

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 concerned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan with respect to 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.

The names on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are all from Regina, from throughout the city of Regina. Thank you.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding 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.

The communities that the people have signed from are mostly Esterhazy and Moosomin, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise too today to present petitions of names of persons from throughout the province regarding the Plains Health Centre closure. 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 that have signed these petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from Watrous, Regina and throughout the province. I so present.

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 from Canora, Melville, Watrous, and the majority are from Regina. I so present.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well on behalf of citizens concerned about the impending closure of 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.

Signatures on this petition are all from the city of Regina.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to present petitions of names from people throughout Saskatchewan regarding 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 this petition are from Regina, Moose Jaw, Punnichy, Avonlea, Estevan, Weyburn, Balcarres — all over Saskatchewan.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise again today to present a petition of names from people throughout southern 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 the decision to close the Plains Health Centre.

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

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions of names of Saskatchewan people 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 those who have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Stoughton, Redvers, Estevan, Weyburn, Midale, Arcola, Griffin, Lampman, Benson, just to mention a few.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present to this Assembly today, Mr. Speaker, a lump of petitions that have come from the south-west area of the province. The petitioners pray, and the prayer of the petition is:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reverse the decision to close the Swift Current Care Centre and instead keep this important facility open and viable and provide for the needs of Swift Current and area residents and seniors.

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

And it's also signed with a note: "Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I have one, unlike Mr. Cline."

And it's signed by petitioners all across . . . from Swift Current and around the area, Mr. Speaker. And I present it to the Assembly.

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

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 62 ask the government the following questions:

To the minister responsible for SPMC, with regards to property leased by the provincial government: (1) what are the lease arrangements for the Saskatchewan Health and the Environment and Resource Management offices located on 5th Avenue in Humboldt; (2) how much is paid monthly to lease the aforementioned properties; (3) how much is the Government of Saskatchewan paying to lease the buildings that houses the rural farm service centre in Humboldt; (4) how much is the government paying to lease property in the town of Wakaw; (5) what are the addresses of the properties in Wakaw that are currently being leased by the government; (6) how much is paid monthly to lease the aforementioned properties; (7) what properties are being leased by the Government of Saskatchewan in the town of Cudworth; (8) how much is paid monthly to lease these properties in Cudworth; and (9) from whom are these properties in Humboldt, Wakaw, and Cudworth leased?

I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'm delighted to introduce a group of students from Wadena Elementary School. There's 37 students here from grade 4. Their teacher is Denise Nelson, Tracy Walleen; chaperons Millie Enge, Cathy Gradin, Kathy Daviduk, and Keith LePouder; and the bus driver is Marcel Pelletier.

I'll be delighted to meet with them afterwards in room 255 for drinks and I hope you enjoy this afternoon here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to introduce two groups to you and through you to the Assembly today. I've already had the opportunity to meet with the group from the Kyle School, the grade 7 and 8's there. Ms. Loftsgard, the teacher, is with them, and two parents, Susan Allport and Jay Sorensen. Had a wonderful discussion about how members in the Assembly behave. I warned them in advance that they should pay attention to our behaviour in question period, and I

know they will.

The other group that's with us today is another group from the Rosetown School — we were joined by one yesterday — another grade 8 class from Rosetown, joined by teachers, Mr. Wiebe, Mr. DeBoice, Mr. Cline, and parent, Judy Anderson. We are delighted to have them with us as well and hope they have a good day here and a safe trip home, and ask members here to join me in welcoming these young people to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Shelly Wagner Elected President of Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to recognize Shelly Wagner of Kelvington who was recently elected as president of the Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association.

Ms. Wagner is a practising pharmacist at Davidson Drugs in Kelvington. She was first elected to council in 1992. Ms. Wagner has served on the education, investigation, and pharmaceutical care steering committees. She also represented the Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association as an observer during meetings at the national association regulatory authorities.

During her one-year term as president, she confirms that pharmaceutical care and alternative reimbursement will remain a priority of the association for the benefit of patient care in Saskatchewan. She also believes that the association's survival is dependent on change, with education as a priority. She feels it is imperative that programs are provided to help change the association's mind-set from technical service, such as dispensing, to cognitive services such as consultation.

I would ask members of this Assembly to join me in commending Ms. Wagner's commitment to her profession and to the health of the Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Regina Transition House Spring Fund-raiser and National Council of Women Meeting

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge two important events taking place in our province today.

This afternoon and evening there's an important fund-raising event for the Regina Transition House. Once again, the friends of Transition House are hosting their annual Spring Soiree fund-raising event.

It isn't only an important source of financial support for this group, but it also supports Transition House to meet and network with like-minded people. Transition House is

dedicated to the elimination of violence against women and children by providing a safe and supportive environment for victims of domestic violence.

You can support this worthwhile project by purchasing a \$25 ticket and attending the Spring Soiree this evening. This year's event is being held at the home of Rhonda Hill and Lowell Monkhouse at 3248 Albert Street between 4:30 and 7:30.

I am also pleased to announce that the National Council of Women of Canada is holding its annual general meeting in Saskatchewan for the first time since 1987. The meeting is being held from today through Sunday at the Delta Bessborough Hotel in Saskatoon.

The NCWC (National Council of Women of Canada) is a federation of 26 national organizations, provincial and local councils. Here in Saskatchewan there is a provincial council, as well as local councils in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert.

This non-partisan, grass roots organization coordinates groups that work on issues of common concern. These two events are important examples . . .

The Speaker: — I'm sorry, the member's time has expired.

National Women's March Against Poverty

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome a caravan of committed women arriving in Saskatchewan tomorrow as part of the National Women's March Against Poverty.

These women hope this march will highlight some of the issues they feel are contributing to poverty across Canada. Some of the issues these women would like to call attention to include job creation and preservation of social safety net programs.

I think that it's important that all governments take time to listen to the concerns and issues that these women are bringing forward. I would also like to commend the Saskatchewan women who are participating in the fight against poverty. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Contributions of Kelran Microbiologicals

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to stand in the House and acknowledge individuals and businesses that are making a difference in the lives of people in my community and in our province. Today I have one such example of a business that's creating jobs locally and contributing to the economy of Prince Albert.

But those aren't all of the reasons why Kelran Microbiologicals is a community leader, Mr. Speaker. This new company, which has done business in Saskatchewan for the past year, has chosen our province as its head office and has announced that it will be donating equipment valued at \$13,000 to Camp Easter

Seal. These items will be used in the implementation of programs undertaken by Camp Easter Seal for the physically and mentally challenged.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Randell Toporowski and Kelran Microbiologicals for demonstrating their confidence in Saskatchewan and for being good corporate citizens in helping a worthwhile cause. Mr. Speaker, we're all well aware of Camp Easter Seal and the good work that it does in this province, and Mr. Toporowski should be congratulated for his assistance in this regard.

Future of Geriatric Unit in Moose Jaw

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week in this House I delivered a number of letters from people in my constituency concerned about the fate of the geriatric unit at Providence Place in Moose Jaw. Those letters represented only a fraction of the people who wrote expressing their concerns to the Minister of Health.

To date, the minister received over 1,800 letters from Moose Jaw and area and another 600 letters from the Assiniboia area. Mr. Speaker, I can assure the minister that I will deliver hundreds more such letters to him. These 2,400 or more people still await the minister's response. This waiting has led concerned people to believe that the minister intends to cut the geriatric centre by allowing continued uncertainty to force members of the geriatric team to leave in search of a more certain future. This tactic is an evasion of responsibility, and will not be tolerated by concerned residents.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge the Minister of Health to quickly respond to this outpouring of support for the geriatric unit and make it clear to everyone now whether he intends to provide this valuable service with the funding his government promised. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Canadian AIDS Memorial Quilt

Ms. Lorje: — The Saskatchewan AIDS Network, as this legislature knows, has launched an AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) awareness campaign. One very tangible and emotional recognition event took place in Saskatoon over the past four days. AIDS Saskatoon and the Persons Living with AIDS Network of Saskatchewan hosted a Saskatoon display of the Canadian AIDS Memorial Quilt.

The display began on Friday evening with a touching ceremony during which the names of AIDS victims were read publicly. The panels of the national quilt were on display until last evening, at which time, during the closing ceremonies, eight new Saskatchewan panels were added.

The purpose of this display was twofold: first, to increase public awareness of AIDS in Saskatchewan; and more significantly, the Canadian AIDS Memorial Quilt is a visible means to provide a safe environment to individuals to acknowledge their personal loss and grief.

Each panel is made by friends and family of an individual lost to AIDS. The panels measure 6 feet by 4 feet, the size of a cemetery plot. Eight panels are combined to make a section, combining panels from different parts of Canada and the United States. Sadly, there are currently enough panels to cover several football fields.

During the four days, over 2,000 people visited the quilt in Saskatoon, bearing witness to the presence of the absence of the AIDS victims.

Mr. Speaker, as moving as this quilt is, there are far too many Saskatchewan panels, too many national sections, too much suffering, far too much loss. We all need a greater awareness of AIDS to prevent needless early deaths.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Northern Job Training Programs

Mr. Langford: — Mr. Speaker, JobStart is a program that matches those seeking a job to employers seeking workers. I want to report on two successful projects in my part of the province. The member from Cumberland may want to sing along with me.

In La Ronge this is a bridging program that is providing upgrading and work skills to women previously on social assistance. The trainees are now working at the La Ronge family service centre and the La Ronge Band home care. The first program worked so well that 15 new trainees are halfway through a similar program.

In Prince Albert four trainees are receiving work-based garden training from the University of Saskatchewan. They will be employed at a new retail outlet in Prince Albert. This project is unique because it involves credit training provided by the university. Both of these projects are good examples of how JobStart and Future Skills help train unemployed people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Makwa Sahgaiehcans' Community Justice Committee

Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, the Makwa Sahgaiehcans First Nation has taken an important step in solving some of their problems through a creative and alternative solution. In doing so, they've also set a role model for others to learn from and follow. In conjunction with the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), this band has established a community justice committee that will deal with first and second offenders of minor crimes.

I wish to commend the six volunteers who are on the committee. They are, elders, Rita Mitsuing and Harry Blackbird; band counsellor, William Ratfoot; young offender coordinator, Vincent Kytwayhat; youth worker, Marion Mitsuing; and student, Lorinda Alexander.

The community justice committee has five functions: to manage

a diversion project in cooperation with the RCMP; to facilitate sentencing circles; to develop programming for young offenders and youth at risk; to take a proactive role in crime prevention; and to develop a Cree justice plan for Makwa Sahgaiehcans First Nation.

The diversion project takes minor crime out of the court system and puts it into the hands of the community. The offender is accountable to the community and must come up with a way to make restitution and restore harmony. It is not easy to have to answer to one's own community, but in the process of committing minor offences, many young people are calling for help. Having to face the victim and the community gives kids a chance to get leadership and direction.

I congratulate the Makwa Sahgaiehcans First Nation for establishing their community justice committee. They are showing wisdom and courage in trying new and hopefully better methods of handling young people at odds with the law. I'm sure we will hear many positive stories from them as they fulfil this exciting and challenging task.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health Care Funding

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's another day in this House and once again we can report on another public meeting involving people who are concerned about health care.

