

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
April 5, 1995

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present today for the people of the Carievale, Carnduff, Oxbow, Kamsack areas of the province. The prayer reads:

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

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

I present these, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to present petitions that have been sent in to me from the south-east Alberta travel and convention association. I'll 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 the double-laning of 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.

And these come from Saskatoon, Medicine Hat, and all across the southern part of Alberta and Saskatchewan. And I'm happy to table these today, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate funding 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.

NOTICES OF MOTION AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day 47 ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Department of Agriculture: (1) has the minister contacted the federal government regarding the recently announced closure of all of the prairie agricultural employment service offices; (2) what actions have been undertaken by the Economic Development minister to ensure agricultural employment services offices in Saskatchewan remain viable; (3) provide copies of any proposal and other correspondence between the Agriculture minister and the federal government on this issue; (4) the number of jobs that will be lost in Saskatchewan as a result of the closure of these offices.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Whitmore: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce in your gallery today a very dear friend and a councillor in the RM (rural municipality) of Vanscoy, Mr. Don Kinzie. I know that Don will be down on business today. His trips to Regina are not a pleasure. So I would like the Legislative Assembly to welcome Don here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce someone who really is no stranger to this Assembly. It's Mr. Wally Sadowsky seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and he's here today with 20 lively and bright students from Ken Jenkins School in the great constituency of Regina Rosemont.

I'd like to ask all members, Mr. Speaker, to welcome this group here. They will be going on a . . . I guess they've already had a tour and they'll be having pictures. And they're here to be entertained and to be educated by the proceedings here. I ask all members to welcome them to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's my distinct pleasure to introduce to you today a very important, well-known Saskatchewan resident, Jimmy Durocher, the new president of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan. Mr. Durocher and I have worked together on a number of projects going back, I guess all the way, Jimmy, to 1978 when I was first elected.

With Jim is Rod Laliberte, the executive director of the Metis Economic Development Authority. And if the two would stand and be recognized, we'd welcome you to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to

add my greetings to those of the Minister of Economic Development to Jim Durocher and Rod Laliberte. And hopefully we'll have a moment when we can get together after we've been discussing future developments in the province. And thank you very much for coming to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, four gentlemen seated in the west gallery who are executive members of local 80 of the International Association of Fire Fighters, which is the Saskatoon local.

And they are Dave Rumpel, the president; Leo Barrett, the secretary; and John Demkiw and Dale Farrell, who are on the executive and also constituents of mine. They do a good job for the citizens of Saskatoon and their union members, and I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, 19 grade 11 and 12 students from Martin Collegiate who are seated in your gallery.

They're here today with their teacher, Mr. Peter Flasko. And I'm sure all members will want to welcome this group here today and I hope that you enjoy question period.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too wanted to add my words of welcome to Mr. Durocher and join the ministers in welcoming him to the Assembly in his newly-elected position.

Mr. Durocher is proof positive that politicians can come back. In my time as minister responsible we had many interesting conversations and Jim always said that it was a long time in politics — so welcome back, Jimmy.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Expansion of Western Co-Operative Fertilizers Limited

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to congratulate Westco Fertilizers on the expansion of its terminal in Elstow in my constituency. This is very good news for Elstow which is about 50 kilometres south-east of Saskatoon.

The expansion will add to the economic activity in the area. It will also create six full-time and seven seasonal jobs. Westco Fertilizers . . . Western Co-Op Fertilizers or Westco Fertilizers is owned by the three prairie Wheat Pools. The company was established in 1965 to manufacture and distribute fertilizers to

western Canadian farmers. It has been a very successful company. It has total sales of more than \$200 million a year and employs about 65 people.

In 1987 Westco built a storage terminal in Elstow. It has now spent about \$3.7 million on a new building that will double the terminal's storage capacity for urea, phosphate, and ammonium sulfate.

The Elstow terminal is one of the largest of its kind in western Canada. It already has the largest market share in Saskatchewan and is looking for continued growth with this expansion.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the enterprising spirit displayed by Westco. This expansion is a vote of confidence in Saskatchewan's economy. Saskatchewan's economy is now one of the strongest in the country and it's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that a successful company like Westco would want to expand its operations in Saskatchewan.

I congratulate the company on the expansion of its fertilizer terminal in Elstow, and continued success.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

National Soil Conservation Week

Mr. Knezacek: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is National Soil Conservation Week in Canada. Of course soil conservation is important, not only in my riding, but across Saskatchewan because agriculture plays a major role in our provincial economy.

The survey of urban residents conducted through the Canada-Saskatchewan green plan urban awareness program suggests that there is a need to raise awareness of the positive actions undertaken by farmers in soil conservation. Those positive actions include "Save our Soils" and the Canada-Saskatchewan Agriculture Green Plan Agreement which promotes development in adoption of environmentally sound production practices which conserve our soil.

As well there are programs which promote the benefits of direct seedings, programs which are being conducted by the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we need to conserve this valuable resource which is so important to our way of life in Canada.

Farmers will continue to develop and promote environmentally sustainable agricultural practices because this resource must be valuable for future generations of Saskatchewan residents. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

South-east Saskatchewan Volunteers Saluted

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment this afternoon to just acknowledge the work of

volunteers across the province of Saskatchewan. Certainly this province has been enhanced because men and women from all stripes and all persuasions have taken the time to volunteer and give of their efforts to serve their community or to serve a recreational group or a heritage or a cultural fund.

This past weekend in Stoughton, the south-east Saskatchewan region had a volunteer award ceremony, and unfortunately due to previous commitments, I was unable to be there. However, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the work of the south-east group, volunteer awards group and recreation society, for the work they have done in continuing to promote this recognition. The recognition is given in many areas such as heritage, culture, and recreation, and a number of individuals from my constituency were recognized and I certainly would be remiss if I didn't recognize the work of these individuals, the work of volunteers, and how they benefit each and every one of our communities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Speaker, Sunday I was also privileged to attend the volunteer recognition program for south-east Saskatchewan which was held at the Stoughton arts and entertainment centre. I should add that in addition to the awards ceremony, we were treated to a delightful three-act comedy performed by the Stoughton Players called *One Toe in the Grave*, and a delicious banquet.

Mainly this was a day to pay tribute to the volunteers in our region who have contributed their time and effort to improving the cultural and recreational lives of our communities. I came across an interesting statistic, Mr. Speaker, a statistic for hard-nosed bottom liners who might be a bit cynical about the praise we give to the volunteers who we claim make Saskatchewan a special place. The amount of volunteered work and service injects \$20 million in our economy every year — and that's nothing to be cynical about.

Mr. Speaker, many people were honoured and deservedly so. At the risk of offending those left out, I would like to mention Colleen Weimer of Weyburn, who was given an award for cultural contributions; William Rudachyk of Weyburn for sport; Judy Buzowetsky of Weyburn for recreation; and Jill Beck of Milestone, who was named youth of the year.

Mr. Speaker, those recognized and all volunteers indeed play a valuable . . . or have a valuable essence in our community life, and I congratulate all who received recognition on Sunday. Their special contributions have a real value in our communities and beyond. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Moose Jaw Region Science Fair

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend I and many other interested spectators got a firsthand look at the shape of things to come as envisioned by the scientists and

inventors of tomorrow.

The Moose Jaw region science fair of Saskatchewan was held at the Palliser campus of SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology). This, Mr. Speaker, is the largest of the 11 science fairs in Saskatchewan.

Students in grades 7 to 12 from four southern school divisions displayed their exhibits. They came from Davidson, Mortlach, Moose Jaw, and towns in between. And they came from Lumsden and Pilot Butte in my constituency.

I could not count the exhibits but I am told that there were 37 judges who volunteered their time and expertise. So you have an idea of the size and of the fine job done by the organizers.

The three overall winners will now go to the national science fair in Whitehorse, Yukon from May 13 to 22. The next three winners will be featured at the Science Centre in Regina on April 29 and 30.

Mr. Speaker, the organizers of this science fair say that every year the entries get better, which should encourage those of us who are naturally optimistic about the future.

I congratulate the winners and all contestants, and I believe SaskEnergy and the Department of Education should be applauded for being major sponsors of the science fairs of Saskatchewan.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

New Grain Elevator at Kelliher

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in this Assembly to congratulate the community of Kelliher on the official opening of its new grain elevating system. Development on this system was started about eight years ago.

In 1987 a group of local farmers got together to try to find some alternatives to shipping their grain. They discovered they could save on elevation costs by loading their own grain into railcars by themselves. So they decided to lease a section of track from the Canadian National Railway and purchase a 45-foot, electric-driven auger.

Over the years the auger could not keep up with the loading, and so it was decided that a grain elevator leg system with a belt conveyor should be used. It seems a conveyor system was the right choice because it was more gentle on specialty crops and more and more farmers were diversifying in their production of these crops.

A 35-foot used leg was purchased and erected at the site. With a few other additions, this system now has the capacity to load about 8,500 bushels an hour.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate this group of farmers and the community of Kelliher for seeing this project through to completion. It is the determination and commitment such as this that is making the difference in agriculture in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

MLA Pension Plan

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we heard the Deputy Premier whining about how it would be unfair to cut his pension, how he's counting on \$65,000 a year to make ends meet in his old age.

Mr. Minister, I have a newspaper article from 1992, back when you personally cut the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. It talks about Mrs. Evelyn Pomedli, a mother of 11 who lives on a farm near Humboldt. She was getting \$105 a month from the Sask Pension Plan and she used that money to pay for insulin. You cut her pension, Mr. Minister, to \$44 a month.

She was counting on . . . she wasn't counting on \$65,000 a year, Mr. Minister, like you are. She was counting on \$1,200 a year to help her buy insulin. You said that was too much and you cut it by more than half, Mr. Minister.

My question is this: why was it fair to cut her \$1,200 a year pension, yet it's not fair to cut your \$65,000 a year pension?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the member opposite that the situation that existed in 1991 was created by the former Conservative government. That pension plan was not eliminated; that pension plan still exists. People are able to contribute to it if they wish.

There was a subsidy that was provided by the former government which was eliminated because the experience showed that that pension plan was benefiting people of higher income categories.

Mr. Speaker, the issue that the member raises here today, which was raised by the Liberal member opposite, I think is a different type of an issue. But changing what we did to the pension plan that existed there does not in any way take away that pension plan. Although it was changed certainly because of the deficit that was created by the members opposite and because of some of the schemes that they introduced which were not workable because they were never intended to work; they were simply intended to try to get the former government re-elected. And obviously that didn't work.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, the reason you

gave for cutting the Saskatchewan Pension Plan is that it had unfunded liability. Mr. Minister, your old MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) pension plan also has an unfunded liability, yet you don't go after those pensions. You didn't go after the Premier's \$78,000 a year one, or your own for 65,000, or the member responsible for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) now, the member from whatever . . .

An Hon. Member: — Regina Churchill Downs.

Mr. Martens: — Regina Churchill Downs for \$60,000, nor the Economic Development minister for 45,000, nor the member from Athabasca for \$46,000. You didn't cut your own for 45. No, instead you went after this lady who wanted to use the money to buy her insulin. You went after that one.

How can you have the gall, Mr. Minister, to say your pension is fair? Your pension is what we're talking about. We're not talking about the other; we're just talking about the comparison. How can you tell us that this pension that you have is fair?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, it's exactly the reasons that the member identifies why it took an NDP government in 1979 to change the pension system in Saskatchewan. In 1979 the pension system for members of the legislature, for teachers, for public servants, for people who work in Crown corporations, was changed to a money purchase plan because it was not possible on an ongoing basis to sustain the pension system as it was then.

That was negotiated; that was agreed to. Everybody understood what the rules were prior to 1979 and they understood what the rules are after the '79. So it took an NDP (New Democratic Party) government to deal with that issue and improve the pension plan to the point where even the taxpayers association of Canada and Saskatchewan say that it is the model that other provinces should use.

We have fixed the problem. That is not . . . We have fixed the problem. And I want to ask the member from Morse then, if he wants to apply this principle, why does he not demand that the senator, his former colleague, Mr. Berntson, give up his double-dipping, give up his senator's salary and the pension plan that he got, which is the old plan? Why the double standard?

I warn the member from Morse: don't fall into the same trap as the Liberal leader who is full of hypocrisy on this issue and sets a double standard, because she wants to apply different rules to everybody else than she wants to apply to her former Liberal colleagues, I might add, just as you want to apply different rules to your former Conservative colleagues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, there are a

whole lot more NDP MLAs who are double-dipping, including the former premier, including the former premier of Saskatchewan, who is now on boards of directors all across this province and earns more than \$80,000 a year pension plan from this. And so if you want to disqualify one, disqualify them all. Don't just draw the line on one.

My question is to you. My question was this, Mr. Minister: will you place your own pension — your pension, not anybody else's; yours and the Premier's and the member from Elphinstone, the now Associate Minister of Finance — will you place them in the same category that all the rest of the members of the Assembly are today? Will you give us that assurance that you will do that? That's the question, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, prior to 1979, when an individual applied and was awarded a public service job, they were done so, understanding what the terms of the conditions of their pay and their pensions are going to be. That's not different than Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that why in his question he does not ask, why does the Liberal senator, Davey Steuart, get the old pension plan and receiving the senator's pension as well. Why is that not an important issue here? Because he's a Liberal.

Why is Eric Berntson, the senator, a former Conservative caucus, receiving a senator's pay and will receive a senator's pension and also receive the pension from the province of Saskatchewan? Because he's a Conservative, Mr. Speaker. And you could itemize a long list of such names. Ted Malone, who's a judge; Cy MacDonald who used to work for the Conservatives; Ian MacDougall; Cliff McIsaac.

