worked in one workplace, and the three gentlemen around me here signed cards to certify in . . . to join a union, and the person to my left and myself did not sign the cards, we have no recourse — the two of us — until such time as 30 to 60 days prior to the anniversary date of the certification.

It's much like an election campaign. When you have the vote, if there's two people, for example, running in an election campaign and you get 51 per cent of the vote and I get 49 per cent of the vote, I have no recourse. You got the majority of the vote in that particular situation.

In this case, very clearly, there were over 50 per cent of the employees signed the cards. The certification occurred. Those that do not want to be part of the union, their only recourse at this point in time under the law and the regulations and the rules and the time-honoured democratic process which leads to some of these things coming before the Labour Relations Board, is — that there is in fact a certification for the union to be in place — the only recourse those employees would have would be at the 30- to 60-day period prior to the anniversary date of certification.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, you told me earlier that the issue wasn't of whether the fax was legal or not, that it came in too late, that this process couldn't be stopped, even though there were employees who felt that they had misrepresentation of what actually was going on there.

Are you telling me that in that circumstance the Labour Relations Board would not want to get to the bottom of the issue of whether misrepresentation was used, particularly when there were all of these employees, the vast majority of them, signing a petition and sending it in, and they still don't care that people would have that much concern about what went on during the process? Are you saying that it wouldn't have mattered if it was the original that went in, that it still would be disallowed even though that was one of the reasons it was given back to these people, that because it was a fax and not the original?

What if they'd sent the original in? Would the same process then be in place?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — That's not the issue — whether it's a fax or whether it's an original. The time in which . . . If there's allegations of misrepresentation, fraud, any kind of illegalities, unfair labour practice, anything that might be out of the ordinary in terms of fair play in certification or decertification, those things are argued before the board at the time of certification. Both parties — those that want the union, those that don't want the union — have the opportunity to appear before the board and file their side of the story. The board then has to look at all of the evidence. The issue is, is that process had already passed, and I assumed that if these people want to do it later, they had been missed in the process somewhere.

So the issue is not whether it was a photocopy or an actual letter. They had missed the period by which they could argue that there was some kind of wrongful activity took place. They now have the next window of opportunity to do that during the open period. The open period is the period from 30 to 60 days prior to the anniversary date of certification. So the fax or the original is not the issue here. There's some misunderstanding in this somewhere.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, that's what these people were told. They were clearly told that. Mr. McLaren was clearly told that by someone at the board. Now why would they throw that . . . If that's a red herring . . . if that's what you're telling the Assembly, that's strictly a red herring. Why would somebody over there do that? That doesn't make any sense to me, that they would say to the employees, well you sent in a fax. You didn't send the original; therefore your petition's invalid. Why would that red herring be used?

I mean as I understand the process. You have the ability now to impose the first contract. Before this process ever gets to where you say it has to go, you're going to let this union, using whatever tactics they want, go through that workplace for the next 10 months. You're going to impose a settlement if one can't be reached mutually. And then after all of this transpires,

then you say, well folks, on the petition, have you still got the courage? Have you still got the will to stand up?

And even then at the end of the day, they aren't going to get a secret ballot. They aren't going to have it set up so they can walk into a polling station and cast their ballot as the people do when they elect you and I. After all of this is done, you'll still find some way to thwart the process. Mr. Minister, why would someone over there tell them then that their fax wasn't the original, and that's why they were disallowed?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well I would like you to provide me with that evidence. And if someone at the Labour Relations Board in fact told those employees what you say was told to them, then I would take action on that because at the Labour Relations Board . . . it's a quasi-judicial body. It's inappropriate for politicians to intervene directly in cases. But if someone is not following due process — the Labour Relations Board — or giving inaccurate information, you provide me with the evidence that you say you have, and I will investigate and report back to you.

So if you've got some evidences to that, please provide that to me. Send over the copies by the page, and I'll look into it. And if someone misrepresented something from our side on the Labour Relations Board, I'll deal with that.

(1245)

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, I'm going to get back to the individuals who have contacted myself and others over this issue, and they did not provide me with any correspondence that says that to the effect. And I'm going to ask them if they have correspondence to that effect or who they were talking to that verbally told them that because if this is a non-issue totally, then it had better not have been raised as an issue with these individuals because I would consider that very serious if this has nothing to do with the process.

