

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Clerk:** — According to order a petition regarding SaskPower presented on April 26 has been reviewed pursuant to rules 11(6) and (7) and is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7) they are hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — It is my distinct pleasure today to welcome and introduce five very distinguished guests to the members of the Legislative Assembly. Seated in the Speaker's gallery we have none other than the 1993 World Women's Curling Champions.

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

**The Speaker:** — I would just like to tell our distinguished guests that this standing ovation doesn't happen to everyone that I introduce.

I would like to at this time introduce the curlers individually and ask them to stand and remain standing. Ms. Sandra Peterson, skip; Ms. Jan Betker, third; Ms. Joan McCusker, second; Ms. Marcia Gudereit, lead; Ms. Anita Ford, fifth, alternate, and coach.

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

**The Speaker:** — Thank you very much. The members of the Legislative Assembly will have an opportunity to welcome and congratulate our guests following question period. We'll now continue with introduction of guests.

**Mr. Solomon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly this afternoon, 72 grade 5 students from McLurg School who are seated in the west gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Graham, Mrs. Taylor, and Mrs. Grant.

I'm very pleased to see them here this afternoon. I hope they enjoy the proceedings and their tour. I look forward to meeting with them afterwards to have a brief visit to discuss some of the proceedings they have witnessed this afternoon. I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming these students to the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two groups of people to introduce today. They are seated in your gallery, four women who have a particular focus in dealing with matters that are before the Assembly and I won't mention them. I'd like them to stand. They're wearing the white ribbons. And I think each person here knows who they are. And I'd like the Assembly to welcome these people to the Assembly here today.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, also seated in your gallery are some school students, grade 8 school students, 14 in number, from the Pense School. And I want to indicate that the member for Thunder Creek gave me the opportunity to introduce you, and I consider that a privilege.

They're here together with their teacher, Mr. Doug Sthamann. And I want to welcome you to the Assembly and I'll be meeting with you later on to visit a little bit about what goes on in the Assembly, and we can talk about various things then. And I want the members of the Assembly to welcome those people here today.

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

**Mr. Devine:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to join with the Speaker in congratulating the Peterson rink, and particularly to say congratulations to some people who are fairly close to me, and that is Anita Ford's family. Her husband Gary is here, who happens to be my cousin. My aunt and uncle, Roy and June Ford are in the gallery as well as some newlyweds, Mr. and Mrs. Ewald Wagner who happen to be Anita's parents, and her father. They're celebrating as well.

And I just want to say on behalf of the legislature, it's really nice to see them all here and in such good spirits. And we're so proud of you. Thank you.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Premier's New York Speech

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Yesterday my colleague asked you about a Canadian Press story that said that your speech in New York included comments about increased farm receipts. In response to this question you, sir, graciously offered to provide the House with the text of your speech. The Premier said, and I quote:

I followed these notes very carefully, and I indeed distributed them to the media . . . I made no mention of farm receipts . . .

Now, Mr. Premier, we felt it was very imperative that

we follow up and indeed see what was said or what actually took place, and we were very concerned. And our staff followed up and contacted Canadian Press. We find out, Mr. Premier, that indeed what Canadian Press says and what you have said do not quite line up. Canadian Press confirmed that the speech you were giving out yesterday was not the same one that you gave to them at all. The speech you gave them did indeed contain comments about increasing farm revenues in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Premier, it would seem to me that by telling this Assembly that the speech you gave out yesterday is the same one you gave to the media, you've misled the House and the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Premier, I would like to know how you explain this misrepresentation.

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, the record will show what I said yesterday. But I don't believe, if my memory serves me correctly, that I said the speech which Canadian Press got was a speech which I delivered in New York. Whether that's the statement I made yesterday or not is really, in my judgement, irrelevant. What I did give to the members yesterday was the text of the speech which I actually delivered in New York.

I have to tell the member also that after I left question period, one of the people in my staff indicated that it is decidedly possible that the text that you referred to, that the Canadian Press received, was an early draft which did have that reference but never was actually delivered. What was delivered was what was presented to you and to your leader yesterday.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to the Premier. Mr. Premier, I believe you've indicated that there was the possibility that maybe the speech given to Canadian Press, as Canadian Press has confirmed with us, they received a different copy than what you handed out in this Assembly.

And it would appear to me, Mr. Premier, that it would be appropriate to apologize to the Assembly and even apologize to Canadian Press for having presented one speech in this Assembly — the copy of a speech — and yet having given possibly a different one to the Canadian Press.

Why not just come clean and apologize to the Assembly and to Canadian Press?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't believe I have anything to apologize for because I have indicated to the hon. member that the speech which I gave to New York city is the one that I've delivered over to him.

There have been drafts which have changed. In fact the speech which I actually delivered in New York was being worked on, on Monday and Monday evening in New York, before I delivered it at Tuesday noon.

So it's very possible that the script which was distributed to Canadian Press contained those words. If there was any attempt . . . any interpretation of an attempt to mislead, I totally withdraw that; that is not the intention. I simply remain in the position which I said yesterday, which is that the speech which I gave yesterday is the same speech which you have and that's in fact what was said.

I think that explains the disparity, if there is any disparity.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again to the Premier, and I believe the problem, Mr. Speaker, the problem we face today is indicative of how the Premier operates.

First of all, people in Saskatchewan really don't know where the Premier's coming from. It seems that the Premier is just telling us, well, he may have . . . the script he gave us was the one he gave to the business community, but he may have given a different one to the Canadian Press.

You go to New York and tell one story; you come back here to Saskatchewan and tell a different story. Then you try to substantiate what you did by providing two different texts of the same speech.

Mr. Premier, how many different versions of your address to the New York business community are there? Will you present them to the Assembly today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, this question really has got to take the cake. And believe me, the opposition surely to goodness must have more important questions to ask, Mr. Speaker. But perhaps they don't.

I can assure the member that the speech which I gave to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday was the text of the speech which I actually in fact delivered in New York. The explanation I've given to you already in the two previous questions — there may be . . . for all I know, there may have been several drafts kicking around in advance of the one that was delivered, and I don't deny that to be the case. All I'm telling you is what I spoke and what I delivered was represented in the notes which was given to the opposite members there. So that's the situation.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, one has to wonder exactly who's trying to cover up and who's trying to hide what. When the Premier starts to laugh and conduct

himself in the way he has today, it's a strong indication that something is hurting over there. In fact, when I look at the press release yesterday — Romanow citing increased farm receipts — did the Premier say that or did he not say that?

On one hand he tells us he didn't; on the other hand the press is telling us this is what they indeed heard. Who heard the truth? What were . . . Were you exactly saying the truth, or do you have one story in New York and another one here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Premier?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry that the hon. member is so agitated that I have reason to smile, but I have to tell the hon. member I do have reason to smile. We have finally turned the corner on the huge deficit that you and your former premier left behind. We have finally turned the corner . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — We have finally turned the corner on the wellness model, and people are beginning to understand and accept it. The prospects are looking better all around. And I've said to the hon. member — I don't know how many times; I will tell him one more time — what I delivered in New York and what I said in New York is the text that was given to you, sir. I invite you to read it. That is the position.

You ask about the Canadian Press story, you ask the Canadian Press about the story; I told you about a possible explanation. You can accept it or reject it; you can do anything you want with it. That happens to be the truth.

So it may irritate you to understand the truth, and it may irritate you that I'm smiling. But I tell you, I have a great deal of time containing my laughter at the low level of questioning in an important day like this in question period.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again to the Premier. I find it very interesting that the Premier talks about Saskatchewan having turned the corner, and yet the headline reads: "Recession has hurt Saskatoon." You've talked to the farm communities. You talk to the farmers trying to get their crop in the ground this year. You talk to the people who are losing their jobs because of your decisions in health care. In fact this article yesterday, its text did not detail the government's decision to cut financing to dozens of small hospitals.

It seems, Mr. Speaker, you say one thing in one place and another thing in another place like you did prior to the election. You told rural hospitals that everything is okay. You came to Regina and said no, we've got to make some tough decisions. Mr. Premier, people just are getting to the point where they don't really believe you any more, and that's the thing that is at stake here. Your credibility is at stake.

Why will you not just take a moment to admit to the people of Saskatchewan that yes, you made a mistake, Yes, you apologized for that mistake and will get on with life. Why won't you do that, Mr. Premier?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, if the members of the Conservative Party wish to talk about credibility, I'm prepared to talk about credibility.

It was, after all, the questioner's party and government that said in 1986 that the deficit would only be \$380 million. And right after the election they came in with \$1.2 billion deficit. And that's credibility.

It was the government of the day that said that in fact all of this deficit and debt was manageable. And only when we opened up the books did we find that the province was teetering on the verge of bankruptcy. That's credibility. I could continue about the credibility. I don't think I have to take any suggestions from the hon. member opposite about credibility.

And if the member persists in wanting to fight the 1991 election all over again, I say to him, good luck. Someday, somewhere, somehow, he may wake up and in his own mind he may conclude that they won the election. But I want to tell him and the member from Estevan, you didn't. The people won; you lost; we're here; we turned the corner; we're building a brand-new, stronger province.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, here again we see a Premier trying to cover his tracks. The Premier went to the people in 1991 and led people to believe that there was so much that he could offer — that there was more for health care, there was more for education, he was going to do so much more for agriculture, he was going to do so much more to build the jobs in this province. And what do we see? People leaving the province. Farmers having difficulty. On one hand he says there's increased revenues; therefore the province has turned the corner, we're on our way up. And yet on the other hand, talk to the people around here.

Mr. Premier, why don't you take a minute and talk to the people? Will you take that minute and in fact take a close look at what you said and apologize to this Assembly and to the Canadian Press for misleading them?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — This is absolutely childish, Mr. Speaker, and embarrassing. It's up to them what they want to do. They can continue this line.

