

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 2, 1995

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition I'm bringing forward today from a lot of my constituents and people of the south-west part of the province. The prayer is as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, most of these people are from the Coronach, Rockglen, and Assiniboia area of the province.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy this morning to present petitions on behalf of people from the Gull Lake, Eastend, and Tompkins area. I will read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate adequate funding dedicated towards the double-laning of Highway No. 1; and further, that the Government of Saskatchewan direct any monies available from the federal infrastructure program towards double-laning Highway No. 1, rather than allocating these funds towards capital construction projections in the province.

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

I'm happy to table those for the folks back home today.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate adequate funding dedicated toward the double-laning of Highway No. 1.

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

And of member shareholders of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool petitioning the Assembly to require the directors of the Pool to seek the approval of the Pool membership by a vote before the proposed changes to

the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Act are enacted by the Legislative Assembly.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would draw your attention and that of the members to a group that are seated in your gallery. This is a group of 17 grade 10 students from Miller High School in Regina.

They're accompanied by their teacher, Shawn Pearce. I look forward to meeting with them after the question period, and at this time I would ask the members to join with me to make them feel welcome here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Eulogy for Murray Cotterill

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A week ago today, Canada and Saskatchewan lost one of our last links with the 1930s, a decade that arguably was the taproot of much that is good and progressive and lasting about our society today.

I speak of Murray Cotterill, Mr. Speaker, a man who contributed very significantly to the lives of the working people in my constituency.

Murray was a long-time trade unionist and labour relations specialist, first with the old Canadian Congress of Labour, now the Canadian Labour Congress, and with the steelworkers' organization.

In the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, Murray was at the centre of the great social movement to establish the rights of working people in the industrial workplaces of Canada. These were times of tremendous struggles as the history books will attest. It was through the efforts of people like Murray Cotterill and his colleagues that the right to organize and the right to bargain collectively were won and got a toe-hold in Canada. Working people today are in his debt.

Those of us on this side of the House owe him something as well. He was active in the youth movement of the original CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) at a very early stage, and then worked with J.S. Woodsworth, Stanley Knowles, David Lewis, and Tommy Douglas to bring about social justice to all Canadians. One man and two very big hats, Mr. Speaker.

After he retired he moved to Saskatchewan where he worked for two years in the Blakeney government. He spent his last active years working for the rights of retired union members, finishing his life as he began it, by promoting the social welfare of his fellow working people

Mr. Speaker, I know all members will join me in celebrating the

life of my friend, Murray Cotterill, and in expressing our sympathy to his wife, Kay.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Telemiracle Radiothon

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Everybody knows that Telemiracle telethon will be again raising money in just a few days. What many people probably don't know is that in my riding, the town of Meadow Lake and the surrounding communities have the dubious distinction of being the largest per capita contributors to this worthwhile cause.

For the past 18 years, Meadow Lake Kinsmen Club has held a radiothon which is always broadcast live on CJNS Radio. Again this weekend the radiothon will be held at the Meadow Lake Civic Centre featuring a wide variety of local talent during the 20-hour event, which runs during the same hours as the telethon on TV.

Mr. Speaker, the community on average raises about \$28,000 every year for the Telemiracle from area residents. This figure is remarkable if you consider the small population base from which we draw. The good thing about raising all of this money from the radiothon is that the community gets much needed services in return, and financial assistance for people who require life-saving medical care.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Kinsmen and Kinettes in the Meadow Lake region, and as well, the efforts of the staff at CJNS Radio. I extend my best wishes to all communities with fund-raising events for Telemiracle and urge residents of Saskatchewan to give generously to this cause. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hockey Rink Energy Efficiency Audit

Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Speaker, mention the words community rink, and what images arise? Winter carnivals with figure skaters, youth emulating superstars in high-paced hockey games, and curling bonspiels involving youth to seniors, or parents huddled in the bleachers hoping their kid is the next Stoikjo, Clark, or Peterson.

But starting this year, Mr. Speaker, rinks will also be the focus of something different. A new five-year program will help more than 250 community rinks in Saskatchewan achieve energy efficiency. Rinks will be offered energy audits, financial advice, technical training and engineering support.

The program will help to educate rink staff, management, and suppliers, enabling them to make better decisions about how their energy budgets are spent. Overall energy savings are expected to be \$4 million, and another \$16 million through installation of energy efficient equipment.

Mr. Speaker, such communities as Foam Lake have already benefited by implementing energy efficiency. There the rink saw its energy costs drop 36 per cent with savings of \$10,000. Many of the communities in my constituency are actively looking into this program.

Four government departments will combine their services to provide the program, which was developed in consultation with Saskatchewan Municipal Government and the Saskatchewan Recreation Facility Association. Another example, Mr. Speaker, of how the cooperative spirit makes Saskatchewan a better place to live. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Return of Migrant Canada Geese to Saskatchewan

Mr. Scott: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to report good news to the Assembly today. We all knew that Pennsylvania has its groundhogs and Capistrano has its swallows. But Saskatchewan has its Canada geese. And during the last week of February the geese had arrived in south-west Saskatchewan . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. If the members wish to carry on that debate on this side of the House, I wish they'd do it outside of the House while the member is giving his private statement. Member from Indian Head-Wolseley, sorry for the interruption.

Mr. Scott: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A number of people reported geese returning to our province in south-west Saskatchewan during the last week of February. And yesterday the first migrant geese had arrived in Regina, with a number of people out to view the birds and to feed them as well.

Spring migration is a very exciting time in Saskatchewan, as it's the end of another winter. And from now until into June, birds will continue to arrive from the South. So it's my pleasure to report this good news today. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Crow Benefit Elimination

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time in Saskatchewan's history there has been a crop failure in the middle of the winter. But instead of drought or frost, the culprit has been the feds and the reds. The NDP Premier of the province saw fit to pilfer nearly \$200 million from Saskatchewan farm families, while the Liberal Prime Minister of this country has seen fit to take up to approximately \$300 million more.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture: Mr. Minister,

Sask Trends Monitor estimates net farm income in 1995 to be approximately \$440 million. We have calculated the cost to producers as a result of the elimination of the Crow benefit to be approximately \$15.92 per tonne, for an extra cost of over \$300 million on exports of 19 million tonnes of grain. That will nearly wipe out the entire net farm income in 1995.

Mr. Minister, will you admit that your changes to the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program and your ill-advised and bull-headed stance on the Crow are directly responsible for this disastrous situation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — No, Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is quite simply, no. If the member had been listening for the last six to eight months, or even a year from now, they would have heard myself and the Premier telling the federal Liberals that \$300 million will be half of our net farm income for next year, and they shouldn't do it. Obviously they didn't listen to that case.

The member opposite, who supported reductions to the Crow benefit under the federal Tories for the last 10 years, is now saying, oops, did you know you're going to lose a bunch of income? We've been aware of that for a long time and have been fighting very hard to keep that income.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, we understand that the Premier is down in Ottawa meeting with the Prime Minister over the last day, again probably conspiring against Saskatchewan farmers, as he's done in the past.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals may have killed the Crow, but now it's the NDP (New Democratic Party) who is eating the crow all across this province.

New question to the minister: the Premier has recently admitted that he screwed up the GRIP program, and his friend, Jean, is now taking full advantage of that.

Mr. Minister, will you call the Premier in Ottawa and get him to ask for the hundreds of millions of dollars in GRIP premiums that he and the Prime Minister have taken away from farm families across this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, again the opposition can't have it both ways. In the first question he says we're being bull-headed and pigheaded about this and we should have negotiated. In the second place he's saying we've negotiated away the benefits. So I don't know how he can have it both ways.

Mr. Speaker, the two opposition parties in the province are probably the only people in the world who want to go back to

'91 GRIP program. I think the farmers . . . if you polled the farmers of this province they will tell you that that was a program that paid farmers to do a poor job of growing the wrong crop; that was more expensive than the provincial budget could possibly have afforded; that we have a new safety net; that we are heading into the next century. We are helping our farmers, and we are still spending 10 per cent of our income on farm families. We negotiated the best safety net we could with the federal government and we are working and supporting our farmers.

When something happens and farmers are devastated by a hit in the federal budget, suddenly the other two opposition parties wake up and say they're suddenly supporting farmers. Where have they been for the past 10 years?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Firearms Legislation

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have just seen the Minister of Agriculture admit that they're abandoning one sector of Saskatchewan society.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, Saskatchewan gun owners are tired of waiting for your government to do something. Firearms owners have already acted: they've gone out to the rallies; they've written letters; they've circulated petitions, which we have presented to this House. And now they're waiting for you to show some leadership, Mr. Minister, but nothing is happening.

Mr. Minister, we think we've waited long enough and that's why our caucus is taking some action. Later today I will be introducing legislation to protect Saskatchewan gun owners by entrenching property rights into the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code. Mr. Minister, will you support this?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much for that question. I have not . . . no member of this side of the Assembly has seen that Bill, so to that extent we must reserve our final statement until after it's given first reading.

Let me say that we do not . . . we have very serious concerns about entrenching property rights in the Human Rights Code. This was debated in 1980 when the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was passed. It was not included in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, we think with good cause, and we would be very concerned about it being included now.

I also want to say, before I take my seat, that it will do nothing to buttress the constitutional position of the province. There is a doctrine called paramountcy which says federal legislation has paramountcy over provincial legislation where the two conflict.

We therefore cannot occupy a field and prevent them from doing so. The feds can do that but we can't, so your tactic is of

little use in buttressing our constitutional position, and it gives us grave concerns on a number of other fronts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Property rights is a provincial responsibility outlined in the Canadian constitution. But property rights have never been formally recognized by a provincial government. Recognition of property rights would give the province the right to decide whether or not to register firearms in Saskatchewan. This would effectively allow us to opt out of a national registry. It would also protect firearms owners from confiscation without compensation.

Mr. Minister, are you prepared to support this type of legislation? And if not, if you're not prepared to support the firearms owner in this matter, what is your government prepared to do in a legislative manner?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I want to thank the hon. member for that legal opinion. It's highly valued and much studied. I want to try to repeat for the member opposite.

There is an entrenched doctrine called the doctrine of paramountcy. Federal legislation takes paramountcy over provincial legislation where the two conflict. We therefore cannot occupy a field and so prevent the federal government from doing so. This matter is within the jurisdiction . . . at the moment it is within the jurisdiction of the federal government.

It is to the federal government that you must address your entreaties. At this point in time there is really very little we can do except hope to persuade the federal government to abandon their course of action. There really is no effective way that I know of whereby we can stop them from proceeding.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is indeed a paramountcy here. It's the fact that the provinces have exclusive jurisdiction of property under the Canadian constitution. Your government is in opposition, states it's in opposition, to the Liberal gun laws, but yet you've done nothing. We know that your party is ideologically opposed to property rights but it seems that you would prefer to maintain your ideology rather than support firearms owners in this province.

Mr. Minister, if you really do support Saskatchewan gun owners in this fight against the federal Liberals, would you put aside that ideology and support us in passing this legislation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Not, Mr. Speaker, that's there's any room for improvement on the member's legal opinions, but I

really would be curious whether or not you have any other reputable legal opinions which suggest that entrenching property rights in the Human Rights Code is going to do very much to affect the federal government's constitutional position. My understanding is that it will not accomplish the objective which you seek to pursue.

Welfare 1-800 Line

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Minister, yesterday there was some figures quoted on both sides of the House about the cost effectiveness of a 1-800 tip line in Manitoba. The difference, Mr. Minister, was that we were able to substantiate our figures, and you were not.

In fact according to CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio this morning, and I quote:

Bob Pringle's office refused to provide any proof of the minister's claim.

Mr. Minister, if you're so sure of your figures, why did you refuse to give them to the media? And will you table the University of Manitoba study now, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Mr. Speaker, when those figures came out from the Leader of the Opposition yesterday, I knew that they were wrong. I knew that they were wrong and we have proven that today. Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba, the figures he gave in Manitoba . . . You know what they do in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker? They don't factor in the staffing costs in that line. That is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, you know what they do, Mr. Speaker, they cut people off immediately upon the complaint. They cut people off immediately upon the complaint. There's an ethic of a human rights issue there, if you ask me. Well I said to CBC — and if they're going to put it the way they did that's not my problem — I said I want to get permission from the professor who gave me the information. Today we have it.

It's Dr. Joe Ryant at the school of social work, and he is quite prepared to get called. But, Mr. Speaker, the question is, it's an illusion of savings. They gave false information. Manitoba is giving false information, and they should apologize. Mr. Speaker, that group there . . . I released two pages of controls yesterday. We will want to be more accountable, not more punitive.

That group there couldn't run a popcorn stand when they were in opposition. They didn't use the scrutiny they should have used when all their friends were lining up for megaproject free money, Mr. Speaker. They're misleading on this issue and they're incompetent and I believe that they're doing it deliberately just like their friends in Manitoba.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Minister, I still don't know where you're getting your figures from. But the fact — you accuse me of not using facts — the fact of the matter is, Mr. Minister, that the Manitoba hot-line cost less than a hundred thousand dollars. You quoted \$650,000. And it's already received, it's already . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. There are just too many interruptions. Let the member ask his question.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I say, Mr. Minister, it's already saved over a million dollars. And if you don't believe me, Manitoba's Social Services will verify those figures for you. Mr. Minister, nobody is saying that everyone on welfare is abusing the system. Nobody thinks that every hunter is breaking the law, but you still have a 1-800 number, tip number for poachers. The point is to make it easier to catch those who are abusing the system.

Will you call, Mr. Minister, will you call Manitoba Social Services and discuss this program with them and at least give it fair consideration? Why are you so afraid to do that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all he's got to understand the system in Manitoba. They have three systems — one in the city of Winnipeg administers social assistance; one in Brandon; one in the province of Manitoba. You know that not any of those three systems are integrated with the computer, with each other. People can go back and forth between systems.

We have one system. That can't happen here, Mr. Speaker. We have 31 verification workers that stop cheques from going out. We do the audit before the cheques go out. They have three. They've got a higher case-load, and they have three. Give us some credit for that accountability measure. We have 12 measures that they don't have. Why don't you look at those seriously if you're really interested in accountability? You're interested in beating up on unemployed people, low income people, and don't say you're not. That is your only motivation.

We already get 500 calls around the province from MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) offices and our regional offices. Manitoba gets 325 calls. We get more than they do already, and you know that in 20 per cent of the cases the people aren't even on assistance.