In this case, Mr. Speaker, about 600 people attended a meeting in Central Butte last night to discuss the government's lack of commitment to health care. They called on the district board and SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations), the provincial association, to begin standing up to the government. They also discussed the issue of health premiums as possibly the only way to ensure that they have a system they can rely on, Mr. Speaker.

Before this meeting ended, a plan was presented on behalf of more than a dozen communities and municipalities in the health district establishing what services they need and the fact that they will not settle for less.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister examine this document and, for once, make the right decision?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out something the member didn't point out, which is that this was a public meeting called by the district health board. And one of the things this government has done is to create district health boards which have at least two public meetings per year, which allows the public to be consulted by the district health board and allows the kind of sharing of information the member is talking about. We encourage that kind of meeting, Mr. Speaker, and the boards are holding them.

But when the member was talking about the meeting — and perhaps the member and his party was represented at the meeting — I wonder if they got up at the meeting and advised the people at the meeting that one of the problems we have in the health care system is that the Liberals have cut funding to our health care system in Saskatchewan by \$50 million this year, and including hundreds of thousands of dollars which equates to a cut in the Moose Jaw/Thunder Creek district, Mr. Speaker.

And I wonder if the member got up and said that. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I bet he didn't. I bet he didn't say that the Liberals are the cause of the health care funding crisis that he wants to fix with premiums and two-tiered medicine.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, what the people did say there was that it's a provincial duty to fund health care in this province. No matter who's cutting where, it's up to the provincial government to fund the provincial health system adequately for the people; otherwise they're going to go to extreme measures and do what they need to do and ensure that they've got some services.

Mr. Speaker, the minister does not appear to realize that his government's under-funding of health care is creating a tremendous amount of anxiety. The Moose Jaw/Thunder Creek Health District is using \$150,000 of their surplus each month to make ends meet. They will begin running a deficit by the end of August.

The health district CEO (chief executive officer), John Borody, says that this government, and I quote: "has tight control on us because they're the ones that pay the bills."

Mr. Minister, quit passing the buck. It is the role of you and your government to adequately fund health care in this province. Mr. Minister, when will you begin to take responsibility for your actions and provide appropriate health care funding?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I'll take responsibility for our actions, Mr. Speaker, but it's clear that that member will not take responsibility for the actions of the Liberal Party. Because what that member just said was that the Liberal Party and the federal government in Ottawa has no role to play in health care. And, Mr. Speaker, that is not the way that Canada has been run for the last 30 years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — We have in this country a medicare system that was started in this province and was continued across the country in the '70s by the Liberal Party when it was more enlightened. And what that member is saying, Mr. Speaker, is that national medicare should not be something that the federal government should support. And we reject that notion, Mr. Speaker, just as we reject what the member said a few weeks

ago, which was that people should have to pay for their health care.

What people have to understand, Mr. Speaker, is the true agenda of the Liberal parties. They are not supporters of the public medicare system — they never have been — and they'd dismantle it if they had the chance, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

St. Joseph's Hospital Funding

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, sooner or later this government's going to have to take some responsibility for what is happening in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it looks like Estevan is the next victim on the government's health care chopping block. Staff at St. Joseph's Hospital, which was opened in 1990, were told yesterday they are facing another \$1 million cut. This means that half the beds will be closed. They are losing their paediatric unit. Supervisory and support positions are being axed. The operating room will be closed 26 days more than its present 10-week closure. Patients will be forced to eat meals that are frozen and reheated on the weekends. And the list goes on and on.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm that the Southeast District Health Board has been forced to make these cuts because the government stubbornly refuses to reinstate funding to our health care system?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting that today the Leader of the Opposition gets up and says that we're under-funding rural districts, because yesterday the Liberals were up in this House saying that we were under-funding Regina, which got an increase. You can't have it both ways, Mr. Speaker.

But when the member talks about cut-backs and less funding for the health districts, I say to the member that the member and his party should accept some responsibility for the fact that the Liberals have cut health care spending in Saskatchewan by \$50 million, which translates into a cut to Estevan, which we have mainly back-filled, Mr. Speaker.

If the member wanted to be completely straightforward about this matter, Mr. Speaker, the member would say that the St. Joseph's Hospital in Estevan has lost hundreds of thousands of dollars — I believe over \$700,000 — in Alberta financing because they were providing services to Alberta people, which has been discontinued. That's the source of the problem down there. And the other source is the Liberals in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, traditionally in the province of Saskatchewan, when our citizens have been in trouble, the government has come through to see them through some crisis

situations. We are getting to that point.

Mr. Speaker, front-line workers are struggling to cope with this government's cuts, but they seem to be fighting a losing battle. The government stands back and refuses to listen to the people who are most affected by these cuts — that's the patients and the staff. Instead the government quietly meets with health boards and gives them ultimatums to make these cuts.

Several sources have told us that they have a meeting in Estevan this evening with the Southeast District Health Board. If the minister is planning on attending, I would expect him to be prepared for less than a pleasant reception. The front-line workers feel very strongly about the cuts, and they plan to talk to the minister directly about that.

I would like to ask the minister, will he please listen to those front-line workers today, and give them some hope that he will step in and stop this trend in destroying our entire health care system in this province, which they pride themselves in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, we pride ourselves in the health care system as well; and our solution to any problems in the health care system are not to privatize health care and go to a two-tiered system as those members advocate, and not to say that the national government should play no role in health care.

And I want to remind the Leader of the Opposition that the largest expenditure of our provincial government is on health care. We are spending the same amount on health care, Mr. Speaker — it's about 35 per cent of our budget — as we have in previous years. That's not the problem.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, has been a lack of commitment from the federal government, which has traditionally supported health care. The member will not acknowledge that. The member wants to say that somehow what is going on in Ottawa is the fault of this government. And I say to the member, Mr. Speaker, that he should accept some responsibility for what the Liberals are doing to health care instead of taking what I think is a somewhat less than straightforward position, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crown Construction Tendering Agreement

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health is indeed correct. You're not only hurting rural health care, you're hurting urban health care as well. The Regina District Health Board is struggling with a \$13 million funding shortfall because of this NDP (New Democratic Party) government. A number of measures have been announced to make up for this shortfall, including the closure of the Martin Luther Nursing Home. In this case, 22 frail and elderly people have been told they will have to move.

Mr. Speaker, we have demonstrated how this government could save at least \$9 million by scrapping the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement. This saving could keep almost 300

long-term care beds open in the province. Will the minister make a commitment on behalf of his government to quit wasting money on union friends and direct it to the proper care of seniors?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Well I've informed the hon. member opposite this government is not in the position of wasting money. This government utilizes the funds that we have at our disposal to carry out the programs that the people of Saskatchewan expect of us.

It's not our fault that the federal cousins of the official opposition cut back millions and millions of dollars from education, health care, social services, within the province, within all the provinces, without any consideration for their national responsibility. We have been a government who has corrected the situation that was left by the Tory administration, a legacy of debt and mismanagement.

The public policy and management of this government is second to none. We're preparing for the future. We want systems in Saskatchewan that our children and our grandchildren can enjoy; they've been accustomed to enjoying in the past. We will keep on the track of good public policy. And we'd ask the members opposite to quit their doom and gloom, to tell the true story of Saskatchewan's future, and not spread the negative stories out there that they want to create for their own political gain.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Construction Association met with cabinet members this morning to discuss concerns regarding the CCTA (Crown Construction Tendering Agreement). They also provided government with a number of alternatives to this policy, which has clearly created a playing field on behalf of union contractors.

Mr. Speaker, the government promised a review of this agreement would be completed in time for the '96 construction season. The season is under way and the review is not complete. Will the Minister of Labour tell this House when the current review of the CCTA will be completed?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite continues to try to misunderstand or is incapable of understanding that there is a necessity to work cooperatively in this economy in order for things to function well in Saskatchewan. And as the Minister of Labour has said, it's our objective to work to keep industry and the workers that support industry in a cooperative working relationship.

And I want to say, unlike the members opposite, the members of the construction association this morning expressed a very strong interest in sitting down at a table to discuss the issues of mutual concern between working people in Saskatchewan and

the construction industry. And I wish the members opposite would join in that same positive spirit to find ways of building this economy, instead of attacking every positive venture that happens. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantfoer: — The question was, when will the review be completed, not a lecture on something we and everyone in this province already knows. In fact your own department knew it; they said that you were going to spend an extra 30 per cent because of your unthoughtful policy on CCTA. And at the same time this is happening, there's a lack of funding for long-term and acute care beds in hospitals.

Will you take responsibility for your actions and apologize to the people of Saskatchewan and scrap this policy while there's still time?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the members of this side of the House, I think are quite proud to take responsibility for actions, and the members opposite ought to take some lessons in good governance and consistent position-taking.

You had asked the question earlier about when the review was complete. I think I gave you this answer two weeks ago. But in case you've forgotten, let me remind you that we had begun the review, and we have shared the information from the review in discussions with the parties to the agreement. As the member opposite knows, there's a five-year agreement between the unionized contractors and the building trades unions and the province of Saskatchewan, and we're going to maintain that agreement until it's renegotiated.

In the meantime, the construction association — positively, and to their credit — said we would like to discuss the issues that arise in this agreement with you as well. And they've met this morning, as I indicated we would. And their response to the circumstance was that they understand the need for us to have a positive, working relationship in this province.

And may I say yet one more time, if the members opposite would only come to that view, Saskatchewan would be unified in a positive direction and there would not be a small group of 10 who insist on doing everything negative, from dumping their leader to criticizing every positive . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Long-term Care

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health as well. Mr. Minister, something isn't quite adding up here. Every health district in the province is cutting back. Budgets are being slashed. Hospitals and nursing homes are closing. Beds are being cut. Jobs are being lost. Yesterday we learned of a \$4.8 million cut

here in Regina which will mean further bed closures and job losses, and another 8 million coming in the near future.

Mr. Minister, one would think with all the cuts we have seen to date that we would have an actual saving on the bottom line of health care spending in this province. But it hasn't. Your department continues to spend as much today as it did in the past. Mr. Minister, where are the savings? Where is all the health fund going since it obviously isn't going into patient services?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of the fact that the member and the other members of the Conservative Party have problems with numbers. That's well-known to most people in the province.

But I want to say to the member that one of the things we've done in this province, which I think is the right thing to do, is to redirect some of the spending. The member is correct that spending has been taken out of some sectors of our health care system, but it's been redirected, Mr. Speaker, into other areas like home care, for example.

And the point I tried to make to the House yesterday was an example from Prince Albert, where they have fewer long-term beds than they had before, so they're spending less on long-term care. But they have no waiting-lists for long-term care, and they have, I understand, seven empty long-term care beds.

The reason is that they've redirected some spending to community care and home care, and that allows their seniors to remain independent in their own homes for longer periods of time. And that kind of redirection, I think, Mr. Speaker, is a very positive development in our health care system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Minister, I'm not sure the public across this province will buy that kind of a statement. The fact that they have seen legitimate and realistic cuts and yet they are wondering where the money is all going . . .

My question, further question, to the premier. Mr. Premier, the great myth of the NDP is being dispelled. Every election your party sends all of its candidates into every seniors' home in this province and you tell the seniors, vote for the NDP because the Conservatives are going to come in and shut down your nursing home and throw you out on the streets.

Mr. Premier, what's happening today? That's what's happening. However in this case, it's the NDP shutting down the nursing homes, not the opposition. Just this week nearly 100 elderly people lost their homes — 70 in Swift Current, 22 at Martin Luther Nursing Home in Regina.