I will only simply say this. I will again at the end of question period, when the rules permit me, Mr. Speaker, I will give them yet the umpteenth copy of what we campaigned on in 1991. It's called "Let's do it . . . The Saskatchewan Way" and it says this: first things first, open up the books, and then talks about

new directions; talks about the PST (provincial sales tax) that these people tried to put on in harmonizations; talks about our attempts to have open and honest, accountable government and work for quality of life.

I'll mail this over to them again. That's what we campaigned on. We said that we would open up the books and work therefrom. Now when we opened up the books we saw exactly what kind of a mess that was there. I want to tell the House — and the members opposite themselves know this to be the case because their own constituents are telling them — they know that what we are doing is the right thing, that we have turned the corner, that we have a horrible task in front of us left behind by nine years.

That's why you people are sitting third and so badly third and will be sitting so badly third for probably decades yet politically. They know that we're doing this and we're doing the right job. And you can represent anything you want. You can say anything with respect to the Canadian Press. I've given you the text, the text that I delivered to New York. That's the truth of the matter. Please accept it and just read it and understand it. It was a heck of a good speech, by the way.

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

**Mr. Devine:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, just so that we can get you on the record one more time while you're so delighted with this line of questioning, it says here in Canadian Press and I quote: Romanow cites increased farm receipts. And you said according to them in New York there's increased farm receipts and that's why the Saskatchewan economy is going to do well. That's why your plan is working.

Now you have a BBB credit rating. It's falling. You're worried about it . . . (inaudible) . . . no, no, ours was A; yours is a BBB. You've added over a billion dollars to the deficit and to the debt. You've added a billion dollars to the debt, and then you're in New York and you're quoted as saying: Romanow cites increased farm receipts. Then when you get home, the Wheat Pool and UGG (United Grain Growers Limited) and everybody else says, whoops, farm receipts are going to be cut in half this year.

Now we know why you might have been tempted to say farm receipts are up in New York, but it's not true. So you come home and we call you on it. And we say, farm receipts are in half. And you say, well it must have been a different speech.

Did you, Mr. Premier, actually say that farm receipts were increasing in the province of Saskatchewan when you were in New York city? Did you say that or not?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, for the fourth or fifth time, the answer is no, I did not. The

answer is what the speech is given. That's the answer.

**An Hon. Member:** — Blame the press.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — I'm not blaming anybody; I'm telling you . . . You asked me a question, and I'm asking the former premier . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, order. I gave the member from Estevan lots of time to ask his question, and I don't think there was very much interruption. I would like him to listen to the Premier's answer now.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I've given the answer to the hon. member. Before I take my place to complete my answer, I find it's passing strange from the member of Weyburn talking about credit ratings . . . Estevan, I'm sorry. There's something about him and credit ratings which is dangerous for the world. It was positively nearly fatal for the province of Saskatchewan on the downgrades that you administered to us.

And — low and behold! — would you know, Mr. Speaker, two weeks after he was appointed to the board of directors of Cominco, Cominco got a downgrade but the . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — I don't know what it is about you, sir. I don't know what it is about you, sir, but something about you and downgrades follows you just like Joe Btssplk in that cartoon that just is around all the time.

Now we have turned the corner here. You have left us a heck of a mess. Please understand that. We have turned the corner; we're trying to control the debt situation. What we need here is your understanding and your support and not the stretching of the truth. You know what the situation is; I've told you before. What that speech that I gave you was is the notes that I delivered to New York and the words that I gave in New York.

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

**Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, you're wrong on two accounts. Number one, you haven't turned the corner because the farm income is cut in half this year, and that's not turning the corner. That's terrible.

There's a recession on in Saskatchewan, particularly in Saskatoon. The food bank people, recipients are up 450 per cent. That's number one. You're not right in turning the corner.

And secondly, you are now saying you didn't say this in New York; therefore the media must have got it wrong. So you're now blaming the media.

You were down there trying to prop up your credit rating, which is BBB, knowing that farmers' income is going in half, there's a recession here, trying to prop

up your ideas, and when you get back home you get caught with your hands in the cookie jar.

Mr. Premier, are you now saying that the media has got the story wrong, that you didn't say that farm receipts were increasing in Saskatchewan? Are you saying that CP (Canadian Press) is wrong?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I said very early to the hon. member from Moosomin, I've said very early in the first questions that the member from Moosomin asked, very, very simply this. I said that the Canadian Press story . . . after I left question period yesterday, one of my officials said, when I asked him about this story, how was this because I did not use those words in the New York speech and I gave you a copy of the New York text speech, the answer is, it may very well have come from an earlier draft of a speech which was given.

I've said to the member before and I repeat again, that speech was being revised on an ongoing basis by myself right up until virtually Tuesday morning when I delivered it Tuesday noon.

**An Hon. Member:** — Why would it have been in there in the first place?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — So I repeat again to the member . . . Because I've given you why, the possibility of maybe why. You won't accept that, and that's the situation. So I mean, those are the notes that I've given. I've given them to the member opposite. I understand the farm receipts problem is a serious one. We know that's the case.

That's not what the Canadian Press says I say. But I told you what I said in New York. But you people, I mean you're like the Bourbons — you'll learn nothing and you remember nothing, and you'll be condemned to third place in opposition forever as a result.

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

#### SEDCO Appointments

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation). Mr. Minister, on April 13, SEDCO fired three vice-presidents. On April 22, SEDCO hired three new vice-presidents. According to the president of SEDCO, the three who were fired were all perfectly competent and will receive letters of recommendation from SEDCO.

Mr. Minister, why would SEDCO fire three perfectly capable vice-presidents and then back-fill these same positions just nine days later?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the member, just so he has things in

context, some examples of the staffing and the changes that have happened in SEDCO since the election.

I find it passing strange that the members opposite, who ran that corporation into the ground by investing in such things as GigaText and many other very, very bad deals, would have the audacity to stand in this House and be critical about a government that is downsizing and reorganizing that corporation. I mean it is just unheard of that they would believe that the mismanagement of that corporation would continue on.

We have announced downsizing of the corporation; from December, 1991 — there were 81 positions in that corporation — to May of 1993 where we will have 63 employees. So while you may want to focus on one or two positions, in actuality there have been a number of changes in that corporation. And some of the people have moved on to other jobs in the community. Some have been elevated within the corporation. And there will be continual change in SEDCO to try to revamp it in such a way so that the hemorrhaging of money which has gone on for 10 years comes to an end.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, it turns out that one of the new vice-presidents is none other than your former ministerial assistant and business partner, Zach Douglas. So what you did, Mr. Minister, was fire three people who were performing their jobs perfectly well in order to make room for a patronage appointment of your buddy.

After your election promises to eliminate patronage, you'd think that you wouldn't do those kinds of things, Mr. Minister. And in fact the president of SEDCO went on to say, I guess this is just an opportunity to test new blood. Is this, Mr. Minister, an opportunity to test new NDP (New Democratic Party) blood?

Isn't the so-called reorganization all about that, Mr. Minister? It's simply an opportunity to create a new position for your friend Zach Douglas who passes the NDP blood test. Is that the reason?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the members opposite that three individuals who were appointed by the president as VPs (vice-president) are Mr. Zach Douglas who has a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of Saskatchewan. From 1984 to the date he started working for our government he had his own consultant firm, and before that worked with the government in the Department of Tourism.

The other individual, Brent Krajewski, had been a member of your government in the economic policy division. He was also part of the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation under your administration. That's another one of the new VPs.

The other individual was Mike Fix, Michael Fix. You will know Michael because he worked in the . . . as a manager of loans and investment for the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation, hired by your administration in October 1980 . . . or 1990.

So I say to you very clearly that the three new vice-presidents are all qualified, some who were hired by your government and one who was hired by our government. I make no apologies about the fact that we're making changes at SEDCO which this year alone, as a result of the bad loans that your administration set up, lost \$47 million.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The vice-president that was hired by SEDCO, Mr. Zach Douglas, was your former assistant and he also was your former business partner. Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would tell us how much Mr. Douglas will be making? Is he qualified for the position other than just being your former assistant and business partner, and does he in fact pass the NDP blood test that we mentioned before?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that all three of the new VPs that were hired as the result of the recommendation from the president to the board of directors are all very competent. Some of them who I mentioned previously worked with your government, and an individual, Mr. Zach Douglas, who is very competent. And we will see, I think, as a result of these changes, a corporation that much better meets the needs of the business community than the operation that you had set up under the previous administration.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister says this is all about a restructuring program. But on the very same day that you fired these three vice-presidents, an article on the same page of the *Star-Phoenix* quoted you as saying you haven't decided how SEDCO is to be restructured.

Mr. Minister, why are you making major personal changes in the department of SEDCO if you haven't decided on what kind of SEDCO . . . what SEDCO's role is to be in the future? And why couldn't these three existing VPs have continued in their positions under a restructured SEDCO?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, if the member would listen to the answers rather than read the prepared questions that are put in front of them, he would remember that I have just indicated that we are downsizing SEDCO from 86 personnel positions to 63 in this year — not 3 but it will be 23 positions that

we're reducing.

Why are we doing that? Because I'll tell you the corporation was badly mismanaged by your government when they were in power. And I tell you I make no apologies, just . . . And not unlike a corporation, whether it's Chrysler or whatever, when they're losing money and have a bad operation, you make changes to the administration. And we are making those changes to SEDCO.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Minister, restructuring has become your government's word for the process of firing perfectly capable people and replacing them with NDP patronage appointments. You've restructured NDP hacks into Education. You've restructured NDP hacks into SaskTel. You've restructured NDP hacks into Crop Insurance. And now you're restructuring up a job at SEDCO for your NDP hack and friend, Zach Douglas, in SEDCO. How many more government employees can expect to be restructured, Mr. Minister?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, at a breakfast meeting with the Regina Chamber of Commerce that I attended with the Premier, the topic of SEDCO came up. And one of the things that is clear to the business community, and they're telling us very clearly, that the operation that you people had set up in SEDCO has to be changed and was a terrible mess. That's what they're telling us. And what they said to us is the changes we have made to date are impressive and they support.