And, Mr. Speaker, one last quote here from the *Free Press* today in Manitoba. It says, by Frances Russell:

This fraud shames all of us (she says). The province's anonymous welfare snitch line is more about saving Tory seats in the next election than about saving money.

Well it's not the welfare abuse tip line savings is so paltry as to be ridiculous; it's abuse of human rights and it's . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting to know who done the survey. The Manitoba social services branch — well what a self-serving survey that would be. Would you table that today, Mr. Minister? Table that survey that you're quoting from.

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Well I'm telling you that . . . as I said in the press yesterday, I'm talking about the information, the source, being the University of Manitoba school of social work. Out of courtesy to the professor, I wanted to get permission to use his name.

I now have permission to use his name, It's Dr. Joe Ryant who's a credible researcher, Dr. Joe Ryant. Give him a call. I'll give you his number. I'll give you his number. Dr. Ryant isn't here. I'll give you his phone number. You can call him and get the information yourself. I'm telling you that the Manitoba minister is misleading the public and so are you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Government Contingency Funds

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The taxpayers of Saskatchewan have really done their part. Ordinary people have emptied their pockets and those lucky enough to have personal savings are using them just to survive.

On Monday, Mr. Speaker, the federal Finance minister told the people of Canada what he's keeping as a cushion in the federal piggy bank in case interest rates go up. He said if the money isn't needed, that it'll go directly to the deficit.

This is considered a responsible approach and people respect the federal government for explaining what's in the piggy bank and what it's going to be used for.

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance today. Madam Minister, your government also has piggy banks. The difference is, nobody knows what's in them, and you aren't saying. How many provincial piggy banks are there and how much money is in each of them?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer on behalf of the Minister of Finance who, as the Liberal leader well knows, is away today in Toronto meeting with some of the people who are important to Saskatchewan from the point of view of the money we borrow in order to pay for the debt that the former administration incurred on behalf of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan and future generations.

I also want to say to the Liberal leader, Mr. Speaker, that her question, I think, in the face of what Liberals have done in Ottawa, points out very much the kind of governance that Liberals provide. They talk about reducing the deficit, Mr. Speaker, but in the next two years will add 59 billion to the debt.

They talk about not raising taxes, but in fact have this year added well in excess of \$1 billion of new taxes on the people of Canada.

They talk about not raising taxes, Mr. Speaker, and then the federal Minister of Finance says — and I suspect that the Liberal leader in Saskatchewan is now covering up for him, because she has become clearly the apologist for the federal Liberal government — then the federal Minister of Finance says recently, well he didn't really have to put the one and a half cent of tax on the people of Saskatchewan, but he's just going to raise that money just in case he needs it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the House and I want to say to you and I want to say to the Liberal leader, that's bad government. No responsible Minister of Finance raises taxes just in case he needs it; he raises taxes, or she should raise taxes, because that is appropriate management of the finances of a country or a province, just as been done here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is most interesting indeed that the Premier of this province, who's the tax king of Canada, would have his Deputy Premier stand up and accuse the federal government of people who are gouging the taxpayers of the country. Little do they admit that they indeed added to the debt of this province under their administration as well.

Mr. Speaker, taxpayers are fed up with governments that have secrets and play games with their money. All we're asking is that the Minister of Finance and the Associate Minister of Finance bring all the money to the table, all the profits, all the windfalls from the VLTs, everything that is not needed for Crown corporations, Crown operations, and that these profits go into a fund to pay down the debt and to be there for rainy days.

Mr. Speaker, my question again to the Associate Minister of Finance: will you create a real fund, a contingency fund that can be monitored, where all extra Crown profits are used to pay the debt in the Crowns and the debt of the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I think, Mr. Speaker, in response to the Leader of the Liberal Party who seems to be continually confused by what is before the House and what is happening in this country and this province . . . and I say confused, Mr. Speaker; either that or she does not do her homework. But I would invite her, I would invite her, Mr. Speaker, to become a little more responsible. Because after all, she is going around the province suggesting to the people that she might want to be the Premier some day.

And it's because of this kind of lack of responsibility that the people of Saskatchewan are now saying, are you kidding? She's got candidates around the province who now are saying they're

going to campaign and they're not going to include the Liberal leader's name on their brochures.

I say to the Liberal leader, read the audited financial summary statements that the Provincial Auditor has presented to this legislature. Read the budget. This isn't the 1980s any more. Every single cent of revenue, every single cent of expenditure, is identified in the new, reformed process of providing budgets in Saskatchewan. Read them. They're all there just as easily for you to find out as it is for anybody in this House or any taxpayer in Saskatchewan.

That's new. That's different than it is in Ottawa. That's different than it was in the 1980s . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

Ms. Haverstock: — I say two words: VLT (video lottery terminal) revenues, Mr. Speaker. The fact is . . .

An Hon. Member: — That's more than two words.

Ms. Haverstock: — That's VLT as a word, yes. Video lottery terminals. If you want . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order.

Ms. Haverstock: — If you want to indeed call VLT three separate words, that's fine with me. The fact is there is an election around the corner. The fact is the government could be tempted to spend money that people haven't been told about to get itself elected. I'm not saying they will; I'm saying they could, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier and this minister are very free with their criticism of the federal government, but one thing that the federal minister has done is to state that there is a \$3 billion contingency fund that has been set aside to use in case interest rates go up or if deficit targets cannot be met. People know how much it is and what it will be used for.

Mr. Minister, you continue to say simply, trust us. Why don't you offer Saskatchewan taxpayers the same protection by setting up a fund where all the extra profits are declared publicly? We're talking about transparency here, not the mounds and tonnes of paper that you sent to the media and all the people to find the needle in the haystack . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. There are so many people who love to answer questions. The questions and the answers are getting much, much too long — much too long. I want the member to put her question directly.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for the length.

Why don't you offer Saskatchewan taxpayers the same protection by setting up a fund where all the extra profits are publicly declared and those will be committed legally to the

debt?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to answer the question raised by the Liberal leader and repeat what I had said previously.

All of the information which she asks for is made public, better than it has ever been made public in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. Now I know she gets up in the House without being substantiate anything that she says in here — that's been going on for some time — because she hopes she'll get a media hit and get a story in the press.

That's fine, but I want to say to the Liberal leader that a lot of people watch this Assembly and they know the inconsistencies that go on from the mouths of the Liberal members opposite.

Now the member wanted to know about the comparison between the federal government and the provincial government. Let me say this and let me ask her this question: does the budget eliminate the deficit in Ottawa? The answer is no. Does it eliminate the deficit in Saskatchewan? The answer is yes. Does in Ottawa it achieve a sustainable balance? The answer is no. Does it maintain a sustainable balance in Saskatchewan? The answer is yes. Does the federal budget raise taxes? The answer is yes. Does the budget in Saskatchewan raise taxes? The answer is no.

I am prepared to compare anything that that member . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I've already said the answers and questions are getting too long.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Minister of Economic Development's Trip

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Economic Development. I know there are a lot of people in Saskatchewan who are sitting on the edge of their seats, as are the media, expecting this question. And I feel obligated to do that on behalf of the Saskatchewan taxpayer.

Mr. Minister of Economic Development, welcome back. And I would just like to ask you how your trip to sunny Hollywood was lately. And I want to ask you what you were doing there.

Ostensibly your trip was there to support — your news release said — to support the Saskatchewan film industry. Well I know you pretty well by now, Mr. Minister, and I know that Quentin Tarantino or David Spielberg you are not. So what exactly were you doing there? Wasn't this just a beautiful excuse for you, Mr. Minister, to go on a holiday in the middle of winter to southern California at taxpayers' expense? Was that not the underlying, fundamental reason for you accompanying these folks on the trip?

And by the way, since I only have time for one question, also

tell me why you took Zach Douglas along and what was the cost of your entire trip with all the buddies that you took along.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the cost of my trip, to Economic Development, was about \$1,600. We met with a number of film industry people. Kevin Dewalt, of course, from Minds Eye motion pictures here in Saskatchewan was along. He was the producer of Decoy, one of the first full-length feature movies, one of the first theatrical movies, ever produced in the province. And we met with a number of people who are very interested in looking at Saskatchewan as a place to produce movies in the future.

The member opposite seems to think of these productions as a bit of a joke but I can tell you it's an 11 to \$12 million industry in the province of Saskatchewan. It employs many hundreds of people. And I can tell you if you had put your mind to economic development instead of major give-aways for the 10 years that you were in government we wouldn't have the \$15 billion in debt that we have at the present time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I turn to the next item of business I just want to remind members that in future question periods I intend to be a lot stricter on the length of both the questions and the answers that are being given. So if members are going to be cut off in the future, it's not my fault. You have had your warning. They're getting much too long.

Order, order. Order.

Mr. Neudorf: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. Yesterday during question period and again this afternoon in question period, the Minister of Social Services yesterday was quoting from a research study that was made from Manitoba apparently, and again this afternoon. Now, Mr. Speaker, the member from Wilkie asked the minister to table that document. And there was not a commitment made by the minister to do precisely that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to substantiate my argument I refer you to the 6th edition of Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules & Forms*. And it's citation number 495; page 151 states that:

A Minister is not at liberty to read or quote from a despatch or other state paper not before the House without being prepared to lay it on the Table.

It goes on further that it says, and it's sub-section (5):

To be cited, (is what I'm requesting you to do, Mr. Speaker, to be cited) a document must be quoted or specifically used to influence debate.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that that is precisely what that minister was doing and therefore it should be tabled promptly, like right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the member referred to, the Minister of Social Services, was not quoting from a document but was using quotes from a document; but not using the document. And so I think there's a significant difference, but I would ask Mr. Speaker to rule on it.

The Speaker: — Order. It is a long-standing tradition in this House that if a minister quotes from a document, then the minister must table that document. I do not know whether the minister was quoting from a document. I have to leave it up to his integrity to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order, order. That is also a long-standing tradition of parliament, that we take the word of members. If the minister was quoting from a document, then the minister must table that document.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Leave to introduce a guest, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Behind the bar with us today we have a long-serving member, now retired, of the Legislative Assembly who served for some 29 years in the Assembly, was recognized prior to his retirement as the dean of the Legislative Assembly, at that time of course the longest serving member without having broken service in the Assembly, serving his constituents for 29 years and serving this Assembly, certainly one of the more colourful and sometimes controversial politicians, even still today in the Saskatchewan scene. I'd like you to welcome Eiling Kramer here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 26 — An Act respecting Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers and to enact certain Consequential Amendments to The Assessment Management Agency Act

Hon. Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that a Bill respecting Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers and to enact certain Consequential Amendments to The Assessment Management Agency Act be now introduced and read the first time

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

Bill No. 27 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984, and to make a Consequential Amendment to The Municipal Board Act

Hon. Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984, and to make a consequential amendment to The Municipal Board Act be now introduced and read a first time.

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

Bill No. 28 — An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act

Hon. Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Northern Municipalities Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 29 — An Act to amend The Rural Municipality Act, 1989

Hon. Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Rural Municipality Act, 1989 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 30 — An Act to amend The Assessment Management Agency Act

Hon. Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Assessment Management Agency Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 31 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code (Property Rights)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code (Property Rights).

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

Bill No. 32 — An Act respecting the Management of Forest Resources

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to move first reading of a Bill respecting the Management of Forest Resources.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as it relates to questions no. 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, and 54, I move they be converted to motions for return (debatable). And I hereby table the answer to question no. 52.

The Speaker: — The answer to question 52 has been tabled; 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, and 54, convert to motion for return (debate).

Before I recognize the minister, why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Stanger: — To ask leave to introduce a guest.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Stanger: — I'd like to introduce to the Assembly, through you, Mr. Speaker, an important person to the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan. I'd like to introduce Elaine Driver, president of the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan. Please welcome Elaine to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 25 — An Act to amend The Farm Financial Stability Act

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will move second reading of The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 1995.

Mr. Speaker, The Farm Financial Stability Act consolidates existing farm finance legislation and broadens the capability to provide programs that address farm finance needs.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments to the Act relate only to part VI of the Act. Part VI deals with feeder and breeder producer associations and provides authority to undertake the following activities: to establish producer associations for the purpose of obtaining guaranteed loans for the purchase of commodities; to indicate how commodities may be purchased, sold, and marked for identification; to define loan conditions; to require associations to establish an assurance fund; and to define the terms and conditions for claims on the guarantee.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of making these changes is to create efficiency. Briefly the amendments provide for the clarification of the kinds of lending institutions that may provide loans; how loans are to be repaid by members of feeder-breeder associations; how feed bills must be submitted; the procedures for buying and selling of cattle within an association; and also additional information from lenders so as to prevent defaults on loans.

These amendments were developed in consultation with the industry. The Government of Saskatchewan consulted with a producer associations committee established through the Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association. The committee members represent all feeder-breeder associations as well as the lenders. During discussions it was agreed that the previous legislation wasn't consistent with industry practice.

The need for change was also identified as a result of active program experience and discussion with individual associations. To accommodate industry and to ensure financial responsibility guarantees, the Government of Saskatchewan developed these amendments which have received the approval of the industry.

Mr. Speaker, and members of the Legislative Assembly, I encourage you to adopt these amendments to The Farm Financial Stability Act. Therefore I move that The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 1995 be read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just a few comments regarding the Act prior to adjourning debate. It sounds to me like the minister's amendments to the Act are basically including the feeder associations now in the same format that the cow-calf operator has, where they . . . or a group of producers have in forming an association, pooling money, pooling their resources and buying breeding stock. And I think, Mr. Speaker, I believe the feeder associations have been asking for this ability.

But if I understand the minister correctly, it gives them an ability to get a group of people together to pool their resources and then be able to access loans to set up a feeder association program. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I think there are some positive influences in this type of a program, and I understand just from talking to the livestock people that there are many people that are very interested.

However, Mr. Speaker, we do have some questions and look forward to continued debate with the minister as we continue in second readings and then move into committee. But at this time I would move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32

The Chair: — As this is the first time for the Department of Health before the committee, I will ask the Minister of Health to introduce his officials to the members of the committee.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Seated to my left is Mr. Duane Adams, deputy minister of Health. We are expecting shortly Ms. Kathy Langlois and Mr. Steve Petz. Mr.

Steve Petz is associate deputy minister, and Ms. Langlois, executive director of finance and management services.

