

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

The committee reported progress.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 41 — An Act to amend The Registered Psychologists Act

The Chair: — At this time, before we proceed to clause-by-clause consideration, I would ask the Associate Minister of Health to introduce the officials who have joined us here this evening.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Immediately to my right is Drew Johnston, who is our senior health professionals analyst; and sitting behind us, Mr. Chairman, we have Paul Leech, who is the director of community therapy; George Peters, executive director of the provincial laboratory services; Bonnie Swan, senior program analyst. And we may be joined in a few moments by Lawrence Krahn, who is executive director, MCIB (medical care insurance branch).

Clause 1

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good evening, Mr. Associate Minister and your officials. I have a few comments to make this evening regarding Bill 41, An Act to amend The Registered Psychologists Act, and will follow those comments by questions.

In the original discussions that this government had with parties affected by this Bill, the government expressed its intent to alter the level of qualification that would be acceptable to deem someone a psychologist. And I have grave concerns about that intention, and I'm not sure that the amendment addresses the problems with the psychologists Act.

As a registered clinical psychologist, I want to point out the level of trust necessary between psychologists and their clients — trust which is absolutely essential for a professional to provide counselling and treatment for psychological problems.

Now when an individual goes to their family physician, they have an understanding, they have an assurance that the individual has completed a certain level of education, taken appropriate examinations, and put in a required number of hours for internship and training.

Without the trust that all practising physicians are qualified, people would understandably hesitate to submit to medical treatment. Now that's not to say that there are not good doctors and bad doctors. What it says is that anyone practising medicine has achieved certain qualifications.

Now in the practice of psychology, there are many imitations of what one calls the real thing, but there

are also very real standards, standards which have been set by the psychologists' association, standards that establish the level of qualification, not only for members of the profession, but specifically for the protection of the public. Registered psychologists are responsible to uphold rigid professional standards, adhere to a code of professional ethics, or they risk losing their registration.

Now this amendment merely continues to sidestep what I consider a very important issue, and that is the issue of the use of the title of psychologist, as it has done since this Act was first introduced in 1962. Currently, Saskatchewan is below the standard in North America, where, of 60 jurisdictions, only a handful allow such an exemption as is found in Saskatchewan's Act. In other words, we permit something that the majority do not.

In Saskatchewan those who are not registered as psychologists provide many valuable and significant services within our mental health sector, our education sector, and to the public at large. I believe that our system needs and can support varied levels of expertise in the field of psychology, but I am strongly rooted in my belief that there should be no confusion in the minds of the public as to the level of qualifications of the professional whose services they are engaging or submitting to.

I believe that regular dentists, for example, should not be permitted to promote themselves as orthodontic dentists. General practitioners should not be confused with orthopedic surgeons, and chiropractors are not physiotherapists. Now that is not to pass judgement on the value of one group over another. It is to protect the distinction and the public's ability to make the distinction between the professional qualifications of the person providing them with the service.

With specific respect to the amendment being proposed, I have some reservations as to whether this will allow the government to broaden the provision of psychological services by deeming persons with master's preparations who are in the employ of government, in the employ of district health boards and the University of Regina, deeming them to be psychologists when someone with similar qualifications outside the employ of those agencies would not have the right to claim that level of professional certification. Further, those individuals may be deemed by the government to be psychologists but they would not in fact be able to register as psychologists by the Saskatchewan Psychological Association.

Who then assures that everyone is competent and regulated? To whom are these people — now deemed to be psychologists — accountable? Who will reprimand them for breach of ethics to which they are not forced by any regulations to subscribe? This also raises the question, who is responsible to determine what constitutes "qualified psychologist"? Is it the government or the professional association?

Now I recognize that the government, as the result of limited resources, has made choices. One of those choices is to reduce the level of qualification required to be a psychologist if you work for a specific, limited number of employers. This raises questions as well. If the government can amend legislation to adjust the level of education required to qualify as a psychologist, will it set a precedent — a precedent which allows them as government to interfere with the professional standards of other professions?

Theoretically speaking now, could the standards be further reduced to include therapists and counsellors? If the government finds itself short of dentists in rural areas can they reclassify dental hygienists or dental therapists as junior dentists, or will they assume responsibility to ensure that rural areas receive the same standard of professional qualification that is available in urban centres? What will determine the standard of professional qualifications in the future? Will it be budgetary restrictions, government policy? And if the government is going to offer people who are qualified, but not as qualified as those who have achieved a higher professional standard, why the need to repackage the product? Why not label it with a different name so that people will be aware of the difference?

So, Mr. Minister, with those comments, I have a few questions to pose to you and would very much appreciate your comments. Could you tell me what discussions your department has had with the Saskatchewan Psychological Association regarding this Bill?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, I recognize in the member's comments this evening, her deep and understandable interest in this piece of legislation and in legislation regarding psychologists generally. I want to remind the member that this piece of legislation is a very narrow piece of legislation. I would guess from the member's comments, too narrow for her taste; that she would have preferred perhaps, in this session, a much broader amending or renewal of the Act.

But let me say this, Mr. Chair. In my view, when this type of professional legislation is brought into the House for legislation, I'm of the view it should only happen when there has been that full discussion in the community and there is some general agreement in the community. I think the member would recognize here tonight that there is not entirely general agreement in the community around some of the issues which she raises. And therefore, at this point, we have chosen to come with this very narrow amendment with the full intention of continuing the discussion in the community.

In answer to your very specific question, there have been a number of meetings between the Psychological Society of Saskatchewan and the Department of Health about this smaller amendment and about the whole question. And I'm informed tonight that the society met last week in their AGM (annual general meeting) and over the course of this

intersessional period — this coming summer and so on — we'll be working with our caucus committee on trying to resolve some of the very important issues that you raise tonight with the goal in future of coming with a much broader package.

(1915)

Ms. Haverstock: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I appreciate that very much.

What I in fact have heard from my colleagues in Saskatchewan is that the initial draft of the legislation was a greater concern. And in fact they're a little less concerned, with the exception that they would like some further definition. And you can correct me if I heard you wrong, but did I hear you say that your department actually is undertaking and would, within a particular time line — you're saying intersessionally — going to move forward and perhaps examine whether or not there could be further amendments to this Act? I'm just wondering if I'm quoting you correctly.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the member is indeed quoting me correctly both, if I may say, both in working with the Department of Health and in working with our caucus committee.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much. Does this discussion . . . will it include the professional psychological associations in Saskatchewan for input? Is this something that you would be looking forward to doing?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the answer is yes, and involved in those discussions will be the Saskatchewan Psychological Association, the Psychological Society of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan educational psychologists.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much. I just want one further clarification. Is this specifically going to look at eliminating the exemptions found in section 10(2) of the Registered Psychologists Act?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — In reference to that specific section, the officials assure me that the whole Act would be under consideration including that and I guess every other section.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, has your department undertaken a survey of other jurisdictions with respect to their licensing of psychologists and the use of the title, psychologist? And can you tell me what information those surveys have told you?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, to the question, have we reviewed other jurisdictions, the answer is yes, I think only Canadian jurisdictions. I'm told that, just in very brief, that we find a difference that some jurisdictions use the title psychologist, some use psychological associate. And so that's an important part of trying to frame legislation in our province, certainly not always the determining factor, but we do

want to know what's happening in other jurisdictions.

And obviously before we went with the fuller amendment of the Act, we'd want to have a good and clear understanding of what's happening across Canada

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Perhaps you could — Mr. Chair, and, Mr. Minister — can you explain to me exactly what it is that you've changed in this Act and why it was brought forward at this particular time if, in fact, your examination of other jurisdictions has not transpired; if you have full intent on moving forward and making changes. It sounds as though this is something that's going to be brought to this House again in the very near future.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The impetus in the current circumstance to make this small amendment relates to the overall reform of health care delivery in our province where, as you will know, some of those services now being delivered by the province, through the Department of Health, will be transferred to the district boards for delivery — a process some refer to as devolution. Because we believe that some of this may occur in advance of the more extensive amendments to the Act, we brought forward this narrow amendment now in that short-term period.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much. I have one final question — actually I have two. What is the number of people actually affected by this amendment? My understanding is that there could be as few as two and as many as four individuals who work for the district health boards or the University of Regina, who are not registered psychologists as per section 10(1) of the Act. Can you, or your officials, confirm that number?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, in response to the member's question, we do not have the exact numbers here and I can commit that we can get exact numbers. I'm told that provincially there are about 70 master's level psychologists. Now certainly not all of them are employed with the Department of Health. We think it will be something more than two to four, but we're not sure of the exact number and I commit that we'll provide that to you.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister — and welcome to your officials as well — as I understand it, one of the things this Bill does is extend professional recognition to the master's prepared psychologists trained or employed at the University of Regina. As you know, the University of Regina is celebrating its 25th anniversary, and I presume it has had a psychology department throughout most if not all of that time. Why has it taken so long for this professional recognition to be extended, and are there any other examples of such oversights in professional recognition regarding the University of Regina that should be attended to as well?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, I believe the answer here is that the Act that we're amending is older than the University of Regina. And in fact, the

issue was not brought to us by the university, but in fact was raised by departmental officials who noted this situation and therefore this is really at the initiative of the department. We're not aware of any other circumstance in the province that exists like this.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, will the professional standing of the Saskatchewan psychologists be affected in any way, either positive or negative, outside of the province by this piece of legislation?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The answer is no.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. This Bill relates to the role of psychologists within the new district health board system. Have you consulted with the psychologists as to their feelings about the health boards, and will their role or duties within the health care system be changed as a result of the devolution of powers to the health boards?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — In terms of the transfer of programming to the district boards, we are endeavouring to consult as widely as possible with all those who will be affected, both at the district level and with professional associations and workers and others. It's our assumption that the role and the services being offered by psychologists will not change dramatically, if they will change at all.