And I want to say that you people are so out of touch with what's happening in the business world that they are amazed and we are amazed that you even represent 10 positions in the Assembly. And I'll tell you that unless you get a handle on the reality . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Why is the Premier on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — With leave, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce a motion, with the consent of the House Leader for the official opposition, respecting our special guests.

**The Speaker:** — I think the Premier has to wait till we get to orders of the day.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, the reality is the opposition has a series of Bills which they want to introduce; we have some. Rather than delay the tea, I'm asking leave of the Assembly, at their suggestion, in the management of the House, to move to this item now.

Leave granted.

## MOTIONS

## Recognition of World Curling Champions

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much, Mr. Opposition House Leader. I'll be very brief.

Mr. Speaker, and members of the House, at the conclusion of my remarks I'll be introducing a motion, seconded by the member from Rosthern, respecting our very special guests, the world champions.

And my remarks here are going to be very brief and to the point.

I think everybody acknowledges that an accomplishment of this magnitude really is something which should be noted and remembered. It's not very often that you can say you're a world champion in any endeavour, and an endeavour which is as difficult and as challenging as so much an instrumental part of Saskatchewan and Canada as curling is. Our special guests are the world curling champions.

It's a wonderful term: world curling champions. And they come from Saskatchewan. They represented us very well, very optimistically, and cheerfully all the time. They went through the Scott tournament of champions, won that, The World following on this. It's wonderful to have watched their progress through Geneva to victory, and we're all very proud of them. We'll be honouring them appropriately in a tea in a few moments.

And with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the official opposition House Leader, the member from Rosthern:

That we, the members of the Legislative Assembly, extend congratulations to the Peterson rink of Regina, including Sandra Peterson, skip; Jan Betker, third; Joan McCusker, second; Marcia Gudereit, lead; and Anita Ford, coach and fifth, for their superb performance and distinguished accomplishment in winning the World Women's Curling Championships.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pride and pleasure that I get up to second the motion made by the Premier. And as the hon. curling team has just noticed, it's not very often that we agree on things in this legislature. But certainly here the Premier has our heartfelt support in this motion that he has just made. And I want to go through just for a few moments with a few ideas as to why.

Because curling, Mr. Speaker, has a long history in Saskatchewan. Following suit of the European and Scottish rural workers who began curling with dry stone rocks on frozen lochs and moors, Saskatchewan people have grown to develop their own curling traditions. And these traditions, Mr. Speaker, have

continued on for generations. Keen competition, spirited audience participation, and strong, friendly heritage are key ingredients of the success of this sport.

Curling in Saskatchewan is not just a sport. It has over the years become a way of life. And it is the way many Saskatchewan friends and families, young and old, enjoy the long winter nights that we have in Saskatchewan.

And as the Premier said, Mr. Speaker, it isn't every day that Saskatchewan athletes receive worldwide recognition. But Sandra Peterson and her curling companions have done just that.

Starting at the city level, Sandra's team won the southern, then they won the provincials, and proceeded to the Scott Tournament of Hearts in Brandon, Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, one of the measures of importance of any game is the prestige of its championship play-offs. Hockey has the Stanley Cup. Baseball has the World Series. Football has the Grey Cup. And the world of curling has the fame of the Brier. And this has been built by men and women who have made it one of the famous sporting events in Canada. And I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that all members will agree that as much as any curling event in Canada, the Canadian curling championship has helped to unite Canada in a manner that has never been done and achieved through economics or through politics or virtually by any other means.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Sandra Peterson rink of Regina . . . excuse me. Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Peterson rink of Saskatchewan — because we're including all of you now — has achieved that goal in Geneva, Switzerland. Here the world watched five Saskatchewan women achieve the highest honour in the sport of curling.

Congratulations, Sandra, Jan, Joan, Marcia, and Anita, for a long-fought victory that you all deserve. And Saskatchewan, I'm sure, is joining me in saying that they are very, very proud of you. But I want to leave you with one short message and challenge. Next year you are going to be Team Canada, and what I want you to do is to be in the finals of the Brier curling against the other Saskatchewan team. Good luck. Congratulations.

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

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with my colleagues that curling is as much of Saskatchewan as snow and the Roughriders. And in Saskatchewan there are heroes everywhere, people who put their souls into what they do best.

Today we are saluting Sandra, Marcia, Joan, Jan, and Anita, for their fabulous performance at the Scott Tournament, the Canadian championships, and the Worlds. The thrills that you've given all of us have drawn right to the button of our hearts. All of us

applaud you, not just for your victory but for your years of sacrifice and dedication, your intensity, and your solid commitment to excellence in your sport.

Curling and politics have a lot of common terminology. Blank ends, lightweight, hacks, freezes, and my personal favourite, keeping the house clean.

Today in honour of your achievement, we are peeling off our political guards and burying our shots for a few moments so we can tell you how proud we are of you, Sandra, and your team. And I join with my other members of the Legislative Assembly in congratulating all of you.

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

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, members of the Assembly, it is my privilege to introduce to you, Sandra Peterson, skip. Sandra Peterson has been curling for 18 years and has established a national reputation as a first-class curler — and I think we might update that to read an international reputation, Mr. Speaker.

She is employed by the city of Regina as a supervisor at the South East Leisure Centre. When not curling or working, Sandra enjoys gardening, golf, and playing with her dog, P.J.

Now the notes I have, Mr. Speaker, state that Sandra admits to being forgetful and absent-minded; for example, leaving her purse in the airport lounge — and this was confirmed by her colleague, Jan, who looks after her. One day Sandra decided to iron out the wrinkles of her new curling pants, and in so doing, she melted a hole in the only pair she had to curl in.

Now none of these are characteristics, Mr. Speaker, that she displays on the ice, where she epitomizes a tremendous ability to concentrate. When asked what has been her most exciting moment to date, Sandra responds, I just lived it by winning the Canadian and World Championships. I would say the people of Saskatchewan and Canada were delighted to be able to share those moments with her. Ms. Sandra Peterson, skip.

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

**Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Speaker, members of the Assembly, it's my privilege to introduce Jan Betker, third. Jan Betker is a distinguished curler of 20 years and many championships, the 1984 Canadian Mixed Championships and three provincial ladies' championships, to name but a few.

Jan finds humour in everything, much to the delight of her team-mates. And she can do — this I have to see — facial impersonations of people and animals, keeping everyone in stitches. I'll just mention that a lot of the members of the legislature share that talent so maybe . . .

Jan looks after Sandra — this confirms the other comment — and her forgetfulness and generally

keeps her on track. When Jan is not curling, you'll find her working at Laurie Artiss, swapping stories on the latest curling techniques. She enjoys reading, golfing, and playing with her dog, Einstein, and says by far the most exciting moment to date was winning the world's women's curling championships.

Again, Ms. Betker has proved that although you are third, you can still be first. Jan Betker, third.

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

(1445)

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, Joan McCusker, second.

Joan McCusker is an elementary school teacher at Dr. A. E. Perry School in Regina and has curled for 16 years. She inherited her love for curling from her parents, who, along with her three brothers and three sisters, are all avid curlers.

Joan is the effervescent member of the team who maintains a high level of enthusiasm even in the most difficult of times. And it's stated that while going through security at the Regina airport to Switzerland, Joan was detained because the scissors in her handbag, used for cross-stitching, turned out to be a quarter of an inch longer than regulation allowed. As you know, in federal regulations, as in curling, a quarter of an inch is everything.

Fortunately for the team, Joan and her scissors arrived in Geneva on time. Joan manages to squeeze in time to cycle, jazzercise, play fastball, slow-pitch, and be a mom to her 8-month-old son, Rory, and wife to her husband Brian.

The most exciting moments to date for Joan were winning the world's women's curling championship and the birth of her son.

Mr. Speaker, Joan McCusker, second.

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

**Mr. Solomon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly, Marcia Gudereit, lead. Mr. Speaker, Marcia Gudereit is employed as a systems analyst by CDSL (Co-operators Data Services Limited) in Regina and has curled for 15 years.

She's the quiet member of the team with an infectious laugh that can be heard throughout the curling rink, invariably getting her team members going. And I might add that she's got them going all the way, so that's great.

When not curling or at work, Marcia enjoys softball, cycling, reading, cooking, and I'm informed she especially likes eating. She also enjoys spending time with her husband, Kerry, who I believe was a member



of last year's Brad Hebert Saskatchewan champions curling rink.

Motion agreed to.

Marcia has had three most exciting moments to date: winning the Canadian women's curling championship, the world women's curling championship, and getting married.

We are all very proud of her and her accomplishments. Congratulations to Marcia Gudereit, world champion lead.

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

**Mr. Kujawa:** — Mr. Speaker, members, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Anita Ford, fifth, alternate, and the coach of this team. Her colleagues say that she is the best-organized person that there is in the world. They couldn't get along without her. They need her to do the things that they do.

She is, I am told, a person who is quiet, with a dry sense of humour who rises to the occasion as she did in the daily draw which she won without having thrown a rock all week — this to the consternation of Marcia, who normally wins this event.

She works as the office manager of the Gold Square Physical Therapy Clinic. Besides that, she's been curling for some 30 years, finds time for softball, golfing, drawing, coaching, and helping her husband, Gary, on the farm.

