

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again on behalf of the great citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

And the names on the petition, Mr. Speaker, the city of Regina and surrounding small communities. Thank you.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from all throughout southern Saskatchewan and Regina.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today to present petitions of names from people throughout Saskatchewan regarding the closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from throughout Saskatchewan, namely Regina and the Regina surrounding district.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are primarily from Regina and Weyburn.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well on behalf of citizens concerned about the Plains Health Centre in Regina. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the

Plains Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the people on this petition are from the community of Balcarres.

**Ms. Draude:** — I rise today to also present petitions of names from people throughout Saskatchewan regarding the closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider the closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed this petition are from Regina, from Yorkton, from Saltcoats, Churchbridge, and all over southern Saskatchewan as well.

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise too today to present a petition of names from people in southern Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre, and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider the closure of the Plains Health Centre.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the concerned citizens of Regina.

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre, and the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

And the people who have signed this petition are from Weyburn, Grenfell, and Regina.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that you Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, they are from Regina here; they're from Lestock; they're from a couple of reserves around the city. They are also from Gainsborough and from Carnduff and all from throughout Saskatchewan.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with my colleagues on the 28th day of the session to also bring petitions regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are mainly from the Lestock area, some from Lloydminster, Regina, and of course Regina Elphinstone constituency and Regina Albert South.

### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Monday next ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Economic Development: describe the services of SR Net, Saskatchewan Research Network; the expected disposition of the \$36,000 grant to this business through order in council no. 175/96; and who the anticipated clientele of the communications research network will be.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce today 11 young people from the 18th Black Panther Scout Troop. They've travelled all the way to Regina from Prince Albert, taking advantage of this Easter break. And they're here with their supervisors, Victor and Ruth Timm.

I'll have an opportunity to meet with them after question period and have a little chat, and I look forward to doing so. And I'd ask all members to welcome the 18th Black Panther Scout Troop from Prince Albert.

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

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, some guests in your gallery. Our guests today are some of the members of the Snowmobile Safety Committee, which was formed last year to provide the government with recommendations on means to improve snowmobile safety in the province of Saskatchewan.

Joining us today, and I would ask them to stand please: Chris Brewer, and Mrs. Brewer, president of the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association; Kim Becker of the Snowmobile Association and Canadian Red Cross; Bob Herbison of Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management; Don McMorris of Saskatchewan Safety Council; Walter McNabb of

the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Also accompanying them today are safety experts from the Department of Highways and Transportation who worked with the committee — Al Popoff and Dave Abbey.

The committee recommendations formed the core of our Bill to amend The Snowmobile Act which is before the House this session, Mr. Speaker. I would like the members of the Assembly to join with me in thanking our guests from the Snowmobile Safety Committee for their hard work on this project. Please welcome them to the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We would like to join with the government in welcoming the people that have been involved in constructing the new legislation for snowmobile safety. We think that it's very appropriate that you should come to the legislature and see how your work will turn into law. And we're happy that you are here and taking an interest, and we will be taking a very big interest in finding out what exactly is in the Bill and seeing how it can help the people of Saskatchewan.

So, thanks for coming and we're glad you're here.

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

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and members of the Assembly, a gentleman seated in your gallery who is a corrections employee with the Department of Justice, out of . . . from the constituency of Yorkton. Mr. Doug Raynes has been involved with the department for about 12 years. He's involved in leading a number of training seminars and sessions with employees within the corrections department. Mr. Raynes is also a very avid observer and critic of the operations of this House. I'm sure that he has more tape than we have in our camera section here of the legislature.

So I'd like to ask Mr. Raynes to stand and ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming Mr. Raynes to the Assembly this afternoon.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask for leave to introduce a notice of motion for first reading of a Bill.

Leave granted.

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Monday next move first reading of a Bill, An Act to enable Northern Municipalities to Name Airports within their boundaries. Short title, The Naming of Northern Municipal Airports Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Lac La Ronge Band Signs Financial Transfer Agreement**

**Hon. Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I attended the signing of a financial transfer agreement by the Lac La Ronge Indian Band. The Lac La Ronge Indian Band in my constituency, with over 6,000 members, is Saskatchewan's largest first nation with 18 reserves in the North.

The signing of this five-year financial transfer agreement with the federal government will greatly increase its control over how it spends its money. This is the third agreement of its kind signed in Saskatchewan. Like the other two, this one recognizes that each band is unique and is in the best position to make financial decisions based on the community's needs.

Chief Harry Cook said that this is the foundation on which to build their financial future, giving their leaders of the band both increased responsibility and higher accountability.

This agreement will allow the band to make more efficient and effective long-term management decisions in the areas that most directly affect them — services such as elementary and secondary education, social assistance, health care, infrastructure maintenance. As well, the band will have greater control over economic development and governance. Mr. Speaker, this agreement marks one more step towards first nations' management of their own destiny and with greater control comes greater accountability by first nations leaders and first nations people.

Let's all congratulate Chief Cook and his officials for reaching this historic agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Dalton Annual Curling Bonspiel**

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rural Saskatchewan is being eroded and over the years we've seen the demise of many communities.

Today I would like to mention the town of Dalton where the community spirit lives on even though the focal points of the store and the hall are long gone. Dalton celebrated its 25th Dalton Residents Only Curling Bonspiel this year at St. Front curling rink. Ninety-six curlers from the four western provinces and the Dalton district participated in this annual event.

It's held every year during the third weekend in February. This unique event has an interesting origin. When Bill Tennant, a Dalton pioneer, died, his estate received a small equity cheque from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. That equity cheque was used to start the first bonspiel.

In 1972, Bill's son, Ray Tennant, and district residents Donald Heden and Max Misfeldt, were appointed in life to look after the details of the annual event. Originally the bonspiel was open only to present and former residents of Dalton, but now it has been expanded to include direct descendants of former

residents.

This year, four curlers were honoured for curling in each of the past 25 bonspiels. During this year's bonspiel a special quilt containing the names of all 362 curlers who have participated in this bonspiel in the past 25 years was displayed by the local ladies who stitched it. Raffle tickets were sold on the quilt to the names of the people who were stitched on the quilt.

Mr. Speaker, I would like this Assembly to join in congratulating this group of individuals on keeping the spirit of Dalton district alive.

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

**South Saskatchewan Youth Orchestra**

**Ms. Lorje:** — Sunday was a very special day for over 60 young Saskatchewan musicians and their chaperons. The South Saskatchewan Youth Orchestra was chosen to be one of six special participants at the First Banff International Festival of Youth Orchestras.

They joined with youth orchestras from Dorset, England; Mirandela, Portugal; Springfield, Missouri; Kansas City; and Saskatoon. They were given special musical instruction and training from some of the finest performers and musical educators in North America over a weeklong event that culminated in a series of splendid orchestral concerts.

The people in the South Saskatchewan Youth Orchestra are very dedicated. They come to Regina weekly from places such as Swift Current and Moose Jaw to practice their musical skills. Their conductor, Alan Denike, who is also principal bassoon in the Regina Symphony Orchestra, has provided excellent direction to this group of talented and dedicated young musicians. It was clear to hear in their excellent concert on Easter Sunday in Banff. With music ranging in styles from Dvorak to Baker to Holst, their musicianship was superb. The highlight was a concerto by Boccherini featuring a solo performance by Blair Lofgren on cello. The audience gave him a well-deserved standing ovation.

I congratulate all members of the South Saskatchewan Youth Orchestra, their parents, and their conductor, for a sterling performance. I wish them even greater successes as they enter their 20th season. Well done.

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

**Provincial Festival of Plays**

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Humboldt Community Players on hosting the annual provincial festival of plays which is being held in Humboldt this week. I had the privilege of addressing theatre groups from throughout the province at the opening ceremonies last Sunday, and I also thoroughly enjoyed the first performance of the week given by the host group, the Humboldt Community Players.

While Humboldt can boast at being Saskatchewan's largest

town, this is the first time a smaller centre has hosted a major, full-length festival. What Humboldt may lack in size, it certainly made up in spirit and cooperation. Theatre groups from Saskatoon, Strasbourg, Moose Jaw, Milestone, the Battlefords, and Humboldt are performing and entertaining at Festival '96 this week in Humboldt. With 81 member-groups from across the province, we know that amateur drama is thriving.

Congratulations to the Humboldt Community Players and the chairperson of the host group, Maury Wrubleski.

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

### Housing Sales Up in Saskatchewan

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know from the movies, "If you build it, they will come." And if you sell it, they will move in. And this is exactly what has happened in Saskatchewan in today's housing market; both of these things.

The most recent indicators suggest that housing starts and housing sales are up considerably — a sure sign that our steadily growing population is confident about the economic prospects here in Saskatchewan.

In the province, housing starts are up as of the end of February by 35 per cent over last year. And sales of all homes in the first quarter are up by 30 per cent. An article in Tuesday's *Leader-Post* — which we know, Mr. Speaker, is our biggest provincial booster — pointed out that in Regina house sales for the first quarter have increased by the same 30 per cent. In real numbers, Mr. Speaker, 266 homes were bought, up from 220 this same time last year.

Mr. Speaker, people do not make a major financial commitment, and especially a major commitment which plants them in one place, unless they have some confidence. It seems evident to me, and I think to everyone here, that these housing numbers are good news in themselves, and are even better times that suggests to where our economy is going. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Increasing Violence in Society

**Mr. Belanger:** — I rise today to call attention to a very disturbing problem in our society today. Almost every day there are more incidents of violence reported in the news. One day it's a cab driver being robbed and beaten; perhaps it's the clerks in convenience stores or gas stations being threatened at knife point. And those are only incidents reported. We often don't hear about the children hiding their bruises from their fellow classmates because of the beating they got last night.

What is most distressing about acts of violence, Mr. Speaker, is that every single one of them is preventable. While no thing and no one can force another person to commit a violent act, study after study shows that crime and violence is more common amongst people with lower incomes. These stats clearly

demonstrate more reasons why there's a need to stimulate the proper social and economic development across all levels of society.

Both of these elements are required to fight the problem. Social and economic development must go hand in hand. People need the proper tools to climb out of this destructive cycle. In the meantime, we must protect the innocent and incarcerate the guilty. Thank you.

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

### Credit Unions Do Well

**Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've all heard that Canada's banks have done very well for themselves this year, and we have also heard that one of the ways they've maximized their profits is by eliminating services to some communities. The member from Thunder Creek in fact made a statement to that effect in this Assembly several days ago.

With that in mind, I believe that this Assembly should recognize the success of our own home-grown financial institution, the Saskatchewan credit union system. Our credit unions were formed by Saskatchewan people to meet their particular needs, and they have always had as a first principle of business, the good of their members and the communities.

As a former credit union manager myself, Mr. Speaker, I was extremely pleased to see Saskatchewan credit unions turning in a record-breaking year in 1995 — a tribute to their commitment to community and to the sound prairie business sense. And, Mr. Speaker, another sign that the Saskatchewan economy is hitting on all cylinders.

The credit unions pay tax at the same rate as any other business in Saskatchewan — 22 per cent on earnings under \$200,000 and close to 50 per cent on anything over that.

In 1995 Saskatchewan's 167 credit unions reached after-tax earnings of \$42.5 million. A record, Mr. Speaker. Total assets rose by 6 per cent to 5.7 billion.

Showing customer confidence in our economy, loans rose by 7 per cent; and demonstrating the soundness of the economy, the number of delinquent loans plunged.

As we used to say, if it's a good service and friendly advice you're looking for, you'll get it here. You can credit union on it.

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

### Cadet Band Concert

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last evening I had the pleasure, along with a number of other MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly), of attending the cadet band concert at the Centre of the Arts. And as you attended it as well, you can certainly attest to the fact that it was a tremendous presentation.

Cadets from all over western Canadian prairie provinces were involved in it. It was an extremely professional event. I must admit that when I went to it, I was expecting something along the lines of a high school calibre type band, and it was anything but. Extremely professional, jazz, big-band songs, bagpipe solos, many, many numbers. It was extremely well presented, very precisioned work. If you recall the young fellow twirling the sceptre, I couldn't help but think if he ever lost that, somebody in the crowd was going to be dead for sure.

But it was indeed one of the nicer events that I've attended as an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), and I think all members next year, when they put on a presentation like that, would be well advised to take it in.

So I would offer on behalf of myself and any of the other members that attended, and certainly this House, our congratulations to the Cadet Honour Band for their presentation last night. It was very enjoyable.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Health District Funding

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I received a call today from Nancy Tank, a registered nurse who is employed at the Radville health centre. She phoned me because of the fact that she and about 70 co-workers were informed during a staff meeting yesterday that they will not be receiving their regular pay cheque tomorrow because the South Central Health District has insufficient funds with which to pay them.

Mr. Speaker, I was informed that the Minister of Health has been made aware of this situation. Will he please now inform this House and the health care workers in Radville what action he's taking?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — There are many instances, Mr. Speaker, where information is presented by that member that is inaccurate, and I'm not going to recite all of them because we don't have sufficient time here in question period. But I want to say to the member that my office was advised by the South Central Health District this morning that funding to the centre in Radville is continuing; that there is going to be no problem with people that work at that centre being paid. That is the information I have from the health district. And I've found that information from the health districts tends to be somewhat more reliable than information that comes from that member, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the track record of the minister is the one that's a little questionable because he's apologized in this House before for being more than wrong.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain then why he has not communicated this to the 70 health care workers at the Radville health centre, who are waiting on pins and needles, I might add. We spoke with a nurse from this facility only minutes before

question period today, and at that point she did not know whether she was going to receive a pay cheque tomorrow, next week, or the week after that.

So will the minister explain when he intends to share this information with the health centre staff in Radville, and will he explain if other districts are experiencing the same kind of problems?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well the member says that I apologized to the House when I made an error, and I did do that, Mr. Speaker. And I might say that if we took the time to listen to the member apologize, if he ever would, when he made an error, we never would get to any other business in the House, Mr. Speaker. I have a list here of errors the member has made, and the Liberal Party has made, just in this session, but I won't go into it.