One thing that might ought to be noted, that district boards as they assess their needs in the local communities and may in fact decide that there is more need for psychological services and other mental health services, and we may see greater demand.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Will the public's access to mental health facilities be affected at all either by this Bill or by the devolution of responsibility over psychologists to the health boards?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — It would be our hope, Mr. Chairman, that in fact access would improve. Again I suggest that our district boards will be doing very careful need assessment, both in the near future and over the long term, so that need assessment is a continual process. And as those needs are identified, we hope that the district boards would act on them and which in the short and long term could mean, in fact, greater access.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, in your second reading speech you stated that the actual devolution of the psychologist staff to the health districts is still several months away. Are we looking at that kind of time frame or have you set out some kind of time frame that you're targeting for that?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, in the longer term we're looking at a date of April 1, 1995. And that is going to be governed entirely on the readiness of the district boards to accept the transfer of programming and responsibility and employees. So there's no strict time lines. We are looking at April 1, '95 as sort of the closing date.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Who will be responsible for the transition of the mental health services affected by this Act to the health boards?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, the district support branch of the department.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 42 — An Act to amend The Physical Therapists Act, 1984

Clause 1

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I do note that this particular Act has been greeted very favourably from the physical therapists of the province because they no longer have to have a doctor's referral. I think that you should note first of all that I generally favour the idea of people having more ready access, but I do want to know certain things.

It seems only logical that people may not know what kind of treatment they require and therefore could there not be damage done by administering physical therapy to patients, for example, with nerve damage or some other condition that could be potentially aggravated by physical therapy? And what position does this leave the physical therapist in if in fact they take it upon themselves to — in quote — diagnose and treat patients?

(1930)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, thank the member for her question and the concern that's behind the question. I know it is a concern that's shared by physiotherapists. The physiotherapist, as the member I'm sure will know, is a health professional, and someone who presents to a physiotherapist, I mean if there is indication that there should be other medical diagnosis, we're more than confident that the physiotherapists would refer to the appropriate . . . probably a physician for further medical diagnosis. The physiotherapists have no interest of course in treating where it's inappropriate.

And so we're confident that they're health professionals and that they will assess individuals who present for treatment as any other health professional would, I think, be it a chiropractor or others. And if there's indication that the person who has presented for treatment requires some other diagnosis or investigation, we're confident that the physios will refer.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, I take it then that what you're saying is that you don't have a concern with people presenting to a physical therapist with perhaps a particular condition that they've brought to

the physical therapist and then this individual, as the health professional they are, would provide some treatment.

What you're suggesting then is that there is a process where one would understand the particular situation they may be placed in as a professional; that it's incumbent upon them to make referrals wherever they deem necessary. In other words, refuse treatment if someone comes to them. Am I following correctly?

Okay. You're nodding, and I shall say that you're nodding for the record.

I have one final question on this. I'm wondering whether this has any impact on health care funding, this particular change to this Act.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Our expectation in this regard is that it will likely balance out. There may in fact be some decrease in expenditures as a result of taking the step of the physician referral out. There may be, on the other side of the equation, some increase in physiotherapy services.

We think the two will almost balance out, so it shouldn't have . . . We're not in essence doing this as some sort of measure for cost saving. We don't anticipate it's going to be a cost to, but rather a balance. Our goal is to provide, as we've said, easier access.

Ms. Haverstock: — Just one final comment, if I may, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, I want to be on record that I think that this is a favourable direction in which to move. What I'm concerned about is a kind of quality control — measuring what transpires as a result of this change, and not just economically, but other ways as well, in terms of their own profession.

Have there been things put in place then to measure changes in cost, measure increases in people accessing service, ways of being able to measure whether or not certain kinds of problems may arise? Is there a place, for example, where physical therapists who begin to see some great advantage in this, and perhaps would like you to consider things further, or see some great disadvantages in the future, can come and have these things addressed promptly?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, to the member's question, we keep a close monitor, of course, of utilization of health services across the province, and that's no different in physiotherapy services. And that kind of monitoring will go on very carefully. We also, of course, keep the financial monitoring.

In terms of quality of care, not unlike almost every other medical profession, the physiotherapists have their professional association and are therefore charged with monitoring and disciplining their own members.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, as we stated today in this second reading, we recognize that this is a move to eliminate needless

waste and duplication in the health care delivery. Has your department made any estimate as to how much money this move will save?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, again I would say that we anticipate this will likely almost equal out. There certainly will be some savings, in that if an individual does not need the doctor's referral, there is some cost saving at that point.

However we anticipate there may be some, although not dramatic, but some rise in the physiotherapy services which, on the other side of the equation, will cost a little more.

We don't see this primarily as a means of saving a great deal of money, but we do see it as providing easier access for Saskatchewan people to the service and emphasizing what we want to emphasize throughout all of health reform and that's community-based services, services which are close to home and easily accessible.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Do you expect the case-load for physical therapists to increase significantly as a result of this Bill? And if you do, do you have any kind of an estimate of how much that it will increase?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we do not anticipate a large increase; we anticipate small increase for physiotherapy services. In jurisdictions where this legislation has existed and where direct access has been permitted for some time, all of the studies have shown that the increase in annual referrals was between 2 and 3 per cent and we expect that pattern will be very likely followed in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, in general, are physical therapists paid by salary or by billings to the health care system? If they are paid by billing, would an increase in case-load bring down the amount of the government's savings as billing increases? If they are paid by salary, do you anticipate the government or the health boards will have to hire more therapists?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, the information that I have is that the physiotherapists in Saskatchewan are all on salary.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, the issue on which this Bill is premised is that physical therapists have adequate training and professional ethics to assess patient needs without necessarily the intervention of a physician. And we do not question that.

However, just for the information of the House, could you outline the kind of training the average physical therapist goes through, the code of ethics they abide by, and how these standards and ethics are enforced?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, I thank the member for his question. The training for the practice of physiotherapy is a four-year university training, a four-year professional training at university.

Physiotherapists in Canada are all members of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association and that association has a code of ethics for all of its practising members which guides their practice and assures the quality of that practice.

In the practice of physiotherapy, I'm told there are many opportunities which are taken by physiotherapists to update their education, continuing education and so on. And of course we have our own professional legislation here in the province which governs the practice.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. The only substantive concern we have, and it's not a large one with this Bill, is how it might affect the related field of chiropractic. You have given your assurance that you have consulted with the physicians and physical therapists on this Bill; however, it occurs to me that chiropractors and physical therapists deal with many of the same kinds of patients so that chiropractors would therefore be affected by the public having easier access to physical therapists.

Have you consulted with chiropractors on this Bill, and if so what was their reaction and how was it taken into account in the drafting of this legislation? And if you didn't consult with the chiropractors, why didn't you?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, the executive director of the chiropractic association has had discussions with departmental officials. Copies of the proposed legislation have been provided to the chiropractors. I think understandably there will be some chiropractors who may have some concerns about this because they are also in the arena and the business of providing health services. But generally there has not been a negative reaction from the chiropractors, and the chiropractors, as you know, have had direct access since the beginning.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Is there a period of internship for a physical therapist?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Part of the four-year professional training at university does include internship. It's built right into the four-year program — clinical training and internship.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Previous to this point, those needing physiotherapy had to be referred by a physician. Now people will be able to go directly to the physiotherapists for attention. Is your department planning on imposing some sort of user fee for this service as you did with chiropractic care?

(1945)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we are looking at the whole range of how physiotherapy services are provided in our province. This is one step in a whole package. Because we have now district boards — as you know, delivering more and more of our primary services — we want to work closely with our districts with physiotherapy services and with all services;

both in terms of the need, and how we meet the need, and then of course as with every health service that we deliver, how indeed that's to be funded.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. I understand that there's quite a waiting-list for those seeking physiotherapy, and with your cut-backs, I can't imagine the situation improving much. After the implementation of this system, how long can individuals expect to wait for physiotherapy?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I think the member will be aware — certainly many of us have been aware for some time — that we do have a shortage of physiotherapists in Saskatchewan and we've been working at that. And indeed part of our whole review of physiotherapy services is to answer that question.

Now in terms of waiting-lists in individual clinics or with individual physiotherapists, I'm told that each of those will have a criteria so that they are trying to treat people who have the most acute needs first.

Mr. Boyd: — So then, Mr. Minister, are you anticipating hiring additional physiotherapists?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, to try and address the availability of physiotherapists to Saskatchewan people, number one, this piece of legislation we see as important to doing that, to encouraging the practice of physiotherapy in our province. We are looking very seriously at other incentives that would encourage our trained physiotherapists to remain in practice in Saskatchewan and particularly in rural Saskatchewan.

One of those areas that we're looking at very seriously is a bursary program with a goal of retaining physiotherapists in the province, and again I say particularly in rural Saskatchewan. We have been in conversations with the university to see just what it would take, financially and other, to expand the training program there and we are also looking very seriously at a rehabilitation assistant program that we believe could take some of the pressure off of the demand for physiotherapy services.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I guess just out of curiosity, who are the major users of physiotherapy services? Heart attack victims? Athletes? People of that nature? Who is it?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I think the answer is everybody. There doesn't seem to be one predominant group, either by age or sex or occupation or location, that demand the services of a physiotherapist. You'll find young people, elderly people, as you say people who have suffered athletic injuries, or stroke, heart attack, those injuries. There's no particular group that shows any greater usage than any other.

Mr. Boyd: — Previous to drafting of this Bill — in conclusion here — what groups or organizations did you consult with?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We talked of course with the physiotherapists and I recall about a year ago, if not a

little more, meeting with a group of physiotherapists here in the city over a reception. We talked about the issue at that time. Since then we have consulted with the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations), and I'm pleased to say all of whom support the legislation.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 43 — An Act respecting the Licensing and Operation of Medical Laboratories

Clause 1

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, there has been much discussion in the House regarding the advantages of private versus public medical laboratories. Could you reflect on how this Bill relates to that situation. Does this Bill affect only private labs, or public labs as well? And will a licensing office have any role in the investigation and quality control of public labs?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, this particular piece of legislation really has no impact on the debate to which the member refers between private and public labs and which will be used by the districts and so on. It does in fact apply to all labs whether they be private or public.