This has to be special for anyone, and in 1990 I think it was special for her. She watched her daughters, Atina and Cindy, win the Canadian Junior Curling Championship, which got them to Glasgow for the championships the following year.

Anita Ford: fifth, alternate coach, world champion.

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

**Mr. Flavel:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to add my congratulations to the world curling champions, and a special one to the second, to Joan. And she's sitting there wondering why.

My constituency includes Raymore, Strasbourg, and Semans, where Joan was a teacher and the coach of the curling team up there, and coached the team that curled against, when my daughter Corrine skipped the team in Strasbourg. So on behalf of Last Mountain-Touchwood and Raymore and Semans area, we congratulate you. I will say that you look very well in red; it's a good colour.

I remember talking to Joan in the Strasbourg curling rink once and she said that she was looking for a team that took the curling a little more seriously, and I think you have finally found that team. You can't get much more serious. Enjoy your time with your new son and your family, and congratulations. We'll look forward to seeing you there again next year as Team Canada.

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

## House Recess

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, in order that we might adjourn for a moment and go have a cup of tea with the world champions, I move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Riversdale:

That this Assembly do now recess to greet our distinguished guests and reconvene at the call of the Speaker, which I understand to be about 30 minutes. I so move.

Motion agreed to.

**The Speaker:** — Before the House is recessed, I just want to remind members that the bell will ring, and you will have then five minutes to reconvene. And that's approximately one-half hour from now. The bell will ring, and you will have five minutes to reconvene.

This House stands recessed at the call of the Chair.

**The Assembly recessed for a period of time.**

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Lampman

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move the first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Lampman.

The division bells rang from 3:32 p.m. until 3:34 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

### Yeas — 7

Neudorf	Britton
Martens	D'Autremont
Boyd	Goohsen
Toth	

### Nays — 28

Wiens	Murray
Simard	Hamilton
Tchorzewski	Draper
Lingenfelter	Whitmore
Teichrob	Flavel
Shillington	Scott
Solomon	Wormsbecker
Kowalsky	Crofford
Carson	Knezacek
Mitchell	Keeping
Bradley	Carlson
Koenker	Renaud
Lyons	Langford
Calvert	Jess

### A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Lafleche

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move the first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Lafleche\*.

The division bells rang from 3:37 p.m. until 3:38 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

**Yeas — 7**

Neudorf	Britton
Martens	D'Autremont
Boyd	Goohsen
Toth	

**Nays — 28**

Wiens	Hamilton
Simard	Draper
Tchorzewski	Whitmore
Lingenfelter	Flavel
Teichrob	Scott
Shillington	Wormsbecker
Solomon	Crofford
Kowalsky	Stanger
Carson	Knezacek
Mitchell	Keeping
Cunningham	Carlson
Lyons	Renaud
Calvert	Langford
Murray	Jess

**Bill No. 54 — An Act respecting the Department of Economic Development**

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to move first reading of a Bill respecting the Department of Economic Development.

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

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**Bill No. 3 — An Act respecting Health Districts**

**The Chair:** — Order. I would ask the minister to introduce the officials who are with her here today.

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I would like to introduce to my left, the deputy minister, Mr. Duane Adams\*; and immediately behind me, Ms. Kathy Langlois\*, the executive director of the financial department in Health. And to her left, Mr. Jim Engel, health planning and policy planner in the Department of Health; and to his left, Mr. Gerald Tegart, solicitor in the Department of Justice. Thank you.

**Clause 1**

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, over the past number of months, a number of communities have been really questioning whether or not your government is indeed following the proper process and format and if indeed your government and your department actually knows or has a plan for . . . long-term plan for health care in this province.

We've seen in my communities in my constituency, constituencies across the province, and when we talk about constituencies across the province we must also refer to the fact that the constituencies here in the two large centres of Saskatoon and Regina . . . Because the decisions that you have made — unilaterally made, I might add — lately are affecting people in a broad spectrum right across this province.

(1545)

Well last night in questioning regarding the department and regarding Bill No. 3, a number of questions were asked of the Associate Minister of Health. At that time the Associate Minister of Health indicated that he would have a number of answers or at least answers for some of the economic decisions of what was the reasoning behind the decisions that you're making regarding the cutting down of health care.

Could you . . . I believe . . . what consultation process, what the finance or the remuneration to boards and chief executive officers . . . and there was a number of areas that I think even when people around the province of Saskatchewan are asking themselves . . . at the end of the day are we really going to save any money.

And I'm wondering, Madam Minister, if indeed you would have the responses or at least responses to the questions that were posed last night so my colleagues can have a chance to review them, and give us a chance to assess the responses to those answers and look at the numbers and see what we can arrive at.

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to whether or not there is really going to be any savings in this health care direction, I want to make this point. And I will tell the member that there are some. I do have some material which I'll be shortly sending over that comes as a result of the questioning yesterday. But as to the general question of will there be any savings, there already has been savings. There have been savings in Regina and Saskatoon and Prince Albert that have been in the millions of dollars. I think . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — How much?

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Well I'll give you some approximations. I think it's around 6 or 7 million in Saskatoon; around 5 to 6 million in Regina. And Prince Albert are still working on their plan and have indicated that there will be, for example, fewer reductions. Because they are operating as one board, they are able to absorb the funding reductions more effectively.

The fact is, is health care has been reduced. The spending in health care has been reduced, and getting into a one-board concept or a district concept helps people to deal with funding reductions. There have already been very substantial funding reductions in the health care area, and particularly in the two major cities, as a result of last year's budget and this year's budget. And the fact that they have had district boards have enabled them to cope better with those funding reductions.

With respect to job loss, for example in Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Health Board indicates in its report that most of the people who were laid off as a result of funding reductions last year have been hired back into the system through proper management and through a proper labour strategy. This would not have happened if we had had a series of separate boards in those cities.

P.A. (Prince Albert) indicates that they are able to achieve the same sort of rationality in the system, reducing the impact of funding cuts by government. And that is key.

And I want to make this point. Funding reductions are going to take place regardless of whether we have district boards and district amalgamation in the province. We have a huge deficit. The government is attempting to get a handle on it, and there will be budget cuts. What getting involved in a district does is it helps those boards in those communities to deal with those funding reductions. It helps them to coordinate and integrate services, and in the long term, through that coordination, to provide a more comprehensive range of services to communities throughout Saskatchewan.

So the members are coming from the perspective that once you get into these boards there will be savings, and I believe there will be. But I want to remind them that there are already reductions, and getting into boards quickly will help our communities to deal with those reductions. And certainly where they have been into boards, the impact has been reduced, and they are coping more effectively with many of the budget reductions. So I just want to make that point generally about savings.

The second aspect of that point that is really important is that health reform, getting into boards and operating in a more coordinated fashion, is not only to be able to deal with deficit reduction and funding cuts and not only to achieve economies of scale, but also to provide the coordination and integration of health care services that is necessary to lead us to a better health care system in the years to come. If we can provide more community-based services — and we have to free up institutional dollars to be able to do that — if we can provide more therapies, if we can get doctors organized in group medical practices on a district basis, if we can achieve all these things that we believe we will achieve through district coordination, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Chair, I'm sorry, we will be able to provide a better-quality health care system into the future and for future generations.

So reform isn't only to save or to deal with budget reductions. Reform is also to move to a higher-quality health care system, to save medicare for future generations because we need an affordable system in Saskatchewan. And if we can move to an affordable system, we will save it for future generations, unlike some other jurisdictions that are talking about privatization of health care.

Now I do have some information for the members opposite, and my deputy is just getting it together. As soon as he's had an opportunity to put a package together for you, we'll send it right over. Thank you.

**Mr. Toth:** — Madam Minister, we trust that that information is coming over immediately because we had asked for it last night, and I think the deputy minister was here and would be aware of it.

Madam Minister, you made some comments about how much more effective and efficient boards will be by going to regional boards and how much you're going to really save. And one has to ask themselves really how much, in the long run, will you save?

Now I trust that the information the deputy is sending over as quickly as possible indicates the remuneration that all board members will be receiving because, Madam Minister, when you take a look at where we are today, most board members presently serving health care and health boards across the province of Saskatchewan are pretty well doing their duty on gratis\*. The only remuneration most board members receive, especially in the rural areas, comes through funding that they receive from rural RMs (rural municipalities) and communities, their municipalities and communities. So I don't know exactly where you're going to find savings by building larger boards and having excessive remuneration\* in place for these boards.

Secondly, Madam Minister, if you're going to put chief executive officers in place to address the different needs — and I'm not exactly sure whether you mean one to address health care in a region or hospitals in a region; one to address home care in a region, and a chief executive officer to address care homes, Madam Minister — where are you going to find the savings? All what you're doing is basically another bureaucracy, another level of government here in the province of Saskatchewan.

So I would like to know how you intend to find savings when indeed what you're suggesting, actually from what I can put together and just by adding up the numbers, it would appear to me that there is an additional expense that is going to be incurred by the department, by this province.

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to that question about how many CEOs (chief executive officer) are you going to have. These will be decisions the district boards will make.

In Regina, for example, they are looking at . . . in

Saskatoon there are, have been, two CEOs, for example, replaced by one. And this kind of the thing is happening throughout Saskatchewan where there are district boards. In other words, what's occurring, Mr. Speaker, is the administrative level is actually being reduced, not increased, through amalgamation and coordination of health care services.

Now district boards will have the right to determine whether they have one CEO or whether they want someone out in the various communities. That will be up to them to make those determinations as to what is best for health care in those particular communities.

Where there have been district boards, it has actually reduced administrative costs from the point of view of numbers. For example, in Saskatoon in the hospital sector, nine administrative departments at each of the facilities were merged into three central services — finance, human resources, and support services — an estimated savings in the order of 6 million.