But I want to say to the House and to the member that he knows that the centre he's talking about receives its funding from the South Central Health District. It does not receive its funding directly from the Department of Health.

So the member says, am I communicating with the employees? Mr. Speaker, it's the responsibility of that health district to pay the employer of those employees. It's the responsibility of the health district and the employer to communicate with those employees. I have every confidence that they will be doing so — more confidence than I have in the information provided by the member.

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

**Mr. McPherson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about responsibility. You're the Minister of Health, getting a lot of money each and every year to make sure the citizens of this province receive proper health care, and now you've failed again.

Mr. Speaker, our caucus continuously calls on this government to prioritize its health care spending to address the needs of those who require medical care. However this does not mean that those who provide front-line care should not be paid. This case highlights the fact that our health districts are facing serious funding problems.

Will the minister explain what commitment he is willing to make today to ensure that health districts have sufficient funds to provide quality health care and appropriate funding to pay the salaries of nurses and front-line workers who provide these services?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — My advice to the people, Mr. Speaker, would be not to take too seriously what this members says. We had a motion in this Chamber a few weeks ago to say to the Liberal government, please don't cut health care spending by 35 per cent; please don't cut funding for health in Saskatchewan by about \$50 million. And that member refused

to vote in favour of that motion, Mr. Speaker.

So then what we did is, my colleagues on this side of the House said that for every dollar the Liberals were taking out of health care, we would put a dollar back in. And that member voted against that as well, Mr. Speaker.

So there isn't much that we can do to keep that member happy, Mr. Speaker. His job is to complain; that's what he'll do. He thinks part of his job is to spread fear among the population; that's what he'll do. But what we'll do, Mr. Speaker, is fund the health care system properly — something that that member and that party refuse to do.

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

### SaskTel Managers' Overtime Pay

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has given the people of Saskatchewan many reasons to be shocked by its spending decisions since June election. Using SaskTel as only one example, this government chose to hire Don Ching as the head of SaskTel at an annual salary of \$167,000. They also chose to retain the services of former president Fred Van Parys at the same amount. And, Mr. Speaker, now we hear the 650 managers who are working in place of the striking SaskTel employees are being paid \$50 for each hour of overtime they work.

Will the minister confirm that this fact is true?

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

**Hon. Mrs. Teichrob:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to answer that question. It is true that the 650 managers that have been deployed to centres around the province to keep the service going are getting their regular managers' pay for the regular hours they put in and they're getting \$50 an hour for overtime. And I think rather than carping about the cost of it, that the opposition should be thanking those managers for leaving their families, for going to other parts of the province to keep the service going, instead of harping about the cost.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Mr. Speaker, what the minister is telling us is just forget about the money. It's no problem; we'll pay them whatever they want. We got two presidents of SaskTel — that doesn't matter either.

Mr. Speaker, given the fact that managers are working 12-hour shifts, or four hours of overtime during each shift, this means each manager is being paid \$200 in overtime each day of the strike. The fact that all 650 managers are putting in these hours means the overtime bill — and I stress this is just the overtime bill — will total \$130,000 each day that this strike continues.

How does the minister and this government justify such an extravagant expense?

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

**Hon. Mrs. Teichrob:** — Mr. Speaker, it's passing strange that this is the same member who yesterday rose in this House and raised some concerns about the sustainability of the service. Which side is he on? Yesterday he wanted the service sustained. Now he complains that we're paying people who want to sustain the service. Make up your mind.

I think again that they're doing an excellent job. There's been minimal disruption — in fact it's going quite smoothly. And don't forget that there's two and a half million dollars a month that's not being paid out in salaries while the unionized workers are on strike. So the money to the managers who are keeping the service going is coming from that money. It's not an additional expense, Mr. Speaker.

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

### High-risk Offender Identification

**Mr. Osika:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, as much as this government wishes that the public's concerns over released pedophiles would just go away, today, according to the Regina *Leader-Post*, another twist has been thrown into this tale.

It appears obvious now that Saskatchewan is quickly becoming a safe haven for convicted pedophiles from those provinces that do warn people about sex offenders living in their area. In our province the police are handcuffed in their efforts to give similar warnings.

The minister tells us to wait a few months. Well the official opposition has introduced a Bill that would give police the freedom to better protect the public. Will the minister tell the people of Saskatchewan what immediate action he will take to ensure the safety of our children?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. We too agree that this is a serious problem in our province. We also realize that it has many implications. What we are doing is that I am meeting with Mr. Rock and Mr. Gray on Monday morning in Ottawa and this is one of the subjects that we are going to spend some time talking about.

The big issue that we have here is that you're dealing with people who have completed their sentence and you have to deal with the Criminal Code which is a federal Liberal responsibility. And we are trying to work with them to come up with a solution which deals with the whole country. The problem we have is that all jurisdictions need to work together, and that has to be done together with the federal Liberals, Mr. Rock and Mr. Gray.

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

**Mr. Osika:** — I thank the minister for his answer, Mr. Speaker.

Again, just to get some clarifications on a Bill that was proposed by the official opposition. We are being told by this government that a few months . . . we were told . . . the people of Saskatchewan are telling us that a few months is simply too long to wait before legislation by that government is proposed. Sooner or later this government has got to realize the rights of law-abiding citizens have to outweigh those of convicted criminals. While they serve their time and get out to continue their lives, their victims suffer for the rest of their lives.

Will this government commit today to pass the private members' Bill put forth by the opposition, or at least immediately introduce its own Bill to better protect citizens from those who prey on the most innocent in our society?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the second question. As I've stated in this Assembly before, that this is really not the place for this kind of a discussion. I know it grabs headlines for the members of the opposition, but it's very unfortunate that that's where they would take this discussion.

What we have is a situation where in Manitoba they have a protocol which we have been reviewing carefully. We have looked at the suggestions made by the opposition and we're examining that as well.

We're working closely with the police chiefs. I talked with Chief Owen Maguire yesterday afternoon. I'll be seeing him again in another hour. We are dealing with this problem, and we're trying to come up with a solution that is a Saskatchewan solution which will mesh in with a Canadian solution, which we will work together with the federal Liberals to accomplish.

But this is the type of thing that should not be discussed in this legislature in this format because what it does is it just creates fear in the community.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker. I have another question for the Minister of Justice as well. Mr. Minister, with all due respect, this is indeed the place to have this type of discussion.

Saskatoon police have now confirmed that two high-risk sex offenders, one of them a child molester who has refused treatment, have relocated from Manitoba to Saskatoon. He left Manitoba, they left Manitoba, to avoid the province's community notification protocol. That's the reason they left, Mr. Minister, to avoid it. They're coming here because there is no such process in place.

While you continue to drag your feet, more and more dangerous sex offenders are moving to Saskatchewan to take advantage of the fact that there is no law here in this province.

Mr. Minister, blaming it on the federal government just isn't going to wash with the parents of Saskatoon. Will you today commit to — as you said, you are going to be having

discussions with the police chief from Saskatoon — will you commit to today, Mr. Minister, to allowing the police in Saskatoon, the police chief, to do whatever he feels is necessary to address this situation in Saskatoon.

And if that includes a community notification process, will you allow for that this afternoon?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Leader of the Third Party for that question as well.

The whole situation is, in Saskatchewan, that it is possible. There's no law preventing the police from going ahead and releasing the information the way they did. I talked with Chief Maguire yesterday about this issue. He says it's a very difficult job for them to decide when to do this.

He has the same mechanism available, which he can use, which he will possibly use if that's what needs to be done here. But practically, it's not my role as Minister of Justice in Saskatchewan to be telling the local police to do this. What my role is, is to set out a policy which we can deal with in the whole province. We're doing that in conjunction with all of the appropriate people. And the kind of discussion, and the way the questions are asked here, does nothing to help solve the problem. Let's work together to solve the problem.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well, Mr. Minister, if you don't know what your role as Minister of Justice is, maybe we can help you out a little bit.

In Manitoba they put in place a protocol system. They put a protocol system in place to help with the situation, Mr. Minister . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. The House will come to order and let the Leader of the Third Party put his question.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the problem is here now. The people in Saskatoon, the police in Saskatoon, people all over this province, believes there needs to be a process put in place, a protocol put in place, right now. We can't wait any longer while you continue to drag your feet. We can't wait any longer while innocent people are being affected, right across this province. Are you going to just sit around and hope the person that is doing these kinds of things are just going to go away? Because that isn't realistic, Mr. Minister.

Let's formalize the process. You said that the police chief is prepared to do what is necessary. Well, Mr. Minister, we are prepared in this House as well. If you want leave to introduce a protocol this afternoon, we are prepared to give you that.

Mr. Minister, let's formalize the process. Are you prepared to do that this afternoon?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the further question about this matter. As I explained previously, I'm meeting with Mr. Rock and Mr. Gray in Ottawa on Monday. This is a part of the discussion that we're having. And basically what is going on in Saskatchewan is that we are working carefully with the chiefs of police, and with the people in the community, and we are coming up with the appropriate policy here.

I think the fallacy to what we are hearing from the members of the opposition is that this magic naming of the offender with some procedure is going to solve the problem. It's not going to solve the problem we have in our community. We need to work together to come up with a solution that will provide protection for our children and our families, and we need to do it in a Saskatchewan way. Thanks.

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

### SaskTel Managers' Overtime Pay

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister for SaskTel this morning. Madam Minister, we understand that you are paying SaskTel managers \$50 an hour for overtime that they are putting in during the current strike.

My first point, Madam Minister, is this: this seems to be a little bit outrageous for work that would normally and usually be done for probably less than half that amount of money. And my second point is that are these people not under contract and therefore required to do whatever job is necessary to get the job done?

Madam Minister, why are SaskTel managers being paid so much to fill in during a strike, which is something that I would think should be just a part of their normal job requirements?

Now will you confirm, Madam Minister, also, the numbers that the Liberals have put forward today and tell us how much, in your opinion, the overtime will be costing and how many hours will they actually be putting in during this strike?

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

**Hon. Mrs. Teichrob:** — Mr. Speaker, I can reconfirm for the member opposite the numbers that I spoke of in answer to the question recently — \$50 an hour is the overtime rate, which represents approximately time and a half for a manager's salary.

I think that rather than harping about the amount, the people of this province should be grateful to these 650 people, Mr. Speaker, who are working day and night all over this province, who left their homes and their families on short notice to provide service to the people of this province. I think we should be grateful for their contribution rather than critical.

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

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Madam

Minister, I hardly think that the word harping is appropriate here because what we are attempting to do is to offer you some solutions and some alternatives.

Now, Madam Minister, does this also then mean that once Don Ching finally shows up for work next week that he'll be getting an extra \$50 an hour to top off his \$167,000 of salary?

And, Madam Minister, rather than paying an additional \$50 an hour to a bunch of managers who are already making a pretty good salary, why didn't you simply hire some replacement workers? I'm sure that given Saskatchewan's dismal job climate, you could have found some people who are willing to work for a lot less than \$50 an hour. In fact I know a lot of farm families where I think both the husband and the wife would be quite happy to come into the city or into the towns and do this job for you for probably \$15 an hour.

Now, Madam Minister, have you considered hiring replacement workers? Now if you are having to train, as we understand, your managers to be able to do the work that is being done, would this have been a more cost-effective approach than paying managers an additional \$50 an hour? Simply hire people that want the work.

**Hon. Mrs. Teichrob:** — Mr. Speaker, the vision of the members opposite for the working people in this province may be a pale shadow of Alabama north. We do not subscribe to the hiring of replacement workers, Mr. Speaker. And I think that the current solution, where the management staff is maintaining the service for the people of Saskatchewan, is the best possible arrangement under the circumstances.

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

### Health Information Network

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Mr. Speaker, the Regina *Leader-Post* recently ran a news item about the development of a \$70 million health information network. Shortly after this item appeared, I received a copy of a report from Fisher and Associates, a computer consulting firm. This report was presented to the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations one year ago, and it highlights a number of concerns — concerns which the author feels have not yet been addressed. And I'd like to send a copy of this across to the minister, if I could.

This report indicates that the design phase of this project will cost about \$17 million, and points out that in the development of most information systems, the design costs generally represent about one-ninth of the total cost, which would push the cost of the project well beyond its intended \$70 million.

Will the minister confirm what, if any, measures will be taken to ensure that a cost overrun does not take place?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well a few minutes ago, Mr. Speaker, we had the member from Wood River confusing the Radville



health centre with a centre run solely by the Department of Health, and now we have this member talking about the Saskatchewan Health Information Network, which is not solely a project of the Department of Health but is a project of SAHO, which is the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, and the health districts, and Saskatchewan Health.

The member says that it's thought that \$70 million will be spent to develop a proposal. The advice I have, Mr. Speaker, is that \$70 million would be spent to both develop and implement the system over a four-year period. That is the information I have.

And this is not an initiative solely of the Department of Health. This is an initiative of the Department of Health and the health districts.

And working in partnership, they are examining whether we can provide better health to people, especially people in rural Saskatchewan, who can benefit from direct collaboration between physicians in rural areas and specialists in urban areas, which is something I would have thought that that member would want us to be looking at, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Mr. Speaker, it's all the same taxpayer's dollar and the minister can pass the buck all he wants.

Mr. Speaker, the letter I refer to also expresses concern that a system which will take a minimum of three and a half years to complete may be obsolete by the time it's implemented. When you realize the tremendous rate of change that's taking place in the information technology industry, will the minister explain how he and his government can justify such an expense when health care is suffering and in fact nurses and other care-givers are not being paid?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well there is change at a tremendous rate in the health care system, Mr. Speaker, something that the Liberal Party refuses to recognize on a day-to-day basis because they refuse to believe that there should be any change in the health care system.