Mr. Boyd: — Could you clarify the extent of the jurisdiction of the licensing office. Would a physician in a private practice who is qualified to run certain tests, or who has a staff member who is qualified to do certain tests, be prohibited from doing these tests in his own office? Or I guess, in other words, would my own physician require a special licence subject to this Act to poke my finger, obtain a sample of blood, or examine it in his office?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — In fact, Mr. Chairman, the situation today is that if your physician has a lab, it needs to be licensed. That doesn't change. What really changes through the legislation is that the process of licensing is being changed. But all labs, whether they be very small in a physician's office or to the largest laboratory in the province, must be licensed.

Mr. Boyd: — Well, Mr. Minister, further to this then, if a family doctor does, under licence, perform tests in his own office and if he records his findings in my personal medical file, would the director of the licensing program then have the ability to read my personal medical file if he conducts an inspection? If so, would you not agree then that this is an intrusion into personal privacy and doctor-client privilege?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I want to assure the

member and any who may share his concern that if there were a circumstance that led to an investigation, in any investigation, that investigation would involve the College of Physicians and Surgeons as it does now. And so I think the confidentiality aspect that the member raises and is concerned about is guarded, as it is now, by the professionalism of the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. So if a doctor were to refuse to submit personal medical files on the grounds of doctor-client privilege, would he none the less be subject to a fine then? Or would there be some other mechanism for him to stay within the bounds of the law without offending doctor-client privileges?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we are here dealing with issues that are regularly faced by the College of Physicians and Surgeons. When there is any investigation into any medical practice, they are going to run into this particular difficulty. This piece of legislation doesn't change that.

Ultimately I expect that the College of Physicians and Surgeons, if they feel the need is warranted, will access information. And if the information is denied, I think then they take the steps to discipline their own member who will be the physician or surgeon involved.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Another aspect to this Bill that concerns me is that there are many people who conduct their own medical tests on themselves or on members of their families — diabetics would be an obvious example where people take their own blood and conduct tests in their own homes. There are many other examples of people receiving home care from relatives where the individuals need simple, standardized testing done on a daily basis.

Is it true then that under this Act that no one in the province can examine a human specimen without a licence?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member's concern in raising the question. Indeed the Act identifies that situation and gives specific exemption within the body of the Act, if you refer to section 2(f)(ii). I believe that exemption in the Act covers off your concern.

We're not here trying to regulate or license those who will take blood samples, for instance, as diabetics. The Act is to deal with labs. And so the concern of the member, I think, has been addressed by the exemption in the Bill.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. As I understand the appeals process set out in this Bill, if the director of the licensing program refuses to grant a licence, or revokes a licence, this can only be appealed through the minister. Since the minister is responsible for appointing the director in the first place, I would say it is fairly unlikely that the minister would reverse a decision made by his or her own hand-picked official.

We have received a suggestion by representatives of medical laboratories that this appeal should be handled by some sort of independent agency. Have you heard that concern, Mr. Minister, and what is your response to it?

(2000)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the member will be interested to know that this is not the only piece of legislation with this same sort of appeal procedure. The same sort of procedure exists under The Personal Care Homes Act, and has been working, and has been workable, for some time.

I think I understand the concern the member raises. It has been raised by others. I do want to point out to the member that, to be very clear, while the minister is responsible, it is indeed within the purview of the minister to appoint a person or persons to form an appeal committee, and may well do that. That is within the provision of the Act and indeed may well happen. This has been the practice, as I've said, under The Personal Care Homes Act, and it seems to have worked quite well.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I notice that, in the definition under the Bill for the position of director of the licensing program, unlike the previous definitions for the licensing board officials, there is no provision that the director must be a doctor, a medical technologist, or hold any other qualifications. Is this going to be provided for in regulations? And if so, can we see a copy of those regulations?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, to be clear, the quality assurance issues, the quality assurance issues — the medical issues primarily — are going to be in the purview of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. They'll be setting the quality standards.

The director is, in essence, an administrative-managerial role, and so we do not believe that that necessarily needs to be someone trained in the practice of medicine. It could be but not necessarily. And so we do not have the intention at this point of putting that into regulation, primarily based on the argument that the quality issues, the medical issues, will be handled by the college.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, why is the position of the director to be appointed purely at the discretion of the minister? Why are there no provisions for a consultation with the College of Physicians and Surgeons or the medical laboratories in either appointing or setting the qualifications out for the director?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, in essence — in answer to the member's question — the director's position is not unlike many other positions within the Department of Health. This will be a position within the department and therefore would be filled through the regular public service competitions and so on, publicly.

We've talked to the College of Physicians and Surgeons about this very issue and I'm told that they have no real concerns about either the qualifications or the job description.

Mr. Boyd: — How many medical laboratories are affected by this legislation, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — About 450.

Mr. Boyd: — How many medical technologists are affected by the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, these figures are approximate. If the member wants exact numbers we could get them but these are approximate numbers. Approximately 1,200 registered technologists, and about half that number, about 600, certified combined X-ray and lab techs, so 1,800 total.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. How many physicians' offices are connected with laboratories at this time and how many are free-standing?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, for the member's information, I'll just . . . rather than trying sort out the specifics, I'll give you the whole list of the labs in the province.

Currently, 223 physician office labs; 60 which are described as satellite labs; 4 private laboratories; 111 laboratories in rural hospitals; 7 labs in large community hospitals; 6 in regional hospitals; 6 in the base hospitals; there's 2 Red Cross labs; 1, our provincial lab. And then in a category described as category 11, there are 31, and these will refer to labs, for instance, at mine sites or in health and social centres. So that gives us a total, I hope, of 447.

Mr. Boyd: — How many private laboratories in the province are connected with government-run hospitals in other medical services facilities, and how will this legislation affect them?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — If I understand the member's question — he may want to return to it — but if I understand the member's question, there are two in Regina and one now in Saskatoon and they, like every other lab, will be licensed under this Act just like every other lab in the province.

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, I just have a couple of questions for clarification to add to what the member from Kindersley had raised. I note that the most significant change, in my view, to this Act, is the replacement of the previous medical laboratory licensing board with an individual appointed by the Minister of Health to act as the director of the laboratory licensing program.

Now the revised Act also specifies that this individual — as you duly pointed out — would be someone who is employed by the Department of Health and that other employees of the department may be appointed as deputy directors. The concern that I have, Mr. Minister, that I'd like you to speak to, is the fact that

there's no stipulation that this particular individual or the other individuals would have any previous knowledge of medical labs. Could you in fact clarify whether or not that's the case.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — As I said, Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, the intention with this Act is to separate and provide to the College of Physicians and Surgeons the quality assurance, the actual medical provision for laboratory work. The director is in essence an administrative position. And so we have not indicated that the director's position would need to be filled by a health professional, i.e., someone trained in the field of medicine.

However, to your question, would we want previous knowledge of the lab scene in Saskatchewan, I think, when that position is advertised and so on; that would certainly be part of the criteria that would recommend someone for the position. What I've said is that it's not necessarily going to be a medical person. It could be but it may not be. I think knowledge of laboratory work would be an essential ingredient for someone who would want to fill that position.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 23 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 44 — An Act respecting Chiropractors

Clause 1

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, can you tell us about the process of consultation with chiropractors that your department had that went into this piece of legislation?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, we have in fact been working with and discussing this piece of legislation, consulting with the chiropractors for a period of two or three years.

This has been under discussion by the chiropractors for some time. I had an opportunity to meet with them just a couple of weeks ago and they tell me that within their own organization this has been through a long process of drafting. They almost jokingly said they think this is the 25th version of the Bill. They've worked very hard internally, they've used some of their own legal expertise, their own experience in the profession. We've been talking to them, working with them for the last two to three years, the Department of Health, and so there has been a good dialogue and discussion all the way along before it reached the House. We've also, of course, knowing that professions do not live in isolation, we've also talked and consulted with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the College of Physical Therapists and SAHO, Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations.

(2015)

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Under section 8 of this Bill the government reserves the right to appoint two members of the board for the chiropractic association. I think this is fairly unusual since the government usually only appoints one member to the board of a professional body. Why was this extra representation needed?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I'm told that in many of our professional pieces of legislation where there will be public representation on the professional boards, many pieces of legislation indicate one or two. In this case we have opted for two, and again that is with the agreement and consultation with the chiropractors. It is a process of trying to have public representation, public involvement. That I know is being welcomed by the chiropractors and it's not inconsistent with other professional pieces of legislation.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. We understand that some of the chiropractors that worked on this Bill felt that this person, an extra board appointee, was meant to be a lay person. Is that your understanding, and if so, why wasn't that made clear in the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I hope we're working on the same definition of lay person here. Neither of the two appointees to that board will be employees or government people. In that sense they will represent the public, they will represent the consumer. So they're not government people that are being appointed, but indeed, members of the general community.

Mr. Boyd: — This Bill substantially increases the disciplinary fines that can be imposed on chiropractors. Can you expand on some of the circumstances that led to this increase and why the chiropractic association requested it?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I just want to refer . . . we're just taking a few moments here to search the old Act and I find under the old Act — I'd forgotten — some of the fines or the penalties indicated by the old Act were in the amounts of a fine not exceeding \$100 — \$100 — and the subsequent offence is a fine not exceeding \$250.

It's my understanding that the chiropractic association felt these penalties were simply too small to be effective, and therefore have recommended the penalty amounts that are indicated in the Act here — just to provide an effective tool for enforcement.

Mr. Boyd: — How many chiropractors are there currently practising in Saskatchewan and how does that compare with the number of practising chiropractors in 1992 and 1993?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I'm pleased to report to the member and to the House tonight that we're, in fact, showing some increase in the number of chiropractors practising in the province. The figures that I have would indicate in 1992-93, we had 106 practising chiropractors in the province; in 1993-94, a

growth to 124; and in the current year, we're now up to 125.