Currently in the House with us, Mr. Jim Simmons, who is director of capital and special operating projects. We have Lawrence Krahn, who is executive director of the medical care insurance branch, and Ms. Maureen Yeske, executive director of health planning and policy development. And Jahzi Van Iderstine will also be back in shortly — she's an assistant to the deputy minister.

Item 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And welcome to the minister and welcome to his officials who have joined us here this afternoon for debate on estimates regarding Health.

Mr. Minister, there's no doubt that Health is one of the main focal points in politics here in the province of Saskatchewan. It's certainly an issue that continues to rise to the surface as one department that really brings out a lot of interest from people across this province.

I think through the years your party and certainly your government over the past couple of years has . . . and while in opposition have certainly viewed Health as one of the tools and one of the avenues whereby they have gone to the electorate and suggested that they were the basic protectors of health services in this province and have brought one of the best programs of health forward into the province of Saskatchewan and certainly into Canada.

However, Mr. Speaker, what I've . . . what I'm hearing lately and what I've seen over the past number of months, not only in my constituency in visiting people in the hospitals, talking to people who work in hospitals out in our area, visiting in care homes, but also here in the city of Regina and the city of Saskatoon, as I visit some of the larger centres, I find that there are many people very disillusioned with our health system as we see it today.

One of the things I think that really concerns people and that really has people somewhat on edge, Mr. Speaker, is the fact . . . or Mr. Minister, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that your government, three years ago when they set out to change health across the province, said that they must change it because we couldn't afford to continue funding the program as we saw it back in 1991.

And as we get into the debate it's going to be interesting to note that while you talked about change and while you talked about the necessity of change and the fact that that change was needed to make it more efficient, to run more efficiently and to run more economically, the fact is the dollar expenditure in Health has not changed dramatically or changed very significantly despite the fact that we've had more than 52 hospitals closed across this province, and most of them in rural Saskatchewan; in fact all of them in rural Saskatchewan. Not only have we had hospitals closed across Saskatchewan, and in specifically rural

Saskatchewan, but every community has been affected including our two large centres, where there have been beds have been cut back.

(1430)

There have been cut-backs in beds, we've had . . . and due to the cut-backs, then we've had the fact that there's been a reduction in staffing. And as a result people are beginning to wonder really what kind of a health system we have had. And the other day we had a bit of a debate over some questions that were raised and that came to the forefront. And I think you stood here and asked, well do you support a two-tier health system?

I think, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, it's not a matter of whether we support a two-tier health system, and that's coming back to the question regarding the eye services offered in the city of Saskatoon, I believe it's at City Hospital. But it's the fact that people across the province of Saskatchewan have many tears in their eyes as they try to understand what the health system is doing to them and what services the health system is making available; what they can count on the health system doing to help them out.

Mr. Minister, you stood in this House the other day and on a number of occasions, and your colleagues have suggested that this health system in the province of Saskatchewan is still one of the best in Canada. And you continually refer to Alberta, how it . . . and bring out the fact that the changes that have taken place in Alberta and how they have decimated their program.

But let me just remind you of the fact that even though the government in Alberta made decisions to streamline their health system and even though they made significant cuts, the fact is the government made the cuts over there. Here in Saskatchewan what we keep and we . . . and the former minister of Health . . . as we were just debating this last year, because of the changes you've made and the formation of, I believe, it's around 35 health care districts across this province, it seems last year we couldn't get a very straight answer when we came to addressing some of the concerns. And I trust that this year will be much different, that you'll be more forward.

But on one hand you criticize the government of Alberta for the cuts they made; on the other hand when we try to establish why there's fewer nurses, why there's fewer beds across Saskatchewan, the former minister of Health kept telling us, well that wasn't really our problem, that wasn't our fault, that was the district, the district board that made that decision.

But board members are telling me that they really had no alternative, that basically directives came out of Health. And that's why we've called for an elected board, a total elected board, not a board that's controlled by three . . . the fact that a third of the members still are appointed by the government, but a totally elected board in our health districts.

Health district boards have told me that they really didn't have any alternative. Number one, the department basically laid out some guidelines for them; number two, the funding has been cut on an annual basis to the point that they had no alternative. And yet while the funding has been cut, the total expenditures in Health continue to remain the same. And those are where some of the discrepancies arise.

But coming back to the system in Alberta, I was just informed the other day — my wife happens to come from central Alberta . . . and a gentleman who had had a major, serious heart attack — in fact that gentleman passed away unfortunately — but he was taken to his local hospital, and his local hospital stabilized him. It was a matter of not a very long time, and I'm not sure if they have the service right available, but he was lifted by air ambulance from a community of Coronation into Edmonton.

So it seems to me their system, even though they've had cut-backs as well, seems to be able to reach out and help the people within the system. And I found that very interesting that his wife could run him into the local hospital and that they could work to stabilize him and within a matter of a few . . . I don't know if it was an hour or less than an hour, there's an air ambulance ready to pick him up. I'm not sure if that's available here in the province of Saskatchewan.

But it seems to me, Mr. Minister, what we do have here is a health system that a person better work . . . and you talk about your wellness model; I think it's very important, as we mentioned last year, it's that people better work very seriously at maintaining their health and being well because there are cases where we have seen over the past year that people have found that the health system as we have it today is not providing the type of service that people expected and came to believe was available to them in this province.

Mr. Minister, I'm looking forward to the ongoing discussion and debate as we enter the series of questions and discussing health care and how we can look at improving the health care program in this province, and how we can better meet the needs of not only the people of today but the people of tomorrow and certainly into the future, and building our health care system, a system that looks at all the residents of this province.

And as the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, who I understand has already been defeated in his riding and will not be able to run again because it appears he spoke out because he believed in the services that were available at one time in his community but aren't there any more . . . and because he spoke out, the very party he ran and represented and represents in this House, made sure there were other people up to contest his nomination.

I don't know if that speaks very well of the government, especially when they take on individuals who feel that they should represent their constituents.

And, Mr. Minister, I believe your office has received a set of global estimate questions which were sent to the office. And as

of now I don't believe we've had a response to the questions. And I'm wondering if you could indicate to us when that series or set of global questions will be arriving in our office. Mr. Minister, would you be able to do that, please?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, to address the member's latter point first, the question of the global estimate package that you've provided to my office, you will note in the request that you have made of us that you are requesting the totals for the fiscal year '94-95. We have not, as you will know, come yet to the end of the fiscal year 1995. When we have that date past us, we will prepare all of the information, and all of the information will be delivered to you.

So there's no sense here that we're holding back. You've asked for information for the total fiscal year and we will give you the complete package when it's possible for us to put that together.

I want to say just a few comments about the member's opening remarks and I think within the purview of those remarks you've raised a whole number of issues that I expect over the course of today and the days ahead we'll be debating one at a time.

Let me say, on some points I think we are in agreement. When you talk of health care being a focus of public concern in our province, you are absolutely dead on. And so it should be so. If there is something that is precious to the people of Saskatchewan as taxpayers, as residents of our province, if there is something that is key to the quality of life in Saskatchewan, it is health care. There should always be frank and open debate about health care in our province, and I'm sure we'll engage in some of that here.

You say in your opening comment — and I think again we can agree and I think there would be few in our province who would disagree — that if we were to sustain this quality of health care in our province, if we were to sustain the principles of medicare which at least we on this side of the House support, if we were to sustain this quality health care in Saskatchewan and available to all Saskatchewan people, the change was required.

Now you make an interesting point in your opening comments. I hear you being critical in your opening comment that we are spending as much today, or almost as much today, in Health as we were spending three and four years ago. You would suggest by that, that we should have further reduced expenditures in Health.

And I want to make it very clear to the member and all members that when we inherited government in 1991, spending within the Department of Health across government had, over the previous 10 years, literally doubled. Spending in Health had literally doubled over the previous decade. And that's in constant dollars.

Now if you take that trend line and follow it up, had no change been made in our expenditures in Health, had no change been made, if we simply followed all the programs and policies that

were in existence in 1991 when we came to government, if no change had been made in spending, the budget figure before you this year would not be \$1.5 billion — it would be \$1.9 billion. A \$400 million increase would have occurred, given the trending of spending in Health. We would today have to be spending \$400 million more. In that sense, there has been a significant reduction in how we are spending in Health.

Now if the member's position is we should not have changed anything, that we should have just left everything in place, then that means, that trend line, we'd be spending \$1.9 billion today and somehow we would have to find that extra \$400 million to provide for that quality of care. I hope the member would agree with me, that is simply not sustainable in the Saskatchewan circumstance.

What has been happening, Mr. Chair, is that we have been taking the global amount of money that we have available to us to spend in Health and attempting, as best as we are able, to match that money and those resources with real need. And so there has been some shifting, some shifting away from institutional acute services to services that are more appropriate to need and more accessible to people where they live and to meet their actual needs.

Now the shift has not been easy. I want to remind the member — he will have read the *Estimates* — that still the vast majority of our resources, the vast majority of our resources are directed at providing the best quality acute care that we can possibly provide.

The largest item in the Department of Health estimates will be, and remains to be, the hospital budget. The second largest chunk of our budget is spent on medical professionals, and the bulk of that to doctors. The third largest part of our budget is for the provision of long-term care, institutional care.

And so a significant — the most significant — chunk of our budget is yet provided to the more institutional acute care. But there has been shift, and we're proud of the shift because we know in the shift we are bringing services closer to where people are and closer to meet their needs.

At the end of the day, when this budget is passed, we will be spending now, in community- and home-based services, \$140 million to provide community- and home-based services. In this budget alone, we are redirecting \$15 million, plus another 5 million from the current fiscal year, to provide new funding of 20 — over 20 — \$20.3 million to community-based, home-based services, bringing services closer to where people are.

That's the goal — to use the resources which are available to us, not in an ever-expanding way as was happening, not in an unsustainable way that sooner or later would bring about the collapse of the entire system — and sooner rather than later in my view — but to use the resources we have to their . . . and tailor those resources to provide the best quality health care for Saskatchewan people that we are able to provide.

And I want the member to know and all members to know that we are being watched, not only from across Canada but from across the world, in what we are being able to accomplish in Saskatchewan to reshape the delivery of health so that it is sustainable. So that it maintains the quality that Saskatchewan people desire and deserve; that it remains publicly accessible and universally accessible — publicly funded — and that the system that is being developed now in this last decade of this century will suit us well into the 21st century.

Mr. Chair, I know that the member will have many specific questions and I invite him now to bring us the specifics and we can have, I'm sure, a good discussion.

Mr. Toth: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I find it interesting that you referred to the substantial jump in the expenditures in health care from the 1982 year through 1991.

You will have to admit, Mr. Minister, that the expenditures in health care, part of those expenditures were actually taking place in '82, except they were in another department. If I'm not mistaken, home care services and care home services were held under Social Services.

What was done in 1982 was lump what was actually health care, or health care-giving services, into the Department of Health versus having part of the health care under one program and part under Health. So that basically took that out of one department and put it into the Department of Health, where we have a total expenditure under the one department. I think that we need to compare the expenditures that we're talking about today based on what they were in 1982 and the fact that whether they were with another department is irrelevant. The fact is those expenditures were still taking place.

And yes, health is the number one expenditure in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact, I would almost guess that health must be the number one expenditure almost right across Canada. It certainly eats up the largest amount of taxpayers' dollars not only in our province, but in all of Canada.

And I guess it boils down to the fact that our health is very important to us, because without health, we aren't able to sit back and enjoy the beauty around us, that we see around us. And I think today of many people who do not have the same abilities that you and I have, sir, because of illnesses that have confronted them that wasn't because of a problem they arise, wasn't because of their own ignorance of health facts — was due to circumstances beyond their control and they don't have the ability to enjoy the freedoms to be able to stand up and walk around.

And certainly we must, I believe, do as much as we can to reach out to meet the needs of those less fortunate than we are. And I think it's very important that we keep those things in mind. And there's some personal experiences that I'd like to bring to your attention as we get into further discussion as well.

(1445)

But, Mr. Minister, coming back to the global questions. You mentioned that yes, we have asked for the year '94-95. The unfortunate part is we've got another month to go until the end of the year 1995. And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, it would seem to me your department would possibly be able to start bringing some of this material together so by the time the end of the month rolls around, the year end rolls around, that those questions are made as quickly or as judiciously as possible. Because if they're not going to come out until the end of April, I'm not exactly sure; maybe the Premier by then is going to have decided it's time to go to the polls and we will not have had a chance to review it.

So I want a commitment from you, sir, that your department will make every effort to have that information and those answers in our hands as quickly as possible following the year end.

And while you're responding to that, I would also like to just bring to your attention a couple of questions, Mr. Minister, that we . . . last year we had asked if you could provide us with lists of trips taken over the past year, who accompanied, whether yourself or the former minister, on any of these trips, the purpose of the trips, total cost and any other pertinent information regarding travel.

And it seems to me my colleague indicated that we did send these questions over, but in a lot of cases, the questions didn't come back as completely answered as we would've anticipated. And we're asking, Mr. Minister, if you will indeed commit to make sure that we have a total commitment . . . or the answers in full to these questions. I wonder if you would do that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank the member for his question.

Just again, to return to some of his earlier comment, he is . . . that's absolutely true. In 1982 his government brought funding for home care and for nursing homes under the purview of the Department of Health, took it from Social Services and put it in Health. But I want to tell the member, when we did our factoring of the trend lines and the expenditures in Health over the decade, this was taken into account. This was taken into account. These do not in any way change the numbers which I gave the member.

In the course of the period, actual funding on these health services doubled. And had the trend line continued, we'd be spending \$400 million today more than we're spending. So that was taken into account.

On the question of the estimate questions that you have provided to my office, clearly the answer is yes, we're working on them now. If any of those can be answered within . . . that don't have the fiscal year attached, we'll provide those as soon as we can. And we're working on them now, and they'll be available to you.

And I understand why the member would want to have this information before any election should happen in this province, knowing that he may well not be here to ask the question after the election. I understand his concern in that regard.