I say to the members opposite, here we are on the 43rd day of this session of the legislature. They don't have anything to ask about debt or deficit reduction, anything to ask about jobs, anything to ask about deficits or tax reductions because every time they have done that they have embarrassed themselves. And short of having a substantial issue, they want to deal with hypocrisy, and hopefully by that, write for themselves an election pamphlet. That's what this is all about. This has got nothing to do with sincerity on the part of either or the . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, my leader has said that he is prepared to go all the way with this if he becomes elected as premier of this province. Will you do the same thing with yours and allow all those from Bob Long to Allan Blakeney to deliver . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. Order, order. Order. I would ask the member to direct his question through the Chair rather than at any particular members in the Assembly. And let's cut down the noise so we can hear the

question and hear the answers.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My leader has indicated that he will provide an opportunity, if elected as premier of this province, to do exactly that as you have suggested, Mr. Minister. Will you do the same thing and show leadership for the first time, for the first time in this province, of reducing your own pensions? Will you provide that to the Assembly here today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is an amazing dissertation by the member from Morse. Let us only examine — and I don't have the time and the answering . . . to answer to a question in the House in question period — but one only has to look to the nine and a half years when those people were in power to know how much they cared about good management, they cared about setting an example, and they cared about what was happening to the financial situation of the province.

Those promises today, Mr. Speaker, sound very hollow in the face of what the reality and what the record is.

It's much like the Liberal leader, who I noted said to the media in answering to a question yesterday, in which she said in 1991, saying that, if I were to become the premier of the province the first thing that I would be . . . would be to substantially cut my salary. She is the first one in this Legislative Assembly, in spite of what she said, to take a 37 per cent increase in her salary without blinking an eye, Mr. Speaker, without apologizing for it, and without even suggesting that she should do away with it.

A Liberal is a Conservative; a Conservative is a Liberal, for the purposes of this debate. Because in desperation to come up with a substantive issue, they have to come down to this kind of a level in order to try to . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Gaming Expansion

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Premier, your weak, your weak defence of the indefensible, as you try to shore up some support for the unconscionable pensions that you are trying to support in this legislature, that is going to come back to haunt you in the next election, rest assured.

However, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister for gambling. Madam Minister, I noted with interest your refusal to answer any of the questions put to you yesterday regarding slot machines, but I'm wondering if you'd try to answer them today.

Why don't you start by explaining to this Assembly the difference between a slot machine and a VLT (video lottery

terminal)? And while you're at it, tell us how many slot machines — not VLTs — how many slot machines will be placed around the province and who is supplying them?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I'd like to thank the member from Rosthern for his question. I'll answer it as I understood it. If I haven't gotten your whole question right, I know you'll get up again and explain it.

There is a cap of 3,600 VLTs in the province. They're the ones that you can go in a bar and look at them and see what they look like. They're an electronic gaming machine. A slot machine is just a different gaming technology.

There's a total of a thousand combined gaming machines in the combination of the Regina casino and the agreement with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians; a potential of 500 in that portion of the agreement, a thousand in total. And that's a combination of gaming machines, either VLTs and/or slot machines.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Quite frankly, Madam Minister, I don't think you know what you're talking about and I think you're dealing from the bottom of the deck again. You're just not playing straight with the people of Saskatchewan.

Quite frankly, Madam Minister, there isn't a whole heck of a lot of difference between a slot machine and a VLT, because lots of money goes in and very precious little goes out; that's the bottom line. And you're playing the old shell game with the number of VLTs and slot machines in the province, removing them from one facility, and then you go ahead and place them in another.

And I want to give you a quote, a quote from a sign that was in the Buffalo Buck Casino. And that Buffalo Buck Casino sign read, and I quote:

In keeping with the provincial government's commitment to address the impacts of the influence of electronic gaming, the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Commission has adjusted the number of VLTs in this casino. Effective April 3 the number of VLTs in this establishment will be reduced from 198 to 100.

Well, Madam Minister, we're making progress. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Will the member please put his question.

Mr. Neudorf: — I want to ask you, Madam Minister . . . and thank you for finally admitting VLTs and their numbers have a negative impact.

The Speaker: — Order, order. If the member doesn't put his question, I'll recognize somebody else. Ask your question.

Mr. Neudorf: — The question, Madam Minister: can you confirm that in those machines that will be relocated to other facilities, that what you are really doing is just expanding the impacts of electronic gaming from one community and moving it to another; that the total impact, negative impact, will still be there. Would you confirm that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the member from Rosthern for his question. Now I know that you're not ignoring all the answers you've received on this subject on purpose, so I'll just assume that you either have a short memory, you've lost your *Hansard*, and you can't take a look at it.

But the fact is I've explained a number of times, that in response to concerns around VLT gaming, we placed a cap on the number of machines in the province. Now the exhibition association . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order! This is the last warning I'm going to give in general. I'm going to start naming individual members. There is just too much interference either when the member asks a question or when the minister is trying to answer. Please give them a chance to at least ask their questions and answering the question.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — As was acknowledged subsequently in a further news report, the exhibition association did acknowledge that there was an agreement for interim use of those VLTs, but there are many legal site contractors throughout the province who are entitled under the legal terms and conditions of having VLTs to have them, and due to the cap, they're being redistributed throughout the network.

Now you know that, unlike your government, we allocated \$1.5 million to education and prevention. And perhaps you might have considered doing that when you expanded bingo, privatized bingo gaming, in the '80s.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MLA Pension Plan

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people have been listening to this NDP government try to justify why some members deserve special pensions. Today I want to table a letter. It's a letter which is signed by the Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan to a resident, a senior in our province, stating why this pensioner and his wife must have their pension reduced. And I quote:

I realize it is disappointing to have the guaranteed minimum pension subsidy of your pension discontinued; however given the current financial crisis facing Saskatchewan, the government simply could not afford it.

My question is to the Deputy Premier this afternoon. Those are your own words, sir. How is it that you're so willing to reduce this elderly couple's pension in the name of fiscal restraint, but the same standards don't apply to yourself.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I have already responded that there was a necessity in 1992 to make some changes because of the difficult circumstances which the former Conservative government left behind.

But I want to ask the member from Greystone why she sets the double standard. I want to ask her if she is really sincere and not being hypocritical here today. Why she talks about, when asked whether she had just about the only . . . was the only person in the legislature who has been making a significant more money than any other member, she said, well of course. But things have changed. I have more responsibilities than the average member. And I want to say, how can the member opposite say that when it is her who has a four-day week in this legislature and has declared a personal holiday for herself every Friday. How can the member say that . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. Order! I think the answers are getting a little too personal and . . . Order, order. Order. I will ask members to please direct their answers through the Speaker and their questions through the Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I respect what you're saying here so I won't go back into that. But I want to continue by asking the members opposite: how can she justify taking a 37 per cent increase in her salary while she says to everybody else, including public servants and teachers . . . because under her proposals they will be next. There is no doubt about it. The other shoe will fall if the Liberals ever have a chance. How can she justify that and single out one group of people, leaving out Liberals and former Liberal members of this Legislative Assembly? Why is it such a hypocritical position that she takes here today simply in the interests of her own partisan political needs — because she has nothing else.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very, very much, Mr. Speaker. One of the reasons why no one in this province, especially the 700 or so people who were in Weyburn last night at a nominating meeting, have absolutely no belief in anything this government says is the total hypocrisy.

I wonder indeed, if today the Minister of Justice is going to disagree with the extra pay for extra responsibilities, or if in fact he's going to remain at his MLA salary now that he's back in cabinet. If he in fact is going to forfeit the 75 per cent pay increase he automatically got today, 75 per cent for every person who became a cabinet minister in this government; 79 per cent when the member from Kindersley became the Leader of the Opposition. Let's talk about reality here and stop this foolishness.

Mr. Speaker, this elderly couple, this elderly . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I wish the member would put her question.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This elderly couple is but one example of hundreds of people throughout our province, and they were told by this Deputy Premier, in writing . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I've asked the member to put her question.

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Deputy Premier, you have indicated that you work very hard and that is why you deserve this exorbitant pension. Other people work extremely . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. This is the last time. If the member does not put her question, I'll recognize somebody else.

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Deputy Premier, how do you explain the fairness in the double standard that you've created between yourself and other people in the general public?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me talk about fairness and double standard by referring to a letter which the Liberal leader wrote to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly Board of Internal Economy some time ago, before she even had a caucus in this House. And the reason I read . . . I raise this, Mr. Speaker, is because she did say that the Minister of Justice, who's now a minister, should not have a minister's salary. That the minister from . . . that the member from Kindersley, the Leader of the Official Opposition, not have an increase because somehow that doesn't make any difference why she got the 37 per cent.

But before she had that caucus, she said in her letter: I respectfully submit for your consideration my request for special funding. Although present legislation indicates that two members are required to achieve official party, I would like to request your approval for special funding.

On the one hand, she says the rules made me do it, when she took the 37 per cent; on the other hand she says, in spite of the rules, give me more money, Mr. Speaker. That's the double standard we're hearing about here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Investigation of Phoenix Advertising

Mr. Toth: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the new Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, it's been an interesting week. I noticed that earlier in this week, people across this nation were quite pleased to see that baseball workers or the replacement players in baseball were fired and we can get on with the deal of playing baseball. Now I see the Premier has gotten rid of the replacement minister and we have a new minister.

Mr. Minister, I did ask a question though of the former minister regarding the investigation into the Phoenix case and the parameters that were given to the independent prosecutor. And, Mr. Minister, we had asked at that time if the minister would give us the information or the letter that he had sent to the prosecutor that laid out the guidelines for the investigation into the Phoenix affair. I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, will you table that for us today, please?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to be on my feet during question period again. And I thank the member for his question. I'm going to have to tell the member that I have to inform myself on that question. I'll report back to the House later.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, just a further question to the minister. Mr. Minister, while the former minister promised to provide that information, it's unfortunate, but we found out afterwards, while it was supposed to come to us, the media did actually get one. And there are a couple of points I'd like to bring to your attention — maybe you'd review these as well — regarding the letter and the two major flaws we find with it.

First of all, the prosecutor can only recommend whether Phoenix Advertising or any of its employees should be charged. Secondly, the investigation should be left open ended so that the prosecutor is free to recommend charges against any individual he sees fit.

And, Mr. Minister, it seems to us that what the former minister did was place a strait-jacket over the investigation. I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you're willing to open that up and allow for a total and independent investigation so at the end of the day the public in general can feel that they have been served well by this investigation. Will you do that, sir?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand from information coming across the House that the letter has in fact been made public, which is probably the answer to the member's first question. But I'll check into that.

I think though that the member is off base with respect to his last question. Surely the issue here is whether or not the prosecutorial decisions in Saskatchewan, made here with respect to Phoenix, were or were not correct, and that question of whether or not that exercise of prosecutorial discretion with respect to Phoenix Advertising was appropriate or not. In other words, what does the special prosecutor think should be done with respect to Phoenix?

Now if the member is suggesting there should be some kind of a massive fishing trip conducted by a special prosecutor, we see no need for that. There is not a scintilla of evidence that anybody else is involved. The question which was raised in this House by the hon. member was the question of whether or not

Phoenix should be charged, and that's the question which of course has been referred.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

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

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take a great deal of pleasure to rise today and move second reading of a long overdue Bill. And I emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill is long overdue. And as I carry on with my remarks and come to my conclusion, I think it will be obvious why I think so.

This is a Bill which will give recognition to the many thousands of volunteers with which our province is very blessed. Since 1985 the Saskatchewan Order of Merit has recognized exceptional individuals. However, only a few could be recognized for their service as volunteers. This Bill establishes a system of recognition devoted entirely to volunteers, the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

I have said that this Bill is long overdue. This is because Saskatchewan has the reputation of having the most volunteers in Canada without any exception. In fact the social and economic growth and development of our province could not have been achieved without the dedication of the thousands of people who unselfishly gave of their time and skills to the betterment of their neighbours and their province. While some have been recognized on a local level, it is time that we as province recognize the important role volunteers have played and continue to play in Saskatchewan's growth.

Mr. Speaker, our people have been offering their services since the early days of our province, and even before. The first settlers quickly recognized that to survive in the harsh and unforgiving environment, they had to rely on each other, they looked out for each other, and from that early involvement with neighbours was born a tradition of volunteering.

That spirit of cooperation, of working with one's neighbours for the betterment of the community, has been passed on from generation to generation. As our population grew, hospitals were needed, and it was volunteers who worked to organize our province's first hospitals. Hospital boards, school boards, and other similar groups were first formed by volunteers.

Farmers realized that they could not increase the opportunities to market their product if they worked . . . if they worked together, they could increase those opportunities. Cooperatives were formed. And from them grew such organizations as the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the cooperative movement, credit

unions, and many other organizations that have had a profound impact on the development not only of Saskatchewan but all of Canada.

This year, Saskatchewan celebrates 90 years as a province. In those 90 short years, our people have created a compassionate and a caring society — a society which has its roots in volunteers who have worked together to help bring about our Saskatchewan of today.

And what of today, Mr. Speaker? Does our society still require volunteers? Because from time to time I have heard people say that they are not important. I do not agree. One need not look very far to find the answer to that question, and I say it's a resounding yes.

Mr. Speaker, there are 6,000 registered charities in Saskatchewan, almost all of them served by volunteers in one capacity or another, and without them the charities could not operate. These volunteers touch almost every segment of our society. In winter, we see them in our rinks coaching youngsters in skating, in hockey, in ringette, in curling. In summer they move to the ball diamonds, soccer and football fields.