But I say to that member that if we can implement, in cooperation with people in rural Saskatchewan as represented by SAHO and the health districts, a system whereby a person in rural Saskatchewan can have better service because there's instantaneous communication and technological advances in rural areas, communication between a physician in rural Saskatchewan and a specialist in urban areas, that's what we should be doing to enhance the care of people in rural Saskatchewan.

And I say to the Liberal Party, get with it, get on board, and let's start providing people in rural Saskatchewan with a kind of health care that they can have if we're prepared to move into the 21st century — something that I think that party has tremendous difficulty contemplating.

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

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Mr. Speaker, when we're speaking about a project that will cost a minimum of \$70 million, when we're speaking of a project that will cost a minimum of \$70 million to develop and implement — and possibly much more — there are obvious fiscal concerns that must be addressed, especially in light of hospital closures and the elimination of front-line health care workers.

Will the minister explain where the funds will come from for this system and what the impact will be on health district funding, as many districts are already encountering deficit situations?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well ultimately, Mr. Speaker, if we cooperate with the people of rural Saskatchewan and the health districts to improve communication between rural areas and urban areas, which is what we should be doing to enhance the treatment of people in rural Saskatchewan, the benefit for health districts will be probably savings of about \$5 million annually.

Because instead of having duplicate lab tests and X-rays and other services, the information concerning the lab tests done on a person previously in another centre would be available to the physician in the rural area. So the health districts and SAHO are very much in favour of exploring how we can enhance care for people in rural Saskatchewan.

And I think we should get onside with people in rural Saskatchewan and not be like the Liberal Party and stand in the way of any change that will enhance health care throughout the province.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### **Bill No. 67 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (Free Votes/"FREE")**

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (Free Votes/"FREE") be now introduced and read the first time.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — Question 67 is converted to motions for return (debatable).

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 53 — An Act to amend The Snowmobile Act**

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak on the second reading of The Snowmobile Amendment Act. This Bill makes two major changes to The Snowmobile Act. These amendments are a direct result of the alarming increase in snowmobile fatalities in the last two years.

Members will recall in 1994 and '95, 10 people died in snowmobile mishaps in our province. This is a terrible and needless waste and has caused suffering to many families.

I was very concerned about this tragic loss of life. As a result, members will recall that I established the Snowmobile Safety Committee in February of 1995 to look at ways of improving snowmobile safety in Saskatchewan. The Snowmobile Safety Committee worked hard to consult stakeholders and come up with recommendations to improve safety for snowmobiles and I would like to recognize their work.

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

**Hon. Mr. Renaud:** — We were able to put together a diverse group of individuals and organizations interested in snowmobile safety. Members of the committee included representatives from: the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association, the Canadian Red Cross, Saskatchewan Safety Council, the trappers association, snowmobile manufacturers, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, individual snowmobilers, and several government agencies including my department, Environment and Resource Management, SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), and the Highway Traffic Board.

The committee presented its report to me last July containing a number of recommendations to improve snowmobile safety. Two of the committee's major recommendations are contained in this Bill.

Before I mention these recommendations, I want to touch on the two other major suggestions from the committee which did not involve legislative changes. The committee recommended we provide two grants to the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association.

I am pleased to advise the House we have done this. I was happy to provide \$15,000 in grants for the updating of the operator training course and the certification of additional safety instructors. And SGI provided \$15,000 to support the association's recent public awareness campaign to promote snowmobile safety.

The committee recommended, and we have agreed, that persons under the age of 16 must complete a training course prior to operating a snowmobile on public property. To improve safety, a person operating a snowmobile on public property requires some degree of knowledge for safe operating behaviour. Snowmobiling requires the operator to understand the capabilities of machines which can now travel at very high speeds. Operators can learn how to take evasive action to avoid collisions.

Persons 16 years of age and over must have a valid driver's licence in order to operate a snowmobile on public property. Having a driver's licence does not automatically mean one knows how to operate a snowmobile, but it does demonstrate one has some knowledge of the rules of the road. Persons under the age of 16 should have to demonstrate an understanding of how to safely operate the machine, and understand basic safety rules. The Bill contains the amendment to make it mandatory for under-age operators to complete a training course.

The second committee recommendation, Mr. Speaker, deals with the wearing of safety helmets. I firmly believe in the use of snowmobile helmets. Protective headgear can save a life of a snowmobiler in a collision. This Bill makes the wearing of helmets mandatory in most situations. Other changes in the Bill are consequential to the major items I have discussed here.

I would be pleased to answer any questions in committee. I would like to express my thanks to the committee for their role in snowmobile safety, and I would like to express my thanks to the snowmobile association for their exceptional work in promoting snowmobile safety in the province of Saskatchewan.

I move second reading of The Snowmobile Amendment Act.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome this chance to speak on the proposed amendments to The Snowmobile Act. But first let me talk about some tragic incidents that happened in Saskatchewan earlier this year.

In late January, two men were killed when their snowmobile crashed into a side of a truck near Humboldt. The constable at the scene said the snowmobile was racing at a very high rate of speed when it broadsided a truck trying to cross the intersection. Witnesses said it appeared the snowmobile did not see the truck until it was too late. The men were killed instantly.

Less than two weeks after that incident, a 28-year-old Oxbow man died after two snowmobiles collided on the frozen Souris River. The second driver suffered serious life-threatening head injuries from this accident. Investigators said visibility was good, but speed and alcohol may have contributed to the accident. One investigator said snowmobile accidents are hard to re-create, so all they can really do is go on what they're told. The man killed in the incident was the seventh person to die in a snowmobile incident this winter.

Mr. Speaker, we are extremely concerned about these unnecessary deaths, and according to stats, we should be concerned. In 1995 in Saskatchewan alone, 10 people died in snowmobile accidents. According to the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association, our province used to average only one or two snowmobile deaths per winter. That was the old average. So that's an increase of 500 to 1,000 per cent.

But, Mr. Speaker, even one to two deaths per year is far too high. Obviously something needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that this Bill is the first step towards

fixing what has become a very frightening situation. Mr. Speaker, with our long, long winters, snowmobiling is a great recreational sport. From small-town poker derbies to family weekend trips, snowmobile is a key source of fun, particularly in rural Saskatchewan; that snowmobiles are also used in the day-to-day lives of our province. Farmers use them to check their land or livestock. Northern residents use them in fishing and trapping.

And when roads are impassable, snowmobiles can be an essential form of transportation. So in making any changes to the snowmobile legislation, we must remember that they'll have an impact of a large number of Saskatchewan people.

As we understand, the amendments put forward in this Bill were recommended by the Snowmobile Safety Committee. This committee includes members from the Canadian Red Cross, trappers, snowmobile manufacturers, police, aboriginal groups, government agencies, and the Saskatchewan Safety Council.

In a nutshell, the changes would: (a) make it mandatory for operators and passengers to wear helmets; (b) make it mandatory for people under the age of 16 to take a snowmobile safety course prior to operating a snowmobile on public property; and (c), phase in over five years a mandatory training course for people of all ages.

Exemptions would be allowed for operation on family property and for people who rely on snowmobiles for business purposes like fishing and trapping.

Mr. Speaker, we must come out on the side of safety. We don't want the sad stats to get even worse, so we support what we feel is a general motive underlying this Bill — the need to improve safety awareness. Hopefully, increased education will help prevent needless deaths.

According to an article in the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* from March 27, the changes are being welcomed by some snowmobilers. The president of the Prince Albert Snow Runners Club said:

It's about time these changes were made before more people get killed. Helmets should always be worn as far as I'm concerned. I think most snowmobilers will embrace the new rules and abide by them.

(1430)

Mr. Speaker, this is good news. A Bill that is widely supported by snowmobile users should be passed into legislation.

Having said that, however, I think we must look at the overall picture before we fully back this Bill. For example, some of our rural and northern constituents have raised some concern about access and the cost of the proposed safety course. I think the members opposite sometimes forget that not everyone lives close to a major centre.

Yes, there is life outside of the cities. In this case, some of the very people who rely on snowmobiles most probably live very

far away from any major centre. Does this mean the government will send safety instructors out to anyone who wants to take the course, all on taxpayers' dollars? I think we probably all agree that this would be impractical.

So does that mean that all people living in remote areas would have to cover the costs of getting to an approved course? That may not mean anything to city people here, but believe me, there could be a huge out-of-pocket expense for some of our residents. Is it fair to put the financial burden on them. This is something we must look at before this Bill is passed.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we believe this Bill has merit. We want to see the number of tragic deaths from snowmobile accidents drop. But we're still in the midst of consultations with groups from throughout the province. We want to be sure that we can handle this issue in the best possible manner for everyone.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask that this Bill be passed to Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

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

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

**Bill No. 50 — An Act to amend The Personal Property Security Act, 1993 and to make a consequential amendment**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Personal Property Security Amendment Act, 1996.

The members of this Assembly will recall that The Personal Property Security Act, 1993 was passed by this legislature at the recommendation of the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan. That Act implemented third generation personal property security legislation to facilitate a fully automated personal property registry. It also provided for substantially uniform personal property security legislation in the four western provinces.

Since its proclamation on April 1, 1995, the new legislation has been well received by the legal and business communities. Remote access registration by law firms and corporations is now widely in use. Saskatchewan residents benefit from the increased speed and clarity this initiative provides.

However, certain technical drafting issues have been raised within the legal community. To this point, these concerns have not resulted in adverse or unintended results in the courts. Nevertheless it is appropriate that they be addressed by this amending legislation to ensure that the original policy intent of these provisions can be achieved.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to simple drafting and housekeeping amendments, this Bill provides clarification with respect to the following issues. It eliminates an unintended distinction between crops and growing crops. This avoids confusion in the terminology used under the Act with respect to the provision of

secured lending for farmers.

It amends the transition provisions. Under the new Act, the two-year re-registration rule regarding inventory interests that have arisen under an agreement prior to April 1, 1995 no longer applies in determining any priority disputes that would otherwise be governed under the old Act. This change will prevent unnecessary re-registration of these prior interests every two years simply to maintain priority.

It expands the definition of lease to include a residential tenancy so leases under The Land Titles Act and leases under The Residential Tenancies Act can be treated in the same way.

It amends the definition of financing statement to include financing statements registered under the old Act that are still valid. While this was the policy intent of the original provisions, some concern has been raised as to whether this has been stated clearly enough in the existing Act.

Mr. Speaker, out of an abundance of caution, this last amendment with respect to the definition of a financing statement is to be made retroactive in effect to April 1, 1995, the proclamation date of the original Bill. This is a necessary step to avoid unintended results in the transition between financing statements registered under the old Act and security agreements completed under the new Act on the basis of those financing statements. Again, while no specific problems have yet arisen with respect to this issue, it is appropriate that this step be taken to provide certainty.

Saskatchewan has, since 1978, been viewed as a leader in the development and implementation of personal property security legislation. These technical amendments ensure that the benefits of certainty and simplicity in the thousands of commercial transactions conducted under this legislation will continue unhindered.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Personal Property Security Act, 1993 and to make a consequential amendment.

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

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to address this Bill today. We are still consulting with several interest groups on the proposed amendments, so today I would like to touch on our interpretation of the Bill at this time and what it means to people of our province.

As I understand, the current Personal Property Security Act is unclear, particularly in terms of definitions and terminology. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not even talking about standard legalese here. Even lawyers we have talked to admit the wording is unclear, and lawyers are supposedly trained to interpret legal mumbo-jumbo. So obviously something should be done to clarify the wording and to ensure the Act is interpreted properly.

On the surface at least, the proposed amendment provides a

clear and more consistent meaning of the provisions. Mr. Speaker, I believe that most of the confusion with The Personal Property Security Act relates to the special interest of crops. I know it also deals with trees, animals, minerals, and other chattel, but to a large extent the proposed amendments address confusion over crops. And in looking back at the original Act I can see where the confusion started.

This Bill will attempt to distinguish between crops which are attached to land and products . . . production of crops. As it stands now, the generic use of the word crops is causing confusion and making the laws difficult to interpret. By distinguishing between the land and the produce it should be easier to determine time limits on security interests.

This Bill will also help the courts decide when a security interest has priority, and more importantly, it clearly outlines the situations where the security interest is subordinate. This Bill also clarifies lease arrangements under The Land Titles Act. The proposed amendment confirms that rentals arising from residential tenancies are subject to the lease arrangements under The Land Titles Act.

Mr. Speaker, I've tried to sum up some of the amendments to Bill 17 as we see it. It's a technical Bill and I can't pretend to fully understand the in's and out's of it.

But as elected representatives, we must determine how these changes will affect the everyday lives of people in our constituencies. We are a rural caucus, Mr. Speaker, and any laws dealing with crops and land could have a significant impact on many of our constituents.

If this Bill is truly nothing more than clarification of words, then we will not object to the changes. And if the amendments will help our constituents, we will fully support the changes.

But as it stands right now, we have not had enough input from the people that this will affect. We would like more time to look at the intricacies of this Bill before any decision is made.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we ask the Assembly to adjourn debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 51 — An Act to amend The Film and Video Classification Act**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 1996.

This Bill is intended to position Saskatchewan to be able to fully explore other opportunities for the delivery of film and video classification services.

Provinces are looking at ways to cooperate, reduce expenditures, and provide a better public service. They are also looking to reduce the regulatory burden on business, and the area of classifying films and videos provides such an

opportunity.

Film classification boards were established in most provinces many years ago. Films were classified based on community standards, which could vary between jurisdictions. In actual fact there are few differences between provinces in terms of classifications assigned to films, even though the names given to classifications may vary. A national film and video classification system would be more effective in this environment.

Common classification categories under a national system would also facilitate the development of a national public information program. This would enable consumers to make more informed choices about the films and videos they want to review.