On the question of the travel, on the question of the travel, we'll be providing that information to you and to your caucus and to the third party caucus. And that will indicate any travel, and I'm assuming you're asking for travel outside the boundaries of the province of Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You want all travel. Well we'll provide all travel, but I'm assuming you want more detail about out . . . the detail that you ask about who accompanied the minister and so on, I am assuming is for out-of-province travel. We'll provide the province in travel and out-of-province travel for both the former minister and myself.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, as well, in view of the fact that we have had a number of cabinet shuffles, and the Department of Health has as well seen a change in roles or leadership as far as the ministers, would you please make available to the office any changes that have taken place in your office as far as personnel, staff changes. As well, could you provide the names and salaries and salary increases over the past year that have taken place in the Department of Health or in the office, please.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, in regards to both, both offices, when my predecessor was serving as minister and I served as associate minister, we'll provide to the members those people who were at work in our office, and I will also provide those who are at work in my office now.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I think one of the areas that certainly has changed over the past number of years is the drug plan. And at one time we had a plan that basically didn't have any levels tied to it. Then we had a plan that came in with a deductible. Now we've got a plan that's even got a higher deductible.

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, what's the policy of the department? What type of a drug plan do we have today? What's the deductible and how often does the deductible come into play? What avenues the department follows in dealing with people that must deal with drug costs that are almost exorbitant, beyond their control, due to health problems that they have that maybe somebody else doesn't have. Maybe you could kind of outline where the drug plan is, where it sits today.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the member requests a rather substantial amount of information about the drug plan. I'm very happy to share that with him. Let me say generally that we in Saskatchewan are one of I believe three provinces in Canada that still have a whole-population drug plan — a drug plan that is available to all citizens of our province, based on a number of criteria. But very few other provinces offer a universal drug plan.

And we're very proud of that fact, that in the fiscal circumstance that we inherited, that we have been able to preserve the

structure of a drug plan, and within the limited financial resources that we've had available to us, or the more limited resources than we used to have, that we've been able to structure a plan that is income sensitive while also recognizing need.

And so we have, I think, arguably the most sensitive to the individual's situation drug benefit of any in Canada. In fact it is the only plan in Canada that actually links ability to pay and income.

In terms of some of the detail of the plan today, 82,400 family units are receiving some subsidy under the plan. That would equate to about one in four families in Saskatchewan receive some subsidy under the drug plan. There are 30,400 separate family units which are approved for special support and receive the reduced co-payment. Of those, 12,900 family units are approved for special support and will have a co-payment of 35 per cent or less. And on average the drug plan will be paying 58 per cent of the prescription cost for families which are approved for special support.

In addition, there are 15,000 family units in Saskatchewan — those people who will be receiving FIP (Family Income Plan), SIP (Saskatchewan Income Plan), and GIS (guaranteed income supplement) benefits — who automatically have their deductible lowered to 100 or \$200 semi-annually, and they would receive the 65 per cent coverage under the drug plan.

There are another 34,500 family units approved under social assistance or SAIL (Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living), palliative care, and special high needs drug costs, receive almost . . . their prescriptions at almost little or no cost at all.

We spent \$52.4 million last year providing the drug plan, and this year we've budgeted 58.0.

So just to repeat, there is the special support program for families whose drug costs would be high in relation to their income, and that will be for families whose income, combined income, is less than \$50,000. So if family income is less than \$50,000 and whose drug costs exceed 3.4 per cent of their annual family income, there is the special support program.

One of the concerns that we have had is the knowledge of the drug plan among the people of Saskatchewan. And so we have taken steps on a number of occasions to provide educational materials. In fact we actually sent a direct mailing to all those whom we knew had high drug use, to be sure that they could . . . to get the benefits under the special support program. So that for families with an income of 50,000 and less and whose drug costs are more than 3.4 per cent of that income, there is special support.

And I'm just going to say it now, because someone may want to note this, that there is a toll-free line. If anyone has any questions about getting the special support program, we have a toll-free line. It's 1-800-667-7581.

Now those people, as I indicated, who are low income in our province, who will be on the Family Income Plan, they automatically have their deductible lowered to \$100 semi-annually. And once they reach the deductible, the support is 35 — they are only required to pay 35 per cent of the cost.

Under the guaranteed income supplement, those receiving guaranteed income supplement and those under the Saskatchewan Income Plan — and these for the most part will be seniors — they have an automatically assigned deductible of \$200 semi-annually, and once they reach the \$200 level the prescription cost drops to 35 per cent.

And then we have all the special coverages for those who may be paraplegics, cystic fibrosis sufferers, chronic renal disease; all palliative care drugs are covered.

And if you are receiving social welfare, if you are among the poorest of our people, the coverage is a simple \$2 flat fee for any prescription — no charge for children — and there would be no charge at all if you are on social assistance and you have a high use of prescription medicines, which would mean five prescriptions a month or more.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Now you gave me a lot of figures in just a few minutes there and I think I got a few down. Number one, you didn't give what the deductible is just for the average, ordinary citizen and whether it's on a bi-annual basis or an annual basis. I wonder if you could give that, please.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The deductible is 850 every six months.

Mr. Toth: — So what you're saying then, Mr. Minister, as far as the health plan in this province, for a lot of people there really isn't a health plan — or a drug plan, pardon me. At \$850 every six months, that's \$1,700 a year. That's a fair bit of drug costs. And for some people, especially diabetics, they may not quite reach the 850 on a six-month period, but they're facing a substantial increase . . . or I shouldn't say increase, but a substantial drug layout.

Now I'm not exactly sure how that fits into some of the numbers you just gave me. You talked about different groups having . . . when you said income less than 50,000, I would take that to be a gross income you're talking of; I'm not exactly sure if you were referring to a net income. Because what happens in the small-business or the farm community, people can have incomes of, say, 50 or 60,000 or \$40,000 but what they're actually living on at the end of the year may be in the neighbourhood of 15 to \$20,000, which almost falls right into what a lot of people would term as being almost at the poverty line.

So I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you could kind of clarify that. Is that a net income we're talking of here? And then if a person has, when we're talking of a substantial need due to physical conditions that they have, that . . . and I think you mentioned a couple areas. I'm wondering if multiple sclerosis happens to be part of some of the assistance, where assistance is

provided, or how . . . how does a person actually determine where they should receive assistance, Mr. Minister? Maybe you could try and clarify on some of that.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Just to clarify then, for the member. Yes, when we're talking about the \$50,000 annual income, that is a gross income. That is based on your gross income, not net, but on your gross income, which means that in fact there are thousands of Saskatchewan families who do benefit under the current drug plan.

I spoke to the member about some of the numbers — 82,400 family units do receive some level of subsidy under the plan. There are other — 30,400 — family units are approved for the special support. The numbers go on.

So there are thousands of people . . . And I must say, Mr. Chair, that if you travel to many other provinces of this country, that level of support is not there for you if you are a family. There may be some support if you're a senior, but in many provinces across Canada there is no support from their provincial governments for drug coverage.

If you're a family in Ontario, if you're a family in Quebec, if you're a family in New Brunswick, if you're a family in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, or Newfoundland and you have a drug cost, you're going to pay the entire amount.

Now we have tailored, using \$50 million, a drug plan — \$52 million — a drug plan which endeavours to take those resources and provide the support in a fair way to those whose incomes are lower and whose drug costs are higher. And then we have separated out, for instance as I illustrated with people on social assistance who have very low incomes, for very special support. And we provide special support for those diseases or conditions where the need is very, very high and the treatments are very, very expensive.

So I don't accept the argument that people are not being assisted through the Saskatchewan drug plan. Thousands of people are receiving assistance. Now do we wish we had greater numbers of resources to put here? The answer is, of course, yes. I mean you'll recall when this plan started — it started in the 1970s; it was pioneered — one of the most difficult choices that we had to make as a government surrounded the issue of the drug plan and at what level could we continue the support.

I'm proud that we've been able to continue a plan in Saskatchewan when other provinces have abandoned their plans or never had plans. Would I wish that we had more resources we could devote to it? The answer, of course, is yes. But currently, with the resources that are available to us, I think we're providing a plan that tries to be sensitive, one, to a person's ability to pay, and two, to your need.

Mr. Toth: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, as well I've chatted with the Minister of Social Services regarding a special need out in our area. And for the sake of the fact that I actually haven't talked to the family about bringing the name

forward, I'll just send it across at a later date for your department to peruse.

But I'm wondering how the department treats individual cases, especially where multiple sclerosis is a factor. Would that fall under the special needs as well, because of the drugs that are . . . especially when you're talking of individuals who are totally dependent upon somebody else for their livelihood; they can't even feed themselves.

(1500)

In the one case I'm talking of, the individual isn't even able to swallow or take in food; they're basically being tube fed, which is certainly difficult for the family. And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you could kind of indicate how the department deals with circumstances such as this, and what kind of support there is for a family like that in those circumstances?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, regarding if the member has — and I believe he has — maybe an individual case that he would like us to follow up, if he would please send that over and I will guarantee that we will review the circumstances of that individual case.

And indeed, if there are any others who have individual cases, I would refer again to the toll-free line, or to contact any one of the MLAs of this House, or to contact the local pharmacist for information, or indeed to contact my office directly, and we'll follow up.

In the case of MS (multiple sclerosis), there is not a specially-defined special coverage. But not knowing the circumstances to which you refer, again coverage will have some basis on the income of the family. They may qualify under the SAIL program — I don't know that — which might provide some special benefits. There are avenues to explore, so if you provide us with the name, we'd be very happy to do that.

Mr. Toth: — Yes, I can assure the minister that in talking to the family they do get support under the SAIL program, which they're quite grateful for in view of the fact of where they were, and not that long ago. It is a farm family, which comes back to the point of . . . that's why I'm pleased to hear that at least you're taking into consideration, gross, not . . . well, not gross . . . may create a problem there because a farm family may have a high gross but that net factor can be very small. And that's where we have some of the discrepancies.

I guess the concern we have, Mr. Minister, and I'm coming back to and I'm going to bring one other area into this besides just the drug costs; and that is because of the individual needing very special care, and you announced — I think it was a little over two weeks ago — an additional expenditure in home care services.

However, home care, I believe, only provides service for five days — five days out of the seven . . . not five days, four days, Monday to Thursday, I think is what they get. And then they

can get a couple of days in a respite bed. But certainly when the patient has care in a respite bed, they have to cover that cost as well.

And so there's so many other factors that come into it, and I'm just thinking of one specific case. I'm not sure how many other circumstances such as this we do have across the province, but I will undertake — and unfortunately, I don't have all the info here this afternoon, Mr. Minister — but I will undertake to at least try and get it into your hands by tomorrow, to follow up on that.

So these are just some of the circumstances that we're dealing with, that many people are dealing with, in trying to address how to meet . . . to provide for themselves at the end of the day, especially if they fall into a scenario where drugs or the use of drugs becomes a major problem for them.

Mr. Minister, at this time I'd like to move into another area for a few moments. As you're aware, I believe it's at least three weeks ago now, we raised the question about special care homes. And you'll be very familiar with the fact that I brought forward a question from the community of Avonlea. And I brought a number of petitions to the floor. I believe you have the original copies in your possession, but I'd like to present these to the Table, place a copy of the petitions.

Mr. Minister, at that time you'd indicated, and I believe in a letter to the MLA from Bengough-Milestone dated August 25, 1994, you indicated that you're undertaking a thorough review of the long-term care sector and developing a strategy that recognized the integration of all services, and this process should take three to four months. And you also indicated in your letter that you were in consultation with Mrs. Krieger, and that you would be getting back to them regarding the licensing of special or private care homes.

And I think, Mr. Minister, from the meeting in your office that you had with the group from Avonlea, you'd also indicated that you'd be making an announcement within a week or so that you thought they would be quite well pleased with.

And I can assure the minister that the announcement you made, while I'm sure most people were quite pleased with the fact that there was an additional influx of money into the home care program to help people stay in their homes somewhat longer, it still doesn't meet the need of this community and the people in the community of Avonlea and surrounding area, who have already indicated that they're more than willing, out of their own resources, to put forward money to help construct and build a private care home of some 40 beds that would meet the needs of individuals who basically are at the point of not being able to really be taken care of, adequately taken care of, under the home care program.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, where the department is today, where you are sitting, where we are sitting as far as licensing of private care homes in this situation. I think you would have to admit that Mrs. Krieger's track record in

providing for the needs of the people in the care homes that she has been involved in to date has been pretty impressive and a number of communities have certainly looked at and adopted it.

And I wonder if you could just elaborate and let us know where we are and where the community of Avonlea may be in the large scheme of things regarding the licensing of a private care home they're looking forward to having in their community.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, I want to just step back one step before addressing the special care and supportive care issues that the member raises. I want to just step one step back and make it clear, and my officials have asked me to try and make this clear, in terms of the drug plan and the income levels.

We are talking about gross income; particularly if you're on a fixed income or wage income, that's easy to identify. If we're talking about a farm or self-employed or a business, then the income will be the adjusted income. I'm told it's line 151 of the income tax form. Is that correct? Line 151 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . 150. I'm sorry, line 150. So it is gross, but it's line 150. The actual, exact and appropriate phrase is the adjusted income reflected from the income tax.

You make, I think, an interesting and a significant point about an individual who may have MS and some . . . There are many factors that call for home care, for respite. One of the things that I'm very pleased about and excited about in this budget, in terms of the community-based services that we're putting into place, we're devoting some resources to accessing information to individuals, providing for quality of care in a local circumstance, and facilitating the whole broad range of treatments that may be necessary in an individual case.

So part of this budget will provide monies to our districts to look at the concept of providing what we might describe as health facilitators. And that would be someone who works with individuals to help them sort out what is sometimes a myriad of services which may be available to help individuals steer themselves through to find the most appropriate mix of services.

I think that's a real step forward, particularly — and this has happened in many cases — where an individual will have multi-needs. It isn't just one issue but a variety of issues.

I'm also very pleased that in this budget we've been able to provide some extra support to help care-givers — family members who have care responsibilities. It may be with an elderly parent; it may be with a disabled child; it may be with a spouse. If we can provide some more support for the actual care-givers, and this may mean . . . well we are going to double, actually double, the number of respite beds across the province. It may mean some personal support and training for the care-giver. This too becomes a very important part of the mix.

So I think your point is well-taken, that individuals may have indeed a variety of needs. And if we can help individuals access the services that are available and support them in their role as

care-giver, we're going to have better communities, better families, and a better society.

I want to talk a little bit about the special care piece that you raise. I expected you to raise that. We are — I may say — very, very close now to having some decision making around that piece. We've been in communication with Mrs. Krieger and all along telling her just what stage we're at. We're very, very close to coming to a policy decision. When we come to policy decisions in this government, we try to involve the caucus deeply, and we've had a number of discussions. But I'm confident we're going to be close to a policy announcement very soon.