But I go back to the premiss, Mr. Minister, that we made to you and to others during the course of this debate, that nowhere in this process do we ever have the opportunity for people to vote, that we simply can have cards or pieces of paper signed by individuals on the work floor, that those cards . . .

And I go back to the fact that a lot of people . . . when they first go into a large workplace, if you're the new guy on the block, the low guy on the totem-pole. You've never had a job before perhaps. You go into this situation. Somebody says, hey, you going to be one of the boys; you better sign one of these. And they don't have the experience. They don't have the forethought to think about what is going on. When they do, it appears that it's too late, that they are now lumped in. And they said that for the next ten months before you have an opportunity to review, you're going to have to live with these people. You're going to have to work with them. You're going to have to be in the mix with them doing whatever. And if you've got people in there that are on an agenda of union certification, they are going to make it very difficult. And people all around this province are

starting to see the implications of the proposals of this government.

And, Mr. Chairman, I don't know why the minister, this one and the past one who likes to chirp from his seat every once in awhile, would not want to have workers exercise a vote, a free and democratic vote, on these issues rather than going through this process which seems to have all sorts of pitfalls in it for people that want to express their free and democratic rights.

In this case we have clearly got names on petitions, 56 out of 81. In my view that would be a very nice majority if I were running for an election. I'm sure the member from North Battleford would agree that would be a nice, healthy majority . . . Not afraid of having those names put before this Legislative Assembly, not at all, not afraid that their name is here saying . . . And I'll read the petition to the minister:

Petition for the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board as per letter. We, the undersigned, present this petition for your consideration as a show of non-support for the union certification. Based on this petition and the afore-submitted letter, it is our hope that you will grant us a vote. In a fair and democratic society, everyone is given a chance to let their voice be heard.

That's the petition. That to me, Mr. Minister, strikes at the very basics of our society. They're not hiding. They're not weaselling. They're not asking for something that is foreign to this province or to this country. And yet they run up against a brick wall of you and your government and your legislation and your pro-union bent. What is wrong with these people, is what I ask you. They cover every walk of life. What is wrong with their wish? What is so terrible about this? In the eyes of anyone in this province, what is so terrible about a petition like that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — I guess what's wrong with those people is that they come to you to misrepresent the facts. And I have nothing other than that. I think these are likely all great individuals. What's wrong with them that they would think it necessary to come to you, so you can misrepresent the facts of the situation here on the floor of the legislature like you misrepresent other facts on the floor of the legislature

There's nothing different about this situation than when you, sir, were sitting around the cabinet table in the administration previous to this government. Nothing is different.

You say you have 56 of 81 signatures on a petition? Is that what you said?

An Hon. Member: — That's what it adds up to.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Okay, 56 of 81. I maintain to you that when the cards were signed for certification, there was in excess of 50 per cent at that time.

I'll tell you what happens in some of those petitions like that . . .

is that the cards for certification are signed with some degree of privacy. When some people find out that there has been enough signed for certification, that's where the coercion happens . . . is when they go around and coerce employees by peer pressure and other means to sign the petition. And that's why the petition came in later than the certification because they didn't have that evidence at the time of the hearing . . . is what I would assert to you. So you, misrepresenter of the facts, that's what you are. That's what you are.

And by the way, there is a system to provide a vote. In cases where there's between 25 per cent and 50 per cent of people who signed cards, the Labour Relations Board will order a vote.

In this case, quite clearly the board determined that over 50 per cent of the people signed cards for certification. Now I don't know how much longer it was later the petition got going, but it looks to me that somebody — either an employer or an employee — said we don't want a union involved in here even though the majority of the employees wanted it. They then would have gone around and got likely the most right wing of the employees they could find to go around and coerce the other employees that maybe did or did not sign a card, and people would be scared to tell the employer that they signed a card for certification.

And that's why something like that objection has to be filed at the time of the hearing before the Labour Relations Board so that people who want to have the free choice of whether to join a union or not join a union can't be harassed into signing petitions through coercion of threats of losing their jobs. That's why the process is like it is.

That's been the process for many, many years. It was the process under the Progressive Conservative administration from 1982 until 1991. It was the process under the Blakeney administration previous to that. It was the process under the Ross Thatcher administration previous to that.

And don't you come here before the legislature and try and beat on the working men and women of this province for your own personal gain in a way that you misrepresent the facts to the public through this democratic Legislative Assembly. Shame on you.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:54 p.m.