Mr. Boyd: — How will Bill No. 42, the one we've discussed earlier, An Act to amend The Physical Therapists Act, affect the viability of chiropractic practices in this province?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we really don't expect any change in that regard. We believe that those who will seek the services of a chiropractor will in fact continue to do so.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 59 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the minister and the officials for the time spent this evening. I think it was a worthwhile examination of the Bills presented here this evening.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I want to join with my colleagues across the House in expressing our appreciation to the officials from the Department of Health who have been here tonight and so ably assisted with our consideration of the Bills. And I want to thank the members opposite for their considered questioning tonight.

Bill No. 32 — An Act to amend The Labour Standards Act

The Chair: — I would ask at this time, the Minister of Labour, please introduce the officials who have joined us here this evening.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — They have been introduced on previous occasions, but I'd be happy to do that again. Deputy minister, Merran Proctor, on my left; and Jeff Parr on my right.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, Mr. Minister, and your officials. This is the first time that the House has had the opportunity to deal with this piece of legislation since it was hoisted some time ago, and there have been a number of amendments brought forward by you, Mr. Minister, because of the significant concern that was voiced all across the province. As you know, there are a number of groups out there that took a lot of issue with the Bill in its original form, and you are going to be presenting a number of House amendments to the Act.

I wonder if you might tell the House exactly about your consultation process since this Bill was hoisted, and what has happened. If you could, tell me which groups you've met with. Maybe give me an outline of two or three of the major areas of concern before we get into the clause-by-clause section of the Bill, because that was one of the criticisms of the Bill in its original form, was that the interest groups felt that there had not been an in-depth look at some of the issues at hand, and that there would be significant job

loss, for one, as a result of the Bill in its original form.

And I presume that some of the amendments which you are proposing to bring to the House tonight are a result of those consultation processes, to show that there will not be significant job loss. And maybe that will speed the process up down the road because we will be aware of the areas where that concern was.

So if you could briefly, Mr. Minister, give us an indication of what you've been doing over the last couple of weeks in order to make this Bill more compatible with the workforce in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Let me be honest with the member from Thunder Creek, and say that the bulk of my time over the last little while has been spent on The Trade Union Act, and not on labour standards.

But the groups I have met with who really have discussed both, I would be hard put to enumerate them all one by one. We have met with a number of business groups and we have met with a number of groups of trade unionists, both the executive of the Federation of Labour and with individuals, met with both fairly extensively.

I think it is fair to say of the trade unionists, their concern is that the amendments not weaken the Bill. They believe the Bill provides much-needed protection for working people and their only concern is that some of the amendments might result in a weakening of the Bill. Therefore they support the Bill and are perhaps less than enthusiastic about the amendments.

With respect to the business community the opposite might be said. They welcome the amendments because they believe that it provides additional guarantees that the Bill will do what we said it's going to do and some of them would have perhaps have soon have passed on the Bill itself. But they welcome the amendments.

All that having being said, I think we have been successful in achieving a fair degree of consensus arising out of this Bill. I recognize there are people on both sides who would dissent from that. There are trade unionists who would want a stronger Bill; there are people in the business community would want a weaker or none at all.

But having said all that I think we've gone a fair distance toward achieving a consensus on this Bill, and I think that's particularly true if you compare this province to virtually any other province which has wrestled with this legislation. Here there has been much more consensus and less marching in the legislature and in the streets than has been the case in other provinces.

So I think we've achieved a fair amount of consensus which has been a collegial effort by this government, and I think the Bill will resound to our credit but I also think the process has resounded to our credit. I think we've achieved a fair amount of consensus and I

recognize the dissent which exists on both sides.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, an area that I don't think has been addressed — and perhaps you can elaborate on it further — a number of the interested groups feel very uncomfortable with the fact that the legislation will be taken through the House and that regulations will be determined afterwards.

One of the groups for instance has written to me still very emphatically saying that they feel that this Bill should be pulled until the entire regulatory framework has been laid out for the public to view. They are somewhat sceptical of a process that for instance has the legislature not in session, that they then are dragged through a long process where one group can be pitted against another group. That a very large business for instance on the private side, who might have hundreds of employees, would in fact be in a different regulatory process than those that might have a few.

And I think the restaurant trades for instance, very worried about this regulatory process being done as a side issue where they don't have the ability to influence the process as much as they might have if the House were in session. And that there is this fear and I know you expressed, earlier on in second reading and others, that no, that this was normal. But I know from as recently as yesterday, when I received correspondence from one of the major business groups in the province, they still feel very, very uncomfortable about the fact that you will be doing regulations piece by piece, rather than sort of an inclusive process.

And I wonder if you might comment on that and how you foresee that happening, to satisfy this real concern that they won't have as much exposure to the wider public because the House may not be in session while you're doing this.

(2030)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I recognize that concern. The problem is, the regulations are a subset of the Bill, and they have to be drafted with respect to a given Bill, a defined Bill. If we did what you asked, it wouldn't be fair to the opposition; it really would not. Because if we were to draft the regulations, that assumes that this legislature plays no role in the Bill itself, and it's just going to rubber-stamp whatever we do.

I don't think that is the legislative process with respect to Bills this difficult. These are difficult Bills. These are difficult areas, these are difficult Bills, and I don't think this is a rubber-stamping process. I think they change, and we consider what things might work, and we listen to people as we go along. And that means, I think, that we have to establish the Bill, the framework, and then do the regulations. I don't think we can draft the regulations and then pass the Bill unless we assume that this legislature simply rubber-stamps. We've got to pass the Bill, provide the framework, and then do the regulations.

I guess the response I make to members of the community — and I admit that they're not all in the opposition — to members of the community who have that concern, my response is that either we short-change the opposition by assuming that the regulations we draft will be cast in stone, and that the Bill therefore is a defined Bill, and can't change from that; or we short-change the process in drafting the regulations by bringing the Bill here and then tabling the regulations already pre-done.

If we want a true consultative process, and we do; and if we want to replace conflict in this area with consensus, and we do; we have to involve people in the decision-making process. That means we have to involve the opposition in the passing of the Bill, and we've got to involve the industry thereafter in the drafting of the regulations. And there isn't another way to do both. There isn't another way that the opposition can be treated with respect, with respect to the Bill, and at the same time give the committees real latitude in drafting the regulations. There isn't another process. We've got to pass the Bill, then we've got to pass the regulations. You can't do it the other way around.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I understand your argument to a certain point. You're right, this is a very complex piece of work. Trying to follow this thing from the original Bill through the comments and criticisms that were made to the original Bill to now look at your House amendments and the criticisms that have come along on those House amendments, and trying to cross-reference that all back and forth is something that is very difficult for the average legislator to handle.

One of my preferences, Mr. Minister, would be to perhaps have a few people sitting here with me as we go through this process. You might call in my officials, individuals that understand this business and have significant concern. We might have a better dialogue in here if I had access to those type of people. But the only way I can do this is for you and I to dialogue, send the verbatim out, ask for comments on what has transpired, because it is a very, very difficult process.

Earlier on you had indicated that there probably were a significant amount of the regulations already in place because they aren't that much different from the previous legislation. And I think it would be very helpful in our case — because we are having to debate in here, and at the same time receive feedback from people in society — if we perhaps even had a draft copy of what the regulatory environment . . . because the meaning and the nuances — and I'll give you an example — for instance, just going through when we get into section 3 here about the definition surrounding holiday pay which are changing significantly from what they were before. And for me to understand the entire complexities of several different industries in the province who are affected by holiday pay is difficult.

I guess what you're saying to me is that we have the opportunity to bring House amendments in here that

may alter the Bill. But my nine years as a legislator in this place tell me that the chances of very many of those things being adopted are slim and next to none because of the way that this place functions.

So in effect the regulatory regime that usually evolves from these things is pretty well cast in stone no matter what we do here with the Bill. And that's just life and I recognize it. I accept it and understand that probably the next session of the House, if there are significant problems, will be the first opportunity to get at those things.

So I say to you, it would make my life easier. And I recognize the arguments that you put forward, saying that we have our role to play here. But it is an extremely difficult role without actually setting the people down in this House on our side to give you the type of thorough examination that would be absolutely necessary on some of these clauses. I'd seek your comments on that.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It was initially my thought that we would do that — that we would provide some draft regulations. I was discouraged from doing that by the groups with whom we met, actually. Both the business community and the trade union community, both were concerned that if regulations were tabled at this point in time . . . And while I respect your — I hate to use the word, it sounds a bit stuffy — but I respect your honour in a sense: if you say you'll treat them as draft regulations, then I believe you'll treat them as draft regulations; it's not that I'm in any sense distrusting your word.

But the groups with whom we met felt that if those regulations were made public, they would attain a certain immutability. They would be immutable. And they wouldn't be able to get them changed. And the groups with whom we had the discussions were anxious that the regulations not be tabled because they were afraid that then the government would feel it had to defend them.

And frankly, there may be something to that, just as you feel that when we bring in legislation — which I want to make a comment on in a minute, actually — when we bring in legislation, you feel that you can't make amendments. Perhaps not directly. That isn't common directly, but indirectly I think the opposition does have a role. Indirectly you send this out to people who you think are interested. They get it. They get another point of view. All they've got at this point in time is ours and the officials'. They get another point of view.

And they say, holy cow! — pardon the language. It may not be parliamentary.

An Hon. Member: — Worse than that.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It is. I don't think the chairman's going to let me get away with it, though. I thought that was the strongest epithet I could get away with. Holy cow! I never thought it would mean that. Then they come back to us and they say, this is

intolerable. You know what you can do with this? And we say, this was never intended. Believe us, trust us.