(1415)

Many of our elderly could not stay in their own homes without the help of volunteers who visit, who deliver meals, clean walks in the winter, and cut grass in the summer. Cultural organizations, youth groups, churches, service clubs, and the list is endless and one could go on and on.

So why do people volunteer, Mr. Speaker? It is certainly not an easy thing to do. With the increased pressures in our society, people must make a greater effort than ever before to devote their time and resources to volunteer service. It often means real personal sacrifice of time from work and from the family.

In true Saskatchewan spirit, our people volunteer because of their tradition of concern, of caring for their neighbours. They volunteer again and again and are rewarded by knowing that they have helped their fellow citizens. It is safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that without volunteers society would collapse as we know it. And yet they receive little recognition.

Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal will help correct that. It gives us an opportunity as a province, and as a provincial community, to say thank you to these unsung heroes, to recognize their generosity, to put them forward as role models for all of us and for our young people.

So in closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge and to thank Mr. Jack Glasser of Regina, the designer of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal. It is a beautiful design that will tell everyone that the wearer is a unique and a special individual who has given unselfish service to society. I know it will be worn with pride.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is with much pride and with great pleasure that I now am able to move second reading of The Provincial Emblems and Honours Amendment Act, 1995.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to deal with this particular piece of legislation.

While the minister didn't comment on it, there are two parts to this particular piece of legislation. One is the volunteer recognition which is very, very important in this province. It's the volunteers of this province, Mr. Speaker, that are the glue that holds our society together. They're the people who make the things in our small communities in particular, but also in the larger urban areas, who make our society work.

When I think to my own communities, Mr. Speaker, if it wasn't for the volunteers, there would be no skating rink. If it wasn't for the volunteers, there would be no community hall. There would be very little, if any, support for seniors in my own community if it was not for the volunteers. And in fact in a lot of cases, Mr. Speaker, it's the seniors that are providing support, volunteer support, for the seniors.

In my community a group of the ladies who are seniors themselves put on bake sales, provide lunches at auctions, to support additional facilities for the seniors' nursing homes. They provide the new television sets; they provide the VCRs (video cassette recorder); they go in and provide entertainment. And it's all done on a volunteer basis, Mr. Speaker, with no reward other than the satisfaction of helping someone else.

I think back to Kara Smith, who is a four-year-old little girl from the community of Carievale, who needed a heart transplant. Mr. Speaker, the community of Redvers, which is 35 miles away, who didn't know Kara Smith or her family, put on two concerts to provide funds to support that family while they had to stay in Toronto.

That's what volunteers are all about, Mr. Speaker, in our small communities. They do all those things that need to be done to make the community work and to keep the people together.

It's just not the individual volunteers, Mr. Speaker, that provide this service in our communities that need to be recognized, for whom this type of award is very important. It's also the corporate entities within our communities, Mr. Speaker, that provide that kind of support.

With Kara Smith it was Canadian Air that provided the opportunity for her parents to travel to Toronto. It was Ronald McDonald House that provided accommodations for them and assisted with that air travel, Mr. Speaker. So it's the volunteer people within our communities and the corporations that assist in that that deserve the recognition, Mr. Speaker.

And we're in favour of an honour to be presented to those people who make such large, long-term, lifelong commitments

to their community and to the support of those communities. That kind of recognition was given three years ago, Mr. Speaker, when the federal government came out with their 125th anniversary commemorative awards that were given to volunteers and to people who serve . . . who provide public service to their communities.

In my own communities, Mr. Speaker, those awards went to a couple of gentlemen that are well up in their 80's who have provided unselfishly of their time and of their efforts to support their communities. One was a long-term mayor of the community of Alida. Approximately 40 years he served as mayor, dedicated most of his life to that job, Mr. Speaker, and he was one of those recipients of the Canada 125 medal. He would be a worthy recipient, Mr. Speaker, of this type of Saskatchewan volunteer award.

The other part of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is the changing of our provincial bird. Now the bird itself, I believe, Mr. Speaker, is not changing, although I can't be sure about that because they're changing the Latin name for the bird being recognized. So I'm not exactly sure, Mr. Speaker, and we will have to get into this with the minister, whether they're changing birds or they're just changing the name of the bird, because in consultation with two different encyclopedias, I come up with different answers. So it's going to be very . . . I think we're going to have to get into this a little bit with the minister to determine what is happening, Mr. Speaker.

So to do further research in contacting the ornithological societies, Mr. Speaker, to determine exactly which bird is going to be recognized as our provincial emblem, I believe we need some more time to look into this, Mr. Speaker. Therefore at this time I would move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

Bill No. 35

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter that **Bill No. 35 — An Act to amend The Department of Economic Development Act, 1993** be now read a second time.

Mr. Neudorf: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make a few comments as we debate the Bill in adjourned debates because I want to raise a few issues and a few concerns and then spend a little bit more time doing some research.

We're dealing with Bill 35, Mr. Speaker, talking about The Department of Economic Development Act, 1993, which was passed two sessions ago, and now we need to amend that. And, Mr. Speaker, some of the concerns that we have I want to highlight at this time.

The minister, in his second reading speech, indicated that this is a simple matter of being a housekeeping Bill. And certainly on

the face of it, it might appear to be just that. However we have from experience learned not to take everything at face value that the Minister of Economic Development might say in this Assembly.

So when I look at the Bill, Mr. Speaker, it's about a half a page long. And now there are two kinds of Bills that give me some concern. It's the voluminous Bills that are 2 and 3 and 400 pages long — and you don't know and you can't really find out what is hidden between the pages — or these extremely short Bills that pretend to be rather unobtrusive and something not to be concerned about.

And as I did some research already, Mr. Speaker, it becomes evident that there are some fairly glaring questions that are going to have to be asked. But then of course in order to be able to ask intelligent questions it does involve a little bit of research. And I've done some already, Mr. Speaker.

The apparent effect of the Bill is to extend the loan powers of the minister — the loan powers, the ability to set interests rates, the ability to seize chattels, to seize goods, and then also to be able to sell them off. These are the powers that are going to be attributed to the Minister of Economic Development.

And then there are special, Mr. Speaker — at the same time — special specific reference to the new northern development fund as it's called. And that allows, Mr. Speaker, this minister to set interest rates, to set the terms of the loans, and then also, as I have said before, allows him to sell off seized property from any loans that might have been defaulted from.

Now this, as the minister says, corrects a gap that was caused by the repeal of The Economic Development and Tourism Act. But, Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of things that the minister is not telling us.

And firstly I have to wonder why this was not put into the original economic development 1993 Act if it is such a standard provision as the minister would have us believe.

And secondly it seems to me that the government already has powers that describe . . . through the provisions of clause 16 of the original Act which allows the Lieutenant Governor to set regulations for anything mentioned in the Bills. Specifically, I might add, including loans.

But then of course you start looking into the reason and the cause for this, and you realize that this provision, this new provision, requires regulations to be passed by OC (order in council) and published — not the new one and the present Act, but in the 1993 Act while this Bill allows these matters to fall entirely under the minister's discretion.

So I guess what we're saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister of everything will now also be the minister that can decide who gets a loan, how much that loan is going to be, what the interest of that loan is going to be, the terms of repayment, Mr. Speaker. And it's not going to have to go through an OC, an order in

council.

And that is significant because order in council is where the cabinet as a whole has to make a decision and pass that regulation. And then after the entire cabinet — not just the Minister of Economic Development — has made that decision, then it behoves the government to gazette it. In other words, to publish the results so that the citizens of Saskatchewan can see, can know, can understand what is going on.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that will not have to be the case and everything can be done within the parameters of the Minister of Economic Development's office himself.

Now it's noteworthy, Mr. Speaker, to note also that the minister tries to distract us in his speech by saying that this Bill only impacts on the northern development fund. Now I would admit, obviously, Mr. Speaker, that is the most immediate effect. That is the most immediate impact of this Bill. We'll talk about that in a little while.

(1430)

However, what the minister would again like us to ignore in this House is that the provisions of the old economic and tourism Act referred exclusively to the northern revolving fund.

What this Bill does, it expands the minister's discretion for the entire length and breadth of his department. I repeat that, Mr. Speaker. This does not restrict it to the northern development fund only, but rather gives that minister the power of those items that I have already enunciated for the entire breadth and length of his department. And we know that that is a massive department dealing with million and millions of dollars.

It allows this minister to strike deals with whomever he pleases under whatever conditions he pleases, with no reference whatsoever to either this Assembly or even to cabinet. And we oppose this Bill on that basis, Mr. Speaker, because we believe this to be a very dangerous move. And we will certainly be giving the minister opportunity to explain why we should change our minds, because like so much that this government has done, it runs contrary to the fundamental tenets of responsible government. And as well, given the substantial funds as I have indicated that this department controls, we believe that the taxpayers of this province will be, quite frankly, poorly served by this broad fiefdom being afforded to the minister's office.

However let us leave this discussion aside for the moment as these are issues that we will be undoubtedly exploring in greater depth and greater detail as we get into the committee stage of this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Since the minister in his remarks waxed eloquent about the new northern development fund, I would like to take a few moments to address the government's northern economic development initiatives and indeed, Mr. Speaker, for that matter, its economic development strategy as a whole.

The minister said in his second reading speech that the main reason for this Bill is to bring the provisions of the new northern development fund more into line with the old northern revolving fund. Now let it be noted that our caucus is in favour of promoting these special economic development needs of the North, and we have long been supporters of programs such as the northern revolving fund.

However it looks like this government took the idea of a revolving fund a little too seriously. They seem to have just revolved the old program into a new one that has much the same mandate and guidelines, but at the same time with a lot of potentially shady consequences. So they're not really doing, Mr. Speaker, anything new for the North. They are recycling old programs so that they can make impressive news releases.

Now the flip side of the coin is, I suppose, our caucus should be flattered that the current government thinks the previous government's programs were so good that the best that they can do is to imitate them, and so I will take that as a compliment, Mr. Speaker.

While there may be a clever political strategy involved here, it is poor economic development strategy. And I think it develops and it illustrates too well the poverty of ideas that exist on the other side of the House, and the very title of the economic development Act points to this. It used to be Economic Development and Tourism, but this government dropped the Tourism department it seems and they finally just threw up their hands and said, well let someone else do that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I took a look at the explanatory notes as well that accompanied this Bill. And usually what happens under the explanatory notes, it gives guidance and reasons for some of the changes that the amending Act is supposed to accomplish. And I find that as I go through it that I'm getting more questions being raised in my mind than answers being given.

And we are currently involved in doing research on this Bill so that in fact we will be a credible opposition when we take the minister to task in the Committee of the Whole. And we need just a little bit more time to accomplish that objective, Mr. Minister. So I beg leave now to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 38 — An Act to amend Certain Health Statutes

The Chair: — Order. Before we proceed to consideration of the Bill, I would ask the Minister of Health to please introduce the officials who have joined us here this afternoon.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To assist in our deliberations this afternoon are Mr. Bryan Middlemiss, health statutes . . . he'll be working particularly on the health statutes Bill. He is the director of the medical care insurance branch.

Drew Johnston, a professional analyst with the department. Bonnie Swan, who is director of our medical laboratory licensing branch. And Rick Hischebett, who is a solicitor with Saskatchewan Justice.

Clause 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's interesting to note, and one would ask why we indeed have the Bill 38, An Act to amend Certain Health Statutes, before us today.

If I'm not mistaken, from some of the discussion we've already . . . that has taken place in the second reading speech given by the minister, I believe the minister had indicated that part of the reason for this Act was the fact that no-fault insurance has created some problems, and in order to cover off some of problems that have occurred in the way payments are made, is the reason for the Act.

And it would seem to me that possibly when the government was arguing and proposing the no-fault insurance Act last year, that there should have been some discussion at least with the department as to how payments would take place and whether or not this Act should have followed the Act that we had introduced last year, rather than coming in this year.

And I'm wondering whether or not the reasoning for the Act, if there's been a difficulty in collecting payments for fees due to negligence or other injuries as a result of the changes to the no-fault insurance Act. And I'm wondering if the minister could bring us up to date as to the real purposes and reasons for this Act and why we're debating it today; whether it would not have been more appropriate last year.

But I guess at the end of the day, the real responsibility of this Assembly is to make sure all Acts conform and pick up where different Acts may interfere with original Acts.

So if the minister could just bring us up to date on the real reasons for the Act before us and the implications of the Act and how it addresses some of the inequities regarding payments that are made under the original Act.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I thank the member for his comments and questions. There is some accuracy in what he says. Certainly that a portion of this piece of legislation is as a result of changes to the insurance structure and payment structure over at SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) under the concept that now is in place.

I wouldn't say that this created a problem; it has created a change. And so recognizing that change — and indeed the change was anticipated — we felt it was appropriate to bring the legislation in the first session after the change has occurred. And so that's why it's in this session.

Mr. Toth: — I understand, Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, that amendments consolidate authority under The Department

of Health Act for the costs of insured medical and hospital services that must be recovered by the department where these costs were incurred as a result of negligence on the part of someone else. And is that true, Mr. Minister, that it does incur the . . . where these costs were incurred as a result of negligence, is that true that it allows the consolidation of these programs?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, yes. Yes, this is true. This is really in essence no change. What has happened . . . what has been happening for many years is that costs are recovered from insurance companies, primarily of course in our circumstance, from SGI.