In an effort to facilitate the development of such a system, we have been engaged in discussions with other provinces and the film and video industry. Mr. Speaker, this industry has advocated for a national classification system for some time and is very supportive of our efforts in this direction.

Although the current Act provides for the establishment of joint classification boards, the systems now being developed may not be joint boards as envisioned by the Act. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the Act must be amended to give us more options. We may have different arrangements for the classification of various products. Amendments will enable Saskatchewan to adopt classification decisions made elsewhere or to delegate this function to another classification body.

Currently the Act does not provide for this range of options. At present, the Saskatchewan board cannot refuse to approve a film for classification based on the decision of another classification board without actually viewing the film. This requirement does not allow joint boards or delegated classification systems to operate efficiently. The amendments I am introducing will address this problem.

Mr. Minister, Saskatchewan will retain responsibility for classification appeals. The legislation's appeal provisions will be expanded to include appeal of administrative decisions such as registration. In addition, amendments are being made to better protect the rights of the owner of a film that has been seized under the Act where no charges have been laid or the person is found not to be in violation of the Act. In either of these situations, the film will be returned to the owner.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will provide the flexibility for Saskatchewan to move forward to a more effective and efficient system of film and video classification. It also accommodates the move to the goal of a national system of classification. This will be an improvement for the general public as well as the film and video industry.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Film and Video Classification Act.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last weekend many people went to the movies or watched rentals at home. Movies

carry us back to days long past or movies transport us forward to worlds beyond our imaginations.

We may even see a reflection of ourselves on the big or the little screen. Some are Academy quality; others have few redeeming qualities. Regardless, the influence on all of us by the film industry cannot be denied.

Until now, films have all fallen under the scrutiny of the Saskatchewan Film Classification Board. However, with the amendments recommended to the Act by the Justice department, they would seem to be farming out the responsibility for policing the film industry to an authority outside of our province.

Under these amendments, the board may refuse to classify a film or edit a film based on the decision of a governing body with no particular connection within Saskatchewan. The board need not view the film to refuse to classify it or to determine what classification it may be given. The board need not view the film to decide how it should be edited.

In this Bill, even authority over advertising standards is given over to some outside body. These amendments give Saskatchewan the ability to join joint classification boards. As a result, it will not be the Saskatchewan Film Classification Board that will either approve or classify the film for distribution.

The Bill also expands on the requirements for registration with the board, and the board's ability to refuse to accept an application.

The Bill, if amended, will allow the board to charge a registration fee. If the board is going to forfeit its responsibility to oversee the film industry in Saskatchewan, why on earth should they have the right to charge a fee, to refuse registration, or to seize a film?

Mr. Speaker, at this time there are more questions than answers on this Bill and therefore I must request that debate on this Bill be adjourned.

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

Debate adjourned.

(1445)

**Bill No. 57 — An Act to repeal  
The Police Pension (Saskatoon) Funding Act**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move the second reading of The Police Pension (Saskatoon) Funding Repeal Act. This Bill repeals The Police Pension (Saskatoon) Funding Act at the request of the pension plan members and the city of Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners. This will allow the provisions of The Pension Benefits Act, 1992 to govern this plan in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this issue arose when the Saskatoon police pension plan board of trustees recently requested amendments

to the legislation for their plan with respect to employee and employer contributions. In examining that request, officials in the Department of Justice recognized that both the current provisions of their legislation and the requested changes could be addressed in The Pension Benefits Act, 1992.

When The Police Pension (Saskatoon) Funding Act was introduced, I am advised that the flexibility they sought with respect to planned payments was not possible under the general pension benefits legislation of the day. In discussions between the Superintendent of Pensions and the plan board members, it became apparent that separate legislation for their plan was no longer required as The Pension Benefits Act, 1992, is now able to accommodate their needs.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon police pension plan will remain subject to the supervision of the Superintendent of Pensions upon repeal of this legislation. It is simply no longer necessary or appropriate that the pension plan be administered through legislation other than The Pension Benefits Act, 1992. This repeal legislation is supported by the board of trustees for the Saskatoon police pension plan, the city of Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners, the Saskatoon City Police Association, as well as by the Superintendent of Pensions.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to repeal The Police Pension (Saskatoon) Funding Act.

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously this Bill, The Police Pension (Saskatoon) Funding Repeal Act, is a fairly straightforward piece of legislation. In fact it contains just three very short clauses. So I won't take much of the members' time today by talking at length about Bill 57.

I guess my caucus chose me to speak on this particular piece of legislation because they figured I had the most experience with police pensions. And of course, the Premier was very kind enough to point this out a couple of weeks back in this House.

As a matter of fact, some policemen are prompted in different ways to leave the force that they serve. In my case, I recall, as my young daughter was growing up, one day I overheard her talking to a friend and her friend asked her, what does your daddy do. And she said, nothing; he's a policeman. So I considered at that time that perhaps I should request a pension.

Nevertheless, without wanting to sound self-serving here, the pensions received by all police officers, be they in municipal services or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, are probably the most deserved in our country. And governments should take great care in ensuring these pension funds are in the strongest position possible for those men and women who served their communities by protecting the public.

But I would remind him once again however, that unlike his political colleagues who have gone on to bigger rewards, and unlike the huge golden handshakes awaiting the Premier when he is retired by the voters in three or four years, policemen do not always receive their full pension right after they leave their job.

While I usually breathe a heavy sigh of relief when the Bills I'm assigned to speak to are brief and to the point, perhaps this one is a little too brief and to the point. I understand the issue here is very straightforward but I think we will be asking for some minor clarifications in committee. It's certainly not to delay this Bill, since it appears to be a basic housekeeping matter, but just to get some needed clarification on the current pension plan and the current legislation.

The law that will be repealed by Bill 57, I understand, was passed by this House to give Saskatoon policemen more flexibility in dealing with their pension plan in a method they'd prefer. Since this was done, however, I understand The Pension Benefits Act passed by this House back in 1992 took care in addressing the issues that caused this inflexibility within the Saskatoon police pension plan.

But, Mr. Speaker, without wanting to hold up the proceedings of this House unnecessarily, our caucus is prepared to pass Bill 57 on to committee.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

#### **Bill No. 58 — An Act to amend The Land Titles Act and to make a consequential amendment**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Land Titles Amendment Act, 1996. There are a number of amendments proposed in this Bill, Mr. Speaker. All of them will assist in streamlining the land titles system and making it more accessible to Saskatchewan people.

In the current Act, Indian bands must establish a private corporation to purchase land. Individual bands cannot purchase land in the band name. Bands have told us that the current process is too expensive and too cumbersome. They have asked us to change this provision and we have done that with this Act. Indian bands under the federal Indian Act will be able to buy and register land using the formally recognized band name.

Including Indian bands as part of the land titles and registration system will not affect the status of existing reserve lands. Land registered by Indian bands in their name will not acquire reserve status. It will be treated the same as land registered by individuals and corporations.

Mr. Speaker, this Act also amends the process for lapsing caveats against land. In Saskatchewan, individuals who claim an interest in land can register caveats in the land titles system against that land. By registering the caveat, the individual effectively makes all dealing with the land, including a transfer, subject to the claim in the caveat.

Owners or people with an interest in the land who want to remove these claims use a procedure called lapsing a caveat. Under the present Act, the onus is on the person seeking to lapse the caveat to provide proper notification to the caveator of an intent to lapse the caveat. The Land Titles Office must be provided with evidence that the proper procedure was followed. Requiring individuals to follow strict and unfamiliar procedures

is often inefficient and frustrating for Land Titles staff and clients.

Today's Bill eliminates these problems by amending the existing lapsing procedure. Under this legislation, parties will be required to advise the registrar of their request to lapse a caveat. The Land Titles Office will then assume responsibility for notifying caveat holders. This will reduce errors encountered by the offices as well as streamline the process and provide more information for the public.

Mr. Speaker, the remaining administrative amendments proposed in this Act will further simplify and streamline the land titles system. The Act will be amended to allow land titles offices to accept notarial copies of powers of attorney and death certificates. It will also allow them to make and accept certified copies of death certificates. These changes will be particularly welcomed by the public and will remove some practical problems associated with filing original documents.

We are proposing removing land titles forms from the actual Act and placing them in the regulations, where they can be easily amended. The land titles system is actively pursuing opportunities to improve and streamline service. This will allow for greater flexibility to modify forms and meet the changing needs of the land titles system and its users.

We are also making amendments to eliminate the establishment of qualifications for registrars and deputy registrars in the Act. The current provisions setting out qualifications are unique and outdated. They require that these officers be lawyers or have served a minimum amount of time within the land titles system. Removal of the qualifications from the Act is consistent with modern management practices and will allow us to set qualifications for our employees that meet the changing needs of the system.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we are also proposing minor technical changes to correct references to other federal and provincial legislation in the current Act.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, The Land Titles Amendment Act, 1996 will permit Indian bands to own land in their own name, modify the caveat lapsing procedure, allow land titles offices to accept and retain copies rather than originals of certain documents, remove land titles forms from the Act, and provide for new forms in the regulations; delete the qualifications for registrars and deputy registrars; and correct references to provincial and federal legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to Amend the Land Titles Act.

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not to be one who's accused of always being critical of the members opposite, I would like to point out that some of the amendments that are outlined in The Land Titles Amendment Act are long overdue. Anyone who's had to get items processed through Land Titles knows how confusing and time-consuming it can be.

Of course these changes will not make land titles processing perfect, but it should help simplify these details somewhat. We have heard complaints from many people about how frustrating the land titles process can be. People who do not have a legal background are often bogged down and discouraged by the multi-layers of paperwork required to get some land titles items processed.

One of the positive changes being made with this new Act affects the removal of caveats. Caveats do serve a useful purpose for people with claims against property, but under the present land titles system the person wanting to lift the caveat on property is also responsible for notifying the caveator. So I do think that's positive that there's changes being made.

If the parties involved do not have a legal background, this aspect of the land titles system can be extremely confusing and the end result is often frustration on behalf of the parties involved and on behalf of the staff. We hope this change to the Act will cut down on the number of mistakes made in processing items.

(1500)

These amendments should rectify some other problem areas in the land titles system including the current requirement for original documents. People making land titles applications are forced to submit original documents under current legislation. Sometimes lay people, and yes, even lawyers do at times have problems locating original documents and it can be time-consuming.

The amendments proposed in this Bill should correct this problem by allowing the registrars to accept some true copies of some documents.

The current Land Titles Act also contains some detailed qualifications for registrars and deputy registrars. But the amendments proposed in this Act will remove those qualifications, and this does leave us some cause for concern. Some of the other changes outlined in this Bill should update the land titles process.

The current Land Titles Act makes references to some other government laws that no longer exist or which now have new titles. The changes should eliminate some confusion over titles of different legislation.

Bill 58 would also significantly change the way the Indian bands buy land. In the present land titles system, the Indian bands must be registered as a corporation in order to buy the land. Well the changes will permit the bands to skip this step and buy land directly, and while we support the intent behind this amendment, we do have a few concerns about potential outcome of these changes as well.

It's for this reason and some of the other problems that I discussed that we would like more time to review the Bill. Therefore at this time we wish to adjourn debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Bill No. 13 — An Act to amend  
The Department of Social Services Act****Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — I would ask the minister to please introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. With me today is Mr. Neil Yeates, associate deputy minister; Phil Walsh, executive director of income security branch; and Richard Hazel, executive director of family and youth. They'll be here for the three Bills that we're dealing with.

Clause 1 agreed to.

**Clause 2**

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I at this point would just like to ask the minister, what is the cited purpose for this amendment? Like, why did you deem the amendment was needed?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, the amendment, as I indicated in the second reading speech, will be to provide consistency between The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and The Department of Social Services Act. This will enable the department staff to use the provisions of the freedom of information Act to release some information on some clients in some circumstances.

And I want to again assure members of the House this will in no way — no way — compromise the confidentiality provisions which are so important when we're dealing with clients in Social Services.

**Ms. Julé:** — Well I'm not sure if that answers my next question here, but I'll put it to you anyway. What is intended to replace the broad confidentiality provision that's set out in section 18(1) — 18.1.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Essentially, Mr. Chair, what we will be doing in the department is now operating under The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. That will be the framework under which we operate.

**Ms. Julé:** — Okay. Will this amendment effect any change in The Adoption Act?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, the officials remind me that both The Adoption Act and The Child and Family Services Act are exempted and so there won't be any effect.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you. I was just wondering about that, because as the — you know, the repealing of subsection 18(1) dealing with secrecy — the words indicate to me that there may be some consent given to . . . for free and open access to identifying information, and I'm just wondering if that's the case at all. And if it is, of course we would want it to be much

clearer than it is here.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, thank you, member, for that concern, and of course we had that same concern in putting this amendment forward. I would want to reassure the member that no, in terms of adoption or child and family services, they are exempt and in fact working under the freedom of information Act. We're now working under a piece of legislation that is considerably updated and newer than the old Department of Social Services Act, which, I think, was crafted in the 1970s.

So I appreciate your concern and we believe those concerns are addressed.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Bill No. 14 — An Act to amend  
The Saskatchewan Income Plan Act****Clause 1**

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to make . . . I made note that section 10.1 deals with the minister entering into an agreement with the Government of Canada to administer the benefits to seniors under the Saskatchewan Income Plan. I have a question for the minister and the question is: what will it cost Saskatchewan taxpayers to turn the system over to the federal government?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, what we would hope actually as a result of this amendment — and it is actually just this technical amendment that needs to be done that prevents us from linking with the federal government, to provide these benefits together with the federal government — we do expect that in working with the federal government we will eventually be in fact saving some money, because what we're doing is in fact instead of having two mailings, we'll be having one mailing.

At this point, because we're in some negotiations with the federal government, I can't give you an exact amount on how much that will be. I hope a year from now, having passed this and having worked the detail out with the federal government, that I'd be able to return to the House and give you a very clear answer on how much the administrative savings have been. But we do expect savings.