And Mr. Blakeney used to have a rule for — the former member from Regina Elphinstone — used to have a rule with respect to drafting legislation. Don't tell me what you thought it meant. Tell me what is the worst interpretation which the words will reasonably bear, and that's the interpretation I'm going to use because that's a reasonable interpretation from the point of view of the public.

So they come back to you with this, we look at this, and we respond accordingly. We may move the amendments — not the opposition.

But the comment that the opposition plays no role in legislation, I think, misunderstands the process. I think that it's a very superficial view of how this place actually operates.

I think we had an effect when we were in opposition on what you did and we did not . . . we tried to take credit for it; I'm not sure the extent to which we succeeded. But I think so does the opposition now have to play a role. It may not be a direct role in moving amendments but it's a role nevertheless that is sure.

One thing I am certain of, having spent a little under 20 years here, is that what is introduced by a minister has no guarantee of passage — no guarantee of passage at all and no guarantee that it will be passed in its original form. And I think the only way the process can be made to work is to have the Bill passed. Then we've got that. And then we'll deal with the regulations which are a subset of it.

I think anything else is really, really irrational. I don't mean that you're irrational, but I think it is an irrational process to try to do it any other way.

Mr. Swenson: — Well if you remember, Mr. Minister, last session, I think in workmen's comp and occupational health and safety, we brought forward over 40 amendments. And I suggest to you that a lot of them were very well thought out. In fact they were a representative voice of a great number of people in the community who expressed concerns to us.

So we know how to do that exercise and were very diligent last session in bringing those amendments forward. Those amendments were fairly well universally rejected by your government at the time. I'm not sure, there might have been one or two very minor ones that you, in turn, adopted through your own wording and brought through.

But that process was done. And I'm not saying to you that that won't be followed again in this case.

This particular piece of legislation is probably twice as difficult as both of those put together last year for people to understand. And that is why, when you had suggested earlier on that perhaps you would bring a set of draft regulations forward in some context and

put that into the mix for us to discern, we sort of felt that that was a good suggestion and that would be forthcoming when we got into this Bill a little bit later.

You mentioned the fact that the groups that you have consulted with didn't want that because they would then . . . you'd be a position of having to defend. And that, Mr. Minister, in my view goes with the chair that you sit in and the turf that you are supposed to understand. That's the minister's job is to defend and you can defend best by having your homework done to the greatest degree and understand that probably the greatest majority of people will back you in what you do.

If you are afraid to bring forward something that will automatically generate a lot of controversy, that tells me then that the issue is not settled enough to go through this House. And it simply puts the opposition in a place of having to filibuster, of perhaps waste the time of this Assembly and waste the time of the people out there, doing something that you're not quite prepared to defend.

And I think that's why a lot of groups with this particular item — which has been many years since it has had a very thorough overview and rejigging and absolutely necessary because of the changing climate that we live in — I don't think there's anyone, Mr. Minister, that denies that it was not appropriate in the 1990s to look at these issues because our workplace is under a tremendous amount of pressure.

We've seen jobs created that weren't here 10 years ago. We're seeing a lot of people in their late 50's having all of a sudden to look at an entirely new environment. They're not prepared mentally, or educationally, or psychologically to handle some of the things that are being thrown in front of them. And it is causing major disruption in our family units, having to cope with second jobs and a workplace that doesn't have all of the safety that people considered when they graduated from high school and moved into the workforce.

But by the same token, Mr. Minister, I think you would be furthering a process by allowing those regulations to come forward. I really do. I believe your Bill would go through this House much faster, even though there might be some tough moments for you in having to defend something that you perhaps have a philosophical point of view on that runs counter to a great number of people.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I think the member is essentially right. I think it would further the process in going through the House. I'm not convinced that that would produce a better product in the end. I think in the end we want to leave the sectorial committees — as we have come to call them — with the maximum degree of flexibility in dealing with their . . . in fine-tuning the regulations.

I mean I can tell you what I think the regulations are going to say. I am reluctant to put it in writing. There's a real difference between what one says and what one

puts in writing. And on any one of these given sections, I can tell you what the department's thinking is, and we'll be sharing that with the committee, and asking the committee to go from there. But you must remember, we have the joint labour-management commission dealing with the broader issues of part-time workers and then working contemporaneously with that we have the sectorial committees flushing out the detail of the regulations.

And we really, I think, are going to pre-empt the work of the joint labour-management commission if we table these regulations. And I don't think there's any difference between giving them to you and tabling them. I think that if we're going to give them to you, we might as well table them; they then become public. I don't think they're of any use to you if you can't disclose them. I assume if I send them to you, you'll want to discuss them with others. Once you do that, they are then in the public domain and we might as well table them. So I don't see any difference between tabling them and giving them to you. I think it has exactly the same effect.

I do think if we do that, there will be a certain rigidity built into the system. And what is more, I think the people who we would like to see serving on these committees are going to think that their work is being pre-empted and that there's nothing left for them to discuss because we have made the major decisions. That's particularly true of the joint labour-management commission, the single commission, which will review the broad issues of part-time workers. I think that is true.

(2045)

I think the draft regulations — which we would like the committees to start with in the area of part-time workers — I think it would, to some extent, pre-empt their work and they would feel they would be faced with something that was a fait accompli if we were to do this.

If it were just the sectorial committees, I think it might be different. I've agonized over this because I fully believe that good government is accountable government; accountable government is that which is, in the broadest sense possible, accessible and in which information is shared. I think good government is a government which shares information. And I had every intention of tabling these until the process began to develop and change once we tabled the Bill and we entered into discussions. And particularly with the joint labour-management commission now, I think it's wise not to have these regulations which will cover some of the same issues which they will want to discuss. And I'm really afraid that we'll pre-empt their discussion.

Maybe the labour-management commission will do what we always intended to do; maybe that's all they'll do, is come back and say yes, that's what we'd have done. But I don't think they think that. I don't think that either side think that we have all the answers. I think both sides think that they would like

us to redirect some of our thinking and I'm hopeful there will be some agreement on how our thinking should be redeveloped.

I am impressed — and I want to say this — I am impressed with the degree of consensus which we've achieved. I know there is conflict, and in some cases bitter conflict, about some of this. But I'm also impressed with where we are. Where we are is a degree of consensus on what should be done that I think truly rebounds to the credit of the province — not to the credit of the government, but to the credit of the province.

As I went around the province, I was impressed with people's decency and thoughtfulness, and their concern for their neighbours. The workers who knew, the business wasn't there, they didn't have a job, and they, quite apart from that, they cared about the business. They wanted it to succeed. They shared a sense of pride and accomplishment that the owners had.

I was impressed as well with the sense of compassion and responsibility which most of the employers had for their workers. They genuinely cared about them. And I think that has shown itself in this process because I think we've achieved a degree of consensus that I never imagined possible. With a little less far along the road with The Trade Union Act, I'd be prepared to admit that, but with labour standards, we've done better than I thought we would, and I want to try to make that process work.

I really think what we want to do with labour-management relations is put behind us the conflict and replace it with cooperation. That I think would be to the benefit of workers, it would be to the benefit of management, and it would certainly be to the benefit of the province of Saskatchewan and the nation called Canada.

And it would certainly make the life of the Minister of Labour a lot easier, not . . . Yes. Last and not least. One of the members on the other side comments, says it would make the life of the Labour minister easy. That's for certain. That isn't really a serious consideration, though.

It is our view that what labour-management relations need is a more cooperative relationship. That requires changes on both sides. And it requires some of the actors who are frankly more pugnacious than productive to stand aside. But I think we've accomplished a good deal here and I really want to let the process work. I think it will work, and for those reasons I, contrary to my every instinct, which I explained earlier, contrary to my every instinct, I am reluctant to table those regulations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorje: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would ask leave of the House to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like at this time to introduce a person whom I'm sure is known to many members at least on this side of the House, and perhaps to other members as well, and I would like to pick up on the comments that the Minister of Labour was making about the need for a more cooperative . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. Order, order. The member should not involve those in the galleries in our discussion. It suffices to simply introduce those who have joined us here.

Ms. Lorje: — All right, my apologies, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to introduce someone who's a well-known person from Saskatoon, very involved in the cooperative movement in Saskatoon, and also very well known in jazz musician circles. And I'm sure that he's going to have much to say with the upcoming Saskatoon jazz festival. I would like to introduce Mr. Skip Kutz to the House.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 32 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — In this business I have got extremely little applause. I'd like to savour what very little I get. That last comment of mine drew a scattering of applause, and I think I'd like to savour that for a while.

On that note, I think I will therefore move the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 41 — An Act to amend The Registered Psychologists Act

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

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

Bill No. 42 — An Act to amend The Physical Therapists Act, 1984

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

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

Bill No. 43 — An Act respecting the Licensing and Operation of Medical Laboratories

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

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

Bill No. 44 — An Act respecting Chiropractors

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

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

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I would ask for leave to move to the Committee of Finance.

Leave granted.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Municipal Government Vote 24

Item 1

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome back, Madam Minister, and your officials. I just have a few more areas to cover.

I believe where we last left off we were discussing your temporary employees and you informed me that my information was wrong, and that you had far more temps than what I had believed from the globals. I wonder if you could tell me — I asked you for highs and lows in that particular area — if you could give me those numbers now.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes. Thank you. I can give you . . . if you would like, I could give you a breakdown of month by month in 1993-94 or I can give you the high of 1993-94. The high was August, where there were 76 total, temporary casual; and the low was in December, where there was 47 temporary casual.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. So that explains why we have such a large number. I believe the totals went from about 523,000 to 1.088 million. And if I average those numbers out, I should come up with a better figure than I had before?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — If you average all the numbers out, they would come to 66 personnel, temporary casual, involved in the department for that fiscal year.