What this does is to consolidate this under The Health Statutes Act. So what we're doing is just kind of consolidating the legislation. It consolidates what's been going on for many, many years, and it takes into account the new circumstance with the insurance mechanism at SGI.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, last year the former minister, Minister Simard, announced in her release, and I'm quoting from the release here:

. . . announced an agreement has been reached with the Victoria Square Medical Clinic in Regina on a new method of payment for its doctors.

(And it was a) . . . three-year agreement between Saskatchewan Health and the clinic comes into effect June 1 . . .

. . . where funding will be provided to the clinic on the basis of the number of residents it serves for the majority of services provided. This means population-based funding will take the place of the traditional fee-for-service method whereby doctors are reimbursed strictly for the specific services they provided.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, is this Bill basically addressing some of the aspect of that type of billing as well? The amendments we're discussing, are they necessary not only because of the no-fault insurance, but as well the introduction of the new population-based funding arrangements that you've arrived at? And I'm wondering how many other clinics have you arrived at or have made these arrangements with. Is it still just the Regina or the Victoria Square Medical Clinic or has it expanded beyond that? And I wonder if you could explain that for us, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Yes, Mr. Chair; to the member, yes. He has this correct, that the legislation also now takes into account those situations where positions are being reimbursed on an alternate payment mechanism from fee for service. The current circumstance has allowed this to happen in the areas of fee-for-service payment. Now this broadens it to encompass the kind of alternate payment mechanism that the member refers to in the news release from the Victoria circumstance here in

Regina.

I don't have at my disposal right now, the exact number of alternate payment circumstances there are in the province. I know that there are a number of them and we are regularly being approached by medical doctors and others to talk about pilot projects and alternate funding mechanisms. So I don't have the exact number here, but this will provide that we can recoup no matter whether it's a fee-for-service arrangement or whether it's a capitation or a salaried circumstance.

(1445)

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, based on this arrangement with the Victoria Square Medical Clinic — and I'm sure by now you've got some figures to kind of show whether or not it's working; whether it's a better arrangement or more workable arrangement — I'm wondering if you could indicate to us what type of costs may have incurred . . . been incurred; whether or not you found it to be somewhat of a saving to the health care and health funding in the province of Saskatchewan versus the strictly fee for service.

And as well could you also indicate the type of acceptability or the amount of acceptability, whether the professions themselves . . . I understand it . . . I'm just going to read a further paragraph from the news release.

This arrangement is also more flexible (it says). There is much more incentive for physicians to work with other health professionals in meeting their patients' overall health needs because their reimbursement is no longer tied to providing specific services.

Now based on those comments — and it's almost, well not quite a year later; we're about 10 months after the fact — are you finding as I indicated earlier that there are some opportunities for a more effective use of the health dollar? And as well, do you find that physicians in general, especially in clinics such as this, find it easier to work together in meeting the health needs of individuals? And I wonder if you could basically bring us up to date on how it has worked.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I want to suggest to the member perhaps we could have a much more informed discussion about this specific Victoria Square project and other alternate payment mechanism projects that are happening around the province in a different context. The officials who are with us here today are the officials with the technical expertise around the piece of legislation that we're working with here in committee today. We don't have some of the statistical information that you're requesting in your questions.

I want to make clear to the member that the piece of legislation that we're dealing with is not legislation which enables alternate payment mechanisms to occur, or pilot projects like the Victoria Square project. This legislation is not enabling legislation for that purpose. What this legislation does is accommodate under The Health Statutes Act, a collection of fees, whether those are

paid under a fee-for-service mechanism or under one of these new payment mechanisms.

So this legislation does not enable that to happen, and in that regard it's not related closely to your questions. I'm going to suggest perhaps to the member that we could discuss this in the process of estimates. I'd be very happy to discuss it with him there.

I can say generally, without the advantage of the expertise of departmental officials, and I know we both appreciate that as these projects have been unfolded, these pilot projects are being tested, there is a certain receptivity among the medical community to look at these various options. And we know from the experience, for instance, of the community clinics which have served in our province for many years with salaried physicians, that in fact it can be a very viable yet alternate method of payment for doctors.

So I'd ask the member that we might postpone this more detailed discussion about the Victoria Square and about the alternate payment mechanisms and the pilot projects that are happening and their success, and the good news that may be happening there until we're into the process of estimates, which we may get to later this afternoon or at some early opportunity.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I'm just going to go back to some of the comments I made in response to your second reading speech and just bring out a couple points here. And then maybe you could add to them or just correct me if I'm wrong.

But I understand the Act allows Saskatchewan Health to continue to recover negligence-related medical and hospital costs in the new insurance and health funding environment. And prior to no-fault, Saskatchewan Health could directly recover medical and hospital costs caused by automobile accidents where those costs were due to negligence on the part of someone else. And this is no longer possible under no-fault.

And SGI has agreed to reimburse Saskatchewan Health for these costs. Costs are expected to be around 4.5 million annually. I understand Saskatchewan Health will still be able to recover health costs incurred due to someone else's negligence with the claims unrelated to automobiles and with respect to non-resident auto accidents.

And this Bill also accommodates cost recovery for third-party liability medical claims in situations where fee for services is not applicable — more specifically, for population-based funding medical doctors.

Now that comes back I think to part of the discussion we just had. And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you could just correct me if I'm wrong — have I understood somewhat of where the Bill is going and the intent of the Bill? And just explain that a little carefully so we've got a better understanding of what the Bill is actually doing for us.

**Bill No. 39 — An Act to amend The
Medical Profession Act, 1981**

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the member has it exactly correct, exactly as he has described it here in the House this afternoon. That is the purpose of the Bill.

Again I would repeat that what is happening here is not something new; it has been happening for many, many years where the Department of Health has been able to reclaim some monies where there has been negligence involved. These monies have come from the insurance companies, and in our case primarily from SGI through auto-related accidents.

The total amount of money typically has been about \$4.5 million, so it's not a small amount of money, and an important part of our health budget. And what this legislation does, it just enables that to continue, that process to continue under the new insurance scheme in place at SGI, and taking into account other methods of payment than fee for service.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. So I gather from what you've just indicated, this just allows the continuing process of recovering funds for in specific matters such as negligence in certain situations and also community-based funding programs. It allows that process to continue.

I understand as well that it allows . . . to help streamline the existing health legislation. Is that true?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Yes, Mr. Chair. The streamlining essentially is to bring under this one piece of legislation provisions which now exist under two other pieces of legislation. So these are brought from The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act and from The Saskatchewan Hospitalization Act. These provisions are now being brought together and streamlined under The Department of Health Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, does this basically affect anyone in the field? Does the Bill create undue hardship for anyone as far as medical professional at all? Or are the recommendations coming as a result of concerns raised by the medical profession or specifically just the department itself trying to streamline the whole process of funding in the area of health in this province?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — No, essentially, Mr. Chair, there is no one beyond government itself that is essentially affected by this. It is to streamline under the piece of legislation and it's to reflect both the change in the insurance provisions at SGI and to effect change to adapt to the new payment mechanisms being made available to medical doctors, particularly capitation.

So beyond the functions of government itself, there will be little or no effect in the community. What has happened for many years will continue to happen.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Clause 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, could you just update us on the purposes of this specific Act and whether or not there are direct . . . individuals directly affected such as people within the medical field.

And who would have brought forward the recommendations and why would they have been brought forward? And whether consultation took place between the different sectors of the medical professions before you had dealings with this Act so that at the end of the day, that we know when the Act is passed and comes into effect, that we're not going to have people on our case because we didn't raise appropriate questions.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the issues that are within the amendment to the Act here essentially came via concerns being raised and issues being raised, not concerns, by the College of Physicians and Surgeons and from within the Department of Health, and in particular, at least with one of the provisions, from our mental health branch.

Just to review with the member some of the provisions of the Act. Currently a Minister of Health in the province has the authority to require the College of Physicians and Surgeons to issue special licences to psychiatrists and medical health officers who are employed in the provincial public service even though they may not yet meet the full requirements for registration as a specialist.

Now on April 1, just days ago, these individuals who have served the people of Saskatchewan working with the Department of Health have now been transferred to employees of the district health boards, with the transfer of all the community-based health services.

And so the amendment that we're here debating today will ensure that these particular physicians will not lose their special licences that have been issued. And so this is a timely matter and it's important in maintaining the licensing of those particular health care-givers.

Now there are also some changes here again which came through joint discussions with the college and the department with recommendations from the college and much consultation of course with the college. And these amendments we might describe as matters of accountability and public accountability. And it brings consistency also with other pieces of newer professional legislation.

And so for instance, as you know, within the Act the time period in which the public can take civil action against a physician for negligence is changed from 12 months to 24 months. And so we've gone from a one-year period . . . this Act would take it to a two-year period.

And another amendment that we're looking at here in this piece of legislation allows the college's committee which investigates patient complaints, the ability to apply to the courts for subpoenas for witnesses to testify. And it is believed that this will assist the college in properly investigating a variety of complaints.

A third amendment which we see as improving accountability will require the College of Physicians and Surgeons to file an annual report with the Minister of Health.

There is a third section or a third issue being dealt with here, and this is the amendment that will concern provisional or temporary licences, which we believe will make the Act more flexible by removing reference to specific countries' qualifications.

That kind of detail is subject to change over time, and that kind of detail we believe is better suited to the by-laws as opposed to being within the Act, so that each time a change is needed it needs legislative change. We believe that's perhaps better suited to the by-laws to give a little more flexibility. Now of course any by-law change still has to be approved publicly by the Minister of Health.

There are two other announcements concerning the use of the college's . . . or the college's use of legal counsel and the assessment of fees. These are also proposed to make the Act a little more flexible and workable for the college and for medical doctors practising in our province.

We have consulted of course with the . . . not only with the College of Physicians of Surgeons but also with the Saskatchewan Medical Association and to my knowledge there have been no major concerns raised by either group or by anyone beyond those groups.

(1500)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, you indicated that there is an extension of length of time, from 12 to — and did I hear you say 24 months?

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

Mr. Toth: — Twenty-four months — or a time period where people can make complaints against . . . I would imagine that it would be against a medical officer or a professional if they feel their negligence has come into place.

I'm wondering why you would extend that period. What's the rationale for extending it? It seems to me 12 months or a year gives you . . . or gives a patient adequate time. Or are there cases where medical problems in some types of procedures may tend to show up past that time period? Is that one of the reasons why you've allowed or opened up or brought forward that extension?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I think shortly put, Mr. Chair, we believe

this does allow the public, individuals who may have a concern or a complaint, a greater period of time in which to access their right to express that concern and have it investigated. And so we do see it as in some ways a public issue with accountability and benefit to the public.

However it also brings this piece of legislation into a little more consistent stance with other pieces of newer . . . newer pieces of legislation. It also then makes this Act consistent with The Limitation of Actions Act. And finally, it was a recommendation of the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan.

So putting those things together, and again with consultation with the college, we believe this is the right thing to do, both for the profession and for the public of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, you as well have indicated that these amendments to the Act may make it, I think indicated may make it, easier for individuals to come and practise medicine in this province, and I'm wondering . . . It had something to do with regards to the naming of doctors from different countries, and right now I know that that's one of the major complaints of the medical professionals looking at Canada.

It's the format and the red tape that they must go through in order to come into this province. And we're fortunate in the area of the province that I represent to have some very good and excellent qualified doctors. However one of the areas they find a little bit of frustration in, especially in trying to get professionals into the rural communities, is the type of red tape and the legislation that is there today and the writing of exams.

And, Mr. Minister, what I'm asking you, does this address the writing of exams and some of the red tape that's involved? Or the format, is it simplifying the format for people who would like to come and practise in Saskatchewan to come and practise here? Or what specifically are you talking in that regard?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I want to try and be very accurate about this. For the member, no, this will not have an impact on the examination process. The college establishes its examination process.

What this change is, my understanding is that under the current Act, there are a number of countries actually identified in the Act — in the Act itself — which are recognized and which medical qualifications are recognized by the college. Now these, I think, just generally because of our tradition and history in Canada and in Saskatchewan, these tend to be Commonwealth countries that are identified in the Act. Now we know that the world is changing, and for instance if we wish to welcome a physician from Holland into Saskatchewan or if we wanted to recognize the qualifications in Holland, it would require a change in the Act.

What this will propose to do is to take that list of countries out of the Act and rather put it into the circumstantive by-laws, so

that it can be more flexible; as the college recognizes other qualifications from other countries, that they can be changed in a by-law. Now again I would remind the member that any by-law of course, change still has to be approved by the minister. But it provides a little more flexibility rather than having to amend the Act each and every time the college would recommend that another country be added to the list.

Mr. Toth: — So what you're saying, Mr. Minister, then it really doesn't address the red tape or the format that a person would go through in applying to come and practice in Canada. There's still a time period and certain number of exams that must be written prior to . . . and I think that's one of the biggest concerns many people would look at coming to Canada.

But the biggest problem is the misunderstanding that I think individuals run into as to the qualifications, how they qualify. What's the process? Some doctors, a couple of doctors in our area actually, came in and found out that they had to go back out to apply for . . . and I'm not exactly sure of the total format. But then even to write exams, it took quite a while before they had an opportunity to write their exams. And in the process, they're sitting in a state of limbo as to whether they continue to practice or whether they should even be looking at practising in this province.

And in rural Saskatchewan specifically, many of the physicians have chosen in the last little while to look at rural areas, and certainly people in rural communities who have been hit by a number of the changes in health care would like to guarantee that they will have access to doctors, that doctors would choose their community.

So what you're saying, this doesn't specifically deal with that issue. Is there another area that in dealing with that issue or is . . . maybe that's something that we'll have to discuss a little more openly in a broader format I guess in department estimates. But maybe you could respond, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Yes, Mr. Chair, I'd be happy to try and respond at least partially. We can have a further, a further discussion if the member wants.