Mr. Premier, the NDP myth of protecting health care and protecting seniors is dead. Will you finally be honest with Saskatchewan seniors? How many more nursing homes are you going to close? How many more elderly people is the NDP

going to kick out of their homes?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the policy of health renewal, as has been described by the Minister of Health, is a policy which we believe is on the cutting and forward edge of what is required in Canada and it is approved by the people of Canada who are knowledgeable in the health care area. They know this is the wave of the future. They know this is what is required to preserve and to protect it. Notwithstanding the noisy interruption from the member from Arm River, he knows this to be the case as well.

But the member opposite asks, where in the world has all the money gone, and how come it doesn't add up? Why doesn't he get up and tell this House that \$860 million a year, each and every year, of the taxes collected in the province of Saskatchewan go to pay the interest on the public debt racked up by you and your administration instead of to the home care and to the health care system of the province of Saskatchewan? Why don't you tell them that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've just seen again this tactic that the NDP continue to use of promoting fear in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Premier didn't even acknowledge that they are spending as much today as they did yesterday, and yet look at the reduction in services.

Time and time again this NDP Party has gone throughout this province at election time and told people, do not vote anything but NDP because we're the protectors of health care in the province of Saskatchewan.

Well do the people at Central Butte or the people at Swift Current or the people at Estevan or the people at Canora believe that, Mr. Speaker? I doubt not. Mr. Premier, why will you not now stand and take responsibility for your actions? And don't blame the federal government.

Your minister for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation) just gave you a \$50 million surplus yesterday to pick up that \$50 million you lost. Mr. Premier, take responsibility. Don't blame somebody else. It's your problem, your decisions, your choices. You answer the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting how the official opposition — the Liberal Party — says don't blame the Liberals in Ottawa for cutting back \$50 million. It's interesting how the Conservatives say, don't blame the Conservatives for having \$860 for every man, woman, and child leave this province every year to pay off the bankers of New York and Hong Kong and Paris and London instead of being used to finance the health care and education system. Don't blame us.

He says, don't deal with the facts; somehow ignore those facts. He acknowledges himself that the amount of money that the Government of Saskatchewan is spending on health care is

roughly the same amount — in fact I think it's gone up — than we've been spending over the past two years.

What are we doing? The Minister of Health has indicated we are saving medicare by redirecting its thrust; making sure that people are staying at home; that they practise the wellness model; and that the development of health care is the direction of the future.

Now this is the opposite of the Tories and the Liberals, who believe in two-tier health care, who believe in deterrent fees, who believe in premiums — as the member from Arm River just talked about today — who believe in a system-for-the-rich health care. That's their approach; it's not our approach.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crown Construction Tendering Agreement

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following on that I don't know what I can say hardly.

My questions this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, are directed towards the minister responsible for the union-preference tendering policy.

Mr. Minister, you met with the Saskatchewan Construction . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I will ask the Leader of the Third Party to direct the question to a minister in the context of the portfolio that he holds. I'll ask the Leader of the Third Party to direct in the context of the minister's portfolio.

Mr. Boyd: — Direct my questions, Mr. Speaker, to the minister responsible for CIC.

Mr. Minister, you met with the Saskatchewan Construction Association this morning and you finally came to the conclusion that the construction association should have been included in the original agreement cooked up between the NDP and the union leaders of this province just before the last election.

Mr. Minister, you are now saying that the meetings between you and the construction association, the building trades, are going to work out a new policy. Obviously this will delay the announcement of your new policy which you had originally scheduled for the end of this month.

Mr. Minister, will the existing union preference policy remain in place until a new agreement is reached? And why did you wait until now to include the construction association in these discussions?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I believe I gave the answer to the official opposition a few minutes ago, but I guess the third party wasn't bothering to listen at the time, so may I repeat the answer. We announced the review of the Crown Tendering Agreement a long time ago and have spoken with

everybody, received input from all the parties to the agreement.

As I've said before, it's a five-year agreement signed between the unionized contractors, the building trades, and the Government of Saskatchewan. Issues were raised and before I brought forward a report, I had a brief meeting at another meeting with Manley McLauchlan, the CEO of the construction association, who indicated they would be interested in joining this discussion. To me that's a very, very positive indication by the construction association that we all have a common interest here in Saskatchewan. And I think the members opposite should stop criticizing people who want to engage in a positive discussion and encourage it.

What we're going to work towards, and I cannot commit this result now, but what we're going to work towards is a process by which those who have an interest in the construction association . . . in the construction in Saskatchewan, i.e., the construction associations and the workers, sit down together with a facilitator . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, there's one very obvious problem with your plan — that the construction association and the building trades are not on an even footing here. The unions already have their agreement, so they're under no real obligation to give anything up. They're bargaining from a position of strength while the construction association is coming to the table at a distinct disadvantage.

Mr. Minister, if you are serious about working out a legitimate compromise between the two sides, will you tear up the existing union-preference tendering policy and start from scratch so that both sides — both sides — are on equal footing at the negotiations?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, at risk of getting involved in describing what scratch is, as designed by the members opposite in 1982, the member opposite ought to know why starting from scratch is a very difficult thing to do, because the members opposite created a divisive situation in Saskatchewan between business and labour that will take years to heal.

And I want to say that in the process of healing, the discussion today was a strong indication by the construction association that they would like to move towards a healing. I think the member opposite ought to be ashamed, first for creating the division originally, and for now disputing the nature of the resolution of the rift that was created.

I can say that I'm very encouraged by the fact the construction association does want to sit down at the table. Our officials will be meeting with the building trades to see if they will all sit down together and examine the issues that divide them. In the meantime, as the member opposite knows, there is an agreement and that agreement will stand until renegotiated. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask leave to make a statement of interest, I hope, to all members.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave to make a statement. Perhaps if the Premier would advise the Assembly very briefly of the content of his statement.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I intend, if I get leave, to make a very brief statement respecting the 100th birthday of Mr. Leslie W. Lee, a former member of this Assembly.

Leave granted.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Leslie W. Lee Celebrates 100th Birthday

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to all my colleagues in the legislature. At first, Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House had intended to make a private member's statement. But I think, and this is acknowledged by the members' agreement to give me leave, that a 100th birthday deserves more than just 90 seconds which is accorded by a member's statement.

This afternoon in Saskatoon, Mr. Leslie W. Lee is celebrating his 100th birthday with family and friends.

Mr. Lee was elected to this legislature on June 15, 1944, as the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) member from the constituency of Cumberland. Current members may be interested to know that he was elected with 58 per cent of the vote, and he received a total 357 votes.

He was of course, Mr. Speaker, the first member from that area of the first government of the then premier, Tommy Douglas, which as history records, was the first social democratic government in Canada, indeed in North America; and a member who in his single term saw the beginning of a society of which it is ours now as heirs.

To our knowledge, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lee is the sole surviving member of that historic government. And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lee is still quite justifiably proud of some of his individual accomplishments.

In his day in the North, most of the school buildings, for example, were built of logs, and not in very good shape. These were replaced. And then the Douglas government provided one meal a day for every student. Each school was provided with a range, and it was the teacher's duty to prepare the noon meal for the students. For many, that was the main meal of the day.

And Les Lee was instrumental in bringing peace to the northern trap lines. Les has said that under the old system, trappers used to — how shall I describe it somewhat delicately, Mr. Speaker — be somewhat unpleasant to each other on occasion in order to settle disputes along trap lines. So he helped bring in

regulations which protected the lines and which allowed them to be an asset that could be sold and of course restored harmony to the area.

Like a lot of the people of that period, Mr. Lee has an interesting background. He was born in Fergus Falls, Minnesota in the United States and came to Saskatchewan in 1921, and he took up his occupation as a trapper and as a prospector.

Like some of us in this Assembly, Mr. Lee did not want to be a politician. He was forced to take the nomination in 1944. And I think that's the correct word to use in this case because he so strongly believed in his party at that time, the CCF, but there was no one who was prepared to take the nomination for Cumberland. So he felt that he was forced to do so. And we see this in all political parties from time to time, and these are the kinds of contributors to the political democratic process that I think we can all be very proud of. But as I said, he did not want to be a politician. And in 1948 to prove the point, he declined to see re-election when there was another candidate who did stand for nomination.

Mr. Speaker, and colleagues, perhaps that's why Mr. Lee has lived to be 100 years old.

Les Lee lived for the past several years in Choiceland. His wife of nearly 50 years, Jean, died last July, and he now lives in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, few of us can boast of being present at the creation of some momentous events that have truly changed the course of history. Les Lee was at the right place at the right time.

I know all members will want to join with me, first in thanking Les Lee for his many contributions to Saskatchewan life in general, in and out of the Legislative Assembly, and secondly, and perhaps even more importantly, in wishing him continuing good health on this very, very important and significant birthday of his. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Osika: — To make some comments on behalf of the official opposition with respect to the Premier's presentation.

Leave granted.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Premier. If I may, could I add also our sincere congratulations. And I very much appreciate . . . this is very encouraging and reassuring to us, all of us, I'm sure, that after going through the meat-grinder in this Legislative Assembly that we have the potential of living to 100 years and beyond.

I again want to express sincere congratulations and join the Premier in wishing Mr. Lee many, many more happy years. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Boyd: — To join with the other members to wish the same.

Leave granted.

Mr. Boyd: — Joining with the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan, we certainly as well would like to wish Mr. Lee all the very best. A hundred years is quite an accomplishment, certainly when part of it has been through the political process. Anyone who has been through the political process I'm sure realizes that it is indeed challenging and I'm sure at that time, dating back to that time, it must have been even more significant of a challenge to be involved in public life, particularly coming from the North, as I understand Mr. Lee did.

So we would certainly want to join with all members of the legislature in wishing him the very best and look forward to many more years for Mr. Lee in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I convert, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Question 102 is converted to motions for returns (debatable).

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Table the answer to question 103.

The Speaker: — Question 103 is tabled.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I also table the response for question 104.

The Speaker: — The answer to question 104 is tabled.

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Not Debatable)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Just a second, please. I had difficulty finding my paper but I remember that we are going to convert that question.

The Speaker: — That motion for return (not debatable) is converted to motions for returns (debatable).

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Extended House Hours

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — By leave of the Assembly, we've agreed, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to stand item no. 1. I don't need leave for that. But I will need leave to move a motion, the contents of which I think all members, including

the Table, have been made aware of. So I'll ask for leave to move the motion.

I'll stand the motion on the order paper and ask for leave to move another.

The Speaker: — The government motion is stood and the Government House Leader has requested leave to introduce a government motion. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I move, seconded by the member from Melville:

That notwithstanding rule 3(1), this Assembly sit this evening from 7 p.m. until 10:30 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

(1430)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund

Justice

Vote 3

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes. I'm pleased to have with me the deputy minister of Justice, the deputy Attorney General, Brent Cotter; Mr. Doug Moen, who is the executive director of the public law and policy branch; Tammy Pryznyk, who is the executive assistant to the deputy minister; and Elizabeth Smith, who is the director of the administrative services branch; and Mr. Richard Quinney, who is the executive director of the public prosecutions division.

There are other officials at the back as well who will assist as necessary. Thanks.

Item 1

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, welcome to your officials. I recall some of the discussions we had earlier in dealing with your estimates. I would like to pick up from that point, and I may just reiterate or at least go over some of the things I recall we previously talked about.