However that is a specific policy announcement around the question of long-term care facilities and what options might be available. The department and government have worked for the last number of months in setting out what we describe as a supportive care framework document to give us some vision for care for those who will need care on a daily basis, whether as a result of illness or frailty or disease. And that paper — and it's quite a substantial paper — has been released with the budget. If you don't have a copy, we'll sure get you a copy of that paper. And it sets out some broad framework, and that took some substantial amount of work within the department to work through that framework document.

Now we're working on more specific policy issues that come out of the framework, one of them being the question of long-term care, personal care homes, and the mix of facilities and options that should be available in Saskatchewan communities and to Saskatchewan people. Let me say that today in Saskatchewan we have a substantial number of long-term care beds. It would be close to 10,000 people who will occupy level 3 and level 4 care beds across our province. That takes about \$250 million of the budget of the Department of Health.

We have as well, across the province, a series of personal care homes. Most of the personal care homes — I think about 240 of 250 — will be small, residential, 10 resident or fewer personal care homes providing a quality care service across our province. We have a number of other personal care homes which are somewhat larger; many of them have been existing for some time and have sort of been grandfathered into the current circumstance.

It's my sense, Mr. Chair, that there may be some room as well in Saskatchewan for yet another option that we may wish to look at. That option we might describe as supportive living. It will not have the intense care that can provide independence for individuals and couples. But still within the context of their living arrangement, be it apartments — likely apartments — there may be within that building some extra support services — perhaps a nurse, perhaps some meal services, and so on.

Providing therefore that we're not continuing to, as some people have described it, to warehouse our seniors, but to provide for them the options of independence which most, if not all, seek as long as they possibly can, but to provide some interim step

which we might describe as supportive living. So I'm going to want to be very interested in looking at some of those options as well.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, I listened very closely to your answer. And unfortunately the words, close and very soon, to a lot of people . . . some people would interpret close or very soon as maybe being tomorrow or within a week's time. I think, in view of what we've seen take place over the last few months, close in your terms looks more like five, six months, maybe a year, maybe two years down the road.

And, Mr. Minister, in regard or relation to the questions I've been raising regarding the Avonlea home, there were a couple of questions that have come in under the "Mr. Premier, I want to know," and I think it would be appropriate if I would at least raise the questions right now so that you can respond to them.

And this question I want to raise comes from Dorothy Watson from Avonlea: I want to know why the village of Avonlea cannot have a nursing home. We were not asking for any financial assistance from the government. The government is trying to create more employment and this home would have employed approximately 25 people.

I'll allow you to respond before I raise the other question.

(1515)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well I will be happy to inform Mrs. Watson, if you would do this for me, that we have been, as you well know, working on the policy framework. Because it's not simply a matter of one community, it is a policy that will affect our entire province and will affect communities across our province; that we've been working very diligently and there have been many meetings between Mrs. Krieger and the department on this issue, and those meetings . . . there have been discussions as late as over the course of the last week.

We are moving to a policy decision and it is very close.

Mr. Toth: — A second question that has come from the same community regarding the same personal or private care home. This question comes from James and Ardiss Clarke from Avonlea: we want to know why we, the people of Avonlea, are being deprived the construction of a personal care home badly needed in this community. Your government refuses to give its approval to a plan worked out with a private investor willing to construct a 40-bed facility. A year ago enough money was pledged by local residents to go ahead with construction at no cost to the government.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And again I will repeat my answer in that we have been giving consideration to this and all of the issues around long-term care in our province. These are not issues that affect just one community, but communities and individuals across our province, and we are very close — very close — to announcing a policy decision in this regard that doesn't just affect Avonlea but that affects communities across

our province.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, I come back to the term close or very close. And I'm wondering if you could be a little more specific about what close or very close means, especially to the town of Avonlea.

Now you've talked about the fact that we've got to look at the global picture, and I don't dispute that. I realize that when we're setting regulations . . . And I recall some of the discussion took place. And I was involved in some of it prior to the 1991 election, having been able to work with the former minister of Health, the Hon. George McLeod, where there were many people coming to us at that time as well seeking licensing for personal care homes, or private care homes.

And of course a concern at that time, as I'm sure it is today, was to make sure that these licences . . . that there were regulations in place about the type of care home, the services that were provided, so that people weren't taken advantage of. And I can appreciate that.

But it would seem to me that there are also circumstances whereby people have already proven that they have the ability to provide a top level form of care to individuals who would be willing to participate in that care. And as the one question brought forward . . . Number one, there's a couple of things for the community and for the government.

Number one, the community already has it; they're not asking the government for any funding of any kind whatsoever. It wouldn't cost the government a dime to give a licence to allow a 40-bed care home to be built in the town of Avonlea.

As well, a 40-bed care home would bring employment to that community. Now I realize, after seeing what happened in the community of Maryfield, people were really excited about that small care home that was built there. A lot of people applied for jobs. And after they had received the jobs, I don't think it was quite a year and then they all of a sudden started looking down the road at a government-funded care home and thought that they should be receiving the same wage, without realizing that there wasn't any government money in their program, other than the ability to license and giving regulations about the specific terms of what they could do as a private care home.

The result was, at the end of the day, the employees realized that if it wasn't for that facility they wouldn't have a job, and so they'd better be thankful they've got the job. And also the books were laid out before them, so they could see it wasn't a big money . . . it wasn't a money-making business. It was there to provide a service. And I think that's what Avonlea is asking for as well.

I also understand that the seniors who would like to participate in and make use of that care home are quite well aware of the fact that they are looking at costs in the neighbourhood of about \$1,200 a month to be in the home versus I think it's in the neighbourhood of around 700, or a little over \$700 a month, in

the government-funded care homes because it's based . . . there again I think income has something to do with it. It comes in, and most people are in a fairly low bracket, and so their only income is old age security, and based on that fact the costs are associated.

So what I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, is, this very soon you're talking about, and this ability to grant that licence, are we talking of the fact that the department is realistically working to a date of — let's say — March 15. And I'm just throwing out a date. By March 15, you will have in place the policy and the ability to say to the community of Avonlea, we've got a program. We believe you fit within it, within the guidelines, and yes we're prepared to grant you a licence to go ahead and build your private care home.

Or are you going to continue to sit on it and use the terminology: soon, or close, or very soon, based on the fact that everything's going to depend on when the next election is called and use it as an election ploy. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could basically be a little more specific for us and the opposition and the community of Avonlea in presenting that question.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Your last comments make the answer quite easy. This is nothing to do with an election, and this policy will be well in advance, I'm sure, of any election unless the Premier should decide this — in the next few days to call an election; although some of us would encourage him to do that.

Let me say that this is not . . . And I think the member will recognize, establishing policy in this regard is not just simple. It's not just simple. In terms of establishing any kind of a care facility for people — whether it be privately owned and privately funded, or whether it be publicly owned and publicly funded — I don't think the member opposite would suggest that this should go without a certain amount of forethought and regulation.

In the establishment of private care homes, he and his government worked very hard; I know that. And we have continued to work hard on establishing standards for personal care homes, which I believe that is appropriate. It is an extremely appropriate role for the Department of Health and for government to establish regulations and control over personal care homes, where people's lives are being cared for.

We have in place, the member knows, a complete set of standards for personal care homes less than 10. We do not have that complete set of standards for personal care homes now that may be proposed for to be substantially, substantially larger.

There are all the questions of the long-term viability, the long-term business viability of special care homes, the numbers of those which may or should or should not exist. Long-term viability in this case is very, very important.

If seniors from our province and from communities have chosen to make their residence in a personal care home, I think

they should have some assurance, some solid assurance, that they will be able to spend the remainder of their lives there given, hopefully, decent physical condition. There should be no risk to people that in two or three years, because of business failure, that they would then be — having sold their own home, very likely, or given up their own apartment — then to be subjected to a very unsettling experience. And so the long-term viability and the risk is extremely, extremely important.

Now what also plays into this whole equation, and in fact is a very significant factor in this whole equation, is the matter of national building codes. And there is quite a different, I'm told, quite a different set of requirements in code for any kind of an institution that will house more than 10 individuals. And we've been working around some of these code issues. This is not a small problem or a small issue.

I want to remind the member that currently, currently we are licensing the smaller personal care homes. And I repeat, they do provide a valuable service in caring for individuals across our province.

But then with all of that said, let me also say this: we are also moving in the direction of providing as much independence to our seniors as we possibly can, as much ability for our seniors in Saskatchewan to maintain their own homes and to maintain their own apartments. Because that is what the vast majority of Saskatchewan seniors desire: that they could have access to services, ability to access services that could keep them living in their own homes, their own apartments, as long as they possibly can. And that is very much the direction that we want to follow.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, I have another series . . . a question here. Basically its got three questions in it. And I'll bring it forward, and I think it's certainly a question that comes back to some of the points you were raising.

And I think I alluded to a little earlier that certainly we need to be very careful when we're setting guidelines, but I think there's also been . . . we've had a number of years to put in place a number of guidelines. And you mentioned the fact that we do have in place right now a program that allows for the licensing of care homes, private care homes of less than 10 people.

One of the problems with that is, I believe, they also in that licensing of less than 10 people, they take into consideration the family unit that may be providing the care. And there's a small care home in my community — and I just can't think of the name; Antler Creek care home, I believe is the one — where they've been looking for a licence. But because they . . . and they did have a licence for under 10, and they went to expand. But because their family is size of six and then they had four, they haven't been granted the licence. And that has created a problem.

So I'm throwing that out as well, as I'd like to read this into the record. A question that came to us through the Mr. Premier, I want to know, program. And it comes from a Mrs. Joan

Williamson from Pambrun:

I would be pleased to have you address the following question to the "MR. PREMIER I WANT TO KNOW" session of the Legislative Assembly regarding license regulations of Personal Care Homes:

1. Does the present government realize the fact that their licensing regulations allow the owners of Personal Care Homes to increase the fees for residents by any amount the owners choose?
2. Does the present government realize the fact that their licensing regulations allow the owners of Personal Care Homes to increase the fees for residents as many times as they choose which could be 5-6 times in one year?
3. Will the Minister of Health give consideration to changing the regulations governing the increase of fees by owners of Personal Care Homes which would reflect fairness to the elderly citizens who find themselves in the position of needing this type of health care as well as the people providing these services?

Now in view of these three questions I've laid out, Mr. Minister, I think what the individual is saying here brings to light some of the concerns that I'm sure that your department has had. It certainly were concerns that were available, or we were aware of back prior to 1991.

But I also want to raise the fact, individuals who do establish private care home and then increase fees like this, basically put themselves at risk in the fact that that private care home may not be around very long because I'm sure residents are going to say enough is enough.

But maybe, Mr. Minister, I'll allow you to respond to the questions that have been raised here by Mrs. Williamson, please.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the specific answer to the question, do we regulate the fees and charges that are levied in the personal care homes, or when those fees and charges can be changed, the answer is we do not.

There is not regulation on the amounts that can be charged. These are viewed as private enterprise, a business opportunity, where if people offer a service, and they offer that service for a price, then the client has, I guess, the choice whether to accept the service or not. We do not regulate in the personal private care homes, the fees.

Now we do regulate quality of care, safety, building code issues. And I think appropriately, appropriately so. But this in fact is the nub of one of the issues that we're struggling with because this does present then the question of viability.

If you were going to build a facility that meets the National Building Code for a residence of 10 people or more, or more than 10 people, then the cost of the construction of that facility is going to be substantially up, just to meet the codes. Therefore if this is a private business, and you have had to invest significant amounts of capital into the structure, into the building, then obviously you're going to have to try and recoup that through the fees and charges for the residents, because these are not publicly subsidized.

If those fees and charges become out of reach for most people, then I think the business viability is in question. So you, I think, raise one of the very points that we are having to struggle with. And the person who inquires raises one of the real points that we're struggling at. Where is the line of viability, particularly in large circumstances where all the building codes have to be adhered to?

(1530)

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This comes from a . . . this request that we've been dealing about for Mrs. Williamson comes from my constituency, Mr. Minister. And when she raised this with me, her father was moved into a home where there were eight residents, I believe, six or eight.

And at January 1, he received a notice that his rent was going from \$1,200 to \$1,500. And I believe that even in normal circumstances when you have rent being asked of an individual, that you should have notice of that. And this was not even given.

And so Mrs. Williamson asks the question, are there going to be regulations put in to give some stability not only to the people who are in the business, but also the people who are in the home.

You talked earlier about the unsettling experience that it would be for an individual to have to move in some of these facilities, and that you have to make it a matter of a certain degree of security because this is their home. And this has already been an adjustment for these individuals over a period of time to establish in their own minds first of all the need to move and then to rationalize all of the decisions that are necessary to put that move together.

And so when you have an individual who comes in and says, I can afford \$1,200 a month for this service, plus his medication and all of the things that are required, and then to be told that you got another \$300 a month that you have to pay, that is very unsettling, not only for the children of these people but for the individual him or her self.

And that is why Mrs. Williamson is raising this point — in order to make sure that you understand that there needs to be some serious recognition of exactly what you're going to do and how you're going to allow this to happen.

If we would have had a whole bunch of these homes in the city

of Swift Current for example, we'd had 25 of these, the amount of charges that could be made or charges that could be levied against the individuals who want this service, then they would have an option. But they don't even have an option because there aren't enough licensed facilities to give them an option. They don't have the option of going to the lowest cost one. They are bound within the framework of a monopoly, Mr. Minister, and that has got almost . . . Well that has a very serious ramification.

And so what we have to consider is, is there more need for more homes? And if there is, then we should start to do that. If they're private and these people are initiating their own money for the investment and then they turn around and say, we'll increase the price, the only way that you can reduce the cost is provide more licences. Because if you have more licences, they will then have to reduce the cost because of competition.

And you shake your head, Mr. Minister. But this gentleman, this gentleman has no place else to go. He's sold his home and he's gotten rid of it. So now what does he do? He's taken it upon himself so he is being told that he's going to have to pay \$1,500 instead of 12. And that is where the problem exists. And that exists over and over again. And I wonder if you'd respond to that.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this is worthy of some debate in the House. Because I think what I hear members of the opposition proposing this afternoon is that we ought to regulate the pricing. That we ought to regulate either, one, regulate the pricing in the personal care homes, move in as government on what is essentially private business and tell them what they can or cannot charge. Or, in the alternative, we should flood the market with licensed homes and therefore drive the price down. That seems to be the two positions being sent over here.