The member I think understands that the provision of licensing physicians in Saskatchewan does not belong to government, but belongs legislatively and appropriately to the College of Physicians and Surgeons who establish their processes and examination processes and so on. Now I recognize that some may argue that the process is too stringent; others may argue the other side of that equation. I think we would all agree we do want some relatively stringent provisions for the licensing of doctors who will practice in our communities. Now that work is left to the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Now I'm told that the process in Saskatchewan, as compared to the processes as it exists in other provinces, while it is stringent and in many ways parallels what does happen in every other province of Canada, is still seen to be the most flexible licensing procedure of . . . if not the most, one of the most

flexible licensing procedures across Canada.

So I recognize that the by-laws which respect to the examination of physicians who will be coming to practise in our province from another jurisdiction are quite stringent. It is a matter that is determined by the College of Physicians and not by government.

Now what is happening here is that the very first, the very first issue that the college will look at when determining whether a physician should be licensed to practise in our province, the very first issue on the list will be, is that person a graduate of a university that is approved by the council, from a nation, from a university that is approved by the council?

Now up until this change, the nations that have been approved under legislation have all been listed in the Act. They have tended to be Commonwealth countries. Because the world is changing and because we know people are coming to our province to practise medicine from around the world — they are many anxiously coming and looking forward to practising in our communities — this will in essence take that first provision, that list of countries, and put it into by-law where it is more flexible and can be changed with some greater ease to reflect the changing world that we live in.

But just to be very clear with the member, that the provisions for testing and licensing are the purview of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. And I'm told by the officials here that if you compare our provisions with any other province in Canada, we have one of the most flexible systems of any province.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 11 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I move this committee rise, report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

I said, for the minister, it was his last Bill. I'll withdraw the motion actually.

The Chair: — Is that by leave, that the member withdraws the motion?

Leave granted.

Bill No. 37 — An Act respecting Medical Laboratory Technologists

Clause 1

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to emphasize that it is our belief that Acts governing professional associations in general are very important for the protection of the public, the professions, and those directly involved in the

professions. Therefore it is important that we give the Bill before us appropriate consideration.

It appears from the comments we have received that the government and its officials did take some time to consult with the Saskatchewan Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists, the SSMLT, and representatives from the association. As well, Mr. Chair, it appears that this association is in agreement with the recommendations put forth in this Bill. However I make this comment with some reservation because as we have seen in the past, this government's idea of consultation is too often one-sided. In other words, the government talks, and everybody else has to listen.

Mr. Chair, I want to take this opportunity to recognize the commitment the SSMLT has made to the goal of achieving self-governing legislation. The association has endured several set-backs and revisions which were required in order to meet the specifications of both the current and previous government. As you can imagine this process has been incredibly difficult for the association due to the indecision and inaction by the previous and present governments.

As well the number of set-backs the SSMLT has endured has resulted in considerable expense to the association. I applaud the SSMLT and its proactive stance with respect to legislation affecting the practice of medical laboratory technologists. And I commend the members of SSMLT for their resilience in striving towards their goal of self-governing legislation.

The third party caucus views the proposed Act as important and deserving of this Assembly's support. We have no objection to the sections relating to self-governance and we will be supportive.

However as it relates to the government's role in dealing with professional associations and its so-called consultative process, I will be putting forward a number of questions.

(1515)

First, there appears to be inconsistency in the way the government deals with professional associations during the consultative process. Specifically, it appears there are inconsistencies in what some associations are being told by the government. This raises the question of fairness relating to how the government deals with associations on an individual basis. I will be bringing forth this concern as it relates to specific sections of the proposed Act.

Secondly, it appears the government's role in the development of this Act and its insistence on specific wording of certain sections reveals the government's overly bureaucratic and dogmatic approach.

We know that this government has shown time and time again how ineffective and overly bureaucratic it has become, and we all know this type of approach does not serve the best interests of the public nor the professional associations the government

deals with. Therefore I have some questions in this regard for the minister today.

Concerning section 8(1), it states: The Lieutenant Governor in Council may appoint two persons who reside in Saskatchewan . . . (to) council. Why does the government believe it is necessary to appoint two people as members of the council?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, I'm going to resist the temptation to ask the member who wrote this stuff that she's reading in the House this afternoon because I'm sure she didn't. I'm sure she didn't.

I will answer the member's question. Now her question would suggest . . . Because it asks why would we appoint two public representatives to the council to represent the interests of the public, I presume she's saying we should perhaps only have one, or perhaps we should have none. I don't know the argument that she's making here.

I can tell her why we have two. We believe that in professional councils who serve the public it is proper and appropriate that public representation should exist. Now not in such numbers that those public representatives have the ability to steer the course or direction of the professional association, but to represent the interests of the public whom these professional associations serve.

Now in this case if you read the Act carefully you will note that it says, may appoint two. So essentially we're saying may appoint up to two individuals. It may be one or it may be two but it most likely will be two because it's our view that there should be a public representative present at the meeting of the council. And in many circumstances one may not be able to and so there will very often be two.

Now I'd ask you to compare that to other provincial jurisdictions where in other provincial jurisdictions up to a third of the council will be appointed as public representatives. And indeed in one jurisdiction it's up to half the council. So I think this is a very reasonable, and I would assume, from the member of the legislature . . . one who would assume this is an appropriate thing, to have public representation on a professional council. So that's the reason.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Minister. It's interesting to note the government deems it necessary to appoint people. Isn't it the minister who approves all regulatory by-laws? Therefore isn't this appointment redundant? Doesn't the minister serve in this role of protecting the public's interest?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Again, Mr. Chairman, I'm a little surprised that the member seems to be taking the tack that there should not be public representatives on the professional councils. It surprises me. I want to say to the member, that surprises me, that point of view.

Yes, the minister of course approves the by-laws, of course. But the public representatives will be part of any disciplinary

actions, any disciplinary hearings that I'm sure you don't want the minister involved in. I'm sure you don't want that. And yet I'm sure you would want public representation there to represent the interests of the people of our province whom the profession serves.

And so I reject the argument that I think you're making, that there should not be public representation on the council simply because you have a Minister of Health who will approve by-laws.

Mrs. Bergman: — What assurances can the minister give that these appointments won't be just more patronage appointments?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, when appointments to professional boards or councils are made, at least under this government's purview, we will accept nominations that come simply from the general public. Some of the nominations will be made in fact by the council themselves.

Whoever will be nominated and appointed to serve on a professional council will be someone who has some interest and very often experience — if it's a medical council, interest and very often experience of the work. But these will be people from all cross-sections of life in our province. We accept nominations from the broad public, and we accept and very often appoint nominations that come directly from the council themselves.

Mrs. Bergman: — Minister, can you tell me why the Act provides for the government appointees to get paid at a rate the government determines and that they are paid by the government?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, this has been the practice for as long as I'm aware in the province. And the principle has been that these are going to be public representatives, that they should have their expenses met by the public through the tax dollar. I think that's reasonable.

And secondly, that it provides then therefore no sense that there can be any conflict of interest if they were receiving any sustenance or travel — which is what's really paid, is for meals and travel, accommodation on occasion — that somehow that money or support was coming from the association to which you were a public representative. And that's been the practice for a very long time.

Mrs. Bergman: — Minister, we understand that the government wants to keep uniformity throughout its legislation regarding Acts affecting professions. Therefore the government told the land surveyors' association that they, the association, would have to pay the government's appointee. However in the case of the SSMLT, you have decided . . . and the government will determine the per diem rate, and the government will pay its appointees. Why is there this difference?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I'm not able to answer for the land titles or whatever it is that the member raised. If she wants

to raise that with the appropriate minister, I'd invite her to do that. I'm here explaining the new legislation and — if I may say — the welcomed legislation by medical laboratory technologists in our province. It's a very welcome legislation, and that's why it surprised me that the member sort of started with a very negative approach to this piece of legislation.

Under this Act the public reps will have their travel and accommodation and meal expenses and so on met by the department.

Mrs. Bergman: — Well as I stated in my opening remarks, Minister, we also support this legislation, but there are some inconsistencies in how you deal with the professions in which you're developing these Acts.

The proposed Act respecting the medical laboratory technologists states that the minister shall remunerate and reimburse for expenses. But that's inconsistent. It was the land surveyors' association which your government also dealt with. As a professional organization, you told them in order to keep uniformity — now whether this is in your job as minister or as your job as a member of cabinet — they were told in order to keep uniformity their association would have to pay the government appointees. Why the inconsistency and misinformation?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, this is consistent within the health area, and I simply do not have at my disposal resources to understand or explain the land surveyor's situation. But it is consistent with the various councils and the professional associations, like the medical laboratory technologists, in the field of health, and that's simply what I can report.

Mrs. Bergman: — Minister, other proposed Acts such as The Real Estate Act states the real estate commission is responsible for per diem for government appointees. Any work that those appointees do must be paid by the real estate commission. Why has the government not followed the practice as it relates to The Medical Laboratory Technologists Act?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I'd be happy if the member wants to move an amendment that the public representatives on the medical laboratory technologists council, if you want to move an amendment that they be paid by the association, then please do and we can debate the amendment.

What I'm telling you is that this is the way we do it. I've told you the rationale for it, and I can tell you that's consistent with other health councils.

Mrs. Bergman: — Will you commit, Mr. Minister . . .

The Chair: — Order. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Flavel: — With leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the members of the Legislative Assembly to join with me this afternoon in welcoming Mr. Steve Gherasim to the Legislative Assembly, here watching the proceedings this afternoon. Steve comes from Dysart, Saskatchewan, and is a very influential person in that town. And I would ask the members to please welcome him here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 37 (continued)

Clause 1

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. As to section 13(2), this section appears to be as good as all . . . bylaws need to be reaffirmed at each annual meeting. This will keep things up to date. However, does this create a time-consuming process for the association and make the entire process cumbersome?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I think I recognize the concern the member has, but certainly in the long period of consultation that went into the writing of this Act, the association itself did not see this as a concern. I'm sure if they'd have seen this as a concern, they certainly would have raised it with us and it would have, I'm sure, been reflected in the drafting.

So I'm in some ways here relying on the long period of consultation that took place. I recognize the issue that you raise, but I guess I don't see it as a particular concern and apparently neither do the medical laboratory technologists.

Mrs. Bergman: — Minister, in section 15(2) it states:

Where the minister does not advise the . . . (association) in writing within 90 days of receiving copies of the regulatory bylaw . . . the regulatory bylaw or amendment is deemed not to be approved.

Therefore if the association doesn't hear from you after 90 days then the by-law or amendment is deemed not approved. Do you think that's a fair way of dealing with it?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, there are essentially two reasons for this. One is to provide a certain period of time so that the minister, through the department, would have time to consult with other affected parties or professional groups about any by-law change, and indeed the public or other members of the legislature for that matter.

And so it does provide a period of time but it also puts a restraint there, for also on government and on the minister, that obviously it must be done within 90 days. So it's an endeavour

to provide a period of time, but not to just leave it wide open so that a minister could just not pay attention to duty here and leave this in an extended period of time. So it's in essence . . . (inaudible) . . . on the government of the day to get it done.

(1530)

Mrs. Bergman: — A bit of political pressure.

Wouldn't it be fair that you should notify the association in writing if you don't approve the by-law? Wouldn't it . . . rather than just . . .

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, that would always be the case. That would always be the case, is the case, and would always be the case.

Mrs. Bergman: — In the case of it not being deemed approved in that 90-day period, how can the association be sure you've dealt with the issue? How can they be sure their request isn't sitting in a file somewhere? Shouldn't there be some onus on you to get back to them in writing with your decision, whether it's approval or disapproval?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the officials that are with us here today, who tend to be the people who deal with this in a real life basis, by the time the minister's attention is drawn, there will have been a great deal of background work completed.

As soon as a professional association makes a by-law change, that will be immediately brought to the attention of the Department of Health, the officials that are responsible, who, knowing the time deadlines, immediately begin whatever process they need to follow, whether it's a legal consultation or whether it's consultation with affected groups or parties.

And I'm assured by the officials that their experience of the professional organizations would indicate that the organizations are continually and consistently in touch with the department to be sure that progress, appropriate progress, is being made so that the by-law will receive the appropriate ministerial signature and approval in the prescribed length of time.

And so because of the interest of the associations in the procedure, it's almost impossible that either officials within the department or a Minister of Health could, in your phrase I think, see this go into a drawer somewhere and not get attended to, simply because of the pressure on an almost daily or weekly basis by the affected association.

Mrs. Bergman: — Is there a particular reason it's 90 days? Is it . . . For instance, in the Act respecting trading in real estate, your government determined that the superintendent who is appointed by the minister has only 30 days to approve or disapprove and must notify the commission in writing. As you say, you do notify them. Is there a particular reason for choosing 90 days? It seems to be a fairly long time.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, a little bit of history here. The 90-day period was something first suggested by the registered nurses back in 1988. It was adopted. And other professional groups looking at that particular work have determined that 90 days seems to be an appropriate length of time, and it has been sort of replicated then from the first suggestion in 1988 by the nurses.