More than 1 million was saved through bulk purchasing, joint tendering of service contracts, and energy conservation measures. By jointly insuring their facilities, they saved more than a hundred thousand. Same-day surgery, out-patient surgical programs, early maternity discharge programs, have contributed to reducing bed numbers in the hospitals while serving the same number of patients.

In Regina we saw measures of this nature as well, so it is . . . The boards that are in existence are working very hard to reduce the administrative costs, to reduce the duplication in the system, and they are doing it with a great deal of success. And I know that rural Saskatchewan can do the same thing. They won't save the same amounts of money, but they will achieve economies of scale. They will be every bit as creative and every bit as innovative as Regina and Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

But let's get back to the other issue. The whole trend in health care is to move to more community-based services right across the country. Institutional services are important and must be maintained. However, we also have to emphasize more health promotion, more disease prevention, and we have to emphasize more community-based services and therapies in our health care system.

Through doing that, we will provide a far broader range of health care services to a far broader community across Saskatchewan than simply maintaining the institutional sector and doing nothing else.

And we can't do these other innovative things without freeing up money from the system in the institutional sector for more community-based services, and the two go hand in hand.

This is the direction we must move. We cannot do it by looking at one institution and one community. We must have the vision to go beyond that, which means that we need a vision to look at a larger community, to

look at larger areas, and working together, communities pulling together and working together. They can, and will, deliver a higher quality of health care services for future generations.

And so it isn't simply an issue of saving money. And without health reform it would almost . . . it would be extremely difficult for our smallest communities to be able to cope with the budget reductions that we are facing in this province as a result of the massive debt that we're trying to get a handle on.

And so I think it's very important to keep pointing that out. Yes, savings are important; yes, I believe there will be savings; yes, there are savings where there are boards in place. But it's not simply a question of savings. It's a question of moving to the new health care system which is going to provide a broader range of services to a broader range of people.

And the potential in this system is enormous because it doesn't have to be limited to traditional health care services like home care and therapies. The potential goes beyond that. The potential goes to programing in social service and human justice areas. Very soon I'll be announcing a provincial council which will be mandated to look at those issues, to look at the broader issues, to look at the broader issues that we know, for example . . . and I say this to the member from Moosomin because he will understand this.

Much of our illness today can be alleviated through proper policies and programs in areas such as the environment, in areas such as housing, in areas such as . . . in social justice areas. We know that these things contribute more to ill health in many ways than things of the past.

There's been a change in the kind of things that cause diseases to people. We have vaccinations now that take care of things like polio and diseases of the past — smallpox and so on. We have vaccinations to deal with that.

But what we haven't dealt with are the social and human justice issues that contribute to ill health. And although we won't be able to do a lot in that area right now because we have limited funds, what we're doing today through the organization of district boards, is creating that coordinated system within a larger community that can move ahead in future generations to create programing in those areas in their district and their communities that are going to affect a person's health.

We know that through proper environmental control, we can improve the health status of a larger number of people than spending \$3 million on another MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) machine.

So we have to think. We've got to stand back. And as people who want to create a system that is better in the future, we've got to stand back, take a hard look at the health services we're providing, and target our dollars in the future where there will be an improved health status for people and improved health outcomes.

So this isn't simply a question of cost-cutting and saving money. This is also an issue of moving to a better health care system that will, for future generations, result in healthier people and healthier communities.

(1600)

**Mr. Toth:** — Well, Madam Minister, in listening to your response, I'm still waiting for the answers to the first question I asked. And I asked you for the information. We were promised it last night. We were promised it would be here on our desks. It would be sent over to us, information that would lay out the remuneration for boards, information that would lay out what chief executive officers would be receiving, what administrators would receive.

And in your response, Madam Minister, you talked about a number of savings that were supposedly taking place at the present time and the fact that you needed Bill No. 3 to force communities into a regional-board concept to address some of the problems we're having in health in trying to make it more efficient.

And I just want to indicate that in my area of the province, since 1989 I believe it was, there are a number of communities have already been sitting down together. And they've been looking at ways in which they could formalize basically one base, have one base hospital that would do all the purchasing and then transfer it out to the different hospitals in the area. And a lot of that was already taking place.

In fact, Madam Minister, a number of the communities have amalgamated basically all their boards into one board to address health in a global sense for the community. And in some situations, they have hired one administrator to administrate both the hospital and the care home.

And it would seem to me that by giving some time to these communities, by encouraging people to look at ways and means in which they could make a contribution to making health care more efficient and more effective and also less costly, a lot of communities, a lot of people have ideas out there already. And I must commend a number of the communities that have already taken the initiative.

But what we're finding, Madam Minister, is the fact that people have a feeling today that even though they believe that rationalization must take place, we must look at ways in which we can become more efficient, they are very concerned with the process that is being adopted today. And what is actually happening, Madam Minister, is health care is basically being focused in the two large centres.

Now in your comment, you talked about early discharge and how much more you were going to save by discharging mothers early, and I just want to . . . An article in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, April 22:

Early discharge for new mothers not cheap as claimed . . . the average number of mothers receiving home care each day is 2.7, the average number of nurses employed is 2.75, the cost per day per mother and child for this is \$147.09.

The board says the cost per day per mother and child at St. Paul's and Royal University is \$144 and \$181 respectively. But it averages in-hospital costs at \$165 a day — halfway between University and St. Paul's — and then compares the \$147 and \$165 and says the early discharge program saves money!

And I think when you look at that, as it goes on to say:

Most would laugh at this analysis. They call it tricky or deceptive accounting. The at-home program really costs money because it is more expensive than the price at St. Paul's.

Now if you looked at the St. Paul's argument . . . or the St. Paul's, the sense is of 144 a day. Then if a patient was in St. Paul's, there would actually be a \$3 saving. Certainly if they're in Royal University, it's substantially a higher cost.

So would it seem, Madam Minister, that when you look at the numbers that are coming out, beginning to come to the surface, then in a lot of cases your wellness model or the health plan you've laid out, rather than saving money, is actually going to cost more money.

And I have a hard time understanding how in the world you're going to save money when you're actually spending certain money . . . more money in different areas, supposedly to provide more efficient, effective health care.

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I don't have access to the figures the member opposite is talking about, but I want to remind him once again: health reform is not simply a question of saving money; it's a question of providing better-quality health care services. And mothers who are discharged earlier and are at home sooner with the rest of their family are where they should be — at home with their family, with help. I say that's better-quality health care. But what it also does is it frees up beds in the hospital sector for other patients who may need surgery or some other medical procedure of a serious or medium nature.

So early maternity discharge, if the member opposite takes it and looks at it in isolation, he might be able to make the argument he's making. I would have to review those figures. But I've been just spending the last 20 minutes saying that isn't the only point to health reform. The point is, is we want to provide higher-quality health care. Early maternity discharge where mothers are in their home, with their families and looked after, is higher-quality health care. Unless there's a reason why that mother should stay in the hospital.

Secondly, it opens up beds for people who may have a greater need for those beds, for people who should be in the hospital today for surgery or whatever the procedure is. But they will have a greater need than that mother, and that mother can be looked at in the home.

And in that sense one could argue that there is a saving. But it isn't simply a question of saving. It's a question of a better health care system for the people of Saskatchewan and for future generations.

**Mr. Toth:** — Well, Madam Minister, I think just to say that early discharge is the appropriate way to go may not be the total answer and may not be totally correct. Because I think every patient, the circumstances are different for every patient. And when patients are sent to the city, major centres like Regina and Saskatoon, maybe they're 125-or-so miles out of the city. To send a patient home without really having an adequate source of help in place or even having a hospital within reaching distance should a major problem occur, in my opinion, Madam Minister, is not really addressing wellness or the wholeness or a very good and wholesome health care system.

Now I don't disagree with the fact that in certain situations many mothers may find that they're in a position . . . they feel quite comfortable and are able to go home early. And I think that has been taking place. But to just blankly say that early discharge is the way to go, I'm not exactly sure that that is proper and that is providing more effective health care delivery in the province of Saskatchewan.

It would seem to me, Madam Minister, that when you're looking at other costs in deliveries in the province as well, we look at the closure of hospitals all across this province . . . and I'm going to get into a few questions in that area in a bit. But there are . . . a lot of people have come up with suggestions as to how we can provide a more effective and efficient health care program.

Now, Madam Minister, you've made an announcement three weeks ago about closing 52 hospitals across rural Saskatchewan. And of those 52 hospitals, there are many communities out there wondering exactly what's going to happen to their community. There are workers out there wondering . . . are very concerned about their jobs and about their livelihood. Families are concerned. It would seem to me, Madam Minister, that if you're talking about wellness, the stress that we have across Saskatchewan in regards to the announcements by your government regarding health in this province is a far cry from being a very sound wellness model.

And I wonder how you answer the individuals who are directly affected. And we're talking . . . I think I believe I saw in one paper where there's supposedly a program in place where you're going to talk to people working in the health care sector and help them broach from the job they were in to maybe another job. And if there aren't any jobs available, I don't

know where you're going to place all these workers.

So it would appear to me that instead of helping or building upon a wellness model, you're actually adding to the fact of health problems in this province and not really, I would say, not addressing very effectively the health needs of the people of Saskatchewan.

I wonder what your response to that is, Madam Minister.

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — As I had indicated in my comments earlier with respect to early maternity discharge, I advised the member opposite that obviously in all cases women will not be discharged early; that it will depend on their unique situation. And of course there are cases where they shouldn't be discharged. And so the doctor and the physician does appraisals before they're discharged and will discharge them if the medical professional, if the physician feels they can be discharged.

It's not a question of just discharging everybody regardless of what their medical condition is, which seems to be implied by the member opposite's comments. And I thought I had taken care of that in my original comments.