One of them was the review of your department by independent attorneys from Calgary. I just wanted to follow up on that with respect to . . . I believe that was a prosecutorial department that was going to be reviewed.

I was wondering, the question I have . . . that it's the prosecution's department that's under scrutiny with this review, but there perhaps are other departments within your area of responsibility, within the Justice department, that may require

some review. Is that under way, or are there any thoughts given to things like the . . . in other departments — land titles, legal aid, or any of those. Are they in fact being reviewed for their administrative processes and efficiencies and the like?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes. I think what I can say is that there has been an ongoing review throughout the Department of Justice and the present review of the prosecutions branch is another step in that process.

We did look at the land titles system and we were actually in the process of looking at some automation questions around land titles. That has taken place.

There was a previous review in the registry systems around the personal property registry. We've looked at things like the Film Classification Board. We've looked at some of the things surrounding the consumer legislation and the various administrative parts of that.

So I think what one can say is that there is ongoing review in the Department of Justice, and the present review with the department of public prosecutions is a continuation of that ongoing policy.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. The internal review is evidently conducted by people from within your own department, or are they from other departments, other government agencies within the province?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Sometimes we do it from within. So that when we reviewed the victims' program for example, that was done from within the department. But we also reviewed the corrections department; that was done from without. And the land titles review, that was done outside of the department.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you. The reviews that are done from outside of the department, no doubt at a cost allotted or funding provided by your department, will those reviews that are funded by your department, by the taxpayers' money, will those reviews be made public, such as particularly the one regarding the review of the prosecution department — will that in fact be made public, and/or will any of the others that are being conducted by outside entities?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think there are two parts to your question. The cost of the review, that will be made public; and it was my announcement when we entered the review that the review report would be made public as well.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

We're still awaiting, and the public is still awaiting, some response with respect to the review being carried out regarding the Latimer case. Is there any progress to report in that respect, and will that be made public, and when?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think the simplest way to answer that question is to say that decisions surrounding that case are imminent.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. This has been going on since last October, and it evidently is costing taxpayers additional monies while this review is under way. The response that it's imminent, is it imminent within the next month? Within the next 6 months?

I have to ask you that question because it has been going on for some time. We have a public prosecutor who is suspended with pay. And these are questions that the public raise from time to time — what is going on, what's happening, and why isn't the Justice department telling us what they're doing, if they're doing anything, about that.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think the best way to respond to that question is to say that this matter is being reviewed very carefully because of many of the implications of the review. The definition of imminent is, within the next month.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Forgive me if we've bounced around a little bit here. I want to go on to something different, something that's near and dear to our heart that we recently discussed, and that's court-house closures. I wonder if those cities that will be losing their court-houses . . . can you tell me, Mr. Minister, how much of a savings it will be to your department for closing down the Melville and the Kerrobert court-houses?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — On an annual basis ongoing, the closure of the court-house in Kerrobert and in Melville will result in an annual saving of \$132,000 per year.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Again I expect . . . and perhaps you can just refresh how the Melville's court usage stack up against perhaps other centres of similar size — the question being that the city of Melville will be one of the only cities in the province of Saskatchewan without a Court of Queen's Bench. And that does raise some concerns.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think the simple answer is Melville will continue to have Provincial Court, where there is a high use. But yes, the Queen's Bench will close, and those matters will be heard in Yorkton which is just down the road.

The comparison of where they fit, I think practically there are some figures that I think we've provided to you before, and I'm not sure which items or which concerns you have about some of the statistics there. Perhaps you could clarify that?

Mr. Osika: — I guess I wasn't looking at any specific place, just a city of comparative size or a community of comparative size. And I'm not sure whether that would be a place like Melfort, would be fairly close to the size of Melville.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think what happened with the Melville situation is that we had two Court of Queen's Benches very close to each other compared to other parts of the province, and that we looked at the usage in both of those areas and realized that this was an area where we could work with one Court of Queen's Bench and easily cover the numbers involved.

And for a comparison, I mean there are comparisons, but some of them have to do with distance. Some of them have to do with other factors. Kerrobert had 345 proceedings commenced in a year. Melville had 355. Then if we look at Melfort, it had 568. And so I mean, you know, you have to look at the various things that were there. But one of the factors that we did look at was the proximity of those two sites and realized that it would be possible to have them serviced quite well from one site.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. May I ask if the residency of the Court of Queen's Bench judge in any of those locations had anything to do with it?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The only centres that have resident Queen's Bench judges now are Prince Albert, Yorkton, North Battleford, Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, and Estevan, and then Melville. All of those places, the usage was substantially higher than that of Melville. And so Melville, on a comparison with all the other places where there is a designated residence, was clearly at the bottom.

Mr. Osika: — Melville was a place where there was a requirement for the judge to reside?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, in the designation there is a judge who is designated for Melville.

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Minister, forgive me if I sound like I'm being insolent, but in the event that a judge refuses to reside in one of those communities, is there . . . are there options or is there . . . When that requirement is asked or determined, demanded — whichever; I'm not sure — are there any recourses either by the court or by your department?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The present situation is that if there is a concern about the residence of a judge or the inadequacy of service to a particular judicial centre, that matter is referred to the Chief Justice and the Judicial Council of Saskatchewan, who has the ability to deal with any kinds of concerns.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you again. You mentioned, I believe, that the savings for closing down the Melville court-house was about \$130,000. What would the savings have been for Kerrobert? And correct me if that figure of 130 was wrong; I'm sorry.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes. When this question was asked in the legislature previously, about Kerrobert, we had a figure of between 83,900 and 85,100 which would be the annual savings related to the Kerrobert court-house. The figure that I gave to you previously included both Kerrobert and Melville — that was 132,000. So the difference is about, I think 47,000 to \$48,000, is the annual saving on transferring the Queen's Bench responsibilities out of Melville into Yorkton.

(1445)

Mr. Osika: — Thank you. In the whole scheme of things, that's really not a significant amount. And as we go into some of the hardships perhaps that will be imposed as a result of that and the costs now that will have to go to the users of those

facilities, the end may not in fact justify the means.

However, having said that, towards what will that measly \$132,000 saving go to?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think, as you've probably heard day in and day out, as we've heard today about health care and the fact that we have to find money in health, education, and social services, what happened was all of the other departments were asked to take a very careful look at absolutely everything that they did to make sure that there would be enough money to cover these other expenses where there weren't sufficient funds.

And I would have to say, as a new minister, that one of the most painful tasks was to go through everything and try to weigh whether this should be ended in Kerrobert and Melville so that we could offer up some of this money to provide funds for the health care system, the education system, and the social services system.

And so what we have here doesn't seem like a lot of money, but it's these little pieces of money throughout the whole of government that is what our budgeting process was all about.

Mr. Osika: — The court-house in Kerrobert being closed down, what will the closest location be now for people that need to use the services of that type of facility?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well for Provincial Court services, there are presently Provincial Court services in Kindersley, Unity, Wilkie, Biggar, North Battleford. As far as Queen's Bench, I think facilities . . . Queen's Bench work will be covered out of Swift Current, Saskatoon, and Battleford, which is where the Queen's Bench court is.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you. That involves some distance then for both the bar and/or clients of members of the bar in that location, which would again increase the costs of doing legal business in those communities. And that is a concern.

As I understand it, and with all due respect to the attorneys, they charge by the hour. And this now increases the time that is eventually charged back to the clients. And I guess, Mr. Minister, that is always the concern. And I appreciate what you said about where we need to save. But again, it seems that that cost unfortunately is passed on to the very taxpayers who can least afford any additional costs for government services that are provided anywhere in the province.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I appreciate your understanding of some of the difficulties. I think one of the . . . You asked previously about reviewing how things are done. There's been an ongoing review, for example, in litigation, civil litigation, and the use of the Queen's Bench court.

And quite a number of years ago, there were introduced the use of fax machines, so that people could actually issue their documents from the court by way of fax. So that meant that you didn't have to take all your documents to the court-house, get them stamped, and then take them back again. There are methods through the rules whereby a lawyer in Macklin or

some other place that's quite a number of miles away from a court-house can actually issue documents. They can file documents that way.

It is also possible for the, sort of most common court proceeding, which is a chambers motion where they argue in front of a judge, whereby that can be done by telephone. And that rule has been in use for many years. And I know I used it over the years as a quite effective way of dealing with a case in a cost-effective and time-effective proceeding.

And it really comes down to asking questions about how much are we willing, as the community, to pay to have access to a building where there are some people, throughout all of Saskatchewan. And we will be continuing to ask hard questions about that, because there are many times people say, we want to solve our problems but we don't want to solve them in that way.

And so we're going to have more questions about this, but it'll . . . Right now we think that there are some quite effective ways for litigants to be involved and use the court system, that allow them to have access, even though they may live 100, 200 miles away.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you. That probably covers the next question I was going to ask with respect to all other services other than criminal court proceedings that folks might want to have access to, such as small claims complaints, small claims court. Is that also included in what you just covered?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well the small claims wouldn't be because that's part of the Provincial Court, although I think there are some methods whereby you can do that. But you have to remember that small claims can be heard at Kindersley and Biggar and Wilkie and Rosetown and those places around Kerrobert. And you know, possibly those kinds of things can be dealt with at the places where provincial courts now sit. So that, I think, is covered by our present system.

Just on a previous point but related to this. You asked about access to Justice. Well when we reviewed and reorganized the personal property registry system and automated it, the net effect was that people could go into their local credit union or bank or wherever and get a search on a car to find out if somebody had borrowed money against it. It used to be that you had to go into a central registry in Regina by mail or some other way to get that information. Well with the automation of the personal property registry, we now have access in thousands of places as opposed to a few offices that were there before.

And so I guess what I would say is that with some patience and with some understanding, with some of the technology, we may actually end up with access in peoples' homes on many of the kinds of things that traditionally you had to go to a government office to get the information.

And that's the kind of thing that we're looking at in the future, which goes way beyond the kinds of discussions about is there a court-house there or is there an office there where we can get some help.

So we're looking at these things, but we're having to use new eyes and new ways of doing it.

Mr. Osika: — The costs of all those services, once again, and understandably, I expect, will be passed on the people that require those services. Is that correct? That will then be added on to whatever professional fees that are required to obtain that type of information.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think I can best answer that question by using the example of the personal property registry. It used to be that if people wanted to find out this kind of information about a car that they were going to buy, they might go to a lawyer and be charged \$50 plus a search fee for the lawyer to find that information.

Now, like I say, one can go to the bank and pay the \$5 or \$10 that it costs and get that information right there. Or if the bank is helping them to buy the vehicle, the bank may even have some arrangement, pay the fee themselves. The net effect is faster, quicker access for less cost.

There are some other things that may happen around some of these things that we're working at towards the future with the land titles automated system that will also change the cost of doing some of the transactions. And we're looking at all these things and trying to make sure that people have access to the justice services that they need.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. That sounds to me like there may be some other very ambitious innovations in the not too distant future, so that leads me to my next question, sir. Are there any other court-house closures being planned by your department?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Not at this time, no.

Ms. Julé: — Good afternoon to your officials and to you, Mr. Minister. In listening to what you were telling the Leader of the Opposition just a moment ago, I don't know if my imagination was running away with me or not here, but I would like you to just clarify a couple of the remarks you made.