And the officials here with us today assure me that when by-laws are changed, that the approvals often go through much, much quicker than a 90-day period. That is a fairly extensive period of time. But I suppose there may be a circumstance, if you need some exceptional legal advice or want to do an exceptional bit of consultation, you want to leave yourself that little bit of extra room. But in most cases it doesn't take by any means the 90 days.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Minister. Section 17 appears to be good for the public as the association is required to provide information to the public at no charge. This will provide good access to their information. My question is why the government makes professional associations provide information to the public at no cost if the government itself charges the public fees for much of the information it provides, such as in the land titles information. Isn't this a double standard?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I think we would want to be very clear in this discussion about what is actually being provided without charge, and then compare that what is provided by various departments of government. In this case, if the member reads very, very carefully, the legislation, we are here talking about the register being kept of all of the members of the association. That register is to be kept, as the legislation says, at the head office of the society. And what is free of charge is that the register shall be, and I quote:

open for inspection by all persons, without fee, during normal office hours of the society.

So I would read that to say that the register is present in the head office, that it . . . for all persons would be able to come to that office and view the register and to check if an individual's name is in fact registered as a medical laboratory technologist under this piece of legislation and this description in the province of Saskatchewan.

And so it is not a matter that there are services being provided or whether there's not a process here of mailing out information or packaging out information. It is simply that the register is available and is open for any citizen of the province to view, to consider, to check if an individual's name is on the register. That's what's being provided without charge.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you for clarifying that, Minister.

I have a question as it relates to section 18. Why the need for issuing temporary licences?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — One or two situations which might apply

here, and that would be someone who may be coming to Saskatchewan and wants to get established in a job or in a practice right away and there may be some delay in getting their qualifications moved through the system. That might qualify for temporary licensing.

The other circumstance, and perhaps more common, would be the brand-new graduate who may be given a temporary licence just until the transcript of marks and so on can be attained.

So these would be relatively, in my view, relatively short-term, temporary licences.

Mrs. Bergman: — Minister, I'm told that if the graduate receives his or her official marks and does not pass, then the licence can be revoked. Don't you think it would be in the public's best interest to not issue temporary licences in this case and wait until the person qualifies, even in the case of someone coming in from the outside, before any licence is issued?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I think, Mr. Chair, I should clarify that each of the medical laboratory technologists will take a Canadian exam. They may have graduated and the marks of their graduation and their training may be immediately available, but the Canadian exam, there may be some delay in getting the transcript of those marks.

So I think . . . I would assume in the vast majority — the vast, vast majority of cases — someone who has graduated through the work will achieve a passing grade on the Canadian exam. So in essence the temporary licence will be based on the graduating from the more local educational institution. But the delay is often due to the Canadian exam. So that's why the association appreciates the ability to license temporarily.

Mrs. Bergman: — Again I ask about the public's best interest here, and I just wondered if there's any possibility of difficulties as a result of these temporary licences.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I think, Mr. Chair, to be fair, the member raises I think what is a matter of some concern. However, we know that in all of our professions we do try and provide some flexibility. The member from Moosomin, if you were listening earlier, was concerned about the College of Physicians and Surgeons, for instance, being too inflexible in terms of their willingness to licence.

Those who will graduate in the studies towards medical laboratory work will have achieved . . . to pass through that they will have achieved a fair base of knowledge. Someone coming to our province from out of country, having trained, will have a pretty secure base of knowledge.

The association itself, you will note in terms of its registration and even in terms of temporary registration, are obliged to ensure that the individual involved is of quote, good character. And I think there is some real assessment made by the professionals before they even issue a temporary licence. I'm sure they don't just write out licences with a Xerox machine.

And so I think that what this does is to provide enough flexibility. If for instance the person who's come to our province and wants to practice but for some bureaucratic delay at the other end — a sheet of paper doesn't get sent out on time — I think the professional associations like some flexibility; that they know this person is going to do good work and they can provide a temporary licence.

It is an important point to consider, reflecting the conversation we had with the member from Moosomin earlier, because we certainly don't want a circumstance where regulations and restrictions are loose, permitting those to practice that may not be qualified. But at the same time, I think we want to provide our professional associations, knowing their professionalism, a little flexibility and which I think the temporary licence represents.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Minister. I'm coming to the end here. Section 24 states that:

The discipline committee may accept any evidence that it considers appropriate and is not bound by rules of law concerning evidence.

It would seem to me that that allows for a heavy-handed approach. It allows for the association possibly to take away a member's right to earn a living.

I understand why this may be a necessary discipline. However if the association has the ability to exercise such a punishment, then the rules governing evidence should be followed. Wouldn't it be logical to set up some form of rules governing disclosure in this section? By disclosure I mean the revealing of all the evidence to be presented by the prosecution to the accused for presentation at a hearing or trial.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, to respond to the member's question . . . it's a good question. This is, number one, consistent with essentially all pieces of professional legislation, that the professional legislation will not require adherence to the rules of law concerning evidence. Because those, as you will know, are very onerous, very onerous.

Now if through the . . . you will see in the legislation and with all professional legislation, this does not deny an individual or an association access to the courts. And if issues are not resolved here, then of course there is the further step of access to the courts where in fact the rule of law regarding evidence does indeed apply. But in that circumstance, then one has accessed I think a fair bit of legal advice and everything else.

So this is consistent with like professional legislation across the way. And it and no other piece of professional legislation can deny access further to the courts.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 47 inclusive agreed to.

(1545)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, just before I move to report the Bill, I do want to thank the officials from the department who have been with us here today. Their help has been invaluable both for myself as minister and I think also to the members of both the official opposition and the third party in the House.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to join with the minister as well and extend my appreciation to the minister and his officials for having taken the time to come and address the questions that we had regarding the Bills that have been presented to the House this day. Thank you.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 38 — An Act to amend Certain Health Statutes

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

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

Bill No. 39 — An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981

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

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

Bill No. 37 — An Act respecting Medical Laboratory Technologists

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

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32

The Chair: — The last time that this department was before the committee was on March 20. I'll ask the minister, if there are any different officials from that time, to introduce them. If there are not, then we'll proceed directly to item no. 1.

Item 1

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know that we

don't have a lot of time here until the minister has to leave, so we'll just pick one issue that I think he can deal with in short order, and that's the issue, Mr. Minister, on private clinics.

And I have a newspaper article dating back November 5, 1994 where I guess it was the former minister of Health . . . Mind you, I guess you would have been associate minister of Health, so you're fully aware of this situation. Regarding some legislation that may or may not be coming forward dealing with some private clinics, can you tell me . . . are you able to tell me where that's at today?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, around that legislation or that concept of legislation, I know the federal minister has been encouraging provinces to be looking very seriously at that kind of legislation. We are still in the process of looking at it and doing the consultation. In fact as late as today there were some discussions held, I'm told, with the SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association) still around this very subject.

Now it is the recommendation of the federal minister that each province put into place this kind of legislation. We have not yet made the decision.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, what will the legislation . . . Can you give me in a general sense what the legislation is intended on accomplishing?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — In essence, Mr. Chair, this kind of . . . this legislation or this concept in legislation is simply a matter of providing government with the legislative tools to regulate and define the type of medical facility that you would want to license in your province.

So it's in essence a legislation that provides for licensing powers to government on medical clinics. That's in essence what this kind of legislation is proposed to do.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, wouldn't it have to go further than just the licensing of private clinics? In fact it would have to have something to do with how private clinics are going to receive extra payment over and above what the insured service would allow from the Department of Health. I would almost think that's one of the major concerns. Is that not correct?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Yes, in essence, Mr. Chair, what this . . . it is in some ways enabling legislation, regulatory legislation which would determine whether fees could be charged. That would give the government that kind of regulatory authority.

And I want to assure the member that under the provisions of the Canada Health Act and so on that we do believe facility fees do represent extra billing. And we're not interested in the concept of facility fees as they exist in some other places, and I know that the federal government's not interested in that either.

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, in your view, in your view is there a need for private clinics given the fact that we

have huge waiting lists? And we've raised that in this House on many occasions. In fact some types of surgeries, I don't even know if they can be done in the province. I know from the area of the province that I'm from, several people go off to Medicine Hat or Edmonton or Calgary so it would appear to me, in knowing so many people that are on lengthy waiting lists for months on end, that there is a need for some private clinics.

So I want to know, in your view . . . from your point of view if there is a need and in fact if you feel there is a need. Can you outline what procedures are . . . in what kind of clinics we're talking about? Examples like an eye clinic but then take that further. Can you give me a list of what sort of clinics we're talking about.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I want to make just a few brief points, and I'll give the member an opportunity to respond.

Number one, I would dispute his observation that we have huge and long, long waiting lists in the province of Saskatchewan. I would dispute that. In some geographic areas, with some very specialized surgeries there are some waiting lists, and these sometimes reflect very much the waiting lists of a small group of physicians.

The one that I believe the member is coming towards would be a matter of cataract surgeries. Now there is in some, for some doctors, particularly in Saskatoon, a relatively lengthy waiting list. For other ophthalmologists the list is much, much shorter — in fact would not be described I think as extremely lengthy at all.

(1600)

Now what's been happening in Saskatchewan is that the volume of cataract surgeries has been growing very, very rapidly. For instance in 1988-89 there were a total of 3,082 cataract surgeries conducted in Saskatchewan. In last year, 1993-94, that number had jumped to 6,774. That's 120 per cent increase in cataract surgeries which are being done in our publicly-funded institutions through publicly-funded medicare and not in the circumstance of the private clinic.

And so it is our view that the waiting lists in Saskatchewan generally should not be described as being extremely long, that there are particular areas where the waiting list and related to particular doctors and some very particular surgeries — and here I refer to cataracts — where there will be a longer waiting list. But it's our goal to deal with that waiting list in the context of the public system. It is not our desire or do we foresee the growth of private clinics which charge exceptional fees for individuals to have the service provided. It's our goal to have a good level of service and a quality service provided in all of our public institutions.

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, then . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think we have to wait until one of the other questioners comes up, so I'm going to carry on if you don't mind.

Listening to the minister, I can only assume that what I hear him saying is that the government feels that there is a need. But if in fact your only concern is the payment, I'm not sure then where you would stand — either you do feel that there is room and a need for private clinics in the province, or there isn't. In fact I think, to narrow this down, if in fact you feel there is a need — and I get that from your comments, especially for private eye clinics; we'll use that example — then, Mr. Minister, one would have to wonder. Firstly, I would want to know how you would expect private clinics to receive the funding that they would require, you know, given the fact that they're not funded by government.

In fact their equipment and their building and their staff and everything is going to be paid from more private sources. So of course they're going to need some topping up to whatever, you know, over and above whatever the province is going to pay.

And if it isn't in fact helping the province to a great deal, to a great extent, then how would you suggest . . . if you do feel that the clinics are needed, how would you suggest that the extra funding that's going to be required for these clinics, where would it come from, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, what we are suggesting is that monies to provide the quality service that we all desire and need should come generally from us all in a shared, publicly funded medicare and that my treatment and my ability to access treatment should be based on my need, on my medical need, and not what's in my wallet. That is the fundamental principle of medical doctor and hospital services, and that principle we would want to maintain without question.

Now we have been able over the last number of years, as I indicated, when we're talking particularly about the cataract procedure, we have been able over the last five years to provide for a 120 per cent increase in the number of cataract procedures being provided in our province under publicly funded medicare. And so we have been finding and moving resources and shifting resources to where the need is, and that's the process that continues. And I know that our district boards, where the cataract procedures are being conducted, are always reviewing their operating times and their resources to try and provide as much of the services as possible.

Now what we have also done is to ask our utilization commission, the Health Services Utilization and Research Commission, to review the process of cataract surgeries as they have reviewed other utilizations and other processes and procedures in our province. And if they believe it's warranted, that they would bring to government and to the medical practitioners recommendations which may improve accessibility or improve the scheduling of the procedures.

And so to speak to the member's question, how do we fund it? Well we've been finding resources to increase the number of surgeries; we've been doing that for the last five years. That's a continual process of shifting resources to where the need is greatest.

And finally, to utilize the expertise of the Utilization and Research Commission to review and monitor the procedures. And this is to maintain what we think is so fundamental to medicare, so fundamental to medicare, and that is the fundamental principle that our doctor and hospital services and our medical care services should be based on our need and not on any ability to pay.

Mr. McPherson: — But, Mr. Minister, what you're talking about, and I guess most would agree with this . . . it shouldn't be based on the ability to pay from an individual point of view. But I guess then if that's the stand you're going to take . . . and I'm not saying I disagree with that. But then of course if there's a need and these private clinics are going to fill that need . . . and in fact you can't continuously shift resources because . . . I mean, we don't . . . I hear from you day after day; we don't have resources for . . . and then fill in the blank, as far as health care goes. I can only assume by this then that the government has got to be willing to support this financially, if you're saying you're not going to put this charge to the individuals.

So once the government finds it unable to shift resources, which are few, then what are your options, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I sincerely do look forward to an opportunity I think to continue this discussion with the member at some further length at a future time.

But let me just reaffirm this government's commitment to the principle, the fundamental principle which I hear the member, I think, in his debate suggesting that we should move from that principle . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well now he says he didn't say that. But I hear the member making an argument or at least a quasi-argument that says we should maybe move to some sort of private provision of health care services, medical and hospital and doctor services, because there is a need.

Mr. Chair, I want to reaffirm that medicare works when we're all in it together. And the principle that our medical services — doctor, hospital services — should be available on the basis of need and, Mr. Chairman, not on the basis of what we have in our bank accounts or in our private health insurance or in our back pockets, but based on our need.

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

General Revenue Fund **Labour** **Vote 20**

The Chair: — This was last before the committee on March 13, and so I'll ask the Minister of Labour to reintroduce his officials to members of the committee.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Thank you. Behind me I have Janis Rathwell, who is the assistant deputy minister; to my left is Jeff Parr, the director of policy and planning; over to the extreme right is Graham Mitchell, the director of labour relations; and beside me is Brian King, the deputy minister.