What this is, is a general direction — early maternity discharge. And as community-based services are put in place, we will be able to do more of that. But of course there are some people who have to stay in hospital longer than others. But it is generally the direction and it is better-quality health care. It's better medicine, Mr. Chair.

Now with respect to communities around the province who are under considerable amount of stress as a result of budget reductions, I know that budget reductions causes people stress and job loss causes people stress. We understand that. I wish the member opposite had thought of that when they put this province on the verge of bankruptcy. If they had not put this province on the verge of bankruptcy, many of these reductions would not have to take place today. So let's accept some responsibility for that, sirs.

Now with respect to jobs and communities, we do have a health reform labour committee that is meeting this week — in fact I think they're meeting today — and they are having very good discussions about exactly the issues that the member opposite has raised, to come to some kind of an understanding as to what sort of retraining and labour adjustment will be required to get us through this very difficult period of transition.

There will be some job opportunity in the community-based services. So although there will be job loss in the institutional sector, there will also be opportunities in community-based services.

And as we develop the home care programing . . . and the increase to home care has been very generous this year. I have been receiving some very favourable

comments from members in the home care sector, indicating to us that they're very pleased with the money that has been allocated to home care this year. And they are very anxious to get on with developing programming to move to more community-based services.

So I do want to say that there will be some job opportunity there. We are in the process of defining it in consultation with labour, and also in consultation with employers in the health care sector. And these meetings that are taking place right now will hopefully bear Saskatchewan people, and people who are particularly concerned about job loss, will bear them some fruit and bear them . . . help to alleviate some of the pressure.

I'm not suggesting that all jobs will be replaced, but there will be job opportunities in the community-based sector.

**Mr. Toth:** — Madam Minister, when you look at the number of hospitals . . . number one, first of all I should respond to your argument about bankrupting the province. One doesn't have to look too hard. Go back to the 1970s and look at the choices made in the 1970s to find out where a lot of the debt that we face today . . . In fact the member from Regina Victoria east or . . . in the east side of Regina, Regina east anyway, former Finance minister last year, indicated to this House that there was indeed a \$3.5 billion or so deficit in the provincial sinking funds, as he told. When you consider the sinking funds which are provided — and the member will know what that's all about — the gross debt for the province of Saskatchewan in '82 was 3.5. That was prior to the election of a Conservative government.

(1615)

As well, Madam Minister, choices were made by the Liberal government of the '60s and by the Blakeney government of the '70s to utilize pension fund money to balance their books rather than putting it into an account to build up for a later date when it would have to be paid out. And lo and behold, we find a \$5 billion deficit in that account. Mr. Gass pointed that out as well.

Madam Minister, the former government of Mr. Blakeney also made choices to go to New York, like your Premier did the other day. Only he's trying to defend his government's decision and ask the creditors down there to hold the ratings up. But Mr. Blakeney went down there and borrowed money and decided to buy potash mines, decided to buy land when land prices were rising. And through the '80s, those decisions came home to roost. Somebody had to pay the bills.

Madam Minister, it doesn't take too long just to sit down and . . . As another article said: the NDP have some responsibility for the province's long-term debts. And to say it was just created through the 1980s is again another long . . . you're drawing another long bow — is a gross mistruth or untruth towards the

Saskatchewan taxpayers. How in the world can you expect Saskatchewan taxpayers to believe that it just built up during the 1980s. Now you're adding to it. And you're telling us today you're going to save money. And I really don't see where you're going to save a lot of money.

Madam Minister, how many people are going to be unemployed due to the decisions you're making in closing down hospitals and care home beds in this province, all across the province, in rural areas, in Regina? We know there's something like 109 jobs, I believe, here in the city of Regina. I'm not sure exactly, close to a hundred in Saskatoon. And all the other areas of the province, how many people's jobs are affected? Those jobs that are affected, what kind of severance packages are going to be agreed to, what kind of a cost is that going to be to the treasury?

It would seem to me, Madam Minister, that there's an additional cost going to be rising. Who's going to be paying that? Are the local boards or these regional boards then going to be asked to pick up the cost of the severance packages out of the reduced global budget they're going to be getting? Madam Minister, I'll give you an opportunity to respond to those questions.

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, I just really cannot believe what I just heard. The members opposite . . . I mean, it's all here in this article from The Globe and Mail: "How the gravy train went off the rails." "A legacy of debt." There it is. The story is there. It talks at length about the mismanagement that has occurred in this province and how money was thrown at everything. There's a whole list. "How the gravy train went off the rails." With a great big picture of the former premier from Estevan.

I mean let's not start rewriting history here, Mr. Member from Moosomin. Let's look at some of the expenditures that was made by the former government: some \$349,000 spent by the Department of Finance in '89-90 to produce glossy budget documents; 500,000 lost in the High R Door Manufacturing failure. How much was it in GigaText and Guy Montpetit with this fancy idea about computers and French translation — 5 million, 6 million? What was it? Three hundred and fifty-five thousand for 60,000 square feet of space in Regina's Ramada Renaissance; \$400,000 dollars spent to repaint the STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) buses. The list goes on and on and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

I think the history on the debt, on the issue of the debt is clear. The members opposite had an opportunity from 1982-86 to make sure we had balanced budgets, and they chose not to do it. From 1986 to 1991, they continued their habit of reckless spending that has virtually put this province on the verge of bankruptcy.

One of their own front-benchers, Grant Hodgins, couldn't stand to sit on the front benches of their government any longer because he knew the province was on the verge of bankruptcy. He said so. He had to get out. He felt it was immoral, that it had gone

beyond anything he could tolerate any longer.

The history is clear, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite would be wise to stand up and admit that they were wrong, to stand up and say, I . . . we made a mistake; we the Tory government made a mistake. And let's get on with trying to get control of the deficit and rebuilding the province. Let's get on with it.

But for heaven sakes, to stand there and point back to 20 years ago and say somebody else caused this is absolutely ridiculous. And do you know what it does? It further erodes the little credibility that you have. Can you imagine the . . . I mean people must be laughing, who are watching this TV, to hear you say it's not your responsibility; it goes back to the Liberals. Come on, gentlemen. Get a dose of reality. Come on.

Now history will prove . . . and, you know, by making comments of that nature you don't do yourself any credit, particularly those of you who are aspiring to be the next leader of the Conservative Party. You will never come out of third place in the province, which is where you're at, unless you stand up and tell the public you made a mistake, you were wrong, and you're going to work to put this province back on track.

And what does that mean? That means supporting what most of the people in this province support. Deficit reduction, health care reform, restructuring, and trying to get a handle on duplication of spending, for example, in the health care, and duplication of spending throughout our system. Let us deal with the debt. Let us turn this province around, and let us start building the future for our grandchildren.

**Mr. Toth:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, there are only three words that can describe that liturgy and that's, what a farce.

I asked the minister to answer a question. I asked the minister how many people are affected by hospital closures. I asked the minister to give us an idea of what kind of severance packages are available. I asked the minister to let us know who's going to be responsible. Are the boards going to be responsible with the global budget that's going to be 5 per cent less than it is this year? Who's going to carry the load of paying for the severance?

I wonder if the minister could respond to those questions.

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question the member opposite was asking, the details with respect to severance is being worked out right now with the management, with the unions, and through the development of a management plan. Each board has been asked to, in context with the district planning group, to put together a management plan to identify how many people would have to be laid off for example in their institution, and to look at what other plans could be put in place in order to rechannel some of these people.

So boards are meeting with unions. And the government, through its committee, is meeting with employers and unions to work out the issues pertaining to the labour impacts as a result of the budget reductions and the conversion of hospitals. And as this is worked out, we'll have a better idea at that point as exactly how many people are going to be impacted, in terms of numbers, and funding will be made available to meet legal obligations, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Toth:** — Well, Madam Minister, I believe you said that there were discussions taking place right now as to how you address severance packages, and how many employees are gone. What I'm wondering is, to my knowledge, we don't have regional boards or regional districts right across the province yet. And how are you going to arrive at these figures and numbers until you have a better idea of where the . . . how the numbers boil down, how they break out, and how many people are actually affected.

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — First of all, each board that has been impacted, each hospital board and integrated facility, has been asked to provide us with a management plan. They have been asked to do that in conjunction with the planning group or steering committee in their area, because there are planning groups and steering committees that have been established and have been there for some time. And they already know who they've been dealing with and what their district will look like.

In many instances, these boards have a pretty good idea of what district they're going to be in and what planning group they've been working with. They will be asked to work with those planning groups and with the Department of Health to come up with a management plan.

In addition to that, there's a joint management and labour coordination process that's taking place out of Regina, and that was announced about a week ago, I believe.

So there are two areas that are dealing with the labour issues that you've raised. First of all, the board, the hospital board, or the board of the integrated facility, has been asked to provide a management plan and to work with the steering group and its district and the Department of Health, to come forward with a management plan.

Secondly, the Department of Health has established a labour and management coordinating committee that's dealing with some of the more provincial issues with regard to labour.

**Mr. Toth:** — Madam Minister, you mention that there are steering committees that are working, and there are individuals out there that are guessing at what they may perceive as being their region. It seems to me that a lot of these communities are still groping in the dark because we've had many situations where department officials have made different comments and suggestions as to the size of regions. And it took



place right in our area.

Now what do you say to communities running along Highway 48, some communities that are looking at possibly forming an association, the Moose Mountain health care district, in the neighbourhood of some 14,000 individuals, when a department official would say at one meeting, while 14,000 might be appropriate but no, we would suggest you look at 29,000 which automatically then pushes them into the . . . I believe it's along the No. 1 Highway. I forget what they call that district.