And when you're talking about people accessing the court system . . . and in fact you mention you had done some transactions. Was it through telecommunications, telephone, etc.? Am I sort of hearing right then in assuming that in not too long a time, any cases regarding criminal charges in fact will be done through telecommunications also, or is that something that is completely apart from other kind of cases?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think I can say that there are some very interesting examples in Canada, including Saskatchewan, where if one is making an application to appeal the matter to the Supreme Court of Canada, one requires leave to have the appeal go ahead. And those leave hearings are done by, I guess what it's called, interactive video where you talk to a video machine. They see you and hear you, and you can see the judges in Ottawa responding.

So that's one service that is, I think, available in Saskatchewan.

It's not that common. I know in Ontario and I think now in Calgary, Alberta they are using video remand for criminal cases where, instead of taking a person who is to appear before a judge to be remanded in custody again while awaiting trial, for example, they do those hearings by way of televideo — I think that's the term — where the person stays at the correctional centre, the judge is in the courtroom with the defence counsel and with the prosecutor. The person sitting at the correctional centre has a screen with four images in it — himself, the judge, his lawyer, and the prosecutor. And it saves time. It also saves the transportation for the person in jail.

These things, I think, now are done with the consent of the person who is the accused.

But I guess what I'm saying is that there are applications of some of these new technologies which will change our understandings and our use of even the criminal justice system.

(1500)

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, then and what becomes sort of the final trial for someone? Are you telling me that in fact the defendant in that trial may not be present at his own trial, in a sense, except through some video system?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — It's possible. I think at the present time the trial would always have the accused present. But subject to the, I suppose, the consent of the accused, it could be held without that person there.

But basically now all trials . . . there are many proceedings within a criminal proceeding where now we require somebody to bring, usually the police or a constable or peace officer, to bring the person from the correctional centre to the court-house. And those are costs, both to justice systems to sometimes the local police. Anything that we can do to make it fair for everybody but also look at some of the costs, well we're looking at some of those possibilities.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, again my imagination is kind of running ahead a bit. I'm wondering then how in a trial of this sort . . . the jury involved in trials as such, what role . . . where would they be with this video or telecommunications system? How would they take part? How would they be able to . . . where would they be present? Or would that also be through telecommunications at their homes, or what goes on?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think practically, if it was a jury trial, you wouldn't be able to use this system. Although in some jury trials already, one may end up with videotape evidence of an expert, for example. But you know, where they bring in information or they actually will do evidence by telephone with an expert, so that the judge and the accused and counsel and the jury could hear somebody testify over the telephone — that kind of thing already does happen.

Another example of some of this use of technology, which I think you would be quite interested in, is some of the issues that

we discussed previously about child support. When there are interprovincial hearings relating to child support, some of these are now done with that kind of interactive video, which then saves costs for both parties because they can stay wherever they are, and the matter can then be heard without incurring the costs of travel or counsel travel.

So things are changing and there are some experiments. They don't always work, but some of them do work, and I guess we have to be looking at these things as well.

One of our . . . the factors for us in Saskatchewan is that a lot of this equipment is quite expensive and we don't have a lot of money for capital expenditures. So if and when we do get involved in this, it would most likely be in some way where we would lease time or services in some other way rather than set up a whole system, like they might in Ontario or even Alberta.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I'm not going to ask you a question, I'm just going to comment on the use of telephones for witnesses or so on. I can see where there could be trouble with that because there's no affirmation of any kind or guarantee that the person on the other end of the phone is in fact the witness. Or what's going on . . . there would have to be someone, you know, someone there to . . . I can understand that with some sort of video associated with it, but I can't understand it just through telephone.

Mr. Minister, I'm wondering if I could just switch gear a little bit here. Is it appropriate at this time for me to be asking questions about the Whitespruce Youth Treatment Centre? Is that under your authority?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — That is the responsibility of the Minister of Social Services, and all the young offender corrections facilities . . . is the Minister of Social Services in charge of that.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I was just wondering because most of the questions during question period were relayed to you as Justice minister on that. And I presumed that you would be the person to ask about this place and any questions associated with it.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well perhaps just for future reference, the way matters are dealt with: we, as the Department of Justice, are responsible for the court system, which includes the courts that deal with young offenders. So that when a sentence is sort of granted by the judge, then the person goes into custody, into a young offender facility. All of those facilities are administered by the Department of Social Services.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. If you could just bear with us for a moment, I believe our leader has got some further questions as soon as he's finished his conversation here.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Excuse me, I apologize for . . . Enforcement of maintenance orders, I just wanted to ask you a question on that. I was somewhat surprised to see that the budget has dropped in that area. I would have thought that since there was a move towards legislation to bolster that particular aspect of the system . . . that there would

be a decrease? I would have thought there might have been an increase in that particular area. Is there any specific reason for that?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well there's a very minor decrease in this. And actually what the decrease is related to is that the federal Minister of Justice contributed towards the cost of some of our new telephone systems. And so that shows up then in the budget as a contribution that they've made to help us purchase this new telephone system, which will be an efficient one. And I think there was a member's statement about that and also some affirmation of that about two months ago in the legislature.

There's the same number of staff. And I think the other thing is, as we get more experienced, we get better at it; we can do even more work with the same number of people or even with a slightly fewer dollars.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. With all due respect, I expect you and I, as time goes on, will get better as well, sir.

Under the legal service subvote, I notice the budget for civil law has been reduced by nearly \$200,000. Can you please, Mr. Minister, tell me what services are covered by this particular area?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think I can respond to this question with good news. With the government reorganization and sort of examining everything that we do, there are less requirements for the civil law services. And the civil law are the lawyers that work with Mr. Bogdasavich, who's the director of civil law, and provide legal advice to all of the government departments on request.

Well as there are fewer people in many of these departments, there's fewer people that think up weird and wonderful legal questions to be asked or answered and that we've therefore been able to reduce the numbers of staff lawyers in that department by two and a half positions. What does happen, though, and we recognize that there are times when civil law requirements will go up and down, and so over the next while we don't think we will need as many legal services.

The other thing is that we have some . . . as people gain in seniority, they're able to handle more difficult questions with greater efficiency. We also have expanded the use of some of the automated systems, more use of computers and more use of some of that kind of computer searching that all law firms use now. And that's meant that we're using less money in this area.

Mr. Osika: — So less money in the civil law area but it's increased in the criminal prosecutions area. Is there . . . Can you indicate the reason for that? Is it perhaps that we're expecting . . . I'm sorry. The question I had for you, Mr. Minister, was, the budget for public prosecutions, in the prosecution area, has gone up by about 300,000. Is that an offset from one to the other? Were there fewer civil law attorneys and they move over to prosecutions?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The fact is that one of the lawyer

positions from civil law was moved into prosecutions. But that doesn't account for the full amount. What we have seen is that over the last number of years that we've been over budget in what we'd predicted for prosecutions, so therefore we've tried to move up their budget and try to provide them with more support.

As we all know, in Saskatchewan we've had some quite difficult cases to deal with over a number of years and it's our goal to provide as full a support as we can for the prosecutions department. This is a bit of a step up in that.

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Minister, just a little bit on that note, dealing with criminal prosecutions. Recently I'd raised a question in the House regarding early parole, and I was just wondering if you could briefly just explain to the House, at this point, just exactly what your policy is regarding early parole.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think the best way of answering that question is to talk generally about the purpose of our correctional systems. We always need to remember that the provincial correctional system deals with all of those people who are sentenced to two years less a day, or less.

And many times the way that people end up in whatever difficulty they end up with, where they're charged, involves some kind of a personal problem, whether it's a psychiatric problem or a health problem, a substance-abuse problem. And many of our sentences that are given by judges include the possibility and the hope that some kind of help could be available for people. And the whole correctional system is geared to deal with the assessment of individuals and making sure that they get the most appropriate incarceration. And when you're dealing with people like this on a broad base, we end up trying to set policies that will deal with that.

We also recognize that there are situations when the most appropriate place for a person is in a treatment centre, and some of those treatment centres are within our correctional centre, so they stay within the correctional centre, but not all of them are.

I think the question about the early release program is more related to, well what kinds of people do we need to keep locked up in our community? And that's something that we're continuing to evaluate all the time. It's the most expensive way of keeping people in the system, is to keep them locked up. I think we all recognize that, but we also don't want anybody out in the community who is a danger to the community. And I think it's pretty clear that that concern is always uppermost in how we deal with the people.

When we look at Saskatchewan's, you know, incarceration rates being quite high, we end up having to look at a number of factors. Clearly one of the factors involves the number of aboriginal people that are caught in the system. And we are working very closely together with the federal government and with the first nations and with the Metis groups within Saskatchewan to try to address some of these things.

There are no magic wands or simple answers, but there are some things that we can do together. And some of them have to

do with things like early release programs where we might release people into healing lodge situations, community situations where some other things can be done that will help these people.

But we're working on many things, and we're looking to see what we can do.

(1515)

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I appreciate your comments and the concerns that you expressed with respect to the parole system. Do you anticipate any cost savings with respect to that type of an early parole program?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I'm not sure if you can talk about cost savings, in that we hope to spend the money, as a government, in places that are more positive than just locking people up. So there might be some cost savings that way, but on the other hand we're wanting to make sure that whatever dollars that we do have actually fulfil what the community wants, which is to have people be productive members in the community. And how one does that is not always straightforward. Sometimes it's pretty clear that they just need to be locked up, and we'll do that.

Mr. Osika: — And, Mr. Minister, I agree and concur with you, and perhaps people must be told or somehow the message has to get out that people are responsible and will suffer the consequences of their actions. I thank you for those comments.

Still under the legal services, Mr. Minister, the salaries under this particular budget item are set to climb nearly half a million dollars this year, I believe. That appears to be what's happening and I wondered if you could tell me what accounts for that increase.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The explanation is that within prosecutions we have hired some new staff, which would account for about 200,000 of the increase. Some of the people in the prosecutions department had been operating on contract jobs and it was an arrangement, I think about a year ago, a little less, to turn all those contracts into salaries positions, and that meant an increase of about \$81,000. And then in the actual recording of the costs for the salaries that are paid to lawyers, some items had been recorded under a different code number, and when everything was reviewed it made sense that it should be showed under legal salaries. So there was a transfer from code 2 to code 9 of \$211,000. So I think that accounts for the number that you are concerned about.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I should have clarified in my question that it was related specifically to the salaries, and I thank you for that.

Under that same item, with grants, there's a considerable reduction. What would the grants cover?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The reduction, I think of \$200,000, is directly related to a reduction in one-year grants that went to some communities in Justice, and they were a one-year grant

and it's not continued this year so there's a reduction of \$200,000.

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

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

The Chair: — They last appeared before the committee on April 29. I'll invite the minister to introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Today with me is Faye Rafter, acting executive coordinator, and Joan Pederson, assistant executive coordinator.

Item 1

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to the minister and her officials again.

I reread the information on our discussion that we had in April, and I have a number of questions again. And today I received this annual report. I'm wondering if this . . . This one is '94-95. This is the last one, is it?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, that is the most recent report.

Ms. Draude: — We discussed last time the budget that was \$975,000, and you'd received about 935,000. You said the \$60,000 was . . . that there was \$60,000 less, and it was basically because of the advisory council. Was all of that money that was cut back because of the deletion of the advisory council?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The reductions included 39,000 from the advisory council and a 35,000 decrease in accommodation because of anticipated lower lease costs in new space, new accommodation, for the Secretariat.