While I'm on my feet, Chair, I would like the page to take this over to Mr. McPherson. It's in regard to a question he asked last time we were before *Estimates* concerning a jurisdictional comparison of group home workers across Canada.

Item 1

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to the officials. Minister, we have some questions that we'd like to ask you today. To begin with, your department went through some major changes last year with the introduction of The Labour Standards Act and The Trade Union Act amendments. Now has any assessment been done on the cost incurred by your department in implementing these changes?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — The cost to implement The Labour Standards Act, the total amount \$180,175. In regard to The Trade Union Act, the comparable amount is \$24,305.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, on page 91 of the *Estimates*, I guess, we're looking for . . . your administrative costs went up by nearly \$120,000 over last year. Would this be attributed to the implementation of the amendments? If not, then to what is it attributed?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — I think it's \$122,000 increase you're referring to. Personnel services increased by \$67,000 or 7 per cent. Other expenses increased by \$51,000 which would be 14 per cent. We're looking under other expenses in terms of completing the centralization of computer funds. Those would be transfers from labour relations and conciliation, Labour Relations Board, Workers' Advocate, and the disabilities directorate. Within that 51,000 as well, there were funds for ergonomic furniture, and there was a transfer back to policy and planning, which was a reduction of \$4,000. That would make up the amount that you're referring to.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Minister. Your labour standards department is actually getting \$100,000 less, it would appear, than last year. How do you explain this in light of this branch's expanded responsibilities?

(1615)

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — There's a \$22,000 reduction for classification salary adjustment. These would be decreases. There was a transfer of communication funds to the planning and policy of \$59,000. That's still within the department but to a different branch. And there was the amount of \$20,000 which was deleted. That was the one-time funding associated with review of the Act.

Mr. Goohsen: — The first number that you gave was 50-some million, I believe. I wasn't just hearing really carefully. What other department are we talking about there? I need a little better understanding of what happened there.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — I'm not talking of another department. I was saying that the funds are still within our Department of

Labour, but it was transferred from the labour standards branch to the planning and policy branch. And so those communication funds will still be available within the Department of Labour. It's just that they're used by another branch within the same department. That amount was \$59,000.

Mr. Goohsen: — Where would I find that in the *Estimates*?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Under the planning and policy branch.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Minister. We shall take a look as soon as we get a little break in the action here and have a chance to check that out.

Now would your department have any responsibility for assessing the cost of these changes to government operations generally? If so, what is the role and what were your findings?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Are you asking the cost to overall government? I'm not sure of your question. If you could just be a little clearer on that, please.

Mr. Goohsen: — I think we're talking about the costs of bringing in the new labour standards Acts and the . . . let me see now. Okay. The implementation of the amendments from The Labour Standards Act changes and the other Act changes that you implemented from last year's legislation.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — But costs to whom — to the general public, to the department, to government, to whom? Which costs are you talking about?

Mr. Goohsen: — I referred a couple of questions back to page 91 of your administrative costs that went up nearly \$120,000 over last year.

Now we asked you if this would be attributable to the implementation of the amendments that you put into your other Labour Standards Act and The Trade Union Act. Now we want to know would your department have any responsibility for assessing the costs of these changes?

Somebody must have made some assessments and done some research on what these things were going to cost the government and the people of Saskatchewan. Did the Department of Labour do that, or did some other department, like CIC, did they pay for the research that was done?

Obviously you must have known something about what you were doing in terms of the cost of implementing all of these programs so that you would be able to budget for it in last year's and this year's budgets — particularly this year's budget. So what we're asking you quite simply, sir, is did you budget for this, or have you any responsibility for it in your department, or did somebody else pay the costs?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well for the review and the implementation of the legislation, we pay the costs internally within the department. In fact I referred to one section where

there's a one-time cost item that was for review of The Labour Standards Act. That won't be there because we don't anticipate in reviewing the Act again this year. We've made the changes that we saw fit to make as a government.

There will not be any ongoing costs to the changes in legislation within the department. There may be reallocation of priorities within the department. That will either be done within the resources we have, or in future years we may find that we want to put more emphasis on some particular area. That's an ongoing assessment that's done internally with the executive managers within the department. And we would then make that request at budgetary time under which you would have the scrutiny, as the process is unfolding here today, in future years.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Minister. Do you have any new inspectors or board members or any other sort of new staff being hired to implement the new legislation? And if you do, you may as well go on to what the cost would be.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — We have within the budget this year anticipated that there are going to be two new positions within the education information under the new Labour Standards Act amendments and regulations. There'll be one new position for a northern mining initiative. There's another position, which is a secretarial position, within labour relations and conciliation. So we anticipate about four positions that will be new to the department this year.

Mr. Goohsen: — And how much will that cost the taxpayer to hire these new people?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — The anticipated cost of that is \$80,000 for the positions associated with The Labour Standards Act; 30,000 for the position with the mining initiative, and . . . what is the amount for the secretarial? And there's no cost to the secretarial position in labour relations and conciliation; it's going to be taken from funds that are reallocated within the department.

Mr. Goohsen: — Now, Minister, the labour standards changes obviously are going to result in the hiring now of some more people. It's going to cost the taxpayers \$80,000. You suspect that the first question that somebody's going to ask me when I leave here is, what exactly do these people do?

So I guess I might as well try to pre-empt that and say to you, what exactly will these people be doing to earn \$80,000 enforcing The Labour Standards Act. You alluded to some education. Who would they educate, if that is their role? Or are they some kind of police officers that enforce? Or do they go out and check to see that the regulations that have set up are in fact being followed? Or do they sit around and wait for complaints? What is the process here?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — We want our department to be a proactive department. And by proactive, I mean that we want our employees to be understanding of the concerns that employees have, as well as the concerns that employers have.

We don't have any policemen, as you refer to it as, within the department. We have people there who operate as labour standards officers, and we want labour standards officers to educate those who are employers and those who are employees — employees of their rights and employers of their responsibilities.

Our desire being proactive in the department, is to make sure that all people in Saskatchewan can in fact comply with the legislation regulations that are there. If we find that situations are there where employers are not complying with The Labour Standards Act, we want to encourage employers to comply. And for whatever reason they may not be complying, we want to be understanding of those reasons. We want to be able to be helpful in getting employers to comply with The Labour Standards Act and regulations. And where that doesn't work, then we will in fact enforce The Labour Standards Act and the regulations.

It's important though for the department to be proactive in educating the public as to what the rights and responsibilities are under The Labour Standards Act and the regulations, sometimes controversial, mind you, that flowed from those statutes that we passed within this legislature.

Mr. Goohsen: — Minister, what further education and training was done in your department to prepare your officers for the new legislation, and at what cost would that have been?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — There's no cost associated with that; the training is done internally.

We have a number of professionals within the department and we want to launch a proactive direction for the department. The training that we do is in-house, internally, and we want the people who have contact with the public to approach the public in an understanding way so that we can have a harmonious relationship between employees and employers throughout Saskatchewan.

This training from time to time may be augmented with people external to the department. These might come from other resources within the government, or resources from the private sector, to be able to provide some extra training we might want at some point in the future. We don't anticipate that happening within the first year, and therefore that's not reflected in the estimates that are presented before the legislature here today.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I see on page 92 of the *Estimates* we have a Labour Relations Board, and then in subvote 7, page 93, we have a labour relations and conciliation. And when I read what the board does, and in fact the monies that are provided under subvote 7, it appears to be the same duties that are performed; the same monies are being spent for the same duties being performed. So can you tell me why that is; in fact what role each would play?

I don't know who the people we'd be talking about . . . in fact,

perhaps that's a good question. Can you provide a list, the names of who is on the Labour Relations Board, everything from the staff and legal counsel? And in fact who these people drawing these salaries, which are just about like amounts as the Labour Relations Board, who these people are? Are they one and the same? Could you supply that to us?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — I don't know what you're looking at, exactly where they read the same. They may read the same in the *Estimates*, but they certainly perform different functions.

The labour relations and conciliation division within the Department of Labour would provide some policy direction to the department from time to time. But their main role would be to look at areas whereby there's a situation where there's a collective agreement in place, say, and there's been a stalemate in terms of the agent for the collective bargaining, both on behalf of the employer and employees.

In this case the department may be requested to provide a conciliator. We would provide conciliation out of that particular branch of the department, and it would be to try and resolve the issues or at least get the employer's agent and the employee's agent back to a bargaining table to resolve some dispute that would be between them.

In terms of the Labour Relations Board, it's a very different function. I suppose before I go to that though, within the labour relations and conciliation, almost all the employees that are there are permanent professionals of the department. Some of the people that they would appoint from time to time as conciliators might be drawn from outside and be taken on for a very short-term contract, only to conciliate within the particular dispute that may be there.

The Labour Relations Board is very different. The Labour Relations Board would be there as a quasi-judicial body. They function independently from the department or independent from myself as the minister. And the Labour Relations Board provides rulings mainly in regard to The Trade Union Act.

(1630)

And where there have been concerns as to The Trade Union Act maybe being violated, either on behalf of a union or an employer within the province, the Labour Relations Board would hear both sides of the dispute, look at the regulations and the legislation that is in place, and make a determination as to who is right. They will provide rulings to resolve disputes that have been brought before them.

The current chair of the Labour Relations Board is Beth Bilson. She's on leave from the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan. Her appointment runs out . . . her current appointment runs out I believe in June of this year.

The other people who are part of the Labour Relations Board, I will send over to you a copy. There's a vice-chair of the board. There are employer representatives and employee

representatives that are on the board.

Because of the new Trade Union Act the list may or may not be accurate for very long into the future because I'm in the process now of doing consultations that flow from The Trade Union Act, to appoint a Labour Relations Board group of people. Some will be from the employee side, some will be from the employers side, so that they will sit and adjudicate on hearings that come before the Labour Relations Board.

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, that's fairly detailed but I'm still wondering if the labour relations and conciliation board — or I guess it's not a board, it's a body — is there overlap? Some of the conciliation mediation services that are provided by the labour relations and conciliation body, are they then moved over to the Labour Relations Board?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — No, as I said before, the Labour Relations Board is a quasi-judicial body and it would be frowned on, if not illegal, for the department or myself to interfere with the workings of the Labour Relations Board in terms of their adjudication over disputes. So there is no direct relationship there in the day-to-day operations of Labour Relations Board in terms of them adjudicating in disputes.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, by your comments I assume then that the labour relations and conciliation body does have — and I don't want to use the word that you had, interference — but do you play a role as minister then in resolving some of the disputes that this body would be looking at?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Yes, in terms of labour relations and conciliation, I believe Graham Mitchell, who is here today, is in charge of that branch of the department. And there would be requests made to me sometimes -- sometimes requests made directly to the department to appoint a mediator, a conciliator, an arbitrator, I guess in some cases. And so we have a role in that but that's usually where both parties have decided that they want arbitration or mediation or conciliation. And then if they can't agree . . . If the member would listen because this is important, so he don't ask another question that's asking for clarification.

Usually where there's a dispute, both sides will try and agree who they want to do the arbitration, mediation, conciliation. They only come to us when they can't decide on who they want as the umpire. If they can't decide on who they want as the umpire between the two bodies then they'll come to us, sometimes myself as the minister, or directly to the department to ask for us to appoint someone because they can't agree on who it should be between them.

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, when we're talking about roughly a half a million dollars that it cost to run the board and a half a million dollars that it costs to run labour relations and conciliation body, and when I look at this — from your own document, Mr. Minister — and it talks about both groups are really involved in solving disputes between employers and employees, if in fact all you need is a body to

pick mediators or conciliators or whatever, why couldn't some of these functions be done by the board themselves? You know, perhaps there's quite a savings of money that could accrue to the province if in fact he had these powers given to the board.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well the labour relations people are basically part time; not all the people are employed. And I'll send over to you a list of currently who are the employer representatives, who are the employee representatives, and the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Labour Relations Board. These people are only paid on a per diem basis, that are the employer representatives, the employee representatives, for the time that they actually sit on the board.

People within the department are professionals that are there on a regular basis and they have more to do than just the appointment of arbitrators, mediators, and conciliators; they have a policy function within the department. So they're the ongoing public employee professionals within the Department of Labour.

In regard to the Labour Relations Board, they serve, as I said, a quasi-judicial function to rule over disputes that cannot otherwise be overturned. And the two really do have a quite different function.

If you were to do away with one or the other, you would actually incur greater costs; there wouldn't be cost savings. And I'll send you across this list.

Mr. McPherson: — So, Mr. Minister, are you telling me then that if the Labour Relations Board consists of a lot of part-time people or are just paid on a per diem basis for days that they do some work and that's going to amount to half a million dollars?

What I'm saying here is, couldn't one of these bodies replace both of the existing ones? Because it looks like their roles parallel one another to me. Perhaps you maybe need a few more officials in one or the other, but I would almost suspect that there's no reason why you couldn't form one group or one body out of the two.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well I think if you talk to any employer or any union or any unorganized workplace or any employer who had an unorganized workplace, there wouldn't be any I think that would agree with the statement you make.

Because the two serve very different functions. One's a quasi-judicial body. And just because some of the people are part time in terms of their appointments, it doesn't mean that the board doesn't function on a regular basis.

Labour Relations Board functions pretty well full time. The labour relations and conciliation branch within the department is also a full-time work that has the responsibilities given to them by the statute of this legislature which creates the department.

And certainly it may appear to you that there's some overlap,

but the two don't overlap. They serve totally different functions. And as I say, any employer or employee's agent who have appeared before the Labour Relations Board or requested the services of the branch within the department could quite well back up what I'm saying, is that they serve different functions and they're both necessary, and they've both been around for a long period of time.