**Ms. Julé:** — Have you done any sort of projected estimate savings, or what the savings might be to the province in the long run by turning this system of benefit payments over to the federal government?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — We have done some preliminary work there, Mr. Chair, but I'd hesitate to start with some real numbers until we know, until we can enter in. I think we've been prevented from detailed negotiations because of this little glitch in the legislation. Once we can get this cleared up, then I



think we can get into some real negotiations. And even during that period I think we could have more specific information. Today I'm really without specific information.

**Ms. Julé:** — Okay. Is there a plan in place to distribute information to the seniors who will be affected by this program change, and if so, who will pay for the information service? Will the federal government pay for that or the province of Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — I think, Mr. Chair, as we approach the date of when this would come into effect, we would see it as our responsibility to clearly inform the seniors of the province of the new format. But I want to re-emphasize again that this doesn't represent any reduction in the programing or the monies that will be available to Saskatchewan seniors. It'll be the same money. But we'll tag with the federal support so they receive one cheque instead of two.

And I think my experience, remembering the time when we used to receive two bills for various utilities, when we combined that there was some appreciation about that. I think we can combine this kind of administrative work together with the federal government. I think that'll be appreciated. But as I said earlier, we will be certain to notify the seniors and I think we'd see that as our responsibility. Again, we'll partner with the federal government.

**Ms. Draude:** — Is there going to be a reduction in staff in Saskatchewan — the people in the government here that are carrying out this program right now, will there be less?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, we do expect administrative savings. However while we're crafting this new delivery mechanism for seniors' income supplement, we're also crafting, as you know, mechanisms towards a child benefit for our province and a working income supplement. And it may in fact be the case that some of those people who now are engaged in doing some of the work around this program will be shifted in their responsibilities to do work around some of the delivery of new programs. So we don't see it as causing a reduction in numbers. It may create some change in responsibilities within the department.

**Ms. Draude:** — The other question I have for you is, is there going to be some way that the seniors here in Saskatchewan will be able to talk to a representative in Saskatchewan, you know, a phone number that's available so that they will be able to feel like there's a contact available to them?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Absolutely, Mr. Chair, absolutely. We'll continue with our 1-800 number. We'll continue with all of our office services across the province, and of course every MLA office is also available to the seniors of our province. This is simply a matter of delivering the money in one cheque, but the program continues and all the services that are with the program and all the access that seniors have to the department and to government will continue as today if not improved.

**Ms. Draude:** — The other question I have then — the information that's gone out, and I guess one of the main reasons

why the seniors might call you is if they didn't get a cheque, if the amount had changed. Is their file going to be as readily available to you then as it is now so that you can answer any questions they may have?

(1515)

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Yes, Mr. Chair. There'll be no change in our ability to access information. As you may know, these . . . the seniors income plan now is based on the federal records. So it's simply on the basis of your federal support that this plan kicks in, so we're already linked in that way. This will just simplify with one cheque. But all of the . . . certainly all of the availability to records and files will be just the same as they are today.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just kind of wondering if, in your government's mind, if there is the savings that will come from the federal government providing distribution of the cheques, whether the savings from that will be taken and put back into seniors' concerns, programs, in one way or the other in this province.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — As the member knows, it's hard to take a dollar here and track it through the process of government. We work from a General Revenue Fund and then we work through departmental budgets overall.

But we would hope . . . Certainly in this budget it's been demonstrated that we've done some re-arranging of funding to maintain the funding to programs for seniors and for others that we are responsible for in the department. And so it would certainly be my hope that any administrative savings here would remain to be utilized for programing within the department.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Minister, how many people are affected by this program in terms of seniors? Do all seniors receive this supplement? And . . . what are we looking . . .

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, I don't have the exact number, but it's about 20,000 seniors across the province will be in receipt of the Saskatchewan Income Plan — about 20,000.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Twenty thousand out of what group? Like is this a 10th?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Twenty thousand of about 120,000 seniors province wide.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Just one question, or a couple, rather. The move here is specifically just to save administration dollars. The 20,000 that you've spoken about will not see in any way, shape, or form a decrease of their annual allocation as a result of this new system coming in place. Can you categorically say no to that?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — I will categorically say, Mr. Chair — and it's a good question — categorically say there will be no change in the level of benefits. This is simply the mechanism by which the benefit is delivered.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Has there been any concerns expressed or any consultations undertaken with any of the seniors' groups in relation to this change in the fact that you're only getting one cheque?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — There has not been, Mr. Chair, formal consultations, that I could document a meeting established to discuss this issue. But I certainly have raised this issue with seniors' groups in my quiet conversations with them and they've indicated to me that if it produces administrative efficiencies, they're very happy to support it.

I've also had an informal conversation with the federal minister and there seems to be a welcoming support at the federal level to do this in partnership. So I think, overall, I've not found anyone who resists the notion.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Would you consider the option of discussing, either through an interpreter or through an interview or through some other means of communications, with people in the northern part of Saskatchewan that may have difficulty reading and writing and understanding English?

As you're probably aware, we do have a number of elders in northern Saskatchewan, and of the 20,000 you mention, I imagine that a huge number of them are from northern Saskatchewan, and they live on limited income, and their English isn't all that great. Are you undertaking any special projects or any special efforts to educate them in this regard because many of them do not understand English?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, I very much appreciate the member's suggestion. At this point, we're still early; like, the program change will not occur for some time because of the need to do this legislation and then work the details with the federal government. But I very much appreciate the member's suggestion — that byway of communication — particularly people in the North or others who may have language barrier or even some literacy questions.

I'm also reminded by many of the seniors that when we do provide information to seniors that we should do it in a print style with a print big enough that you can read. That happens even for some of us who are not getting to be senior; we should have that.

But I really . . . I do appreciate the member's suggestion. I think we'll want to perhaps chat with him further about the most effective ways, and it may be through the use of translators in some communities or printed materials in the appropriate languages. At present, we do not have a plan in place, but I think, particularly based on what you've raised today, we'll be sure to give that consideration as we move towards the program change.

**Mr. Belanger:** — The other question I have is in relation to — again going back to the northern communities — especially the far northern communities at Camsell Portage, Uranium City, Stony Rapids, Fond-du-Lac, Black Lake, Wollaston post; the costs are quite high in terms of food prices and the likes. Is there any special provisions in this whole system to

accommodate for some of those isolation factors, in terms of cost, when considering the application and the income of elders?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chairman, in regard to the program affected by this Bill, the Saskatchewan Income Plan, the answer is no. There is no . . . this is a standard benefit across the province to elders and seniors. It is based upon the old age pension and the GIS (guaranteed income supplement) supplement from the federal government. If a senior is in receipt of those payments, then the Saskatchewan Income Plan will automatically kick in. But there is no differentiation in the Saskatchewan Income Plan to our geography or cost of living. It is a standard benefit, province-wide.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Do you feel that perhaps there should be some consideration, especially the fact that there is some food price differences, and I stress, huge differences?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — The issue of the cost of living, and therefore an individual's needs to maintain basic lifestyle, we try and deal with through our social assistance program, through the SAP (Saskatchewan Assistance Plan) program. And in that program there is the northern . . . through that program there is the northern food allowance. In this program, which is the Saskatchewan Income Plan, it is a flat benefit, standard benefit, provided to seniors across the province. We're trying to deal with those issues that you raise, important issues, through the other programing.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Okay, one last question. Through some glitch in the system, that perhaps there was an overpayment of some sort, you know, through your branch, how will you go about collecting the overpayment from some of these elders? If there was a glitch in the system, how would you usually collect overpayments?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, my officials tell me that it would be extremely rare that there would be a situation of an overpayment or an inappropriate payment with the Saskatchewan Income Plan, with the SIP benefit. You understand that the SIP benefit is paid when a senior in our province qualifies for both the old age assistance and the guaranteed income supplement from the federal government.

When one has done the application paperwork to receive the guaranteed income supplement, then the Saskatchewan Income Plan just kicks in automatically. So the only circumstances we can think of where the plan would be paying out inappropriately is perhaps if someone has died and there has not been notification through the federal process. There may be that circumstance. Or I guess if a senior's income level dramatically changed and they no longer qualified for the GIS and didn't report that. But our officials here today think that would be an extremely rare situation.

**Mr. Belanger:** — You mentioned savings in reference to, you know, this new system. And I would suggest that perhaps some of the savings that you do generate as a result of this new system being put in place, that you take into consideration the special circumstances of the northern elderly people. Many of

them are living in substandard houses. Housing is a major problem. High food prices are also another major problem.

And because we have a lack of housing, many of the seniors in northern Saskatchewan automatically assume the responsibilities of some of their grandchildren. They raise many of their grandchildren. They live in extended families. So really they're raising families, in many cases, living in substandard houses, with very low income.

So would your department be in a particular position to look at the high costs in the North; the poor housing associated with the elders; the fact that they raise a lot of their grandchildren; in relation to the allocation to some of these potential savings?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, I think the member draws to our attention that the issues in the North and affecting the income level and lifestyles of people living in the North are not the purview indeed of one department, but many departments of government and in fact our community generally.

He is, I think, very accurate when he says some of the most significant issues perhaps are housing issues in the North. There are related health issues. There is the cost of food in the North and the geography.

I think it is important to note, Mr. Chair, that it is precisely for this reason that our government has now created a ministry to deal with northern issues in whole, and I'll be working certainly with that minister and with other ministers affected to look at the broad, all of the broad, issues that we need to face.

To his very specific question, those savings, which will not be huge amounts of dollars as a result of this small change, but any saving that we can achieve on the administration side I'm anxious that we achieve, because hopefully then we can turn that dollar into a programing dollar that will serve the needs of Saskatchewan people.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Bill No. 15 — An Act to amend  
The Child and Family Services Act**

**Clause 1**

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, I fully recognize the purpose of this amendment. The purpose is to provide adequate legal protection for people who report their honest and reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection, and I support that purpose. The concern I have with this Bill is whether clause 2 is the best way to provide that protection.

I have a particular concern with clause 2 as I said, sub-clause (3.3). That's the sub-clause which provides that if an application for leave to commence an action to prove a false

allegation of child abuse fails, then the court may award court's costs against the applicant.

That may be a good rule, but it provides for only one set of circumstances. If the application for leave to commence the action is successful, then I think there should be an equivalent provision stating that the court may award costs in favour of the applicant and against the respondent.

This could be done either at the close of the application or at the close of the action. I will be moving an amendment to clause 2 (3.3) for that purpose.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, I'm wondering if the member could clarify for us. Does she intend to move that amendment and . . . I'm sorry, I didn't quite understand the intent of her amendment. We're certainly willing to look at it, but if she could perhaps give us a little more of her intention with the amendment.

**Ms. Julé:** — I guess in looking at clause 2, Mr. Chairman, as I indicated in my remarks concerning the general intent of the Bill, I wish to move an amendment to sub-clause 3.3 of clause 2 of this Bill. I have provided the Clerk with six signed copies of the amendment that I wish to propose, and I would ask that you distribute the copies of my amendment to the members of this committee so that they can follow along with my proposal.

(1530)

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, perhaps with the member's indulgence, what we might do by way of proceeding, if we could take some time to give some study to the member's amendment. We're certainly not rejecting it out of hand. If we could take some time — and I understand it's the opposition's desire that we should come back to this Bill on a future day in any event. If perhaps then we could just adjourn discussion today, we'll have the officials take some time with the amendment and then we can come back to it after having given it some thought.

**The Chair:** — I want to remind the committee that the member from Humboldt has not moved the amendment yet. She has simply supplied the amendment for discussion and so forth. So it has not been moved yet.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Perhaps by way of proceeding, I believe the member from Moosomin may have some questions about the Bill and we could maybe work with those questions, and then the member from Humboldt may wish to move the amendment, and then we can adjourn to a future date.

**The Chair:** — Yes, that's agreeable.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, as you recall yesterday we had a bit of a debate in the Assembly on a question that I had raised, and I mentioned the fact that children are the most vulnerable in our society and protecting them should be a priority of all governments and all adults. In fact your government's final report to the Government of Saskatchewan regarding new century — *MAKING CHOICES*

survey — child protection is the number three priority, falling only behind health services and education. In fact this happens to rank above job creation in the survey that you had conducted. And so we would support any measures that you would bring forward to protect Saskatchewan children from neglect and abuse.

However, Mr. Minister, you stated in your second reading speech that every person who has reasonable grounds to believe a person, or that a child is in need of protection, must report this to a police officer or to a child protection worker — and I'm going from *Hansard*. I'm wondering, does this mean, Mr. Minister, if a person wilfully does not report such suspected abuse that action could be taken against them? What specifically were you talking about when you made your second . . . or gave your second reading speech in that regard?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, yes, every citizen of our province, adult citizen of our province, has obligation under law, if they are aware of an abusive situation, to report that situation. That is the law of our province.

**Mr. Toth:** — So what you're basically saying, Mr. Minister, if I was — and let me phrase this — if I suspected that maybe there was an abusive situation, but I wasn't totally sure and I didn't report it, and then maybe down the road something came about, I could be legally held responsible for having not reported that. Because I guess what I'm trying to say is, if someone suspects something but they don't really have the evidence to substantiate it, are they going to be held accountable later on?

I think before anyone would go to any person and suggest that maybe there's a wrongdoing, they should have some legitimate information. Because I don't think, Mr. Minister, we want to be putting innocent individuals at risk over something they may have suspected which down the road may actually have taken place, but they weren't aware of at the time.

**The Chair:** — Why is the member on her feet?

**Ms. Murrell:** — Leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Ms. Murrell:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the west gallery, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have 52 cadets, chaperons, commanding officers Captain Chris LaClare, Lieutenant Anne Pidwerbeski, and Lieutenant Michael Curtis. And I would like the Assembly to please make them welcome. We'll be meeting afterwards in room 218. I look forward to meeting with you all.