Ms. Draude: — Have you moved now?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — No, not yet.

Ms. Draude: — And the decrease from last year had nothing to do with cheaper costs last year then?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — This is our projected budget that will have the decrease.

Ms. Draude: — Okay, so there . . . Madam Minister, I was looking at . . . last year we had looked at the expenses. You were supposed to get 975, and you actually got 935, so the difference there was the money you actually spent last year. And you're saying that 35,000 of it, or 39, was the advisory council. The rest couldn't have been space because you haven't moved yet. What is the difference?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, the difference there is 40,000 and that was the advisory council portion of the money that was not occurring during that budget period.

Ms. Draude: — Could you tell me how many were on this advisory council and actually why it was cut?

(1530)

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — It was 12 people, and it was largely in discussion with them that the conclusion was reached, because they felt there are so many people today working on the range of issues that have been of concern to us. I don't think just because we're women but because we're women who are involved in various matters in the community, that there were many people doing more substantive work than they as an advisory council were able to do. And they felt that really they were not able to do much more than replicate work that people were already doing. And it struck us all that we needed to rethink what the best way was to bring women's views into the decision-making process.

Now what government has done in many areas is set up interdepartmental committees which also have a community component. So for example, there's a community strategy on action on violence and so there would be community people represented. They would meet with an interdepartmental group of government people. And that way you've got people working more directly in the areas of concern to them.

And I think the Women's Advisory Council view is that those women were more able to directly represent themselves into that process than as a separate, standalone advisory council.

Now that doesn't mean that we wouldn't find reasons to pull women together to consult on things in the future. It was just that that process as structured was not, if you want to put it this way, adding value to our knowledge or our ability to act on the matters that concern them.

Ms. Draude: — So, Madam Minister, then basically we . . . the advisory council was disbanded and you actually have more of a type of consultation process now?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes. I think that would adequately represent the way that government is doing that kind of consulting now with the community, is that people are actually on committees with interdepartmental people and what not and the views are represented directly.

As well, the Women's Secretariat, who are very connected to women's organizations throughout Saskatchewan, also participate in those interdepartmental committees, and if there are matters that affect a particular segment of women, they will also seek out further information and discussion with the women who would be most knowledgeable about those things.

Ms. Draude: — And now with the consultation process as opposed to the advisory council . . . you are paying the people on the advisory council. Will you be paying people on the consultation . . . that are being . . . consulting?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I think that individual departments would be picking up some expense cost, just related to, you know, a meeting room, maybe a lunch, something like that.

Perhaps if we've asked people to come specifically for something that's primarily of concern to us and not something that they're working on already in the community, we might support some limited travel costs or what not.

But for the most part, we don't have much budget for that, so we would use it very frugally and sparingly and try to give small bits of assistance so that women around the province that are meeting could also meet together, have their discussions. And they quite often send us a report back of the work they've done.

Ms. Draude: — The monies that would be paid to the consultation group, whether it's . . . even if it's just rental or office rental space, will that monies be coming out of your communication budget then?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The monies come out of the general administration budget.

Ms. Draude: — I'm worried, Madam Minister, that if we can cut the advisory council because it was redundant after awhile, maybe they're going to look at the Secretariat in the same way. That concerns me, so I am hoping that the consultation process will ensure that the needs of women across the province are actually brought to the front of the Secretariat. And I feel that that was probably the advantage of the advisory council. So if it's more haphazard that this group get together, do you feel confident that we're still going to be able to have everybody's best interests met by the Secretariat?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Haphazard wouldn't be the word I would choose. I think the process as it exists now is more accountable because women who work in transition houses and children's counselling, etc., are actually dealing with the areas of government that are responsible for that legislation and for that programing.

Part of what I see the role of the Secretariat as being is hooking people up to the appropriate place in government so that their views are represented in the policy and legislative process.

So for example, a recent example would be when we were having some discussions about a farm Internet in terms of information to rural areas. I raised the concern with the director whether women's information would be part of that Internet because many women are involved in farming and have particular needs, particular perspectives, in relation to farming. So we followed up and took measures to make sure that that linkage would be there.

So that would be the kind of thing. We would not always provide something directly ourselves, but we would make sure that people got hooked up to the right place.

Another example would be immigrant women who are concerned with some of the shifting immigration policies in Canada. And so we would hook them up with working committees within the government so that they can represent their views directly to those committees.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, I noticed the other day when we discussed it, we talked about hooking up more frequently. Could you be a little more definitive on what you mean by hooking up with different departments?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well for example, we would meet with a group or a group of individuals — they don't necessarily have to be an organization — who have decided that they don't feel that some important needs are being met. We would sit with them to analyse specifically what those needs are, and then we would try to determine whether or not there is an existing place in the government that is responsible to respond to those things. And if in fact there isn't a place that's responsible to respond, and if we think that it falls within the realm of what one would consider a governmental responsibility, we would then seek the mandate to establish a body that could respond to the particular concerns that were being raised.

For example, we've had some engagement prior to The Labour Standards Act with domestic workers. And that would have been a process of getting the domestic workers' organization hooked up to the labour standards review process, so they could represent their concerns.

And also the Women's Secretariat, acting as both a facilitator but also a bit of an internal advocate, in the sense of making sure that things don't get lost in the big shuffle.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you again. You discussed women in farming a few minutes ago. And at last opportunity, we discussed the fuel tax rebate. And I'm still quite upset about the fact that women are still being discriminated against in this point. And I'm hoping that you have something that is actually a definite objective or some point that you're going to be able to make to ensure that this isn't going to proceed this year. Have you made any steps towards overcoming this problem?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The entire taxation area is handled by Finance. And certainly over the years, whether it's been matters of maintenance enforcement, whether it's been pension sharing, those kinds of things, there has been slow but real progress on all these things, and no doubt the matter you raise is another one that I would believe that Finance is looking at.

And always when you make these changes there's always two issues. One of the issues is, is it right; and the other issue is always, can you afford it? And so if a policy decision is made that something is right, you then develop a financial plan of how you can move towards it. Because whether the discussion is pay equity or whether it's this particular issue you raise, there's no doubt that a case can be made for fairness.

But there's also the corresponding need to ensure affordability. And my goal is always to make progress in the right direction and you can't always do that as quickly as you'd like to. But Finance would be the particular place to get more detail on that matter.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Good afternoon, Madam Minister, and welcome to your officials.

Madam Minister, I'd just like to take you back to the comments that you've just made in regards to . . . I guess we could start with the farm fuel tax rebate — as we see it, a very unfair issue. And as we see it, it's a women's issue. It's simple as that.

If Finance and the economic realities of things should affect men and be in favour of men having certain sort of considerations, then it should be that way for women that have got ownership also, or part ownership, in a farm, and in fact incur the same expenses as their partner.

So we see that as . . . it's getting to be a women's issue more than anything, because it won't be addressed by anyone else. It's simple as that. So I would think that we should go hand in hand on these kind of things and try to effect some changes.

I was reading Judy LaMarsh's book the other night in fact, *Bird in a Gilded Cage*, and she made some comment about they had a long ways to go in 1930 and they've come a little bit ahead, and we still have a long ways to go. But if different sectors of our society have come along, so will women.

And I think that women certainly have got a great strength nowadays, and also a common sense approach to things that will hopefully lead them to some further equity. I guess that probably that's one of my major concerns in this day and age, is certainly with farm women, with pay equity, with things like that.

Now I know that members probably in this House, from every party, don't have the same views on this kind of thing, but I know that there are loads of women out there who have got the same skills certainly as men, and are not being paid equally. And so I think that we have some work to do in that area.

I'd like to switch a little bit right now to some of the statements in the annual report, the Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat. I'll refer you to the page; it's page 13 on harassment prevention in Saskatchewan workplaces.

Madam Minister, if someone comes to you, for instance, with a complaint about sexual harassment in the workplace, and if in fact they have gone through government departments and so on and they just haven't been able to effect some help with these kind of things, which role would you play? How could you help them? What would . . . how would you direct them in this area?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, there's really two levels on which we respond to those things. One is the policy level where, if it seems that the responses aren't sufficient, we would work with the various departments and agencies that are responsible. There's actually quite a few different bodies that play a role in this issue. There's everything from occupational health and safety, Human Rights Commission, workers' comp . . . there's quite a range of agencies that play a role. But our role is a policy and legislative role.

The direct service role resides primarily in the community. So we would be inclined to refer women to the appropriate community resources as far as first line of information. It's no different than a lot of other service provision areas. A lot of

community organization do front-line work in those areas.

But we do meet with women who feel that the system is not working as well as it could, to, I guess, prevent them from being double victimized in these kinds of situations. And certainly we had such a meeting just recently where we developed about a 14-point list of actions to take as far as seeing if we can strengthen the ability for women to get the information they need when they need it and to be clear on what processes are there to have a situation like that examined and some kind of resolution brought to it.

But like I say, the front-line contact would generally be done in the community by a community organization. Aside from that, the officially mandated bodies like occupational health and safety, like Human Rights, would be the places where people would go through formal processes to get those issues resolved.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, if someone has gone through occupational health and safety, through Human Rights, and those kind of things, and they really have not been successful in obtaining the kind of help that they believe that they have a right to and that they need, how then can you help them?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I think we're the first jurisdiction anywhere that has included sexual harassment and actually racial harassment in our occupational health and safety code as a workplace hazard.

And we are not yet into full implementation. We still have to approve the regulations pursuant to that legislation. And after the regulations are approved, there will be a committee set up in each workplace who will establish procedures within the workplace. So I guess we're still at the, a little bit, falling between the crack stage. We haven't still gotten to the point where the legislation that was enacted is fully implemented.

(1545)

And I've encouraged the women I've met with that, once we've got that in place, we could have training workshops with employers that fall under the legislation, with shop stewards, with a variety of people, so they can understand the process, because there's no point having legislation or a process unless you understand it as well.

So our goal will be to make sure that as many people as possible understand it, that the Women's Secretariat is available to do training on that topic, to assist workplaces in understanding how to create a harassment-free workplace, and also to plug some of the other holes as far as making that . . . I mean I look at it a little bit like filling out a UI (unemployment insurance) claim; there's a lot of trick questions. And if someone doesn't talk to you first about, this is the process you're entering into; these are the kinds of questions, you may find yourself getting more into a problem rather than into a solution.

So I do think there is a need for a first line of information. But we are working on a systematic approach to working with the

new legislation and to making sure that there is enough people who are informed, to understand how to link people up.

We also produce a wallet card which, although it's not specific just to harassment, helps link women with a range of services in the community to support a number of problem areas. And you may actually want to get some of those for your constituency office.

Ms. Draude: — Thanks again, Deputy Chairman. Madam Minister, when I looked at the Secretariat, I was excited to have the opportunity to be the critic for this area. But when we . . . after our discussions the other day and reading the information, I see that your department is really trying to be all things for all people when it comes to women. It's sort of like we try and be at home and at work and our communities. We're still trying to do it even to the Secretariat.

And I think that's the real problem. We don't have an opportunity, or your department doesn't have an opportunity, to have the focus that it needs to have to make a real difference. The department has a very proud mandate, but because of the lack of specific objectives and because of the steadily decreasing budget, it isn't allowing the Secretariat to undertake some of the very pressing needs of women.