Now if either of those are the position, please refine it and tell me and we'd certainly have a look at it.

Now recall that the personal care home regulations and policy was a policy shaped while you folks were in government. We haven't essentially changed that. We've tightened up, I think, some of the regulations and some of the enforcement. But I think essentially this is the same policy. And that policy said we are not into moving in and setting the prices or regulating the fees and charges.

But again this is one of the very issues that we're struggling with. Because if there are more and more of these in the province and then they begin to lose their viability of have vacancies, prices go up, people are going to be hurt. No one — no one, I think — wants that.

Now I'm told, Mr. Chair, by some friends in Saskatoon, for instance, that because of the work that has gone on in Saskatoon in putting community and home-based services in place . . . and I have to give credit to Saskatoon; they were out in front on this some years ago. They have a wide network of

home and community-based services in Saskatoon that may not yet exist province-wide, that we're working towards.

But as a result of that, I'm told, Mr. Chair, that a number of the personal care homes in Saskatoon now have vacancies and are having trouble filling some of their spaces. I'm also told that a few months ago we actually had a circumstance where there was a vacancy, an empty bed, in one of the level 3 and 4 facilities, and there was not a waiting list. There wasn't someone on a list immediately to fill that place.

Now that to me is indicative that as we build the community-based services, that we can begin to meet many, many more of our needs outside the concept of an institution. On the other hand, we will always have the need for institutional care, for who knows -- any one of us may require it, any one of our parents or neighbours. Where that need exists, we will need to provide institutional care.

We have the mix currently of small personal care homes and the level 3 and 4 facilities, and we are looking at the kind of options that have been presented by the community of Avonlea and other options that have been presented. And I say again, that policy decision will be made very soon.

Mr. Martens: — Well, Mr. Minister, there has to be some way for the price to be controlled. And control comes in two ways — either it's regulated or let the market-place dictate what it is going to do.

You're telling the people in Swift Current you can only have X amount of licences so that the price can't relate to not what the market should bear, but you're saying let's talk about a minimum requirement for a cost and then put that in there.

If that's the way you regulate it, then you can say, fine. But I would far sooner have it regulated by the market-place. Let the market-place dictate what will happen. And what you have then is an opportunity for the market to stabilize. And if people want to get in the business they will say, I have X amount of spaces available — under 10 or 8 or 7, these are available — and then let the market dictate what the price will be.

There will be a minimum standard there, Mr. Minister — not a minimum standard of quality of care, but a minimum standard of price and cost. And when that is reached, everybody will be the same. And if one guy can be more efficient than another, or if one person in his home or his facility can be cheaper than another, then allow him to be that and let him determine what that price is going to be.

But now what you have is you have a full house and people on a waiting list. You talked about Saskatoon. Well that isn't in those small local communities, Mr. Minister. That isn't in Swift Current. Because I know people who are on the waiting list and my in-laws were on that waiting list this past summer as well, Mr. Minister. There are tens of twenties of people on waiting lists in Swift Current in looking for a place to get into one of those kinds of facilities.

And then you have the individual who has the home, who has a monopoly control on the licence, and you're saying to him he can't . . . or the individual going into that home has no recourse except to stay in that home and pay that bill or go into a hotel bill.

I just spoke today, Mr. Minister, to an individual whose mother has a retarded son — and it's this fellow's brother — and they have a serious problem because the mother is not able to look after that son. They have no place to put that individual, no place to put that individual, and she can't look after him any more. So what do they do? There is a waiting list, in the tens, in the twenties in Swift Current and they can't do anything about it. So what are you going to do about that?

This individual says there is too much supply so that the individual who has the home can charge whatever they like. They could charge \$5,000 an individual, Mr. Minister, and there would be no recourse. The people would move out, but where would they move? Where would they move, Mr. Minister?

Allow more licences. And that's what the member from Moosomin is talking about, about Avonlea. Allow more of these. And if they fail, they fail. There will be times when some in Swift Current may fail too, but it may not be because of supply.

And so, Mr. Minister, you either do it in a regulatory basis if you want to control the licences or allow the licences to be expanded. You have choices to make, Mr. Minister. And I believe you're afraid to allow more licences because that will point out the error of what you're doing.

So, Mr. Minister, will you give some assurance to this lady, Mrs. Williamson, about the condition that exists for her father? Will you provide that for us?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, the member makes an interesting argument in this debate. I think he bases his argument on some mistaken notion that there is no ability to licence a personal care home in Saskatchewan today and open a personal care . . . That's simply not the fact.

An Hon. Member: — Oh yes, but you have so terribly many restrictions on it, you can't . . .

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well now the member says from his seat we have a terrible number of restrictions on them; that's why we can't open them. Well now he wants me to add more restrictions on what people can be charged.

Now I want to make it clear to the member. There has been no restriction or delay beyond meeting the appropriate standards in opening a personal care home in Saskatchewan. In fact there have been new personal care homes open . . .

An Hon. Member: — Remember the story about the good Samaritan? Where was the Levite going when he walked by the

guy on the road?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Apparently the member now wants to get into a biblical discussion; I'm not sure. Now if he would sit still and listen, he may understand what's happening in our province. Now, Mr. Chair, if the member wants the answer, I'll give him the answer. If he wants to chirp from his seat perhaps I can sit down and he can . . .

The Chairperson: — Order, order. We've been having a fairly orderly review of department estimates, and I'll simply ask that all members of the House cooperate and allow it to proceed in that way.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now let me repeat. We've had a policy where personal care homes of less than 10 beds have been and are being approved if they meet the appropriate regulations and standards.

If there is a community and individuals in that community — I would hope caring individuals — who wish to open a personal care home as a private business, they have the ability to make application and receive a licence should they meet the standards. There's been nothing to change that.

Now the member proposes that somehow we should make that process easier, I guess, so that more options may be available, more homes available. Then he says from his feet, well if they fail, they fail. Now I would remind the member, we're not here dealing with nuts and bolts. We're not here dealing with hardware stores or hamburger joints. We're dealing with institutions that will care for people. If the hardware shop goes broke, what happens? Well you padlock the door, and you sell off the inventory. Now if a personal care home fails . . .

An Hon. Member: — Remember you're talking to this woman here who's got a father that's got a problem.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And the member says, remember you're speaking to a woman who has a father in need. Well I'm sure that she would want us to be careful about having institutions that her father may be a part of and that someday may have to close their doors, because I ask the member, then what? Then what? What do we do if, as the member says, well if they fail, they fail? Well it's not that simple. If they fail, what do we do with these human beings, perhaps my mother, your mother, our friend, our neighbour? What do we do?

An Hon. Member: — That's what you should have thought about when you shut the door at Vanguard and Ponteix, in Gull Lake.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, Mr. Chair, the member seems to be recommending that we either regulate or flood the market. We're not . . . regulate the pricing or flood the market. Mr. Chair, we're not going to do either; we're going to take, I think, a more sensible and thoughtful approach.

In the interim, Mr. Chair, I want to remind the member that

those who wish to license a personal care home in the province of Saskatchewan, 10 beds or under, 10 residents or under, are more than welcome and are free today, as they always have been, to make application, and having met the standards, will receive a licence.

(1545)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, in view of current regulations regarding private care homes — and I'm just going to raise this; I'm not going to dwell on it — regarding the Antler Creek situation. And certainly what comes up there is a problem in trying to establish what would be an appropriate fire guard system. And I think the big factor is the number 10. The fact that they did apply. They did have a licence for . . . because they're a family of six, the parents, the husband and wife and four children, that they were granted a licence to have four special care or care home people, individuals, in their special care home. Then when they expanded, of course, they got beyond that. And now they haven't received a licence, and a lot of the licence is all tied around basically putting in an adequate fire retardant system despite the fact that there's almost an exterior door at . . . well actually I shouldn't say almost, there is an exterior door pretty well available to every one of the rooms.

And this has created a problem and I'm not exactly sure where they sit because I haven't chatted with them lately. But what I'm wondering, is that still, when we talk about the private care homes and you're talking about licensing a facility, you're still limiting that facility to actually, if there's a family of five, there would be five individuals being able to get the service; they could take five more people in. Or has the department looked at the possibility of licensing based on 10 people receiving services through the special care home over and above the four, five or six family members?

Just exactly where is the department sitting today in circumstances like that, and maybe your department could maybe update me as to where we might be sitting as well regarding the Antler Creek situation. I understand that the proprietor has had some health problems as well and that may have created a bit of a problem. But maybe you could just update us on that, please.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, in regard to . . . and I think I have this correct; I just want to just check with the member. It's Antler Creek? Antler Creek? In regard to that specific situation, I'll have some officials be sure to be in touch and see what exactly is there.

My understanding of the circumstance is that yes, we are talking about 10 individuals under one roof. If it exceeds 10 individual . . . now some of these may be family members; some of these may be clients of the home, but it is limited to 10 individuals. And the requirements are not simply ours, but requirements based on National Building Code standards which we are obliged, and I think rightly so, to meet.

And when I say rightly so, I think some of the initial move of

the province of Saskatchewan into regulating some of the circumstances around personal care homes arose after, if I recall, it was a fire in Prince Albert where two individuals lost their lives in that fire. And I tell you so long as I'm Minister of Health around here, we're not licensing anything that presents a fire risk to individuals. No, I don't think anyone in this House wants to wake up some morning hearing on the radio that lives have been lost in a tragic fire because we didn't strictly enforce the appropriate regulations.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, has there been any construction of care home beds in the province since 1991?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes. I assume the member would like some more specifics around that?

Mr. Chair, in terms of brand-new construction of long-term care facilities, notably there is construction going on in Moose Jaw to construct Providence Place. There is construction happening in Gravelbourg to construct there for the Foyer. There has been approval granted to Prince Albert for new construction.

But I would refer, member, also to a number of the health centres where in fact, in the integrated facilities, where some of the acute care beds that had one time been used for acute care are now serving the role of long-term care beds, some of those acute care beds. And the other notable of course is La Ronge where there are some long-term care beds being built into the new capital facility in La Ronge.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, maybe you could just inform us as to what has taken place at Providence Place and some of these other facilities. Are we talking specifically beds? I know there was a request. And I'm not exactly sure . . . Is Providence Place up on the hill, south of the river? Is that the . . . There was a care home . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, that's St. Anthony's. Okay. Now we've got it straight.

But I was just going to say, I find it interesting that the long-term care . . . I'd like to have some in my constituency as well, Mr. Minister. I guess as Minister of Health you have that ability every once in a while just to pull a string here or there that says yes, I think my community comes ahead of somebody else. I'm not exactly sure if that took place or not, but . . .

Anyway, Mr. Minister, I understand that some of this construction possibly is related back to decisions made prior to 1991. And I'm wondering how many beds are under construction under the program that you've talked about. How many actual beds are we talking of placing in the province with this construction that's presently taking place?

And also maybe one other thing you could answer, Mr. Minister, is if there are any other small private care homes that would be included or part of or over and above the question I just asked about care home construction or private care homes . . . not private, but care homes construction, including private

care home construction.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, if the member will permit, we'll have to do some addition to be accurate on all of these numbers, the numbers of personal care homes. So I will assure him we'll get these numbers and get them to him.

I do want to respond though to one or two of his comments, particularly beginning with the construction of Providence Place in Moose Jaw, Mr. Chairman. As you well know, Mr. Chair, this project was approved not once, not twice, but three times when you were in government.

Now approval and getting some bricks under way was a different thing. But it was . . . and I give some due credit to your government in this regard, for working with the community of Moose Jaw in developing some long-term health care plans. But for sure, approvals were given that weren't followed through on, let me say.

I want to be clear with the member, that in health delivery in Saskatchewan now, if any kind of capital is going to be approved it must . . . that request must come through the district. The district must make its own need assessment of capital requirements and put to . . . The first test that must be passed must be at the district level. Then the district will make its recommendations to the province, and there are a number of criteria that must be followed.

But I would also point out to the member that while he was in government I'm kind of aware of a fair bit of capital that seemed to go on down around the Moosomin area. It seems to me Broadview and Whitewood and Wawota; there seemed to be some capital work going down there in Moosomin. I'm sure it was all appropriate, the member would argue as well.

But I do want to emphasize this, in terms of any capital construction, that capital construction — and given the limited dollars we have, you'll see in the budget this year there's not a large capital budget available, and we will always have some emergency needs that need to be dealt with — but in light of that relatively restricted budget, we work entirely with the districts on the basis of their recommendations, on the basis of the need that they've assessed for capital.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, as much as I would like to take credit for the new home in Whitewood and Wawota and possibly the one in Broadview, those decisions were made prior to my involvements; unfortunately I can't even take much credit for that. But I think the people of the community are quite pleased that they are there.

A couple of things in some of the comments that you made just recently. Number one, district approval. You mention the fact that now basically the . . . in looking at construction, it first of all goes through a phase where the district determines whether or not there should be some capital construction before it is . . . an approval is given at the district level, and then it comes to the Department of Health.

And based on that, I'd like to come back to the Avonlea principal because we've talked to the district out there and the district is quite supportive of a private care home in the community of Avonlea. So on that basis, Mr. Minister, I wonder at the end of the day, who makes the final decision then?

If the district . . . you're saying the district, if they have that ability and they have come to you with recommendations for construction, is the final decision made at the department level or can the district . . . and I guess this is where the district is a little uncertain, as well, as to what their role is. They are quite supportive of the Avonlea group and their private care home, but at the same time they feel that their hands are tied as well. So maybe you could clarify a few of those things, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Yes, Mr. Chair, I'd be very happy to do that. Let us be clear again about definitions. When we are talking about special care homes — homes which will have care for level 3 and 4 needs and will be subsidized by the provincial taxpayer — those must clearly have the full approval of the district and be built into the needs assessment of the district.

Currently, in the small personal care homes, the application for licensing comes directly to the department. Now it is my preference that, as we move into other options and looking at the future licensing of personal care homes, that the district should play some role so that they have a sense of all of the options that are going to be available to the people of their district, so that they should play some role. And when we describe the policy, the role of the districts will be very clearly described.

So today, if it's a special care home that will be subsidized, it needs entire district approval. In terms of personal care homes in the 10 and under, right now the licensing is just a matter of application directly to the department and approval or denial at the departmental level.