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

**Hon. Mr. Anguish:** — I'd like leave to as well welcome the guests, Mr. Chairman.

Leave granted.

**Hon. Mr. Anguish:** — I'd like to welcome the cadets and the officers and the chaperons that are here with the 43rd Air Cadet Squadron, I believe it is. It's a great pleasure to have the cadets come from time to time and visit the legislature to see how the democratic process works in Saskatchewan. As flawed as it may be sometimes, it's still the best system that we have for having representation of people within the British parliamentary system.

How times have changed. I remember the five years I spent in Air Cadets, we were never allowed to go anywhere without being in our uniforms. But it's nice to see you casual today and I hope you enjoy your trip here to the legislature and have a safe trip back home. I regret I won't be joining you at 4 o'clock with the MLA from Cut Knife-Battleford or Battleford-Cut Knife, I have to perform some duties here in the House today, but I wish you all the very best and ask the members to welcome you here.

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

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

#### Bill No. 15 (continued)

#### Clause 1

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, perhaps I can just . . . I can share with the member from Moosomin the exact wording of the Act and the responsibility to report. It reads, in The Child and Family Services Act, section 12 number 1:

Subject to subsections (2) and (3), every person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection shall report the information to an officer or peace officer.

And so I think the operative words here would be the "person who has reasonable grounds to believe". It would, I think, have to be something more than suspicions, but some reasonable ground to believe that there was an abusive relationship. If in fact those reasonable grounds existed in your mind and you did not report, then you could at the end of the day, I think, be liable for prosecution. Now I'd also want to make it clear it's certainly rare that such prosecutions have been followed. There's certainly not a . . . there's certainly not prosecutions being sought regularly on this basis. But the way the law stands is that if you have reasonable grounds you should — you must — report.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. First of all welcome to the cadets as well and I trust they had the privilege of being at the Centre last night and enjoying that terrific show. It was certainly something that was worth participating in. So welcome to the Legislative Assembly today.

Mr. Minister, coming back to our question here, I guess the concern I have is the fact that I think . . . and I'm not exactly sure if I would consider that part of the Act as being clear enough. I think if when you talk about reasonable grounds, unfortunately while we're trying to protect children or abused

individuals — and there's no doubt in my mind that we need to do everything we can — but at the same time I think we must be careful that we've got a clear set of guidelines whereby individuals don't just use this peace of legislation or an abusive situation to, if you will, or the ability to create an abusive situation or create the argument for it, just to get back at some individual that they may be angry at for a situation that may have evolved, whether it was a parent reprimanding a child for mistakes they had made or for disobedience, or even in a situation in schools where teachers face instances where students can come back at them and make accusations that may not be totally true.

But unfortunately it seems that sometimes we jump to conclusions before we take the appropriate action to make sure that we're really following up on it.

And I want to just make sure that we've got at least a clear understanding of what it really means so that we don't put people in the situation where they are forced to defend their innocence because of overzealous social workers, or even policemen trying to implement what they believe is an appropriate law.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — I think, Mr. Chair, it will be also helpful when we look at The Child and Family Services Act, under the section of child protection. When we talk about a child who is in need of protection, we're here certainly not talking about frivolous issues, but just for instance:

A child is in need of protection where:

- (a) as a result of action or omission by the child's parent:
  - (i) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer physical harm;
  - (ii) (if) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer a serious impairment of mental or emotional functioning;

And on and on. These are like various serious circumstances.

Now I accept the member's point that there is a certain risk here. However I think if we are going to err on any side of this delicate equation, we should err always on the side of safety for the child.

The matter of defining reasonable grounds, of course, is a matter that would be determined and defined within the court setting. From my point of view, I think those words, reasonable grounds, are about as precise as we could find in the English language to describe what we hope to be the reality.

**Mr. Toth:** — Well, Mr. Minister, what actions would be taken by let's say a social worker, and what provisions have you brought forward or instilled in the Bill? If an accusation is made by an individual, and whether it's through a social worker or even through a policeman, whereby they would do some background research before they would even, if you will, step in and say lay charge, so that we aren't indeed bringing people before the courts.

And the reason I say that, Mr. Minister . . . and you mentioned about the fact that maybe it were better to err on the part of caution, and to charge a person, and then go through the court process. The facts are, if a person is charged, if it comes into the court system, and at the end of the day if that person is found totally innocent, that person has still been smeared by society simply because of the court process and because of a charge being laid. And there is no way for that individual to indeed show beyond a shadow of a doubt that they were innocent of the charge being laid.

So what I'm saying, Mr. Minister, is while we need to work to find ways of protecting children and abused, I guess, spouses — I'll use the word because it may be one or the other — we need to be careful that as well we're not maliciously charging people. And that's the area I think we need to make sure that we're careful of, that we are indeed protecting the innocent amongst us.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, I want to say to the member, absolutely. And he should be reassured that before a charge is ever laid, there is a long period and a thorough period of investigation.

And perhaps just for the information of the member, my officials tell me that, for instance here in the Regina region on a monthly basis, there may well be between 6 and 700 phone calls, reports. Of those 6 and 700, after initial assessment, perhaps only 10 per cent of them are deemed to be appropriate and call for further investigation. Of the 10 per cent that will be further investigated, there will be a long process of working with families and working with the children before any charges would be laid.

And so it is a very, very careful process. And part of that careful process is in fact to ensure that any malicious reporting is caught real early.

(1545)

**Mr. Toth:** — I thank you, Mr. Minister. And, Mr. Minister, don't get me wrong. I am certainly in support of anything whereby a child or anyone who is in an abusive situation is . . . that we offer protection, at the same time making sure that we do not falsely accuse individuals and then force them into an element where they're forced to then pay for and cover the costs of proving their innocence.

And in our system today, unfortunately I think so many people get caught in a situation where I think the law has come to the point that it's easier to lay a charge and force a person to prove their innocence rather than to make sure that the evidence is there to show that a person has been guilty.

So we need to be careful on that side while at the same time protecting a situation where there is an abuse because . . . And I guess when you look at it, the one thing I would also ask, when you're reviewing a situation where an accusation has been brought forward or a suggestion has been brought forward, while I'm not saying we should remove people from the home or just walk in and, say, physically remove a person, what steps

are taken, while you're reviewing a report, what steps are taken to make sure that indeed there is protection, if it appears that this suggestion is legitimate, to make sure that that person is protected before you make any final charges or any real charges against a suspect?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, I want to assure the member that the process is thorough, that if there is a reported incident of abuse there will be an investigation, and through that process of investigation it will be determined if there is in fact a child protection issue here that needs to be further pursued. If that is determined, then there is sincere efforts to work with the family, work with the care-givers, to resolve the circumstances. And in many cases those circumstances can be resolved and the family can be held intact if it safe to do so.

The department will only access the courts if it cannot absolutely ensure the safety of the child and cannot find resolution of that safety issue by any other means. So there is a very careful and relatively long process.

I'm not sure I would accept the member's observation that we may have gone too far to the other extreme. I think we're trying to achieve a balance and I think there is a pretty fair balance in guaranteeing the responsibility that we have to protect children against the concern, that is appropriate, that there may be malicious reporting.

To come back to the very focus of this Bill, it will in fact strengthen the protection of those who do report so that any action taken against them would only be taken after a decision by the Court of Queen's Bench.

So we are, I would argue, attempting to find that appropriate balance. But again, I think from my point of view, if we have to err on any side of this delicate balance, it would be to err on the side of protection of children.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Minister, you must admit that some of the questions and concerns I'm raising have evolved back and go back to some direct areas where I've been called because of the fact that Social Services moving in. In one situation where they moved right into a school and removed a child, the child didn't know what was happening. The parents were frantic when the bus didn't stop and their child didn't get off the bus. And I found that very alarming at the time, that there was no contact.

And at the end of the day, I think we were able to resolve it by the department itself finally sitting down with the parents and kind of working over and going through the . . . This goes back four or five years ago. And we didn't end up . . . it was a situation that didn't end up before the courts, which was fortunate.

But I think we need to make sure that there is at least some consultation process goes in, and that while we're protecting children that parents are not left in the lurch and all of a sudden trying to figure out what has happened to that child if the department personnel comes in because of a suggestion from an individual that there may be some abuse taking place in the home.

So those are some of the reasons I raise that point, and I'm just bringing that to your attention as well to make sure that we're indeed in this legislation addressing the real abuse out there and at least, at the same, time trying to protect people from the malicious attack that may come against them.

What happens to an individual wrongly accused of abuse and what recourses do they have, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — I guess in any circumstance where we are wrongly accused, we all have our access then to the courts to pursue.

**Mr. Toth:** — The unfortunate part, and I come back to that one other statement. If a person is wrongly accused and if you end up in the courts, Mr. Minister, and it's splashed across the front pages that a person has been accused, even if you're proven innocent at the end of the day — let's say it's six or eight months down the road before you finally get your day in court — there's so much personal harm that has taken place. And it's hard to rebuild that even if the courts say you're totally innocent, if that can be . . . that factor from how society views you can be taken away.

So I think it's certainly imperative, Mr. Minister, that we indeed have strong leading facts so we don't . . . try and avert any wrong accusations.

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, have there been many cases in this province where individuals have been falsely accused and have ended up before the courts to prove their innocence, or do you have any numbers in regards to that?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, I want to remind the member, we're here talking about the family, the child and family services. This is the child protection. We're not here talking about the criminal court system; we're here talking about a child and family services and the protection of children, so we wouldn't have, I think, access to numbers of those who may have ended up in the courts on false accusations.

I want to restate to the member that before any action is taken by the department in terms of an apprehension of a child or intervention into a family situation that a very careful investigation is conducted and efforts are made as best as possible to work with family to find other resolutions before any apprehension will occur.

On occasion, there will have to be apprehensions. We are trying to ensure that when it reaches that stage that that apprehension is done in a very sensitive manner. And I know we've had discussion about the circumstances you raised earlier that occurred some years ago. And we want to avoid those kind of situations.

But there will be on occasion those situations where, for the protection of the child, an apprehension will have to occur. But we'd want it to happen in the most sensitive of all possible ways.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Minister, under this Bill in regard to this

piece of legislation, what steps or what avenues of protection are offered to individuals who would bring forward legitimate accusations of neglect or abuse? Because it would seem to me that if a . . . I think if a person came with a suggestion or with a feeling that there is an abusive situation that may be taking place in the neighbourhood, that person probably would not want to have their identity revealed.

Is it something along the lines of, like, a TIP (turn in poachers) program, or that avenue, that this piece of legislation is offering so that people are protected and therefore may feel a little freer in coming forward and offering this information?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, when a report is provided to the department, if the reporter wishes to remain anonymous, we respect that and we don't make those names public.

And I also would remind the member that it's very, very rarely that any of the issues that are dealt through The Child and Family Services Act, and the court hearings there, become the subject of any media coverage. It's only in the rarest of circumstances that would occur. But in terms of reporting, if confidentiality is desired, and anonymity, we respect that.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Minister, one final question at this point. How are other provinces dealing with similar pieces of legislation? Are there provinces that have similar legislation before them and is the legislation that we have here today similar to what other jurisdictions have followed?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, I think each province will have its own provisions to protect those people who report. We are here, through this small amendment, endeavouring to strengthen the provisions of protection that we have in Saskatchewan for those who will report abusive situations.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Chairman, are you saying, Mr. Minister, that you're not aware of what other provinces have done in regards to this specific piece of legislation?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, I don't have here the statutes of the 10 provinces and two territories of Canada. Each province will have its own Act and wording within that Act to protect those who will report abuse.

What we're trying to do is add one small but important change to this Act to further strengthen the protection of those who report. Each province will have their own protections. There's no doubt about that.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was working on some papers here as you were talking to the member from Moosomin, Mr. Minister, so I would just like to ask you again, if you would, what prompted the amendment to this Act in the first place?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — I think there will be one, or maybe several — not a large a number, but several — specific cases which have suggested that we should have this amendment. But it's clearly based, I think, on something much more

fundamental that I'm sure we agree on and that's the need to have appropriate legislation to protect the children of our province.

And we believe that by strengthening the protection of those who have cause to report, we are in fact protecting the children of our province. That's the fundamental goal here. Now there have been, the department tells me, some cases where this would certainly be an appropriate amendment. There are cases, of course, which I can't discuss publicly.

But it's based on something much more fundamental, and that's, I think, our common goal — to protect the children of Saskatchewan.

**Ms. Julé:** — Do you know, Mr. Minister, if there are a number of cases before the court where malicious reports have taken place and it's causing a problem? I mean, is that part of why this amendment is happening?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Just to be clear with the member from Humboldt, Mr. Chair. No, it's sort of the opposite here. What we're trying to do is protect those who have made real reports, verifiable reports, and not malicious reports. We're trying to protect those who have brought forward real reports of abusive situations.

**Hon. Mr. Anguish:** — I move that we rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again, Mr. Chairman.

The committee reported progress.

(1600)

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 13 — An Act to amend The Department of Social Services Act

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

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

#### Bill No. 14 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Income Plan Act

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

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

### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

#### General Revenue Fund Social Services Vote 36

**The Chair:** — I would ask the Minister to please introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With us today to assist in our deliberations are Mr. Con Hnatiuk, deputy minister of Social Services; Mr. Neil Yeates, associate deputy minister; Mr. Phil Walsh, executive director of income security branch; Mr. Richard Hazel, executive director of family and youth; and Mr. Bob Wihlidal, director of budget and management branch.

### Item 1

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too would like to welcome the officials that are here today with the Minister of Social Services and I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss with you the focus of the provincial government with regards to the direction that it will be taking as we head into the 21st century.

With an increase in the number of people living in poverty and mounting social concerns and serious problems in the North, I am pleased to have this chance to discuss the budget for Social Services with the minister and his officials that are here with us today.