Under the direction your government is taking, I was hoping you would give the people across the province, women across the province, an opportunity to believe that issues could be resolved and actually make a difference in their lives, and I guess I'm not really seeing that this is happening.

When I talk to women across the province . . . and to be fair, maybe I don't talk to the women that you're talking to. But if I talk to rural women and native women and low income women, and if — and I stress if — they've heard of the department, they don't know what it does. In lots of cases they think it's nothing more than a tea party for rich women, and I hate saying that, but that's basically the way they are thinking. I don't say I agree with them, but I'm telling you what other people are telling me.

And you have a tremendous opportunity to make a difference, but it's going to require a focus and a direction and more money. And I'm saying more money is the last option because I know that it'll just be fed bashing.

The needs of Saskatchewan women are very great, but we're missing the boat. And I think that what we're having is a department in name only because we're trying to do so many different things. Could you tell me specifically what you think we could do for women in business or, for example, native women that's actually going to make a difference to their lives?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well that is a load; there's no question. I'd like to think that as well as initiating a lot of substantive policy discussion that needs to be had in government, we've also done a lot of very practical things. For example, the new labour standards legislation substantively affects women and families by improving working conditions and benefits for part-time workers, providing protection for domestic workers, but also strengthening maternity and other family-related

leaves.

Now that would be of relevance to any employed person in the province, rural or urban. Certainly rural people may tend to be more self-employed, but my understanding is that there's many farming wives who also work off farm, and so that would therefore be of significance to them.

The new occupational health and safety legislation, by your own comments, is important because sexual harassment is an issue in the workplace and in many places, and women do need to have the protection of a society that sends a clear message that violence against women and sexual harassment aren't tolerated and are not appropriate. And so that would be of relevance to all women.

Employment equity has created a substantial increase in the number of women represented in all the boards and commissions and agencies of government as well within executive government, which means that women are having a stronger role in policy making. And really once you get into those jobs, to a degree, what you make of them depends on your ability to assert yourself on the process. It's not much different than being elected. There's no magic wand; it's your ability to assert yourself onto the process, to a degree.

In sexual harassment prevention we do have a training and education program. Child care, it's involved subsidies to low income parents and over 1,000 new, licensed spaces. As well, the number of spaces for teen parents has increased. Many of these teen parent spaces are out in small communities; they're not just in Regina and Saskatoon.

The Victims of Domestic Violence Act I thought to be very significant for all women, because prior to The Victims of Domestic Violence Act, women had to basically pack their bags and the children and run in the middle of the night. What The Victims of Domestic Violence Act does is it gives women property rights. They can stay in the home and the abuser has to leave. And I think that's a significant step up, that you're not just thieves in the night. You have a right to where you live and the children have a right to continuity in their lives. And it's not in all cases that it would be the male parent who is the abusive parent, but it certainly tends to be the dominant experience.

In terms of health, there's been a province-wide toll free information line on sexual and reproductive health that's available to anyone. The breast cancer screening program has been expanded. The Women's Health Centre at the Regina General Hospital, and about 20 million spent for home care expansion and support for family care-givers. And that's very important to women, because if you're a woman and someone falls ill in the family or there's an elderly parent, nine times out of ten a good portion of the care will fall to you.

So the new home care programs and the respite care and those kinds of thing, I think are very important to women. And those are certainly available in all the smaller communities around the province.

Funding for child maintenance orders has increased, and we're

doing a better job of making sure that parents share in the responsibility for children that they've collectively produced. And I think that would be of benefit to all women.

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code has prohibited discrimination. One of the things people don't realize — it is also based on family status and the receipt of social assistance. So you can't discriminate against a woman because she's a poor woman and a poor parent of a family.

I think none of these are small accomplishments. And as far as the aboriginal women in particular goes, I've upped my efforts a lot in the last year, meeting with aboriginal women around the province to really get a fix on what their concerns are. In some cases I've taken their concerns to their elected representatives to tell them what the women in their communities are telling me. And actually the aboriginal women receive some core funding from Indian and Metis Affairs Secretariat, to be able to organize themselves to put their views forward within their communities that they work in.

I could actually continue on. The farm-stress line which although we're not directly responsible for, is certainly another avenue that's available to women in rural areas around the province. And according to the counsellors that I've spoken to on that line, people do make quite a bit of use out of it.

So I don't think these are small achievements and I do think they affect women substantially and I'm actually quite able to hold my head up on these particular matters.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, you're saying exactly . . . you're saying it much better than what I'm trying to say. You're doing so many different things. You're responsible for so many different issues and every issue seems to be a women's issue because it's something that you basically have to work with. And it seems to me that to try and do this all through one Secretariat that's so terribly under-funded doesn't seem to be making sense to anybody.

I'm hoping at the end of the next four years that you no longer have to fight to maintain your budget. It should be the largest budget in the government because you have to do so many things.

But unless you actually can do something that we can put our fingers on rather than just hook-ups and all this linking and this type of thing, all the specific things that you've mentioned, you don't get credit for. I don't know how to say it in any other way. I'm trying to . . . I just wish that the essence of it and the importance of it all could be brought forward.

I want to talk specifically about some of the budget that you have. I understand your total communication budget is only \$50,000. Can you give me a breakdown of how you spend \$50,000 to do all these jobs that you're trying to do?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Largely we spend that money on educational materials related to the areas that we're working on. For example, one of our goals for the coming year, and possibly longer depending on how long it takes us to do the work, is

family friendly workplaces that try to take some of the pressure off of families by finding ways to accommodate the workplace to the reality of people's dual responsibilities in life as parents and family members as well as workers. And there has been some materials produced for that.

One of the decisions the Women's Secretariat made along the lines that you're saying of limited resources was the fact the educational materials would likely travel a long way in getting the word around on a number of things, and certainly I've had people who counsel in technical institutes and what not tell me that they make good use of the materials that we develop.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, do you make funding available to women's organizations?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The role of the Secretariat is not to replace the functions of the other departments of government. It's to be a policy window, an advocate for systemic and structural legislative change. But the purpose is not to take over the functions and nor would I want to do that because I think you would be much further marginalized if it was: well you're a woman; go there. The women go everywhere in the government and should expect to receive services everywhere. We just deal with those particular matters that don't seem to be getting enough attention.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I want to zero in for a minute again, Madam Minister, on a few things. First of all, how very much I admire yourself and the work you've been trying to do — trying to do and doing well, in fact.

The other thing I want to suggest is that I want to make an equation to the Women's Secretariat and its function as part of government. I don't think it should be part of the government of the day. I think it should be . . . there should be an all-party committee for the Women's Secretariat and we should then in fact have people from every party. Unfortunately the Tories don't have any women, but should that ever happen — which is unlikely . . . but anyway at this point, anyways, I would like to see an all-party committee set up for this.

I think, simply because we definitely have a different way of doing things and we're much more direct in our approach at things. And I think we have a common sort of sense of responsibility and other qualities that would lead us to helping things like the child prostitution situation in the province. And I think we would get action a lot quicker than men would; it's simple as that to me.

And so there are areas like that that I'm really very concerned about. And I'm wondering whether or not the Women's Secretariat, as it is right now, has got any ability to influence government. If in fact you can in fact suggest policy or drive home some points that in fact would influence policy making in this area — this horrendous area of child prostitution — and the abuse and use in violence of children's bodies, particularly young girls. I understand there's only 15 per cent of child prostitutes, or 11 per cent, something like that, that are young men and the rest are young girls.

So I think we have to take the bull by the horns and start really moving on this, and I'm wondering if you have any influence in any way on this matter.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Again these are comprehensive questions. And I appreciate your concern over all these things. I do think it would be worthwhile to have all-party discussions and I see no reason why we can't do that when we've all got a little more time.

One of the things though I do believe — and I say this often when I meet with people in the community — is that yes, you've elected me, but I can't do it all. And it takes all of us working in our respective organizations, in our respective places, in our respective parties, in our respective community associations, to create the attitudinal changes and the social changes that will make these problems less likely to happen. The stronger parenting, the stronger community awareness of the other people who live in the community — that creates a safer community environment. It's not a thing that's going to be solved just by government.

And so I think it's important that we have those discussions, but then we branch out from those discussions to create that change in all of our various organizations. Because legislation is important from the purpose of protecting people, but legislation will not change the thinking in a society. So it's really important that we all take that awareness and take it back to our homes, our workplaces, our organizations, and help to get that critical mass developed so that everybody will share the view that that's an important issue to deal with.

There is some support for the reduction of prostitution efforts. But of course we've got issues to deal with there, like adults who think that's okay, people who view other people as a commodity. So there's a large range of attitudinal and other issues we're dealing with. And some of it, obviously the results will be at both the federal and provincial level on the legislative and punitive end of things as well.

(1600)

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, the Ombudsman for our province is a woman. She is having some difficulty with, in fact, feeling the autonomy that she needs to have is there. And not because she's a woman; just because of the way things are structured.

I'm wondering if I could ask you to be so brave as to give your comments on whether the Ombudsman's office, from a woman's point of view or from anybody's point of view, should have an all-party committee to determine and approve the budget?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I've certainly never heard this view, that the Ombudsman's office isn't independent. And they do report to the legislature, which is an all-party committee. The Ombudsman's report is tabled here in this legislature, and this Committee of the Whole is the all-party committee. So I do think that that happens. And I've certainly never had the Ombudsperson or anybody else suggest to me that that office

doesn't have sufficient independence.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, I'm not too sure of whether or not you've had the opportunity to read the Ombudsman's report this year. But I would invite you to do so because I think you would be much clearer on some of the difficulties that that person is experiencing. And it has nothing to do with women or men; it just seems that the way it's set up is causing some difficulty. So there definitely is a problem of independence, I think, in that.

So I would thank you, and I will turn this questioning back over to my colleague.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you again, Mr. Deputy Chairman. I notice with interest you said that the Women's Secretariat would increase sensitivity to within government as we go through the various kinds of policy development. Does that mean that new Bills and amendments go through the Women's Secretariat before they come to the House?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, the items that we would be asked to comment on would be the ongoing working committees that we're on which is substantial — about 24, I think — but also specific areas that there would be a need for us to comment. For example, when there was discussions with the federal government about the Canadian Health Social Transfer changes, the Women's Secretariat was part of developing the guidelines for what should be considered in that discussion.

Right now with the discussions about Canada Pension Plan, the Women's Secretariat is forwarding the analysis that should take place to make sure that women are not further disadvantaged by changes to the Canada Pension Plan, being that for whatever reason we live longer and need support much further into life and often have less of an economic base on which to build that pension for the future.

And so in fact, next week I'll be attending a federal women's ministers meeting in Winnipeg, and that's partly where the agenda gets set. There's a federal agenda that we commonly set and then provincial agendas where strategic plans are developed within the provinces. But we try to hook some of our work to the federal agenda so that there's a momentum right across Canada for particular kinds of work to get done.

So my answer I guess in long would be that we don't look at everything but we do participate in most significant policy discussions.

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

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Chair, I'm on my feet to request leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Today in the Speaker's gallery we have a fine group of some 37

grade 5 students from Vickers School in Prince Albert. I believe they drove up today. They took the four hour drive. And as this is part of their studies about government, I welcome the students, and I want to welcome their teachers: Dave Monette, Linda Franc-Vickers, and Elaine Olexson. And I look forward to meeting with these students in a few moments, taking a photo, and also answering their questions about the proceedings in the House.