(2100)

Mr. Swenson: — That's still a fairly significant jump, Madam Minister. You had an average, I believe, of 46 the year before for 523; 66 would be about one-third more, but the budget is just about doubled. I'm wondering . . . and as I said, last year the temporary average would have been about \$11,000. These numbers still seem fairly high. Has there been anything beyond a normal 5 per cent increase that

would drive those numbers up that much?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I was going to correct what you have as far as '92-93. The average was .43 for the in scope, casual, semi-permanent, in 1992-93. The reason, I guess, can be many and varied. There's short-term contracts and people are coming and leaving the department. But there has been nothing more than the average two and a half per cent that was applied under the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union) contract.

There were other increases, I guess, when you take the in-scope or in-grid advancement within the range, as they move up within the range year over year, and so that would have brought up some of the salaries. Some were reclassifications which was a result of the amalgamation of the department.

We had a compensation to the staff in Sask Housing in July 1993, from converting the collective agreement in Sask Housing to an SGEU main table agreement. So that also increased the amount of salary in that category.

So there were a number of variations but I think it can be said unequivocally that there was no more than a two and a half per cent increase for any of the workers who belong to the SGEU union.

Mr. Swenson: — Could you tell me, Madam Minister, what the difference was in that conversion at Sask Housing, taking them from where they were to SGEU. Could you give me a global number for that?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The conversion in the Sask Housing division amounted to about an extra 3 per cent per worker.

Mr. Swenson: — Do you have a number for that, a total dollar volume in that conversion — what extra it cost to convert to SGEU?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We don't have it here but we can provide you with those numbers.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. That'll be of some interest. On your out-of-scope permanent employees, it looks like this class of employee cost you about 8 per cent more while you had one fewer person in this category. Is 8 per cent normal, given some of the other numbers that government has been insisting upon, as we go through budgeting process?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Again, on that number of 98 out-of-scope permanent, that number has fluctuated through the year and it goes from a high of five down to a low of three. For example, in April 1993 . . . oh I guess we had 15 in April of 1993. In May, we had three; in June, four. We don't have the figure for July. In August, we had three; September, we had four; October, we had three; November, four; December, five; January, five; February, four; and March, five. So that number fluctuated up and down.

Mr. Swenson: — How does that work, Madam

Minister? I'm talking about out-of-scope permanent employees. Are these being seconded in and out then, of the department? Because I would expect that your permanents, your out-of-scopes would be managerial-type people who are already being paid fairly significant salaries. Can you explain to me how you get that much fluctuation in your permanents?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Chairman, we gave the wrong numbers just now. I apologize. We'll go back and correct those numbers. The ones I gave were related to the out-of-scope . . . no, the in-scope, casual temporary. But we will find those numbers so that you will have an understanding of the fluctuation within the management level.

Mr. Swenson: — Well my research shows me, Madam Minister, that what we're probably dealing with here is not necessarily 8 per cent due to raises but probably 8 per cent due to the higher salaries that you have given to people who replaced existing positions. And I'd still like to know what the difference is.

I mean 8 per cent to the category of employee that are in the upper scale of pay in government, 8 per cent seems to me fairly high compared to some of the other areas in the province. So I'm wondering if you could explain to me if . . . tell me that I'm wrong in my assessment of what has been going on.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Okay. I apologize for the mix-up in the answer to the last question. We reorganized the department in March, on March 31, 1993, and at that point when reorganization took place we had a vacancy for an ADM (associate deputy minister), an associate minister of culture and recreation division.

So as the department has come up to full complement we have brought in more management level people to take care of the recreation cultural division, and then we brought in also the public safety division from the old Environment and Public Safety department. So it was a matter of reorganizing the department into those various divisions, and with that came an increase in the management level of personnel.

Mr. Swenson: — Madam Minister, how many of those people were brand-new to those positions, that weren't simply transfers from another area of government?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The two new positions would be the Provincial Librarian and the associate deputy of recreation and culture, Ken Alecxe.

Mr. Swenson: — Well these were people that were brought in totally brand-new. Okay.

Madam Minister, in your contract employees the costs appear to have gone from 191,787 last year to 367,269 this year even though you only hired three contracts as opposed to four last year. That works out to 122,000 a contract. First of all, could you explain this large overall change, and how do you justify those type of wages given that we've just been through a number of exercises to cut down wages and

percentage increases across government?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — On your data that we gave you, you have a number that says out-of-scope permanent, 98 personnel for 5,378,800. And then down two you have “contract” where you have three personnel for 367,269. When the staff put these numbers together they included in that 98 the contracted personnel in the minister’s office, the three people who work as secretarial staff and the three who work as ministerial staff. So that 98 includes those but the number 367,000 includes their salary. So there was a mismatch when they put these answers together. What we should have in out-of-scope permanent is the number 92, and under contract, the number should read 9. And that relates to the total contracted cost, salary cost of 367,269, which would include those six people working in the minister’s office.

Mr. Swenson: — Okay, well you understand, Madam Minister, when I look at last year’s numbers I have to trust that the cross-referencing being done by your department officials are accurate, that if there’s nine instead of three, then we will do our mathematics a little bit differently.

You indicate you have six people in your office that are under contract?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That’s right. The three people who work as secretarial assistants are on contracts, and the three people who work as ministerial assistants are contracted people.

Mr. Swenson: — Madam Minister, in the information that you have sent to us you have a category which is “other,” in which you’ve spent \$571,000. That seems like a lot on miscellaneous for an undetailed cost analysis. Can you explain to me what these other costs are, because I believe in the previous year there were no such category, or if it was, it was a very small amount of money.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, I can give you the breakdown. There are a number of items. First, overtime is 110,149; TPHD (temporary performance of higher duties), \$6,807; a shift differential for \$1,808; stand-by fees for \$996; northern district allowance for \$11,448; employee education expenses for \$9,790; severance pay for 279,938; staff housing for 1,644; allowance for special services, 1,389; pensions and benefits, 90,052; car allowance, 2,811; honorariums and retainers, 31,153; and career assistance for 14,606. The total of that is \$562,591.

(2115)

Mr. Swenson: — I wonder, Madam Minister, would you mind providing me with that list, and also could you break that severance payment down for me by the number of individuals and the amounts that they received in severance.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, we’re looking it up. We’ll send it over to you. The list I just gave you we can send over right now, but the severance payments will take a

minute to get that data.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Madam Minister.

You mentioned a figure of over \$31,000 in honorariums. Can you tell me what type of honorariums we’re dealing with here?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That’s a number for the boards and commissions. We were just looking . . . It’s in the information we provided for you. There are a number of boards and commissions who receive honorariums. We can provide . . . I believe it’s in that list, that document that you have there. Yes, on page . . . well these aren’t numbered, but it’s question no. 7.

Do you want me to go over all the boards and commissions that were given honorariums and payments?

Mr. Swenson: — No, we’ll check that Madam Minister. I’m sure if it isn’t in here you would be more than willing to provide that list to us. This year’s figures that you’ve given us show that you failed to tender on 58 of your 86 computer purchases, including one for around \$40,000 in the housing division. Can you tell me why you would not tender on something that size?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That project was an upgrade to an existing system that we use in Sask Housing for all the local housing authorities and the company that owns the software had the expertise to do the upgrade, so that’s why it wasn’t contracted.

Mr. Swenson: — Can you tell me then at what the threshold number is when you do contract?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The benchmark is \$10,000 unless there are exceptional circumstances like the one we’ve just mentioned. But usually anything above 10,000 is set to tender.

Mr. Swenson: — Can you tell me, Madam Minister, what would be exceptional about this software? I don’t know a whole lot about computers, but it seems like these days you can pretty well cross-reference anywhere you want and you’ll come up . . . if your system’s IBM compatible, there’s all sorts of people out there that can provide the same stuff. So I wonder if you could tell me what is exceptional about this system.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Well they own the system and they were the ones who had the expertise in providing the software. So I guess the point is that the original system, the original package that was being used by the housing authorities, was designed by this company. And when there was an upgrade needed, then they turned back to that company to provide the expertise to do the upgrade.

Mr. Swenson: — But as far as you know, there’s nothing about this software that makes it unique in any way? Like I said, if your system’s IBM compatible there’s all sorts of people can supply you software

that'll be compatible with your system. Is this an Apple system or something else that makes it different?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — This company owns that system. They're the ones that own the computer system, so they are the ones that did the upgrade on the software package.

Mr. Swenson: — Well I would compliment you, Madam Minister, on the fact that it looks like your computer costs in this last year were around \$300,000 and that is a drop from 1.8 million the year previous — at least that's what my data shows. And so I would compliment you and your officials for reducing that number significantly. There's others in government that haven't been quite so diligent this year when it comes to buying computer hardware.

Madam Minister, one final question here. When we were talking about honorariums we quickly looked through here. You have an individual, a number of individuals here, receiving far more than the total actually of the honorarium that you talked about. There's an Ann Kipling-Brown who is your adviser on the status of the artist for \$31,000. Can you tell me what that individual does for \$31,000?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The number that you have there is for the total cost of the committee. There were 10 members on the committee and that cost includes accommodation costs, travel costs, honorariums. So the number you have in that category is a total cost for the committee's work. It includes the honorariums but is not the only cost.

Mr. Swenson: — Well I would suggest to you, Madam Minister, for accountability purposes then, we must be dealing with the same thing here. You've got Alderman Mark Thompson down for just about 16,000 and you have Sonia Morris for 21,000-plus. I would presume then that these are the same type of things where there would be a committee in place that would be accounting for this money.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That's true. All those committees . . . you have the head of the committee and then you have the cost of the committee and the cost includes all of the personnel who worked on the committee and all the associated cost with that committee's work.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I would suggest that in future we would like to have all of the committee members with a cost attached to them because the rest of them are very good here. You know, you've got it right down to \$130, \$150, that type of thing and that makes it easy for me to understand on your honorariums what exactly you're up to.

But I would like those committees broken down by individual with the amounts attached to them so we understand who's getting what here. Because just the total of those three is nearly \$70,000 which, if I were just to accept honorarium, would give me a totally

different idea.