And just for the information for the member from Morse, I'm told there have been three recent applications in Swift Current for smaller personal care homes and they're all being reviewed by the department right now, and none have been turned down.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, as well, you made a comment in one of your early answers I think just a few moments ago about the fact that some of the acute care beds that were in integrated facilities have been turned into long-term care. For that I commend you, for at least looking at that and making that option available, rather than just closing the beds down.

And that gets into another question regarding hospitals and acute care services in rural Saskatchewan. Because it seems to me, Mr. Minister, I think that it would have been quite appropriate and would still be appropriate for many communities to allow a few acute care beds in those communities. And I don't think that a lot of communities are expecting a 10-bed acute care hospital.

I think what most communities are looking at, especially if the facilities are there, is if we had even two or three acute care beds so that we've got one that could be used in an emergency situation. Maybe a bed or two that's available for patients as they recover and are sent out from major centres. I think a lot of people would certainly feel that that would be appropriate.

But I want to come to another question, and that's regarding respite beds. And maybe I'm . . . I'm just going to throw out a couple of things here, Mr. Minister.

Across this province we do have a lot of facilities. And I certainly agree that the way these facilities were funded created a problem. And I think that most people are aware of that. We've got hospitals that had acute care bed funding and yet had level 4 patients occupying those beds. And the hospitals weren't getting covered for that because of the funding process.

And I've always wondered why we couldn't have developed a policy that recognized that community's need for some long-term care beds. And basically in the acute care facility that was there, let's throw it . . . just for an example, let's say we've got an acute care facility that has the ability to accommodate 30 beds. But that community or that facility is down to possibly 12 acute care beds that should actually be funded because of the utilization, and yet there's a waiting-list in and around the community.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if we couldn't have designed a program that took into consideration of turning that facility into, if you will, an integrated facility. Because I believe it's a lot cheaper to keep a person in a long-term care bed than it is to keep a level 4 patient or client in an acute care facility.

And I don't know if the department took the time to assess some of that and looked at turning some of these beds that were available into long-term care versus acute care. And maybe the minister would like to respond before I get on into some other discussions in the area of funding and how beds are funded across the province.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I understand at 4 we'll be wrapping up, and I'm sure we'll have a longer discussion. We'll maybe hold this question.

I can just very briefly respond by saying that as our district boards now do all of their need assessment — they look at community by community and then the district generally — about what is the appropriate mix of institutional beds, we have had and continue to have the availability under policy to create the integrated circumstance where you could have the mix of acute and long-term care, although the staffing levels are quite different.

We know circumstances now where communities are choosing to have available to them observation beds or respite beds. Some communities are describing it as palliative care beds. But I'm sure we could have a much longer discussion about this.

(1600)

**General Revenue Fund
Women's Secretariat
Vote 41**

The Chair: — As this is the first time for the Women's Secretariat to be before the committee, I'll ask that the minister introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have with me today Faye Rafter, acting executive coordinator of the Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat; Joan Pederson, assistant executive coordinator, Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat; and Pat More, director of administration from Saskatchewan Labour.

Item 1

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Madam Minister, and congratulations on your appointment as minister of the Women's Secretariat. And as the chairman mentioned, it's not only the first time this session that we've been in estimates, it's also I think your first time in estimates.

So as you notice, the caucus, our caucus, picked the most gentle, easygoing person to question you, and as you can see I was raised in those days when women were respected. And so they chose me to ask you some questions, Madam Minister.

An Hon. Member: — The only trouble is he has to put his glasses on to see you.

Mr. Britton: — No, the glasses are just a sham; I want to look dignified. Madam Minister, I would like to welcome your assistants as well because, as you know and I know, without them we'd have a difficult time getting through these questions.

Madam Minister, we have been in the habit of sending over global questions and I'm sure you've received them and they're just a standard set, and I wonder if you could give me some indication as to when those answers would be coming back to us?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I thank the member from Wilkie for his question. We understand that a lot of the questions are financial in nature so we'll be waiting till the end of the fiscal year, but as soon as that information is available, you'll get it right away after that.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Madam Minister. That would be after March 31 then. You have received the questions?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — My understanding is that we've not received them yet.

Mr. Britton: — Well as the global questions cover an area of travel and staff, I hope you won't mind if we ask you a few questions about your travel and your staff here before we get the answers.

Can you provide the names of staff in your office who deal with the Women's Secretariat? In addition, could you provide how long they have been with you. And could you tell me when they were hired and what their rate of pay is.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Okay, if I understand that question, you asked to know who the assigned staff were to the Secretariat, when they were appointed, and . . .

Mr. Britton: — And rate of pay, Madam Minister.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We're just asking for some clarification here. Are you meaning the actual staff of the Secretariat, the people who work in the Secretariat?

Mr. Britton: — Yes, Madam Minister. What I'm interested in is the actual staff that you have who are working in the Women's Secretariat. Not the staff of your minister's . . . Just the people that are working for the Secretariat, and when they were hired and the rate of pay.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you. I'll read those into the record. Secretary at an SG4 level, D. Bureau, 2,600 a month, and March 1, '84 was the appointment date. Senior policy analyst, V. Dohlen, 4,121 a month, December 1, '94. Senior policy analyst — that one is vacant at the moment. Information services officer, S. Dusel, 3,518, appointed January 1, '93. Research officer 3, J. Havelock, \$4,046 a month, February 14, '84. Clerk typist, J. Mohr, 2,205, September 21, '81. Assistant executive coordinator, J. Pederson, 6,318, September 1, '88. Info services officer, G. Quinney, 4,155 a month, October 25, '93. Acting executive coordinator, F. Rafter, 6,615 per month, June 1, '94. Clerk typist 3, J. Young, 2,205 per week, April 16, '84. Ed and extension co-ordinator, J. McCamus, 3,272 per month, September 1, '94. Ed and extens co-ordinator, C. Senecal, 3,146 a month, September 6, '94. And a pay equity analyst, which is a new position, 6,000 is the salary and a new position April 1, '95.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Minister. I think you and I are going to get along real well.

I believe what you gave me was your total ministerial staff, and that was my next question . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, is that so? Well okay, then. That seemed like a lot of people. It seemed like a lot of people. Then can I ask you how many people are employed at the Women's Secretariat?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — There's 12 full-time existing and one additional in the next fiscal year. And those are the total staff of the Secretariat. Those are not performing any function for myself other than their role as the Women's Secretariat.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Minister. That's what I was needing. It just seemed to me that it seemed like there was a lot of folks there.

So could you then provide their names, the position they hold, and at what rate of pay? And have any other of these people

received an increase in pay during the last year?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — There's only one person that has received an increase in pay and that was a 1.8 per cent performance increase and a 2 per cent economic increase as of January 1, '94. And the list that we read was the entire . . . No, I won't repeat it again for you; it was the entire list and there is only one who's received an increase.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I have a couple of questions regarding the acting executive coordinator of the Women's Secretariat, Faye Rafter; she's still in your employ?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — That was one of the people I introduced to you earlier, sitting on my right here, Faye Rafter. And yes, she's very much actively in my employ, and I'm very pleased to have her.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Order in council 326/94 states that Ms. Rafter receives a salary of \$77,820. Is that correct?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — This isn't an order in council. It's a secondment from the university. Faye Rafter was seconded from the University of Regina Faculty Association for the term of June 1, 1994 to November 30, 1995.

Her experience in the university was extensive as a manager and administrator, as well as having experience in industrial relations, conflict management, and gender-related issues. And we're just very pleased to have somebody this skilled in this position.

Mr. Britton: — Madam Minister, I don't think I was concerned about her qualifications. I was wondering if the salary that I quoted was the correct one: \$77,820?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The salary on a yearly basis is 79,380.

Mr. Britton: — That is for the year. Could I ask you about the previous executive coordinator, Marianne P. Weston, who I understand challenged the minister for the nomination of Regina Lake Centre in 1991, was hired at a salary of \$75,000; that's OC (order in council) 607/92. Can you confirm this, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, that's accurate.

(1615)

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, I also understand that Ms. Weston is currently employed as an associate deputy minister of the Executive Council; that is OC 618/94 at 85,956. Is that figure also correct, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — She's not employed by myself, so I wouldn't have those figures. But you could certainly ask those when the appropriate minister is in front of you.

Mr. Britton: — Well certainly not trying to discredit Ms. Weston's abilities, but the Women's Secretariat is certainly a stepping stone, it seems, for bigger and better positions within the NDP government.

Madam Minister, can you explain the discrepancy in salaries between Miss Faye Rafter, executive coordinator, and the previous executive coordinator, Marianne Weston? Why is there a discrepancy there?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I think it's as other contracts in government are, the contract is contracted at a particular rate and that rate is not always the same depending on the individual and other criteria involved in the hiring. So that was a particular contract set at that rate.

Mr. Britton: — And is it your opinion that these quite high salaries are justified, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I would mention that women in general, 70 per cent of women in Saskatchewan, earn under \$20,000 a year, and that women are able to achieve some of the same salaries . . . levels as men, I find quite admirable.

Mr. Britton: — Madam Minister, that isn't quite what I asked. I'm not worried in this particular position as to the 20 per cent. I'm just asking you, are these high salaries, in your opinion, justified?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — These salaries are commensurate with other permanent heads in the government with a similar level of policy responsibility within the government. So this would be comparable to what other people, not mentioning gender, are making in the government.

Mr. Britton: — Madam Minister, can you then tell me what the salaries are based on?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — As in most hiring, people's salaries are based on a couple of different areas and factors. One is, level of responsibility, supervision, budgetary impact, policy responsibilities. And on the other hand it's based on what they bring to the job, being their qualifications, experience, background and years in the workforce.

So there's always those two elements at play. And there's always an additional market element, and that's the ability to find the people that you need with the money that you have to attract them. So I guess that's a third factor that comes into hiring.

Mr. Britton: — Could I ask you, Madam Minister, was a competition held for the position and positions? If yes, would you please provide the information on those competing for the position? And if not, Madam Minister, could you explain why a competition was not held?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — When the original person holding this job left, she left on a secondment. So this was, I guess, a series

of temporary arrangements at the time. And we moved quickly to place Ms. Rafter into this job, and she is also seconded from the University of Regina.

So these are not, at this point . . . at least this one here is not at this point a permanent arrangement.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then, Madam Minister, am I to understand there was no competition held?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — That would be accurate. For the purposes of filling the job temporarily, people were not asked to leave their job on a temporary basis to hold this. It was thought that a secondment was the best way to do this.

And looking around at individuals with this kind of background, there are not lots with this particular kind of background. And so Ms. Rafter was seconded from the university.

Mr. Britton: — Can you then tell me when you intend to hold a competition for the position?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — In a timely manner, before the end of this particular contract, we'll review that and make a decision about that at that time.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, could you then tell me the length of the contract we're talking about?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — As I mentioned earlier, but I don't mind repeating it, it goes from June 1 of 1994 to November 30 of 1995.

Mr. Britton: — Madam, the *Estimates* document states that:

The mandate of the Secretariat is to work in partnership with all other provincial departments and the community to achieve the goal of equality for all Saskatchewan women.

Could you expand on this mandate for us today and inform the Assembly what you, as the new minister, see the Women's Secretariat role as being and what you plan on accomplishing in your tenure as the minister for the Secretariat.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — As you can see by my reading off of the staff of the Secretariat and what not, it's a very small Secretariat with very limited resources. And so we hope to use those resources as strategically as possible to accomplish our goals across government.

But if I could give you a bit of an idea of how I see this thing functioning, in the past government departments used to operate fairly independently from each other. You might have an initiative over here, an initiative over there. It's women over time have been sitting in a bath-tub with only about two inches of water in it and the notion with the policy secretariat is to

raise the water level so that we can at least get wet.

And so what we're trying to do is right across government — rather than a program here or a program there — are trying to raise the overall standard of access to government; of understanding of circumstances and programs and how they impact women; looking at problems across the province of women who are living in isolated or northern communities as well as urban centres; looking at issues that are of particular concern in the family violence area; providing good supports to children in families, those are achieving economic equity.

Those are some of the kinds of issues that we deal with. And really, our goal is not unlike most departments — and that's in the end what we hope to see is results. And if we're not seeing those results, then obviously we're going to have to adjust our activities in order to see the results. But for the moment a lot of the results we would like to see for women are not there, so we're going to keep working away until those results are there.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I heard you say something about children and the abuse of women. Can you outline just a little bit as to how you see your department, your role, in making sure that in a home where the women, particularly the female, is being abused, how you will protect the welfare of those children?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — There are a number of ways this takes place. For example, right across government, there's a child action plan and that involves people from all different departments looking at how to put in place in the community, services that support family and children.

So for example, some of that involves helping to move some government services into the schools so that there's full-service schools. And in that way if a child has a problem at school, the school can work with the child, with the family, and help to create those changes that'll make that child successful in the school and make sure that the family has the support it needs to bring those changes about.

So the Women's Secretariat would be on that kind of a committee in government to help make those decisions, to make sure that money is well directed to the place where it'll have the biggest impact for children and families.

Another way would be a partnership that they have with Justice on The Victims of Domestic Violence Act. And one of the things that's been very useful about this Act is the provisions of the Act itself, but a very important side effect has been all the training that goes along with training people involved in the justice system on how to work with family violence situations. And the Women's Secretariat has been involved with Justice on working on these educational and training needs in that particular area.

There's a number of pilot projects that have taken place in areas under the child action plan. For example, there's pilot projects in rural and northern locations.

There's new day care subsidies that help parents in various circumstances, whether in training or whether they're employed; it helps provide that comfort level that there's an adequate level of child care and their children are safe and well looked after.

There's been — I don't want to make too much of this, but an unfortunate circumstance over the years of women sometimes being under personal pressure in a workplace because they need a job and sometimes there's sexual harassment and other types of activities occurring in a workplace. And the very economic necessity has made it difficult for women to take any steps to prevent that kind of activity. And so under the new Occupational Health and Safety Act, there now is provision to deal with issues like sexual harassment in the workplace.

And again, the Women's Secretariat does training throughout the community, NGOs (non-governmental agency), private business, Crowns, government agencies, to help people understand the inappropriateness of that kind of behaviour in a workplace, particularly related to the economic constraints that women are under in dealing with those kinds of issues.