So if you're sitting there, trying to draw up a plan, how do you draw up a plan when to date you still don't have a sound or solid idea of what kind of district you're going to be forming, and how do you address the employees in those communities when you're not exactly sure if your community is in this district or if it's in another district? It would seem to me that before you're drawing up a plan, you should have a pretty firm idea as to what your district is going to look at so you know who you're dealing with, the communities you're dealing with, the facilities you're dealing with, and the individuals.

And I just don't know exactly . . . and a lot of the boards out there, the steering committees, the number that I've talked to are still groping, trying to understand where the department and your government is really coming from, because there hasn't been a lot of clear ideas or a format laid out for them so they know exactly what they're facing. So how do they develop that plan, Madam Minister?

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, the member has made our point. Let's get this district board legislation passed and let's get on with the planning. The member has made our point. These decisions, budgetary decisions, have been made. It is urgent that we get districts in place so we can deal effectively with the budgetary decisions, that whether or not we have districts, those decisions are still there. We can lessen the impact if the members opposite would just allow this to go through and get it passed and get these districts in place. You've made my point, sir.

Now with respect to the area that you've talked about, the 14,000 and the 29,000, what is taking place in the province is that we have indicated that we want districts of at least 12,000, that we would like to see at least 12,000. There may be one with eleven five somewhere and that might be okay, but I'm not sure that is the case anywhere in the province. I think they're all shaping up to be 12,000 or more.

(1630)

There may be some sense in some situations to look at a larger district, and I think the Department of Health officials have an obligation and a duty to tell planning groups and steering committees — have you thought of this option? Have you thought perhaps of moving to a group of 29,000, for example? Have you thought of this other option over here? — in order for people to explore all the options that are available to them and

then come up with the best decision for their communities.

So you may very well have heard Health department officials saying 14,000 would be appropriate, but have you thought of this possibility? That's fine. I don't have any problems with that. I don't have any problems with people being made aware of options and coming forward with a more informed decision.

But I'm saying to the members opposite that the planning groups throughout the province are coming together very quickly. They are coming together with a pretty good sense of where their districts are. I don't think it's as the member opposite has pointed out, that they're groping and don't know where they're going.

I think they've had a lot of discussion and they know exactly what they want to do. Many of them are waiting for the district board legislation so they can get their district board in place, and they want the legislation to be able to do that.

We have heard repeatedly from people that delay at this point, and I quote from the Saskatoon Health Board, a letter that was written to the opposition Health critic, where the chairperson of the board indicates that delay at this point can only serve to reduce the time remaining for district boards, once they are formed, to begin facing the challenges ahead. So let us get on with the process.

I have heard this comment repeatedly throughout the province. People want the legislation, they know it will assist them in getting into districts, they know it'll assist them in dealing with the budget realities, and they want to be able to move ahead.

Now yes, there will be uncertainties and there will be anxieties, because change always brings with it uncertainties and anxieties. That's true. I know that. But that doesn't mean that you stand still and you don't do anything and you say, I'm not going to change because I'm not 110 per cent sure of all of the little detail. Nobody can be 110 per cent sure of all the little detail. Nobody. And it takes courage, it takes vision, it takes innovation to move ahead and deal with problems and solutions as they arise, and find the opportunities within change.

And there are communities throughout this province, Mr. Chair, that are doing exactly that. Many communities in this province are seeing the opportunities within change and are grabbing the challenge and running with it — many, many communities. And they are waiting for the district legislation to be able to form a board and get on with facing those challenges that are there. And they want to have an opportunity to make their local input and to develop a plan and work with the Department of Health and other communities throughout Saskatchewan to develop a high quality health care system for their citizens and for the residents of Saskatchewan.

So I say to the member opposite, if the group sees a

district of 14,000 and they feel strongly about that, well then they should put their proposal together. But asking them to look at other options is not an unreasonable request. I would say it's prudent because there may be other options that serve their needs better. And if they look at them and then say, well they don't like it because they don't want to join with that particular community for some reason, that is fine too. But let's look at the options.

And that's what is being urged throughout the province. Where district planning groups have not considered all the options, Health officials will direct their attention to other options that might be a possibility for them.

**Mr. Toth:** — Well, Madam Minister, there are many people across this province who will not agree totally with what you've just said. In fact probably the only ones really pushing it are Mr. Helmsing from SHA (Saskatchewan Health-Care Association) and a few of your very close supporters scattered throughout the province who are standing up for their . . . trying to defend you. In fact, if you went into a lot of communities, you'd find there are many people just totally annoyed at the process and the way you have proceeded.

And it would seem to me from your response, Madam Minister, earlier on, your very first response, that there is and has been in the minds of the department for a long time, a plan or a map of some kind that could have been put out there for people to work with. I wonder if you'd reveal that map to this Assembly.

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to support on health reform, I want to remind the member opposite, that the Saskatchewan Association of Special Care Homes is supporting health reform. The SHA, which represents numerous boards, is supporting health reform. Home care, which represents numerous boards, is supporting health reform — we're talking some 400 boards in the province.

We see support coming from the P.A. Health Board. We've seen support coming from Regina and Saskatoon. We've seen support coming from the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association. We have had support across this province.

And I think if the members opposite are being honest, they will realize that the large majority of people in this province recognize the need for health reform and support health reform and want to move in the direction of health reform as proposed by the government. It's clear . . . I have a whole file here, and this is only part of the support that has been expressed to the government as to the health reform.

I recently spoke to the public health association which talked about the need to move in this direction. I recently spoke to the palliative care association. They support health reform. And yes, people recognize there are difficult budget decisions. They recognize that. And they recognize that this causes problems as

we move through health reform, but they also see the need to get a handle on the deficit, and they're prepared to work within that context. And they also see that health reform helps them to deal with the deficit situation as it exists today in the province.

We need health reform, Mr. Speaker, for a whole range of reasons, and the members opposite know that, and so does the public. We need it in order to be able to deal with the financial situation, to fill in the gaps in the health care system, to remove the duplication from the system, to continue to be able to operate the infrastructure that has been built in an effective fashion, to rebalance roles and put more emphasis on community-based services, home-based services, therapies, and so on.

That's absolutely essential for future health care. We need it to be able to reduce some of the inequities in the health system, in northern Saskatchewan for example, to move people from user dependencies, to empower communities and people with respect to their own health care.

There are a whole range of reasons why we need health reform, and what we are doing when we form districts, Mr. Speaker, is setting the building blocks for that health reform. We've established a Health Services Utilization and Research Commission that's going to be looking at health outcomes, because long gone is the day when we can simply provide health care services without making some sort of a determination as to whether or not there are health outcomes. It's important for us to look at health outcomes in the future in our new health care system.

Communities throughout this province and professional people and individuals are rising above vested interests. They're rising above political partisanship. They're building new partnerships. And why are they doing it? They're doing it because they want a better health care system for future generations, and they want to preserve and save medicare for future generations. That's why they're doing it.

All across this province, people are rising above professional partisanship, political partisanship, and vested interests. And that's our heritage in Saskatchewan, and that's why health reform is going to work because that's our heritage. And notwithstanding the political jockeying that's taking place today on health care issues, the communities are going to rise above it, and we will end up with a better health care system.

**Mr. Toth:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think we've sat here about five minutes waiting for the answer, and there wasn't an answer to the question. Will the minister release the proposed regional map that the department probably has on its back wall?

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, we don't have a map that the Department of Health has pre-prepared. There are districts coming together, and we have a pretty good sense of what they are, but they also

change. And what may be a district last week, today, when we're putting it into the final form, is slightly different. So as communities look at their options, districts are changing, and the size is changing. So we don't have a predetermined map. We are waiting for the communities to come forward and provide us with their district.

Now we have been following the direction the communities are moving, and we've got some indication as to what those boundaries are and what those districts will look like. We have an indication, but they are changing as well. And until all the district boards are in place, we will see that change taking place, and until all the discussions have been had.

So the Department of Health does not have a predetermined map that's going to be imposed on the people of Saskatchewan as they did in New Brunswick. We have asked communities to come forward and to tell us what districts they want to be in, to have these discussions with other communities and with other boards, and to come forward with their plan of what kind of district they want to form.

And we're waiting for all of that information to come in before we draw the map. And even at that point boundaries may not be specifically defined between districts. We may know what communities and what catchment areas a district board is going to represent, but until all the district boards are in place and the institutions and services that they represent are in place and fully determined, we will not know exactly where the boundary is. And even at that point there may have to be discussions between districts to determine exactly where that boundary is. Now it may be clear because it may be the municipal boundaries, but there may be situations where it isn't a municipal boundary, in which case we'll have to have further discussions in that regard.

So to the member opposite, no, we don't have a predetermined map; and yes, we do have some idea as to what it's going to look like because districts have been having these discussions now since last August. But it is also flexible; where they're heading is flexible. Until their board's in place, we won't be sure.

**Mr. Toth:** — Well, Madam Minister, I'd like to follow that area but there's a couple of questions I would like to address regarding facilities and I'd like . . . I'm wondering, regarding a community like Whitewood where their hospital has been cut, the community of Whitewood, what is going to happen to the employees there and what kind of services can that community expect once the hospital's gone?

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Now with respect to communities where their hospitals are facing a role conversion, what we have said is this. The hospital is to provide us with a management plan. This management plan will deal with the issue of employees and it will also deal with the issue of placement of long-term care patients in acute care beds. The management plan is supposed to be in by May 31, although some leeway has been given to

some areas if they feel they can't get it together that quickly. The management plan is to be done in conjunction with the planning group or steering group in that district and the Department of Health.

And it's no different for Whitewood as it is for any other place. The hospitals have been asked to send correspondence to the families to indicate that their relative will be re-placed. Now that does not mean that the long-term care patient is going to be just dumped back in the lap of the family; that's not the plan. The plan is to come up with alternate placement. And the administrators of those hospitals have been asked to provide a management plan to do that.