I would like to begin by asking for a brief overview of the changes that have been occurring within the Department of Social Services over the last year or so. And I would like to ask the minister to give a brief explanation of the direction in which the department is heading as this government moves through its second term in office.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, I thank the member for her question. I don't want to spend a great deal of time in response even though I could, I think, given that opening. Let me say, generally, that I know I share with the member and all members and, I believe, with the general public of Saskatchewan a deep concern for the issues that this department is called upon to address.

This department is called upon to address the issues of poverty and low income needs across our province — East, West, North to South, from our largest urban centres to our smallest communities, each with their own set of challenges.

This department is charged with responsibility around many of the issues that affect Saskatchewan's children — those many children in our province who are today living in poverty; the children in our province who need the protection of the public; the children in our province who have found themselves in difficulty with the law. This department has the responsibility for adoption services across the province.

It is a department very much focused on human service, on service to people, and that is the central focus of the Department of Social Service — providing services to people and with people.

If you ask of new directions, I think I would remind you again of the significant new direction that we've set out, in terms of the delivery of social assistance, in the redesigned paper that has been discussed very widely in the province, and those discussions will continue through the course of this year and be

refined into programs which we hope we can begin next year. Programs which, we hope, through redesigning the way we deliver resources to those in need will in fact assist those in need to secure independence. To move individuals who may now be dependent on the public purse to a circumstance of independence for we believe that that dignity is an important dignity.

I personally am motivated towards the redesign of Social Services and some of the tasks that our department takes on by a number of factors, one of them being the incidence of child poverty. That, I believe, is an incident and a circumstance that no one of us in this House or in this province can be happy with, and that together with our creative abilities, we must find ways to improve the lot of Saskatchewan children for we're not only dealing with this generation, but we're dealing with future generations.

And so in terms of new directions of the department and new emphasis, clearly the redesign of how we provide to those who need, our neighbours in need, is a prime motivation and a prime focus.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm going to continue our discussion today by asking some questions about some more general aspects of the Department of Social Services. Now it's my understanding that the Minister of Social Services has the authority to provide money through an order in council to any organizations, agencies, etc., which he deems fit to receive the funding.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you: is the money that is used for these kind of grants or contributions through an order in council, is that money extracted from within the \$524 million budget or is it above and beyond the Department of Social Services budget?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, all of the monies that will be provided to non-government organizations, community-based organizations through granting and programs of the department are included in the budgetary number that's represented in the blue book.

So in the 500-plus million dollars, all of the money that's expended by the department is included. All of the grants by OC (order in council) must be included in that number. If they're not, then I would have to return to cabinet for special warrants. So I have to operate . . . the department must operate within that allocated budget amount, and it's divided for you in the blue book.

**Ms. Julé:** — Just a little more clarification on that, I guess, for me. I ask you to bear with me because I'm new at this. I understand that anything under \$10,000 that you can give a grant for as such without an order in council. So is that the money — anything under \$10,000 that's included in the \$524 million? Or what about anything over the \$10,000? Is that also included in that \$524 million?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, every dollar that the Department of Social Services expends, or that I am responsible



for the expenditure of, is included in the \$524 million. I have no ability to grant monies beyond those amounts. Within that amount we must provide all of the social assistance and all of the funding to third parties and otherwise. It must come out of that global amount.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. How can you determine what's going to be asked of you within the next year, then, in order to try to keep those sums within your estimates? How do you come up with that?

There might be unforeseen circumstances that you may have to deal with that would require you to give out great sums of money possibly. And one of those circumstances is the growing number of people in poverty and food banks and so on. So how can you know exactly how much is going to be asked and how can you possibly keep it within that budget estimate?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Well the member puts her finger right on the great challenge of budgeting and providing public services and operating government. The member will likely know that the budgetary process is not a process that happens over days or weeks but happens over many, many months. And I mean, it won't be long before we need to really start planning again for next . . . for the following fiscal years' budget.

When we're trying to assess the needs, those assessments will be done based on historical patterns of utilization and programing. They'll be based on ongoing consultations, regular consultations, with the variety of non-governmental organizations that provide services. They're assessed and estimated by our network of regional offices around the province. All of that input is brought together and we submit to the legislature exactly what it is called — the estimate. The estimate of what we will require to provide appropriate services.

Now the fact of the matter is, these estimates will not be based on requests. The requests for funding will always exceed our ability to meet the requests. So the estimates are not sort of just based on what people will request, but on our assessment of what we can appropriately provide as best we are able and then appropriately allocate it to where we believe the needs will be met.

And so it's not a easy process for any government. It's a long-term process, and it's a process that we try as best as we are able to do, in consultation with actual service providers.

(1615)

**Ms. Julé:** — Okay. Thank you. So in the *Estimates* you have stated what you used in the last fiscal year. And so am I to take it then that the total amount of money that you used for issuing grants of over \$10,000 in the last fiscal year coupled with everything else you needed to do within the last fiscal year came to 500 and . . . like the amount down there, whatever — 524 million? So that was it? Okay.

I'm not sure if you have this in front of you, Mr. Minister, but I was just wondering where the monies were used. I need some

idea of instances where you used or issued grants of over \$10,000. What kind of organizations or what kind of needs would there be out there for this?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, there are many who will receive funding in excess of \$10,000. If I may speak generally of the kinds of organizations that would receive large amounts of money would be the Family Service Bureau, some of the welfare advocacy groups.

An example, which would be well above the \$10,000, would be the department's funding of group homes across the province through community living. The member will know that at the end of the fiscal year when the *Public Accounts* are published every grant provided by the department, every dollar expended by government is recorded and to whom it has gone and its exact amount.

We'd be pleased to provide . . . we can provide to the member the list of funded agencies and the amounts across the province if she would be interested.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. So you were saying that the total amount of money issued by order in council you can't tell me basically today? Like I'm just wondering how much was issued in total by order in council last year?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — It's hard to separate . . . just to the member, it's a little difficult to separate out orders in council from that which we fund through contracts. Like all the orders in council are public. I mean the information is publicly . . . But if you want totals, I guess we'd have to do the math. We can give you a total. Perhaps we can do it in a matter of minutes here — not in minutes, the deputy tells me, not in minutes. It will take until tomorrow.

If maybe in our next estimate, or I can provide it in written form, the exact total of amount. But it will be very close, if you look to the *Estimates* book, it will be very close to the amount that was budgeted. We can give you to the penny, but it will be close.

Now some of the monies are expended through orders in council. But the order in council, on the vast majority of cases, is a planned budgetary expense. We plan what we intend to do. Some of them will be done through order in council. Some of the expenditures are through contractual arrangements that we've made. So not all of the third-party funding goes through order in council. Some goes through contractual arrangement. But we can certainly give you a precise total of how much was spent in the last fiscal year. It will be relatively close to the number you see in the *Estimates* book.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would be very pleased if I could get that written down for me and presented to me. Within the next few days would be fine. And I appreciate your doing that. Thank you.

I just have some more general questions. Where in this budget is the money to meet your government's sort of promise to eliminate child poverty? And I know that's a broad question,

but I don't see a set-out program or sum of money to be allocated directly to the elimination of child poverty in our province. Can you sort of point out where that money will be coming from and how it will be used?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — I think the member would want to look not only at the budget of Social Services but across government to see how we together, hopefully, can begin to deal with child poverty in our province. You can almost take the entire budget of Social Services, almost its entire budget, and relate it in one way or another to poverty issues, although not entirely. But certainly all of the monies that we expend through the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan are monies directed to low income, poor people in our province.

But the notion of addressing child poverty is not just something that will be done through income supports, although those are very important — not to deny that. And as we look towards creating a Saskatchewan child benefit, you will see, hopefully in the next estimate layout, that reflected as a specific, targeted benefit for children.

But to deal with child poverty, we would also want to look across the piece. Much of the work that's being done through the Department of Health, for instance, in health care and preventative health care, is related to poverty issues.

You will find through some work being done in Municipal Government around housing issues; those too relate to child poverty. When we talk in this House and debate strengthening and building the economy, providing jobs — some of the debate that happened earlier this week — those are related to dealing with issues of low income and poverty.

So I couldn't today point in the budget of the Social Services department and say this money only is targeted to deal with child poverty. In some ways, much of the money we spend in this department is targeted to child poverty issues, and their families, and indeed much of what we're doing across the government.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. What programs, or the components of programs I guess, are you putting in place or do you have in your mind to put in place to fight the ever increasing numbers of children depending on social assistance.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Again, Mr. Chair, the issues, the causes of child poverty in our province and across Canada, are not . . . there's not a single cause and there's not therefore a single solution. I would remind the member again of some of the redesign proposals that I know she has given study to and has made comment on. We appreciate that. In our proposals for redesigning the way we deliver social assistance, let me give you one or two examples.

We're proposing to craft in Saskatchewan, something we would describe as a Saskatchewan child benefit, which would provide some basic supports for the children of Saskatchewan, outside of the traditional welfare system. So that every child of our province in a low income circumstance could be provided with benefits to meet their very basic needs through a Saskatchewan

child benefit. We're hoping that we might be able to partner with the federal government in this regard, to strengthen that benefit.

We're proposing in addition, through our redesign proposals, that supplementary health benefits which are now provided to children if the family is on welfare, be extended to children of low income families, so that it wouldn't depend on your being on welfare to receive your supplemental health coverage. And we know that it is that fact alone that keeps some families in our province on welfare. And by simply providing the supplemental health benefit to the children, we can in fact have that family move to independence and continue to support the child.

So there are some very targeted and I think extremely important programing issues to deal with the poverty which exists today in our province.

But we have, and I'm extremely proud of this, as a government crafted a much more interdepartmental approach to dealing with child poverty and to dealing with other issues affecting Saskatchewan children. We've crafted that under the title of the Saskatchewan's action plan for children. The action plan has been in place a number of years now. To my knowledge we are the only province in Canada who has undertaken this kind of initiative for our children.

What the action plan endeavours to do is to bring together not just one department of government dealing with one issue, but to bring together a broad range of governmental departments to deal with a broad range of issues facing Saskatchewan children.

And so you will know, as a result of decisions made in this budget alone, we've increased our funding to action plan initiatives by \$1.9 million. This will be further investment in child care initiatives. It will be important investments in education and in preschool initiatives. It will be an investment in the successful mothers program. I read something earlier this week by a noted Canadian, who said if we were sincerely wanting to deal with some of the issues of child poverty we would assist the young mother as much and as early as we can.

Again I would want to say we're taking steps in renewing our economy, providing employment for people. We're taking steps in health around preventative medicine. All of these have important impact on child poverty. I repeat again that we see this as one of the fundamental priorities of our government.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, just one question regarding your discussion paper. In the discussion paper you state that there will be a supplement for low income families. Does that imply that a person will have to be working and getting an income in the first place? Because if not, and the child allotment is cut out for parents and they can't work — I'm not saying if they're disabled, but if they can't find a job and it has to be that they have an income — then this is going to be a major, major problem.

So I want you to clarify low income families. And does that mean no income at all? If they're in a state where there's no

income, that you will give them enough to cover not only the basic allowance for the parents but the children's portion of that also?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, I do want to clarify here. Let there be no mistake about this, that low income people whose income falls below the ability to meet the needs of themselves or their families will continue to have full access to our social assistance programs. Let there be no mistake about that.

What our working income supplement proposes is that those who are receiving benefits because of need, and who are able to access some employment, that in fact we would change the current circumstance which in some ways punishes those people, because in the current circumstance there is an income exemption, and in most cases it would be \$150, and after you've earned your first \$150 outside of the system, then the benefits start to be reduced under social assistance.

What we would like to do is enable people to earn those extra dollars beyond the public support, be it in job or in payments of other natures, and in fact assist them with a supplement to that income. So it's not a circumstance where any low income person in our province would be denied benefits simply because they are not able to find work. Let that be clear.

But we want to assist those who can find some income beyond public assistance, to encourage and to support and, hopefully, then earlier to see them move to a situation of independence.

In the area of talking about the ability to find work and the workplace, I should also say that in dealing with issues of poverty and in dealing with issues of security to families, another aspect of government involvement is important here, and that's the kind of things we've done through some labour standards and workplace protections. These two play a significant role in the lives of working families and low income families.

**Ms. Julé:** — All right. Again, I was only going to ask you one question on the discussion paper, but there are so many things that people bring to me that are of concern to them, so I'm going to take the opportunity right now to ask you a little more.

One question that has been brought up repeatedly is if, for instance, a mother with three children is going to . . . you know, is able to find some work and she . . . is she going to be provided some kind of funding for child care while she's goes to work? And is that going to end up costing government more? Less? And the most important thing is in fact that people feel that they're a valuable contribution to community. And I believe that.

But we have to know whether . . . to assure these people whether or not they're going to have some money for care of their children, or how that's going to work into the whole picture here.

(1630)

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, that's a good question and it's

an appropriate question, because many of those who today in Saskatchewan are low income, will be single moms with young children. That's just the fact of the matter. And we need to have concern for their child care as we have concern for their whole family unit. And as we hope that the single mother can be provided educational tools to enable her to be into the economy or find work, or to access maintenance payments in some cases, the child care issue is important.

What our hope is, that by taking in combination the kind of the things we're talking in the redesign paper, a child supplement for the child or children of the family, combined with her ability perhaps to earn some income in the workplace; combined with a working income supplement; combined with the ability to maintain supplemental health benefits; combined with, in some cases, an ability to access maintenance support payments which should be accessed and should be provided; combined with the subsidies that now exist for child care and so on in our province — that through that combination of programing, we will see this family unit move from dependence on welfare to independence.