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, all right, we see that there's a \$155 a day per diem for all the representatives here. But the Chair and the Vice-Chair, could you tell me what these people would be paid on a full-time basis, I would assume — Chair and Vice-Chair. Could you tell me what kind of salary and benefits they would have. And in fact when did the Chair, Beth Bilson, and the Vice-Chair, John Hobbs, both of Regina, when did they assume these positions and who did they replace?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — the Chair of the Labour Relations Board currently receives \$7,085 a month. As I said, she's on leave of absence from the College of Law in Saskatoon. She was appointed three years ago this coming June. She replaced Richard Hornung, who was the Chair of the Labour Relations Board at that time. The vice-chairperson of the board, John R. Hobbs, receives a salary of \$6,907 per month. He was put into that position in 1984. The person he replaced was a Graham Mitchell.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, there was a fellow that I thought worked with the Labour Relations Board, Mr. Dennis Ball. Can you tell me if he's . . . if he still plays a role with the board or when that role was finished?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — He was the Chair of the Board before Richard Hornung, and he is no longer associated with the Labour Relations Board. So he would have been there some time . . . some time more than three years ago.

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I just had a couple of questions that came to mind as a result of your last portfolio and your new portfolio. I was recently at the CAPP (Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers) meeting in Calgary, and as you know the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers are interested in developing the energy business in Canada, western Canada, and Saskatchewan.

And they were . . . they seemed to be concerned about your labour legislation, particularly when they look at pipelines and oil development and investment. And when they looked at The Trade Union Act and the Crown tendering policies, The Labour Standards Act, it was . . . they had a lot of questions. And I wondered if you in your other life, in your previous life, had thought about maybe informing those that are major investors in energy development, like pipeline development . . . SaskEnergy might want to build a pipeline. And obviously if you have a labour relations and union policy that tends to be labour only, particularly with the Crown tendering policies in some of your recent legislation, it's not particularly well received by those that might like to bid on that.

Have you given that any thought in terms of how you might explain it to those that would invest in energy here and in energy projects, given some of the more, if you will, strident labour legislation, pro-union or only-union legislation that's in the province?

And the second question related to that, do you know other jurisdictions in Canada that have been as, if you will, union only or pro-union when it comes to economic projects and economic development as you are now? I suppose you could find it in Ontario, maybe it's . . . Bob Rae has introduced some of that. Anybody else, or are you kind of leading in this area with your . . . some would say with your chin.

So two points: how do you reconcile your portfolio now with the one that you used to have — encouraging energy and pipeline development and all kinds of energy projects — and square that circle with the rather opposite view that you're taking now, certainly from the oil patch point of view, from energy, because they're not quite comfortable. And would you explain that to people that you normally used to visit with when you'd go to say, something like the CAPP conference?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well I haven't appeared in Calgary since the change in my portfolio, but I've certainly talked to many of the people I did business with as the minister of Energy and Mines and they've not expressed quite the same thing to me as what you express here today.

The reconciliation in my own mind, I have no problem with that whatsoever. This government has worked consistently to try and create a good climate in Saskatchewan, to develop our economy and to develop our residents of our province along with the economy, as the economy improves.

And we have no intention as a government of damaging our good relationship that we've had with the oil and gas industry. We have no intention of damaging the good relationship that we have with the working men and women of this province. And you put out a case that the two are diametrically opposed to each other.

I submit to you, member from Estevan, that the two are not opposed to each other. That as long as we provide a stable climate in Saskatchewan and show that there's some planning . . . the planning is evident in the balanced budget that we have before this Legislative Assembly today; the stability is demonstrated by the good quality of workforce that we do have in Saskatchewan.

(1645)

And work continues to increase in the oil and gas industry in this province. There'll be more pipeline work done, at least on the gas side, this year than ever before in the province of Saskatchewan. And I'm quite comfortable going into the same offices in Calgary that I went into over the past few years as I would if I went into those same offices today. I have no problem at all in reconciling the role I have now as to the role I

had before.

The Premier chose to appoint me as the Minister of Labour and I'm happy to be the best Minister of Labour I can be in the province of Saskatchewan. And I don't see that in any way opposing the position I had before; was to work with the oil and gas industry to develop that resource within the province.

And I think that the hon. member would serve the province much better if you would look at ways of telling people in Calgary that you know, that Saskatchewan is a good place in which to do business and invite them to enhance the business activities they have here. And maybe you and I could work on that as a bit of a plan for Saskatchewan so that not only the business side receives benefit, but the working men and women of this province receive a benefit as well.

So I give that to you as my answer to the question and the hypothesis that you make that somehow what we do in Saskatchewan in one case is bad for working people, and on the other case is bad for business. I don't take that view. I take the view as those being complementary. And I think that the role I had before serves me well within the ministry of Labour, not only from the business side but also from the working men and women of this province.

Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the energy world, as you know, Mr. Minister, certainly has been dominated by those that really support, if you will, a free enterprise approach. And the member from Swift Current might not believe that, but that's the case. In fact the NDP, if he wants to look at it, aren't doing that well in Alberta, not doing that well in Manitoba, aren't doing that well in B.C. (British Columbia), and aren't doing that well in Ontario.

So he knows that and he probably hates to hear the truth.

An Hon. Member: — How about in Saskatchewan?

Mr. Devine: — Well and they're starting to find out about the NDP in Saskatchewan. The truth about the NDP is that the former minister of Energy had some difficulty with co-generation projects. And the oil patch and the energy business are saying, well I wonder if he's going to take the same attitude into his Labour portfolio.

And what they want to know, and I'd be interested, Mr. Minister, you said that they support your labour legislation. I'd like to have any letters that you could table from the oil patch that support your labour legislation, whether it's The Labour Standards Act or The Trade Union Act or your Crown tendering policy or your workers' compensation. Could you come up with some letters that show that the oil patch in Saskatchewan or Calgary or major investors really support your labour legislation? And I'd like to see it because I'm just going to call you on that.

Number two, if in fact you're going to produce more pipelines and you're going to have people bidding on the pipelines,

would you describe what sort of bid you would accept. In other words, is it union only? Does it fall under your Crown tendering policies where your union-only legislation would apply? Because the oil patch would be very interested in knowing that. In other words, if you're going to build lots of pipelines and I thought I heard you say you were, what is the . . . how would you describe your policy in an NDP administration to the oil patch that might bid on that project?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well first off I didn't say that the oil and gas industry supported the labour legislation. What they support is the business climate, the environment, the working climate of this province.

And I think that one of the most destructive forces in Saskatchewan is you. You were when you were premier and you are today. You come in here and you string out a line of rhetoric. You sit in your seat and you laugh at the House of democracy in this province. You spread misinformation about what this government stands for and what this great province stands for.

Instead of coming here and laughing and tapping your fingers around, you should go away and go off to the private sector somewhere where you profess to have such great expertise, even though I don't even know any place where you've ever made a contribution to the private sector. Unless you consider your time at the university as being in the private sector.

And you come here and you try and make mockery of a government that provides a very stable business climate within this province — in fact I would say one of the most stable business climates certainly in the past decade, if not the past several decades. And it can be held up to testament in that the unemployment is lower, the budgets are balanced, there's a good business climate, working men and women have a chance to thrive in this province. You have people coming into the province, returning home, because there's a land of opportunity here; you have companies that are expanding their businesses in rural Saskatchewan; you have new companies coming in to do business in Saskatchewan.

And I think that you should be ashamed of yourself, trying to misconstrue the facts within this province. I don't know what you say to the oil and gas people in Calgary, but if it's the same thing that's said in this legislature, then I feel badly that you, as a former premier of this province, would go to Alberta and spread misinformation about this province. This province has one of the most stable workforces, one of the most stable business climates, of any province in Canada right now.

We may not be booming but we sure aren't busting as we were in the years that were destined under your government, where you racked up \$15 billion debts, perpetual deficit budgets, businesses that couldn't thrive in this province, an oil and gas industry even that were scared to do work here because they didn't know what you'd do next. They were tired, business was tired, working men and women were tired, of you making deals on the backs of cigarette packages with the cabinet colleagues

that you had that used to sit on this side of the House. I say, as a former premier, you should be ashamed of yourself for the way you conduct yourself.

If there was ever a destructive force in the province of Saskatchewan, it was you, sir. And maybe you should try and ask some questions that deal with the legislation and the estimates that we have before us here this afternoon.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, obviously the minister won't answer my question. I asked him quite specifically: if companies bid on pipeline construction, what are the rules and regulations if private sector companies bid on pipeline construction under your labour legislation, particularly with respect to Crown tendering policies and as it applies to labour and trade unions in the province of Saskatchewan?

People in Calgary and those that would invest in pipelines want to know. What you've given me, and I'll certainly send them, is a non-answer. You just got right into the politics and said, oh no, I just want to talk about politics.

Why don't you just describe to the oil patch what the rules are if they want to invest in pipeline construction in the province of Saskatchewan. They don't know. And what they do know is that they don't like what they've seen in changes to The Labour Standards Act, The Trade Union Act, the Crown tendering policy, workers' compensation. And they just want you to come clean and tell them the rules. Because the last time, you didn't.

The last time on the co-generation projects you said, here are the rules; send us your money; send us the projects. And your reputation is following you into the Labour portfolio. You've got some serious reputation problems.

That's why the Premier moved you out of there. He's put you in Labour, and the oil patch is saying, what is going on now? And your colleagues know that. It's very clear, Mr. Chairman, his colleagues know it. They say, well geez, they finally found him a portfolio where he couldn't do quite the damage. And yet everybody's watching your performance and saying, well would you tell us what the rules are so we can invest.

Give me the name of any energy companies that support your economic development strategy associated with labour. Don't leave out labour. You said they support the balance. But don't leave out labour; include labour. Give me one oil company, one gas company, one energy company, that supports NDP labour legislation that we're talking about here today.

Well obviously you can't, and you won't. So at least describe to me and to them what are the consequences of them bidding on and investing in pipeline development in the province of Saskatchewan. They need to know the rules.

I asked you very clearly and very specifically, and you avoided it. So I want to come back and ask you, as the members have said, one more time. And I'm going to keep asking until at least you can design something here that we could send them, or you

agree to send the energy businesses that would invest in pipeline development or energy construction or co-generation, just what in the world are the labour rules and regulations in the great province of Saskatchewan under the NDP administration.

I don't think there's another government in Canada that has rules anything like it. And those other jurisdictions in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario, and indeed Americans, are saying, where did this come from? Where did the ideas come from?

Did they come from Bob Rae? How's he doing these days? Well Bob Rae, he's kind of at the bottom of the barrel.

Did they come from B.C.? How's B.C. doing these days? Well B.C. is not that good politically for the NDP. Maybe it was the labour legislation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And the members opposite say, well tell us about Saskatchewan. And we're asking, and tell us about the labour legislation. Explain how the labour legislation is going to impact in the province of Saskatchewan when it comes to companies investing in bids for pipeline development and/or other projects.

Could you design a letter or a statement in this legislature that we could take to all those potential investors in the energy business in Saskatchewan that would describe the Saskatchewan labour legislation scene, particularly as it applies to the Crown tendering policies? And I would suspect, and maybe the minister sitting next to you over there could describe it — he's in charge of it now — how the labour legislation would apply to say TransGas. If indeed TransGas was going to build pipelines, could you describe how people would bid for that construction project under the umbrella of the new NDP labour legislation?

Now you haven't sent anybody in Calgary that I know of the results of your legislation. You certainly haven't sent them the results of your Crown tendering policies. And if that's the case, they'd be very interested in receiving it.

So it's very obvious, by you not answering my question, that you're ashamed of it. In the circles of investment that would come into Saskatchewan, even when I asked you pointedly, you say, well the NDP has a nice, broad economic environment here; but you wouldn't comment about labour.

Because in your last portfolio you pooh-poohed the labour legislation. And those in the private sectors knew that you were cuddling up and saying, oh well, we're open to the private sector and open to the private sector and open to free enterprise and all this stuff.

And then they said, well you didn't treat us all that well when it came to co-generation; maybe you didn't know what you were talking about. Now you got the Labour portfolio and you got them worried. They're worried. Because they thought, well maybe the Premier just gave you that portfolio because he didn't know what else to do with you, and that you would treat them with the same roughshod fashion as you did when you

were minister of Energy.

Now we're asking specifically — if you're the Minister of Labour — what's the policy for Alberta and American and other firms who want to come in and bid on Crown projects, TransGas projects, other energy projects, here in the province of Saskatchewan? What are the rules?

And if you haven't sent them those rules, then I'm going to ask you to table the lay of the land. What's the legislative environment that they're going to bid on? Is it similar to co-generation projects that you promoted in the past? How does it compare with other jurisdictions?

In other words, if they were bidding for a project in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, or Ontario, or in the United States, could you compare the labour legislation? And if you're so proud of your environment here, you just jump to your feet and say I'd be happy to compare it. Here is how an energy company would be received in the province of Saskatchewan if it bid on say TransGas pipeline projects.

Well, Mr. Minister, we want you to do that so in fact we can sell that and market it and send it to the jurisdictions around North America that are in the vicinity of Saskatchewan, so that they'll know the truth about what you've done. And the truth will obviously be interesting to those people who would want to spend probably tens of millions, sometimes even hundreds of millions, of dollars in the province of Saskatchewan to make sure that they can get a return on their investment.

Now a lot of them I suspect, would be non-union. If its non-union . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. Order, order. It now being 5 o'clock, the Committee of Finance will rise, report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:02 p.m.