So if you'll make that commitment, Madam Minister, I think we can bring our business to a conclusion here.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, we will provide you with that breakdown. I just wanted to say the average honorarium was between 75 and \$100 for each of those committee workers. But we'll provide you with all of the costs associated with honorariums for all the committees.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Madam Minister, I welcome your staff here this evening. Madam Minister, I have several questions that I want to quickly go through different areas, and it has just come to my attention that you had sent to our caucus an estimates package. So if some of the questions are answered in the package, just make reference and I can follow those through later.

Madam Minister, on some of the cost savings in your department, now the total budget for the department is increasing by eleven and a half million dollars. Now that's an increase of six and a half per cent. Now what benefit will the people of Saskatchewan receive as result of this increased spending?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The increase in our budget is attributable to the infrastructure program of \$10 million, and also we had an increase in the futures allocation under the rural conditional grant program. So when you combine that with the decreases in other areas, what you end up with is an increase overall in the budget of \$11 million. But most of it can be attributed to the infrastructure program.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. On page 4 of the budget speech, it says that . . . and I quote:

Last year, almost \$18 million was saved by making common sense changes to the day to day operations of government . . .

This year, we will save an additional \$12 million . . .

Madam Minister, could you please tell me where your department made its share of these savings last year and where you intend to make the savings this year?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Last year when we amalgamated the departments, we had a savings of \$2 million. This year, there was a further reduction of \$800,000 by doing certain streamlining within the department and some program cuts and efficiencies within the personnel in our department.

So we had an \$800,000 what we call a program expenditure reduction this year. And last year we achieved the \$2 million by virtue of amalgamating the departments.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. In these areas that you spoke of, as far as the

decision-making process that was used to identify these savings and go ahead with them, did you use outside consultants or efficiency audits? Were they performed? What other methods of identifying cost-cutting measures were used?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Our individual managers and associate deputy and the deputy minister did the assessment and made the decisions about where the efficiencies could be gained. So we did not use any external management company to do an audit or review. It was the management people within our department that made the recommendations for the cuts.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The total staff has been reduced by about nine full-time equivalent positions but this is an overall total. So how many employees have been hired in your department through the Public Service Commission in the past year?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We can find that answer if you want to wait. But you will find it also in the document that we passed over to you and to the members of the opposition on prepared questions.

(2130)

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I haven't had a chance to look at that document so I appreciate you telling me if it's in there or not.

Of those employees that we're discussing, how many are classified as in scope, and how many are management and professional classification, which is out of scope?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That's in the document you have. It's the first question on the second page of the document. How many are in scope — 299 are in scope and out-of-scope people are 96.

Mr. McPherson: — Madam Minister, how many employees have been transferred from in-scope to out-of-scope status during the past year? I'd ask to be provided with a complete list of those transfers, including employee name and department, old classification or title, new classifications and titles, and salary change if there was any salary changes. If it's in here, just let me know. If not, I guess you could provide that in a written statement instead of verbal.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — There was no one who was transferred from in-scope to out-of-scope positions.

Mr. McPherson: — How many employees have been reclassified in your department in the past year through the Public Service Commission's reclassification process? And was the reclassification process initiated by the employee, or by the department, or the Public Service Commission?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The answer is question no. 2 on the document, which is 12. But in regards to who initiated the process, some were initiated by the

department and some were initiated by the personnel. So the reclassification in numbers is 12. The process can either be through recommendation from the management or recommendation from the employee.

Mr. McPherson: — Madam Minister, of the 12 that you referred to in this document now, we have all the names and the positions and the numbers and all the information on those 12?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — No, you only have that number. If you want the detailed information, we'll provide it for you.

Mr. McPherson: — Yes, Madam Minister. Well if you're going to have the detailed information provided, then can you include that position number, employee name, department, classification or title, and salary change, and the full gamut?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We'll provide you with that information.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Did your department abolish any positions or terminate any staff in this last budget?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The answer to your question is no. 3 on the information packet that you have. It includes the employee and the position and so on and so forth . . . termination of contract. I can read it out for you if you like, but it's behind question no. 3.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. On March 18, 1993, the budget day for the '93-94 fiscal year, your government cut 291 government positions. The minister for Public Service Commission has already confirmed the cost of the severance to those individuals was 2.8 million for all of government. Could you advise this House of the cost of severing those employees in your department?

And I ask you to provide me with, I guess, a list of information that I could send over to you, but it's positions abolished, including position number and working title, name of employee employed in the position at the time of abolishment, seniority or years of service of each terminated employee, amount of severance paid to each employee, whether the employee has since been re-employed within the government and where, and what has the domino effect been in the departments where staff were eliminated. For example, how many jobs were reclassified and at what cost in order to absorb the duties of the terminated employees.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — A number of the answers to the questions you've asked is in the document that you have. In regard to the total amount of severance pay when we downsized our department, the number is 279,938. That was the number I gave the member from Thunder Creek a few minutes ago on severance pay, total severance pay.

You had a number of other, more detailed questions there, and if you would send that over, we would

provide you with the answers, but there is some . . . some of that information is in the packet you have. The global amount for severance pay is, again, 279,938. And the answers to the other questions you have, we'll provide to you if you'll send over your question.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Would you care for me to send this to you so you have a list of the questions? And I guess then you can just send them to us at a later date.

In administration, your officials have saved 268,000 in administrative spending, and I'm wondering how this was achieved and where did you save the money?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That number includes the following items.

Program service reduction decisions taken in the 1994-95 budget: one, to eliminate funds for relocation was 45,000; reduce computer support was further 45,000; abolish an executive position was 50,000; savings on pension and benefits in housing was 12,000; reduce communication funds for 15,000; absorb unfunded reclassifications for 11,000; and absorb recreation reduction for 40,000. And that comes to \$218,000.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. How have internal administrative services changed as a result of these savings and are there any services your department is now going without?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — To your question, we will not be eliminating any services to our clients. We have achieved these efficiencies by better management practices and we have relied more on branch managers to be able to internally manage their budgets better, instead of . . . and of course to absorb the costs rather than to rely on extra funds through budget allocation. So I guess it's just a tightening up of management practices and relying on all the managers in various branches to be more efficient and to make better use of their personnel.

Mr. McPherson: — Madam Minister, the total staff count for the department is going down, but in the subvote under administration it's going up. How can you explain this?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — When we amalgamated the various parts of the government last year, we took personnel from both Rural Development and Public Safety from the old Environment and Public Safety department. They transferred the people in our last budget but they didn't transfer the PYs (person-years). And so what happens this year is that that mistake has been corrected and now the PYs show up, so we had three people that were transferred from Public Safety during the amalgamation process. They weren't accounted for in the '93-94 budget as PYs, but they are accounted for in the '94-95 budget.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Under accommodation and central services subvote,

there's a new charge for capital operating that appears in the budget. Can you tell me what this means and how that money will be spent?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That is long-overdue shelving at the Provincial Library. The Provincial Library has had for a number of years some severe problems with their shelving for books, and we have this year undertaken to provide new shelving in the Provincial Library.

(2145)

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam. Under municipal services, the budget shows an increase of \$100,000 for financial assistance and policy services. How much of this item is financial assistance, and does all of the increase go to financial assistance to municipalities?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — There are no grounds attached to that subvote. What we have is a branch of the department that provides legislative and policy research and that number is the cost for the in-department service. It doesn't pertain to providing grants to third parties.

Mr. McPherson: — Urban revenue sharing is down this year by 5 million, so which towns and cities will be most affected and how will the increase be apportioned, by a per capita or whatever?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The reduction was applied uniformly; everybody got an 8 per cent reduction from last year's allocation.

Mr. McPherson: — Eight per cent for cities, towns, it didn't matter, whatever?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Everybody got an 8 per cent reduction from last year's allocation. It doesn't matter whether it was cities, towns, or village.

Mr. McPherson: — The urban-rural split in Saskatchewan is approximately 50-50, but the revenue sharing between urban and rural is going to be 58 to 42. Last year the split was even greater in favour of urban municipalities — 62 to 38. How do you account for this being proportioned, a greater share going to urban municipalities?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The revenue-sharing pools have different criteria for the two different classifications of municipalities. On the urban side the pool is allocated mainly on a per capita but also on the cost of delivering services and urban municipalities deliver quite a wider range of services than do the rural municipalities. In general the RM (rural municipality) grants are applied to road maintenance and construction.

Mr. McPherson: — Given that answer, is there exceptions made for a municipality like Corman Park where they have a lot more service to deliver?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — As I understand your question regarding how do we allocate the money between

various classifications of municipalities, they're based on a formula and it's . . . Corman Park is an RM and the allocation under the rural revenue-sharing grant is as the formula will provide. I'm not quite sure I understand the nature of your question. Perhaps you could rephrase it and I could better understand what you're trying to get at.

Mr. McPherson: — Well your answer earlier, you had mentioned that it was based on the amount of services they provide. And I just used Corman Park as an example because I know that they provide a lot of the same services that I guess perhaps the city of Swift Current does.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Well your question is still not clear to us. But I think what we have to say is you have to look at how the formula is applied, and it's . . . there are a number of factors within the formula, whether it's the urban revenue-sharing or the rural revenue-sharing formula. And it's based on their ability, or their assessment base, or their ability to provide services and their needs. And so whether it's Corman Park or whether it's the RM of Flett's Springs, a formula applies so that there is an equal distribution of assistance from the provincial government to that municipality to cover its needs.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The allocation to urban municipalities is going down by 10 per cent but the allocation to rural municipalities is going up by almost a million dollars. How do you account for this?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I'm going to give you these numbers so that you can do your comparison. On the urban revenue sharing, there was a reduction of 8 per cent, which amounted to \$4.047 million. There was an additional draw for SAMA's (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) core services from the revenue-sharing pool on the urban side of \$1.167 million.