And I want to reiterate that because there has been some concern expressed by people that they have been advised that what they are to do is just take back their mother, for example. And that hasn't been the plan. They've been directed, and they know that, that they are to do a management plan about the best place for this person to go to. So that plan should be ready by May 31 or sometime thereafter, but certainly within a short period of time thereafter.

(1645)

And with respect to what is going to be there, we have indicated that these facilities can convert to emergency acute care centres and health centres or wellness centres. What will be in there? The ability to deal with emergency acute care situations. The other thing that the facility could be used for is basic diagnostic services. Doctors, for example, could use the facility for basic diagnostic services and the X-ray services that are available in the facility today.

There should be emergency acute care. And there could also be other health care planning and programming. For example, I was out in one community that provided me with a long list of potential things that could be done in their community with respect to wellness programming like foot care for seniors and a therapist coming out once a week and the well senior clinics, well adult clinics, and so on. And they were looking, this community was looking to the future and grabbing the opportunities within change. They wanted to develop a health centre that provided a broader range of services to a broader range of people than simply delivering acute care in-patient beds.

And so there is . . . the options that are available are lengthy for communities to consider. And we're asking them in context with their district board, where there is a board, or in the context of their planning group and steering group, to come forward with the options.

Now some of these communities don't want to use the hospital facility to do that. They may say their facility is too old; they want to use another facility in town. Well that option is available for them to explore as well. So I believe that most of these facilities will be converted to emergency acute care and to a wellness centre, other health care programming with the

availability of X-ray and diagnostic services that the doctor can access. Some of them may not be converted because the community may determine that they have other facilities that are higher quality that they prefer to use. And those options should be explored by those boards in conjunction with the planning group and steering group within their community.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So what you're saying, Madam Minister, then is if the district board or regional board decides to look in, like in this case I've raised, the community of Whitewood decides to put five beds in that hospital, reinstate five beds and run the X-ray and lab, that they have the ability to do that. Is that true, Madam Minister?

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Not with respect to in-patient beds. They could look at something like respite care, but not with respect to acute in-patient beds. The decision with respect to in-patient acute care beds has been made unless there is an exceptional circumstance that the Department of Health has not considered. But that has to be very exceptional.

And I wouldn't say Whitewood falls into that category. However, I don't want to speak to that without that community having an opportunity to have input into that process.

However, it has to be looked at in the district context, not just one community. And the district in the planning group and the community, if they decide for example that they want some day care there for seniors or some respite care, they may want to look at something of that nature in that facility.

Now I'm not saying that it would happen. It has to be done in the context of the district planning group and in the context of global funding. Because what the government will be doing is funding the district globally. The district will do a needs assessment as to what is required where and in the context of provincial standards and targets that we've set, and the district will be funded in that regard.

Now if the district determines that they need some day care, for example, in this particular community for seniors, if that is a real need that's been determined by the district, then they could look at using a facility for that purpose. What they can't use it for is in-patient acute care beds.

**Mr. Toth:** — Madam Minister, so what you're saying then is if a district board decides to put acute care bed . . . they really can't put acute care beds into a hospital like Whitewood. Rather, they could possibly look at respite beds.

Are you also saying that they have the ability to operate that X-ray and the lab work that is already sitting there? You've got the employees . . . your lab techs and your X-ray technicians are married to businessmen and women and men in the community; they're married to farmers. And they're going to be in that community so they're available.

So on one hand you're saying no, they can't fund acute care beds . . . and my colleague at Unity said that they were informed last night if a district board decided to put two or three or four acute care beds in a facility like that, they have the ability to do that.

So who is actually telling us the truth? Are you telling us the truth, that you can't put them there? Or is the department right in saying that the board has the decision to put two or three acute care beds in these hospitals?

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — The acute care in-patient beds will not be funded by the government in the facilities where the funding has been taken out for acute care in-patient beds, subject of course to the comments that I had made earlier. What is going to go into the wellness centres or the health centres that will exist in these facilities will have to depend on what the real need is, not on wants — not on wants, on needs. We will in the future be funding health care needs and not health care wants.

And so with respect to X-ray and diagnostic, what has to happen is the potential for using that equipment is there. They have to get together with their planning group in their districts, do a needs assessment, determine what the real needs are, and then in conjunction with the Department of Health and the global funding that is going to be allotted to the districts, the Department of Health will approve a plan that is affordable and sustainable and that is targeted to needs.

So to the member from Moosomin, the Department of Health will support a plan that's affordable, that's sustainable in the future, and targeted to needs. It's not good enough for one community to look at one institution. It has to be done in the context of a district. And this is why the district board legislation is so important to enable these communities to move ahead — to move ahead with the process of reform so they can determine what their needs are and come forward with an affordable and sustainable plan.

That's what has to happen. And so we urge your community to move ahead in that direction, the sooner the better.

**Mr. Toth:** — One quick question. Madam Minister, if the community decides to fund those beds in their community and the district goes along with them, will they be able to do that?

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Are you asking if they decide to fund them out of community monies personally? Is that the question? He nodded his head yes.

The answer to that is no. And the reason for that is that we end up . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Why not?

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Well we end up with a health care system that isn't equal across the province, that

isn't equal across the province.

So communities, we will not be allowing communities to go out and raise the money locally to try and build their own private hospital or build their own in-patient acute care beds. So no, that option will not be available.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Madam Minister, I've listened as carefully as I could for the last while as you've been skating around the important issues of this Bill. And I want you to know that the people of rural Saskatchewan as well as the people in the cities of Regina and Saskatoon are firmly convinced that that's exactly what you're doing. You're skating around the issue. You're not hitting it straight on. You're not giving people the facts and the realities here.

I'm going to show you an example from one of the people that wrote a letter here, and I have the letter here with me from the operator of Gull Agencies in Gull Lake. He gives a little example here, and I want to just read one little paragraph:

To put it in perspective you would appreciate, just consider cutting 10 per cent of the total employees of Saskatoon or Regina and see what effect it has on the city. This is the percentage we will lose from our payroll if this goes.

And he says here in the paragraph ahead:

Two hundred and twelve people are employed in the town of Gull Lake with real jobs according to the census, and the jobs connected with health care that are going to be gone is 26.

That's more than 10 per cent, Madam Minister. You take 10 per cent of the key jobs of any community in this province away from them, and you have caused disaster. Nobody else. You can't blame this one on the federal government or the Arabs or anybody else. It is on your shoulders and on your conscience. And when you look in the mirror, you had better be prepared to face all of the people of Saskatchewan that you're hurting because they're the people that are going to be looking back at you on this health issue.

You are destroying medicare in the province of Saskatchewan such that nobody else has ever done in the history of this province. You claim to be the champions of all of these great things. You're going to make health care better. You tell me what kind of health care is better when people in Prelate and Leader are going to be expected to drive for 50 or 100 miles, and all they're going to get for services is an extended ambulance service. How do you expect those people to have any faith in their community to be able to provide them the kind of care they need?

There's absolutely no way that those people can survive. We have an ageing population in Saskatchewan, an ageing population in rural

Saskatchewan, more than any place else because the young people are having to leave rural Saskatchewan because of lack of opportunities. Instead of cutting health care jobs, instead of cutting the province down to the bone, what you've got to be thinking about is providing some job opportunities to attract our young people to the rest of this province, or you're going to end up with two big cities in this province.

And the rest of it will be a wasteland; it might as well go back to being a desert. Maybe it will be like the Palliser triangle that Palliser described so many years ago where he described that it was a desolate area, not fit for human habitation. Maybe that's what you really want, is a desert with only two big cities left. I'm sure you'll have fun controlling them. You can be the master of both the big cities, and there'll be nothing left of the rest of the province.

But that's what you're heading for, and the people of Saskatchewan are saying that and they know it because you're destroying the fundamental job base in this province as well as the medicare system itself. The jobs are important, but the service is important, and we can justify that. You have ignored the wishes of the people. You have ignored the arguments of the people who have come to you in a very honest and forthright manner and have said to you, we can show you how; we can make these buildings and these facilities more economical, more viable, and we can make them manage more effectively and more efficiently.

These communities have said to you, Madam Minister, that there are ways that we can do it, and they've come up with lists of ideas. And when they present them to you, what do they get in return? Nothing. Go away. Disappear. Get out of my life. That's all we hear. We have the Minister of Environment, of all people to be representing Health, out in our town trying to tell us how to run our hospital. That's the kind of stuff we get out of the back benches here. I'm telling you, Madam Minister, this is a travesty beyond all recognition of travesties. The people of rural Saskatchewan will never forgive you.

In all the days that you live you will look in that mirror and see the faces of the people of Saskatchewan that you've hurt. They will be there looking back at you and only at you. These fellows here don't even count because the rest of Saskatchewan doesn't even know they're there and they don't care, but they care about what you're doing because it's important. It's too, too important to be left lying here idly without being discussed and without you taking some consideration for two things — negotiation and compromise.

That's all they've asked you for. They've not asked for the moon, and they have not asked for the stars, and they haven't even asked you to stop trying to solve the problem of the deficit. They've said they'd work with you. They've shown you examples of how those facilities can be better used, and they've shown you examples of how they're willing to cooperate and they've shown you that they're willing to negotiate. But negotiation is no good without compromise.

It's like a marriage, Madam Minister, and you've got to start cooperating like one of those members in that marriage — the marriage of politics with the people of Saskatchewan. You've got to start considering the option of giving some compromise.

Out in Gull Lake, a short few days ago, the Minister of the Environment tried to explain to us what was happening, and I tell you that he was an absolute farce. It was disgusting to listen to what he had to say . . .

**The Chair:** — Order. It being 5 o'clock the committee will recess until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.