So I don't know if you need more examples than that, but that's the kind of thing that we deal with.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Minister. I certainly appreciate what you've said and I certainly agree with you that there is a need in that area. Because I think all of us will agree that what happens to a child in the early stages can sometimes carry through their whole life. And while that's not to say that every child that's had a certain amount of neglect or abuse don't turn out good . . . I'll give you myself as an example. I turned out very well and I got strapped many times, and needed it every time.

So I certainly support you in that part of your mandate, Madam Minister, and I just hope you have success with it.

And another thing I might say is that I hope that the cabinet will allow you to have enough finance to carry that out.

I think you covered a pretty good bit of ground there, and I appreciate that. I say you and I are going to get along really well here. We don't seem to be frightened about anything.

Could you then just give me a little run-down on what the Women's Secretariat has accomplished in the last year, we'll say.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Do you want me to go through all of them or give you some examples? Because I've got four pages here of specific accomplishments over this last year and I'm prepared to provide as much detail as you would like.

Mr. Britton: — Madam Minister, no, I don't think . . . I just wanted to get a bit of an outline, what you feel that has been accomplished in the last year in order to fulfil the mandate. Have you some specific things that might have happened that

would give us encouragement that your program is not only there but it's working?

(1630)

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — One of the important initiatives that has continued into this year, but didn't just start in this year, is looking at options for implementing pay equity in Saskatchewan, and starting to create the movement within government for pay equity in an orderly process, of making improvement to the incomes of women so that it reflects the actual work they're doing and places the appropriate value on women's work in relation to other kinds of work.

I would say we've accomplished our first one or two steps in this process, but this is something we intend to continue working on until we can say that we've achieved fairness on that front.

We're involved in the review of The Labour Standards Act in the areas of the Act that affected women particularly. And you may have noticed the improvements to maternity and paternity leave. As well, there was the inclusion of domestic workers by regulation under The Labour Standards Act because of course domestic workers are very vulnerable in their workplaces.

There are working members of 25 different committees that exist to deal with particular problems. And some of the examples of that would be the child action plan steering committee, the interdepartmental committee on family violence, the working committee on funding for transition houses, the social security policy and task group committee to respond to the federal government initiatives in the area of income security, the interdepartmental committee on the International Year of the Family. So that would be some of the work in the policy and research area.

When it comes to public awareness, I mentioned earlier the work on sexual harassment prevention in both the public and private sector, the community consultations and training on Victims of Domestic Violence Act. They've done a number of things to make information more accessible to women and children as far as services, with the production of some wallet cards with phone numbers and that kind of thing. So if women are experiencing danger or experiencing problems, they have ready access to the information that they need. And they also liaised with Executive Council and hosted a member of the Namibian delegation.

One of the things I found when I attended an international parliamentary conference is that although women here still have gains to make, that in some areas we're light years ahead of women in other countries. So it's very important that as well as our local efforts, we stay involved in international efforts because it can help set a standard around the world.

As far as partnerships with other areas, again I mention the work with Justice on the domestic violence Act and also with the Indian and Metis Affairs Secretariat because many of the

problems experienced by women are experienced by women from the aboriginal community. And because of the particular way our systems have worked, they have not necessarily been very accessible to women from those communities. So we've been working on ways to improve that and get them included in some of the benefits of the changes.

There was a partnership to develop a model of cooperation on how to deal with family violence in the community because, as you know, there's many people — from police to emergency wards to family service agencies, crisis services — that all deal a bit in these areas. And there is a need to pull together all of the various people that are having an effect on this area.

There was work with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission on particular issues related to women. And of course some of the new provisions in the human rights legislation disallow discrimination based on economic status and family status, and those are very positive for a lot women who have that kind of situation.

And we've also been involved in some national meetings with the B.C. (British Columbia) ministry on women's equality, creating some video materials for use in the schools. And these are again largely to help young women overcome gender socialization and to realize that a wide range of careers are open to them, a wide range of choices and opportunities are open to them.

We've also worked with the area of film classification. And right now the national classification system is using some of the work that we did to look at reviewing the content of films, again for their impact on children and families and women. So these would be just some examples of what we think some of the accomplishments have been this year.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you. Madam Minister, you were mentioning equality between the two genders. I was just looking at some information I have. And it seems that Ms. Rafter was an instructor at the university, and an instructor receives in the neighbourhood of 55,000 to 60,000 a year, and that's maximum. Could you explain why she was entitled to a \$20,000 increase, coming over to the Secretariat? Could you explain how that wide a spread could happen just in changing jobs?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — In her role at the university, she was never a full-time professor in the particular time period you're referring to but was a sessional instructor, and their salaries are quite different than a full-time professor. But subsequent to that, she had a range of other responsibilities and jobs at the university.

So I think the particular time period you're talking about is an isolated moment. And I don't think it would be reasonable to discuss her pay in that institution in this setting.

Mr. Britton: — Well, Madam Minister, you lost me a little bit there. You're saying that Ms. Rafter was not a full-time

employee, so that would make the jump seem quite . . .

An Hon. Member: — Worse.

Mr. Britton: — Yes. The maximum an instructor receives is between 55,000 and 60 a year from the information that we have, and this is from a professor that we talked to. And if she was not working full time, that doesn't change the . . . You're anxious to get up?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I'll just clarify to save you having to restate your question. The sessional work was part time, but that was in addition to a full-time job within the university, so it wasn't the only job. But it, itself, was part time. But that was in addition to full-time duties.

Mr. Britton: — I think again we're off track a bit. Maybe I should ask you then: is it fair to assume that had Ms. Rafter worked full time, full time as an instructor at the university, her salary would have been between 55,000 and \$60,000?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well being that you represent the particular political philosophy you do, you would certainly understand the market-place, and you would also understand that people often get jobs throughout their life that pay different ranges of salaries. I myself have worked in a broad range of salaries, depending on my circumstance at the time, what was available at the time, and who was available at the time. So I think to make comparisons are not particularly fair or that meaningful.

Mr. Britton: — Well thank you, Madam Minister. It would seem that we . . . you and I are going to have some fun after all. I did not ask you for your opinion on my philosophy. I did not ask you as to whether it was fair or not. I asked you a simple question: is it fair to assume that had Ms. Rafter been employed for a full year as a director at the university, her salary range would be between 55,000 and \$60,000?

Now if you don't want to answer that — it's a straightforward question. And regardless of where my opinion is, I haven't as yet indicated that I disagreed with it. I'm just asking you to tell me why there would be a change of \$20,000 between the job as an instructor in the university and the job Ms. Rafter has with you today. Is that fair?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Again, Ms. Rafter was selected to move into a position for which there is a pay and salary standard set and, I would comment, is on the lower end of that scale. And that is the scale that the job pays regardless of who is in it. And I think I would have to remind you that she was executive director of the faculty association in her most recent position before she came over to us.

But I really don't think it's appropriate in any job to talk about what the person's previous salary was, because the job you're applying for is the job that is set at a particular rate. And whether you're hired as a ditch digger, the fact of whether you picked a shovel up or not, if the guy decides to hire you, he

hires you on at the shovel-heaving rate and that's the rate you get. And so I'm not quite sure how pertinent this is. Once we've assessed that a person is qualified, then they are qualified for the salary that goes with that job.

Mr. Britton: — Madam Minister, Mr. Chairman. Well I guess if you come out of a university, at least when you went digging ditches you'd get your first choice of the shovel. That would be an advantage.

Madam Minister, all I want you to do is explain to me and those who may be watching if this salary level of, I believe you told me \$79,000 — if that's an appropriate level, say so. I don't think you have to justify to me and I don't have to justify to you what questions I asked about the salaries of the people that you have that are being paid by the taxpayer of this province.

So let's not get banging away at each other here, because I can tell you I can hold my own when it comes to that. Now please tell me and those that are interested why that salary level is there. Is that an accepted salary level in the Women's Secretariat?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — That is an accepted salary level for permanent heads with a similar level of responsibility in government. Now I used to be assistant director of personnel for the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and we had 2,000 employees, so I know a little bit about this topic. And all jobs had salaries assigned to them and when you decided to hire a person into a job, they got the salary that was assigned to that job. We did not veer off that because the salaries had been set according to the particular requirements of that job, and the fact you accepted a person for that job indicated that they were qualified to perform those duties that were assigned to that job and to that pay level.

Mr. Britton: — Well, Madam Minister, I would warn you, you said you knew a little about the subject. I tell you, when you only know a little bit about something it's a dangerous thing.

Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I needed a confirmation.

Madam Minister, I did start out, but I don't think you're telling me just exactly the whole story here. When I asked you about an order in council, you said that Faye Rafter was not hired a OC, and I have here in my hand a piece of paper that indicates she was.

And it says, the undersigned has the honour to recommend that Your Honour's order do issue pursuant to positions of The Public Service Act appointing Faye Rafter to a position in the unclassified division of the public service, acting executive co-ordinator at the Women's Secretariat, at a salary of 77,820 per annum; in the salary range, 70,000 to 88,040. Now, Madam Minister, why would you tell me that it was not an order in council?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I apologize if I made an error. It is a

contract, but it was an appointment by order in council. I mean it's a bit complicated in that it is a secondment. It is a contract, but it is an order in council.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Madam Minister. As I mentioned, you — and as I said, I don't intend to be hard to get along with, but I do expect you to be; I expect you to be open and forthcoming. As I mentioned, to know just a little bit about something is a dangerous thing.

Madam Minister, we'll leave that for now and we'll go onto another day. I'd like to ask you, does the Women's Secretariat provide any sort of grants to third party organizations, or is the entire amount that is budgeted to you spent on wages and rent?

(1645)

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — No, there is no direct funding to groups from the Secretariat but there is money spent on the resource materials that are done, the costs of going out to do training, and some of those various other kinds of things. And we have looked at some cost recovery on that kind of training effort, but there is no direct granting at all.

If they're involved in any grants, it would be on an interdepartmental committee where there's people from various departments who are coming together to look at things like the child action plan grants and have a coordinated approach to problems in the community rather than just an individual department making a decision.

So they would influence that discussion but not be a direct granter at all, no.

Mr. Britton: — Then I'm to assume, Madam Minister, that there is no grants at all?

Then, Madam Minister, I would like maybe to go on again to uncover as much ground as I can. But I guess we'll be visiting it again and we can do some of this.

Do you see your role, Madam Minister, and the role of the agency, as being an advocate or a voice for the women of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I'm not sure quite in what way you mean that. Certainly the role is to provide good information on the circumstances of women and the ways we can improve the functioning of government for women as part of the citizens in this province. And certainly where changes are needed, we would urge that those changes occur. If that's what you mean by advocacy, then that would certainly be one of the things we do.

Mr. Britton: — I guess the difference is the difference between an advocate and a voice. And I understand from what you've told me that you, that you . . . I think you're more of an advocate than you are of a voice. I think you . . . it seems to me that you're dedicated to further the role of women in society. And I would suggest that that was an advocate, rather than just

a voice talking about it.

Now I would like to ask you a question. Does the Women's Secretariat represent the views of REAL — Realistic, Equal, Active for Life — women, a conservative anti-feminist women's group which promotes traditional family values, in addition to the feminist movement? Do you represent those views, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I would say that women have educational needs, whether they are pro-choice or pro-life. Women get beat up whether they're pro-choice or pro-life; and women don't get paid fairly whether they are pro-choice or pro-life. So I would say, yes, we do fairly represent the very broad-based needs of women regardless of their views on those particular subjects.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, I have for some time wondered about the usefulness of this whole department. Could you tell me, what does your Secretariat and all of the money that you spend, what does that do in my constituency, the constituency of Maple Creek?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well one of the things I could say generally that it would do there is to ensure that there are facilities available for women who are in family violence situations so that they can remove themselves from a dangerous situation and get into a safe house somewhere.

Certainly we have met with rural women to discuss the particular kinds of child care needs that are specific to rural areas and very different from the needs in urban areas because of distance. And not all of that can be solved immediately because, as you know from having been in government, every initiative has a cost associated with it.

One of the things I would like to see us do more actively in the next year, is use some of the distance-ed mechanisms to assist women with getting the kind of support educational services and what not that they need out in rural areas. And hopefully, over time, we can be even more useful in rural and northern areas.

I certainly am concerned about that and I think it's important, and if you have suggestions or women in your constituency have suggestions, I'd very much like to hear them.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Madam Minister, the suggestions I'm getting you wouldn't want to probably hear, but I'm going to tell you that most of the people out in my area simply don't see any value for their dollars at all. And quite frankly, they've told me that we ought to scrap the whole thing and put it into Social Services or some place like that because it really isn't doing any good. So I'll allow you the opportunity to prove those folks and myself wrong here in the opinion that you're wasting a lot of time and money.

So what facilities have we got in my constituency? Where are they, and what are they?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — These are some of the kinds of things that perhaps women in your area have utilized and not realized that the Women's Secretariat have had an effect on.

For example the toll free farm stress line was established to ensure that farm families can access existing services. And in 1994, 49 per cent of the callers to this line were women. Now I don't have a break-out from your particular area, but I hope that they were comfortable in using that service as other women were.

I mentioned already the shelters and the crisis counselling services that exist in various locations throughout the province, and I was actually part of a group of farm women who produced a film called "Fear on the Farm," where they very much were raising concerns about the dangers to women living in isolated areas without protection.

The distance education network provides education in 52 centres which give university level and career-oriented classes to rural women to further their education. And in fact, I was at a Statistics Canada conference earlier this morning, and one of the very promising statistics there was the rising education levels of women in Saskatchewan. And education is always a first step to improving your pay and living conditions. So I think SCN (Saskatchewan Communication Network Corporation) as it develops will be even more useful in helping accomplish that goal for the women in the area where you live.

The child action plan has provided pilot project initiatives in rural and northern locations. And if your community is not accessing those, we certainly could help you get the information to help them access those kinds of programs to assist in their community.

The breast cancer screening program has been expanded to serve the entire province. And of course this is only maybe pertinent to those of us who have those accoutrements, but it's certainly important to myself and I think important to women in rural areas.

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food is making efforts to work towards meeting the needs of farm women. And many of the farm managers — we know there's many farm managers out there now who are actually the farm operator. With the federal, provincial, and territorial counterparts, we're working on ways to reduce barriers to women in agriculture and increase the role for farm women through participation in boards and the various organizations that have been dominated in the past only by the male farm operators.

Now I'm not able to assess how important any of this is to the women in your community, but I would suggest that they perhaps don't know that some of these initiatives are affected by the work of the Secretariat.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:55 p.m.