Now on the rural revenue side, there was a reduction from last year's revenue-sharing pool of 8 per cent. That 8 per cent reduction amounted to \$2.89 million. The rural services to support SAMA's core services, the rural contribution to support SAMA's core services, drew down from the revenue-sharing pool \$833,000. But because of the change to accrual accounting and because we redesigned or put back money into the futures program again, there was an addition of \$4.6 million going back into the rural revenue-sharing pool. So there was an overall addition to the rural revenue-sharing pool because of the change in accrual accounting and because of the allocation of the futures grants, which was increasing it by about 4.5, \$4.4 million this year from last year.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The allocation to SAMA is going down from seven and a half million dollars to four million dollars. Now I can also see there is a transitional grant of two million, presumably to help SAMA ease toward a reduced budget. What is changing at SAMA that makes a lower budget possible? And will SAMA be offering its

services on a cost-recovery basis?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We have to go back to some history on SAMA here, and look at SAMA's budget. And as you look at their internal budget, there was an allocation made of about \$4 million to cover what we call core services. And \$5.3 million was allocated to cover what we call field inspection services.

What we did this year was to split those two parts of SAMA so that it could be defined, the core service side from the field services side. The provincial government allocated \$2 million towards those core services and transferred from revenue sharing another \$2 million that I talked about from the revenue-sharing pool a moment ago.

So the core services, which are the main brain or the nerve centre of SAMA, are funded by \$4 million, and there is a \$2 million transitional assistance program to SAMA to cover part of the cost of the field services which was the 5.3 that I had mentioned. So from the provincial government to SAMA this year there is an allocation of \$6 million, 2 from the General Revenue Fund, 2 from the revenue pools, and 2 additional million from the General Revenue Fund as transitional assistance.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'm going to back you up a question for a moment just so you can explain something to me. As I recall, some of the municipalities were saying when you changed the futures that they were building their roads on, that I understood your department was saving a great deal of money on. Did you not just say that you're spending \$4 million more by changes to the futures? Can you tell me how that works?

(2200)

Hon. Ms. Carson: — This has got to do with accrual accounting and last year we took a snapshot of the futures program and they were about \$19.6 million into the futures. We wanted to stabilize it at about \$15 million so last year we took \$4.6 million out of it. This year the futures . . . we put back into the futures \$4.6 million so it's a matter of trying to adjust to the accrual accounting program that came into effect last year.

And the futures program is complex as it is because it allows certain municipalities the ability to draw down on their future allocation. And what we wanted to do was stabilize that fund at \$15 million, not allow it to go over it. So we have it stabilized at \$15 million at this point in time by the reduction last year of 4.6 but this year we put back into it 4.6. But that is money that the municipalities do use; it is money that they have allocated to their conditional grant program.

Mr. McPherson: — Madam Minister, if I understand what you're saying then is last year you went from 19.6 to 15. And now you're remaining at 15 even though you put \$4.6 million more into the futures program?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Well I think we're going to have

to send over some paper for you to show you how this works, because as I said, the accrual accounting that we did last year took a snapshot of the program. We decided to stabilize it at \$15 million. This year we put \$4.6 million back into it. It is money in addition to what their revenue-sharing grant provides for them.

You will have to see how the program is designed in order for it to make sense. But we'll provide you with a detailed breakdown of that information from the officials.

Mr. McPherson: — Can you also provide me then a detailed breakdown of each RM that was using the futures . . . into the futures and where they're at? Give me the snapshot of where they're at in the futures?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, we can do that. The futures money is applied to the designated road program and so some municipalities if they have less, I think less than — how many years into the future? — if they are less than three years into their futures, they have access to that money. And for other municipalities, if they are further into their futures then they can't draw down from the futures program because they've already borrowed into the future too much.

But we'll provide you with a breakdown of which RMs are drawing down the futures this year and how much that is and what it relates to as far as road development.

Mr. McPherson: — The budget allocates 21 million for the municipal assistance program. And first I'd like to confirm that this is a provincially funded portion of the federal program and I'd have to know if that was, first of all, correct. There seems to be a delay in soliciting projects, selecting them, and announcing the money allocations. Is the responsibility for the administration of the program in this branch of your department?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — There is an infrastructure management team that looks after the administration of those projects.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Under the subvote of urban parks, the funding allocations for the Meewasin Valley Authority, the Wakamow Valley Authority, and the Swift Current Chinook Parkway are all frozen. What are each of these agencies going to do to account for the usual increases in cost of living, input price increases, and increased fees? Are there any activities going to be cut as a result?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — That's up to the park authorities to manage. We transfer the funding to them and they set their yearly agenda and their projects. And they have a number of ways. They can look to other sponsors to help them fund any shortfall or they can do some internal reductions or readjustments.

But what we do is transfer the money over to the urban park authorities and then they set their own internal yearly agenda and schedule of projects.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam. For both the authorities, how much of their budgets are made up from self-generated revenues?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We don't have that figure. What we do is simply transfer the money over to them and they set their own budget. I know that in Saskatoon, the city of Saskatoon contributes to the Meewasin Valley as does the University of Saskatchewan.

So there are a number of different funding partners besides corporate and patron sponsors that they have. We don't know what their total budget is but we can provide you with that information.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you. You'll provide a list of the activities that they do to raise the revenues? All right.

Can you tell me what the Swift Current Chinook Parkway . . . is this a scenic route or are there toll charges being considered similar to those charged on the Coquihalla in B.C. (British Columbia).

Hon. Ms. Carson: — It's a recreational urban park. It was an agreement that the last administration went into with the city of Swift Current. It provides assistance to the city of Swift Current to develop their river park within the city.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The Wakamow Valley Authority recently hired a new general manager. Are there any costs out of this budget in payment to the former manager? And who is the new general manager? Can you describe the selection process for the managers?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We don't have any influence over the way the local park authority manages its internal affairs. They make the decision about who they will hire and the programs that they deliver. All we do is transfer to them a grant and they develop their budget. So we do not have that information.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Under public safety, the budgets for fire safety and building standards are both going down. It appears that much of the costs will come in the usual operating expenses. Where will the cuts be made and how will this affect public safety?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — In the public safety division, we had two positions. We eliminated two positions from the fire prevention officers. That was a saving of \$80,000. In the building standards division we eliminated one technical safety inspector, and in the inspection services we eliminated 2.9 full-time equivalents, and elimination of one municipal enforcement assistant officer under building standards for \$56,000.

How will that compromise our services? They will not be compromised. What we have done is amalgamate some of our personnel so that they can cover the two sides of the services at the same time. So by making

better use of our personnel in various locations we believe we can still provide the same coverage and the same advisory support to communities as we did before.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam. Are any of these services contracted out?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — No, none of them are contracted out.

Mr. McPherson: — Are those positions and those employees, are they in this other booklet that you sent over?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, they are.

Mr. McPherson: — The budget for the Provincial Library is practically frozen. Literally thousands of new books are published daily, not to mention serials and government publications. Will the Provincial Library be able to carry out its mandate with only 22,000 more dollars?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The Provincial Library has provided an excellent service to our regional libraries for many years and the staff there have been very dedicated. They have been under pressure, for sure, for the last number of years as we've gone through funding reductions. They have been able though to manage their services to the public. And it has been difficult but we believe we can maintain the same level of services today as we have in the future, but we have to be very careful that we make sure the Provincial Library is not depleted of resources because they provide a valuable service to all residents of Saskatchewan. And we're trying to build partnerships through our multi-type library board and to look for better ways of making use of all the library services that we have in Saskatchewan.

So your question is . . . it's been difficult for the Provincial Library. The staff over there have undergone some cuts and some frozen budgets for the last number of years. They are coping well. They are providing an excellent service. And we hope that in the years to come we can continue to enhance this service.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The multi-type library that you talked about, how does this budget support that initiative? And exactly how many dollars are allocated to it?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We have \$200,000 in a special initiative for libraries, \$100,000 of that has been dedicated to the multi-type library development. And we have allocated an extra 12,000 to provide research services for the multi-type library board, advisory board, that we just recently established.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. As you know, we live in an information-rich environment and we are witnessing the development of the information super highway, I guess it's coined. The growth of Internet is a notable achievement and

efforts are currently underway to create SASK#net link of the Internet. Is the Provincial Library involved in this effort?

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Hon. Ms. Carson: — Yes, they have been intimately involved in the development of this service, through partners in the education institutions and in the research institutions. The Provincial Library is working with those partners to provide access to information and computer services for the people of Saskatchewan. They are providing access through their own database and through their own systems of access to information. So it is a valuable service. We're building on it. The library system is one of the partners in that Internet system and we think in the future it's going to be a great asset to the people, particularly in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Can you describe other efforts by your department to integrate with the emerging information networks?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We have one pilot project in partnership with the provincial government in the active living for the environment program, so the recreation services have accessed the information highway to the extent that they're in cooperation with the federal government like a participation-type of an approach to active living.

Mr. McPherson: — Is any money in this budget being allocated to SASK#net?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — We have provided \$3,000 as a special grant to the library system to access SASK#net.

Mr. McPherson: — There's considerable pressure to amalgamate school and public libraries. On one hand they have different roles and on the other hand there are potential savings. What is your department's position on this matter and have you conducted any studies to assess the costs and savings? If so, where are the savings and if not, will you be conducting a study?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Well first of all, we are not amalgamating and we are not trying to push amalgamation on either the public education system, or library system, or on our public library service system. What we're trying to do is explore areas where we can cooperate and find efficiencies, but it is up to both the library trustees' association and the school library association to try to provide us with those answers. So we don't have any agenda to amalgamate any library systems in Saskatchewan, but we do certainly want to promote enhanced cooperation and coordination where it's practical and feasible. And really, that is the essence of the multi-type library board — to look for those ways of working more closely together and providing better services.

The committee reported progress.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you. I would like to thank

the officials from the Department of Municipal Government that have been here tonight and have been here on a number of other occasions. I appreciate their support and their advice. And I also thank the members of the opposition for their questions tonight.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:21 p.m.