And so it's not a single program but a combination of things that we think — and this simply is reusing the same monies that we're using today — can be more creative and assist more people.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. If in fact a woman in that situation that you were talking about is getting maintenance enforcement, is receiving maintenance enforcement, will she be then told that that is a certain amount of money that she is getting and therefore she will have some income support for her children diminished because of that? Or how will that work?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — You see, this is one of the changes that we'd like to make, Mr. Chair. Today, in what you might describe as a regressive system with the maintenance payment that's counted as income, the next thing you know your benefits are deducted because that's more income.

So we'd like to switch that around again and reward that other income that can come into the household, whether it be from employment or it be from maintenance payment, and in fact supplement with working income supplement, hopefully then to craft an income that removes someone from the system.

So we kind of like, just exactly reverse of what we do today. And I have had some discussions at the federal level, hoping that working with the federal minister that we might use some creativity there with the federal child tax credit system and redirect some of that into this kind of supplement hopefully to lift people from dependency.

**Ms. Julé:** — I certainly thank you for that and I hope you do thank the federal government if they do give you that kind of access. Thank you.

One more question that I had in mind just a minute ago was if in fact we take the scenario of the mother again with two or three children, if in fact this mother does find work and the whole bureaucracy is running smoothly now to figure how

much in fact she will be getting as an income supplement, etc., etc., and the work happens to end up short-lived after three months, have you been able to sort of guesstimate what kind of bureaucratic changes and expenses will be sort of the taxpayers', I guess, responsibility if that kind of thing happens, if there's a fluctuation in work and no-work kind of situation?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — The member raises a very good point and a very good question.

We think by shifting our emphasis . . . The emphasis today is on a needs-based system, where you will need to present yourself to a social worker and show your need to receive benefit. The redesign proposals, when we talk about the child benefit, when we talk about working income supplement, are an income-based program. It's simply based on — and now the levels of income are not yet determined, something we have to continue to work through; we haven't set sort of the parameters here of levels of income — but they will be income based. Not unlike the current Family Income Plan in Saskatchewan, which is income based. And therefore, I think much more . . . I shouldn't say easier, but it's a more simple administrative process. And in that circumstance, if somebody's employment dries up, as we know it can, it would be a more simple process, as we have with our Family Income Plan, to move into more traditional support.

The current . . . for instance, the current federal child tax, because it's based on an annual income, operation is a little more difficult because you've got to have the whole 12 months of income to report. We do want to tailor our's, income-based, but something around like the principle that we use on the Family Income Plan so it can be flexible to meet those needs.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you. The problem of child prostitution in our province and cities is overwhelming, and it's really very unacceptable, and very scary, and I am sure you agree with that. Just last week it was reported that there were over 100 children working the streets in Regina alone. So the number of child prostitutes also in Saskatoon is almost as high. Are there some provisions in this budget to combat this problem in any way or form?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, again the member raises what is a very important issue. I had opportunity just yesterday morning to meet with the Regina Aboriginal Co-Operative, who have been doing some very important work around child prostitution in this city, and I know similar work has been done in the city of Saskatoon and the problem is before us.

I think we all recognize that no one of us would want to tolerate children being involved in the practice of prostitution. I think we also all recognize that again this is not a single cause or a single solution — that many of the children who will find themselves on the streets will be there as a result of perhaps abusive situations in their own lives, as a result of poverty and so on. We have as a government been financially supporting some of the work that the Regina Aboriginal Co-Operative has been doing in this city and some work that has been done in Saskatoon.

I mentioned earlier the Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children. Within this plan we have in past budgeted about 1.4 million, I believe the figure is, for prevention and support programs in the community, and through that funding we've seen a number of programs being put in place in communities around the province.

Other programs which, if I may illustrate, in my own city of Moose Jaw just last week I had the privilege to participate in the opening of what's described as a teen wellness centre. While not directed in any way particular to the issue of prostitution, it is certainly directed to the issue of children and youth, offering them a place to be, a place to share some concerns with adults, a place to receive important information for their own health and well-being. That has occurred through funding through the Department of Health, through the minister's Advisory Committee on Family Planning.

So again, it has to be a combination of effort from a variety of departments, but I know that our community seeks that we should find some appropriate solution to the issue of child prostitution.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm not quite sure which way I want to go here. Okay, are there grants available within the budget, or have there been anything specifically targeted for safe homes for kids, for children — possibly a place that they can go. Because there's so many of them on their own now out on the streets and it's not like there are some, although they're inadequate safe homes for battered women, etc., but it's getting to the point where we almost need safe homes for kids. And is there anything . . . has that been thought of or is there any kind of a shelter for children that are ending up on the streets and whose lives are threatened, virtually threatened?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, the member may not be aware of this but there was in fact a pilot project in Saskatoon of a safe home for children. And that project having been undertaken now has been given assessment by the community, and it would appear to be the community's observation that that is not likely the best use of resources to meet the need. That has been the conclusion of the Saskatoon community around the pilot project.

The recommendation of the Children off the Streets group here in Regina that was done through the Aboriginal Co-Operative and the Children off the Streets committee, the recommendations focus on the need for a strong interagency approach to delivering services to children — an outreach on the street as opposed to the safe home concept. I report that to the member. That has been the experience in Saskatoon, where now the community is saying that perhaps a better use of resources is not to create the safe home.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I really have a great deal of respect for your efforts at interagency cooperation in order to try to alleviate some of these problems, but I must also tell you in truth that I have had a number of calls of people in frustration saying that this thing is obviously not working. And it seems to me . . . It may be in some places, and I sincerely hope it is.

But, for instance, I have had a principal of a high school in Saskatoon tell me that he understood that the integrated services would work in a fashion that if he had problems with children in Social Services or children in trouble or their parents, that he would access a social worker through a number of phone calls. And so, you know, on would go the story, that everyone would be able to then notify the correct people from there. However, he's having a great deal of trouble.

And I hear this repeated over and over again, that people can't access the social workers and it's because, I believe, they're overworked. I believe there's just too many problems for the number of social workers out there.

This particular principal phoned four different numbers and he said that there was a real crisis situation. And he couldn't get through after four numbers and he was frustrated. And he said there's growing numbers of problems in that school to the point where he can't even teach any more — that the teachers are having a difficult time teaching because of so many social and personal problems of children.

So is there something that we can do here somehow to ensure that there is better access? Is there a computer service or something that . . . or are we going to be able to put more social workers out there so that they're not so overloaded? I'm not sure within the budget that you have allotted money to maybe this problem. If you could sort of explain to me what you intend to do, because I'm sure you know of this also.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, first of all let me say to the member, if at any time she is aware of a particular concern in a particular circumstance, feel free to contact myself, my office, or the department and let us know. Because there are circumstances that do arise and sometimes need immediate attention.

If I may say to the member, I sincerely would wish . . . I can't operate on wishing, but I would wish that in fact there were more resources available to us to in fact put more people in the role of social worker, to hire more social workers. Given the fiscal realities that we're working under and not desiring to be reducing benefits to people and so on, we are trying to reallocate and reshape as best we can.

We've had I think some success around the province in a number of cases now where we have in fact social workers working right in the school setting. This is not by any means universal, but in some circumstances we've been able to accomplish that. It's happening here for instance at Scott Collegiate in Regina, where a social worker is actually working right in the school. And that gives the hands-on connection to the students. It also provides hands-on integration with the teaching staff and the administrative staff of the school. We have I think in the community of Swift Current established a very good working relationship with social workers and educators. And that is important.

As I look to the future, if we are able over the course of the next number of months to redesign the way we do the delivery of social services and some of our programing and in fact to

simplify some of the delivery and programing, that may enable us to enable some of our current social workers to focus again more on the profession for which they are trained and able — and that is social work, hands-on contact with people. And perhaps we can continue to build on the network of social work in schools.

I just go back to my first point. If there's a particular circumstance that you want to raise, feel free at any time to do that.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. In regards to child prostitution, if I could just go back to that for a moment, are there any, I guess maybe we'd call it grounds available or any monies going towards counselling services in Saskatoon or Regina's inner cities for families of children that are child prostitutes, for instance? Is there some kind of educational programs for them or for children that are just on the streets, again without parents or any kind of guidance? Is there some sort of information that can get to these people to help them in the form of education programs or counselling services?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — There are a number of very important and I think very creative and successful agencies at work in both Regina and Saskatoon and in other communities in our province, trying to meet the needs of the inner city and youth in the inner city.

The member will likely be aware of Egadz in Saskatoon, doing a great job. Here in Regina, the Rainbow Youth Center is doing great work. We have the family service bureaus, the Catholic family service centres. We'll be very happy to provide for the member a list of all of the agencies at work which are funded through the department.

If I could just digress maybe for a minute. I would have wished that every member of this legislature could have been with me yesterday. I had the opportunity to attend an event down at the Rainbow Youth Center here in Regina where we celebrated the graduation of seven young women, each of them single moms, who have completed a very intensive 12-week course preparing them with educational skills, with also lifestyle skills.

(1645)

Twelve weeks ago the member will remember, I think it was about 40 below zero in this province, and each of these seven young women took it upon themselves to enter into this course of study with all the requirements of having to care for their children throughout. And yesterday while there were only five in attendance, one happened to be ill, and one happened to be a little concerned about the stage fright and so on, but those who were there were proud, accomplished, and they're ready to take on the world.

It may be a small number of people in the total picture but a real victory for these individuals, and it's that kind of thing that will turn the world around. And that's happening here at the Rainbow Youth Center. So these programs that you mention are doing very good work. We'll be very happy to provide you with a list of the agencies that are at work.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Is your government providing funding to the Rainbow Youth Center, and how much, if it is?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, the Rainbow Youth Center actually is funded through a variety of government departments. From our department the funding is about \$37,000 on an annual basis, but I recall it is a significantly larger number from the Department of Health that goes into the Rainbow Youth Center.

The program that I spoke of just moments ago, that the seven young women were involved in, was a program sponsored by the New Careers Corporation. And so there's a variety of funding sources that come together at the Rainbow Youth, and I think they also access some charitable and private donations, and have other fund-raising projects. So it's a combination. But one thing for sure is they're doing great work.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I can appreciate the money that has been put in. However I wish there was a little more and I wish there was a more basic way to take care of problems. I wish it was a perfect world, and you do to. But it isn't.

And New Careers Corporation has been . . . funding has been cut quite a bit to that and so that will make it more difficult if that's where some of the money was coming. And, Mr. Minister, I would like to ask you also if the Rainbow Center has had funding cut by the government in this budget.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — No, Mr. Chair. No, no. There's been no reduction in this year's budget. And just on New Careers — and I know you'll have an opportunity in another estimates to talk about New Careers — but the funding reduction there is quite small. It's not a large funding reduction on that front either.

Now I wish, and the member wishes, and I guess we all wish that we did have more resources that we could devote. And I think the member would want to congratulate this government for holding the line and being able to in fact maintain the levels of support as we have, knowing the loss of the federal money.

**Ms. Julé:** — Actually we could get into a debate on that I think, Mr. Minister. Now I'm not exactly sure, but I understand from some sources that there's probably, according to your budget, a 1 per cent, a 1 to 2 per cent budget cut to your complete budget, is about all there is. And that's the only amount affected by federal cuts. So I guess that you'd probably argue that because you use a 73 per cent number . . . but really I don't think that this is the place or the time. I just wanted to kind of get that in because that's my understanding.

I would like to ask the minister some questions with regards to safe homes and transition houses and their availability to people in rural and northern Saskatchewan. First of all, is there anything like a safe house in northern Saskatchewan at all, or a transition house in . . . I would say from 50 miles north of Prince Albert right to the most northern part of Saskatchewan. Do we have anything like that?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, there is a family service centre, safe house circumstance in La Ronge operated by the La Ronge native women's organization.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. How many spaces are there or how many women are they able to accommodate at a given time or how many women have they accommodated within the past year? And how many women were turned away?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, I'll have to ask the member's indulgence. We'll get you the exact number. This is a third-party funded, and we could get you the exact number. My officials believe it's about 10 accommodated at any given time. But we'll get you that exact number.

I should say though to the member that in regards to protection of women and children in rural Saskatchewan, a tool that has now proven itself to be very effective, as we hoped it would be, is The Victims of Domestic Violence Act. It was passed in this House about a year ago, a little more.

There was even some local coverage or some press coverage about it on April 3 in the *Star-Phoenix*, where the press is reporting that The Victims of Domestic Violence Act has been used now 220 times, and many of the applications to that Act have been in rural Saskatchewan. And this is where the authorities are notified and the abuser is actually removed from the home rather than having to remove, in most cases, the woman and the children to a safe place. This Act provides that the authorities may in fact remove the abuser from the home and therefore create a safe place in the family home. And the indications are that the Act is being utilized and is having an important and helpful affect for women in families in rural Saskatchewan.

**Ms. Julé:** — That's quite intriguing, that's interesting, and I think it's great. I'm just wondering if the abuser, how long he is removed from the home, or she is removed from the home, and what help that really is if they're allowed to come back to the home and the whole thing is repeated?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — The officials of the Department of Social Services don't have that information because the Act, of course, is administered by the Justice department. I'm sure when the Minister of Justice is here that his officials can provide or will have that.

I think what is important is that there is a tool. And again I would say how much more we wish we could be doing and finding appropriate ways to do it. But this tool seems to have proven itself now as being a real help.

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Minister, I'd like you to tell us today how many safe homes for victims of abuse in the home are available to women and their children across the province.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chair, I'll just . . . for the member's information, I can just read out the list and this will represent across province. There is the Regina Transition Women's Society; Saskatoon Interval House; Battlefords Interval House; the Moose Jaw Women's Transition Association; the Yorkton

Women In Need Shelwin House; there's the YWCA in Regina; the La Ronge Native Women's organization; the South West Crisis Services in Swift Current; Wichihik Iskwewak Safe shelter here in Regina; the Hudson Bay Crisis Centre; the Prince Albert and District Community Service Centre — for a total of 11.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. What is the . . .

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

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