So I ask all members to welcome this group from Prince Albert.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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Item 1

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Madam Minister, whenever you discuss all the different tasks that you have in front of you, I just can't help but be amazed how many things that you're suppose to be doing. And it just leads me to believe that we can't do a . . . I shouldn't say we can't do a good job of everything. But it seems it would be difficult to do a good job of everything you're expected to do when there's so many of them.

Has there been talk of joining your department with Intergovernmental Affairs or something where you can get more of a profile and more money and more help — something where you actually can make a real difference?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Certainly over the year, one of the things we will be doing is looking at whether there's any way to organizationally strengthen our responses in this area. We did a little thinking about it last year. It's kind of like the advisory committee problem. It's trying to figure out really what the best way to do it. What we're doing right now might not be a 100 per cent, but it works not badly. And so I would be reluctant to change it unless we had a pretty solid idea of how the new creature would be an improvement.

Quite often organizational specialists have found . . . even with all the restructuring that's going on everywhere, specialists who work in that area have found that sometimes you don't need to change structures. You just need to change working relationships, and we spend too much time sometimes moving people and furniture around and not enough changing the relationships. So that's partly how the interdepartmental committees came about: rather than merging whole departments, just get people working differently. And some of that will solve some of that problem.

But it is something we think about, and perhaps when we have our first all-party rap session on this, we can discuss whether there might be a better way to do it.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, maybe until the Minister of Labour decides that pay equity isn't just a women's issue,

maybe we should just divide the money in half and have a men's secretariat, a Women's Secretariat, and no Department of Labour, and that could save some money — divide it in half then.

I'm just wondering how many policy analyst positions do you have within the Women's Secretariat?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Three.

Ms. Draude: — One of the last questions I have for you is, do you have any specific plans for anything you can do to assist the needs of rural women? Within business or within their farming, is there some specific mandate that you'll be working on this year?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Again I would suggest that that might be an area we could pursue a bit more in discussion. It's always been difficult for all the reasons that rural life presents a few more challenges because people are further. Travel is more expensive.

One of the ways we've come up with recently that might be part of the solution to that is use of the Internet for those people who are equipped. But a lot of farms are moving in that direction.

Another solution is the SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network Corporation) link-ups. For International Women's Day there was a rural SCN link-up. And although it didn't last very long, the women were very excited, who participated in it, and quite enjoyed that ability to link up without actually having travel great distances from their community.

So this may be something we could consider doing again that would make it easier for people to talk to each other without having to be away from home for a long time.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, I believe probably most of the women in your caucus see the need, and your department probably was saved because different men in the department felt that it would be a backlash if you cut the whole department. I think it would be a tremendous backlash, and there should be.

But I do believe that there has to be a real focus on something that we can . . . either with money or with focus of making a difference so that we can tell people that this is what we're standing for.

Madam Minister, I have one more question from my colleague here.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. And I must say it's been fun in the past having a conversation with yourself on the role of men and women in society. So we'll continue that conversation as time goes on.

Madam Minister, I would just want to know and be pleased to find out whether or not you have some input from the group called SWAN; it's the Saskatchewan Women's Agricultural Network. And if so, what kind of issues have they brought to your attention, and how do they feel that you would have been

able to support them or help them out?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — At this particular point, it would be a lot like the relationship we have with a lot of organizations around the province. We have an open door. They contact us if there's something they want to discuss. Certainly they're concerned about child care issues, the violence issues, and so the initiatives in those areas would be meaningful.

I spoke actually at their annual conference in Saskatoon this year as did the Minister of Agriculture. So we had an opportunity for some informal discussion there. Probably one of the reasons we hear a little bit less is just by the very self-sufficient nature of rural communities. But there has been a long-standing concern about child care and how to best provide it in areas where people live increasingly far apart, and it's not an easily solved answer.

But we do set goals. Just to get back to something that's been a theme running through both of your questions, we do set goals, again both in relation to the federal goals which in this last year have been to establish economic indicators for women's well-being, to look at women in restructuring, women in business, and financial primary type of information for women. And as a result of our commitment to that national agenda, we recently produced a booklet on all the various supports and avenues there are for women to participate in small business.

And on the provincial level, I would say that in the last year we've been making efforts to have a much stronger relationship to aboriginal, immigrant, and farm women, as well as the business agenda. So it is a broadening out.

And you're right; it is difficult to serve that many masters. But we try to pick a strategy for what we're working on for the year, get it done, and then the next year reassess it. If we're not finished, finish it, or if it's not as relevant, move on to new areas where success seems possible.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I have one question, and I presume it might take you a little time to answer it. And after that time, our colleague from Moosomin will be asking a few questions of you.

Madam Minister, in regards to child care in rural areas . . . and there's enough controversy on this, goodness only knows. But I've had some inquiry from the Yorkton area about people concerned that . . . or parents concerned that as they're at work, the children that do come home from school are coming home from school at 3:30, 4 o'clock, somewhere in there, and the parents are not home till 5 or 5:30.

(1615)

Now they understand that there is danger and their kid is either roaming the streets getting into trouble or in fact having someone take advantage of them or whatever, or just they don't want them sort of at loose ends all over the place, especially the young children.

Now apparently in that community there is a child care home

approved for that, but I understand that the numbers of children that can be taken in are up to eight. Is that correct? Do you know whether or not that's true? I've heard it's seven or eight and that they can't get approval for any more. And in fact they don't have another place there. They don't have another place where these children can be taken in for that hour or two or whatever it may be for their safety. If you have some knowledge of this, I would appreciate a comment on it.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — My detailed knowledge of the day care regulations is sketchy. I would only say that one of the ongoing debates in the whole child care area is how much standard is required, and how much to give parents leeway to pick whatever kind of care they choose to pick for their children. You know, in the cut-off of where government ceases to be responsible for assuring that there are safety standards, health standards, etc., in the child care, you really would be best put to ask those questions specifically of Minister Calvert.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I intended to do that. I'm just really very afraid that I won't have enough time to ask him all the questions that I have coming for him. But I thank you, and I will turn over the questions to anyone else that may want to present some to you. Thank you very much.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Madam Minister, and your staff, I've been listening very inquisitively and with a lot of interest to the debate that's taken place this afternoon. I'm just a little afraid that since the questions coming from the opposition members happen to be two of the female gender in this Assembly, and Madam Minister and her staff, I may appear like a real male chauvinist this afternoon. But there's some very significant questions to ask and to raise.

And one of those . . . I just had to take in the comments you made about child care. And first of all let me say that the community of Moosomin, there were a number of women in that . . . or individuals had been approached about a child care program. And I believe that program is off and running. Now I don't believe your ministry really had any involvement in that program, but I think the people in Moosomin who put that program together — and I believe they worked in some cases with Social Services and some assistance there — are certainly pleased to have it.

But at the same time there are many people across this province, women in particular, who have become somewhat offended when we talk about child care, and we forget about one sector of our society. And I just want to raise that issue for the women who chose to be homemakers and chose to be care-givers . . . and recognize the fact that I don't know if we can replace the service that they offer in our society in providing for young children and families.

And also a point that we noticed on the census form this year, the first time it's ever been there, is there was, I believe, a question that addressed the value of work that women who would stay at home to, if you will, the choice of theirs to stay at home and provide a home environment, look after the family, and not go out and work. The value of their work in the home so far for many years has been forgotten. And I think, Madam

Minister, we need to keep this in the back of our mind as well that there is a role to play for women in that area.

I do have a concern as well, and I come back to a point brought forward, I believe, by the member from Kelvington-Wadena talking about . . . I look at the Women's Secretariat. I see the expenditures here, and I'm almost reaching the point . . . and I think the member mentioned maybe splitting the funding. I don't know if we've split the funding, but I think there are many men across this province who are beginning to think the pendulum has swung so far, we might have to get a men's secretariat in motion just to bring the pendulum just a little closer back to the centre again. I'm not sure about that.

But the thing is, Madam Minister, you talked about the fact of equality. And I listened to the Minister of Health when we talked about the new boards, the structure of the boards, and the reason that there are still four appointees so that we can guarantee that there is representation from all the sectors of our society, and specifically women on boards.

Well I look across this province and I look at the board make-up of many health boards through the years, and I specifically note that in many cases a lot of members on many of those health boards through the years were women. So I think even society itself recognizes there is a place for women on boards.

So while this isn't a specific issue that relates to you, I do have a concern with the fact that we use . . . your government uses these lame duck excuses for their board appointees all the time rather than open and accountable boards, even having a committee of the legislature appoint board members.

I have a question for you though, Madam Minister. Where was your department, Madam Minister . . . you just made a comment a moment ago about women in this province. And I think it's general knowledge across the nation that women in many cases tend to be the lower income earners, especially if they're single parent families or if the spouse happens to pass on when they're a young age and doesn't leave them in a position where there's a lot of income.

I actually have had a lot of women come to me, women who are in their later years of life, as their spouse has passed on and because there wasn't really anything built up in the past, or they struggled through life, didn't have a lot to live on.

And I would like to know where your department was when your government discontinued the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. This was a pension plan, Madam Minister, that I think . . . and I'd be surprised if your department and certainly members of your government caucus didn't receive letters from people right across this province, asking why you scrapped the program that was actually put in place and would have been addressing in the long term, the needs of these low income individuals in our society, specifically women, that would give them something to look forward to when they retired.

And I'm wondering, Madam Minister, if you could respond to that, and ask where you were when that program was scrapped.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I have a quick run-down of some of the points you raised. For the first time the federal census will be keeping track of unpaid hours of work that is done, and I think primarily this has been at the urging of women who feel that what you don't pay for you don't value. And so it's an attempt to put a value on the unpaid work that is done many times by women. And so the federal census will be doing that.

But when you talked about the need for a men's secretariat, Chief Justice Bertha Wilson made an interesting comment during the aboriginal commission. And she said what's important when you're making change is not necessarily that the opportunities are equal but that the results are equal.

And the comparison I would use is for a person in a wheelchair to go up those steps, what would make that an even result is that they would end up at the top of those steps the same as I would, but how we would get there might be different.

And so equality is not all merely in having the same door opened. Sometimes there's other things required. In terms of women on health boards, that wouldn't surprise me because one of the ghettoization problems that women have had in society is that they're primarily seen as care-givers. And it's good that they be represented on health boards, but not just relegated to the role of care-givers as a single opportunity that they might have.

As far as the lower income earners go and the pension issue, it is I think unfortunate that the program that was started under the previous Conservative government was not affordable, because it was a good program. But it was not an affordable program because all of the matching money came directly from taxpayers. And I guess you'd have to square that circle as to how you were going to pay for it.

I think it's worth raising the issue again in the context of the discussion in the CPP reform — the Canadian Pension Plan. Because a plan like that would probably be more sustainable if shared out across the federal level. And certainly when I lived in the North and what not, I met many women who were trappers, fisherwomen, and what not. And they had never in their lives contributed to a pension nor would they have enough money to put into one. Even if somebody else matched it, they just would not have the surplus income to do that.

So really the best solution for most people is a universal Canada Pension Plan, and that's why this pension discussion will be so important.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Madam Minister, might I remind you, we do have a pension plan in this province already that is unaffordable — a pension plan that has an unfunded liability of almost \$3 billion basically, better than \$3 billion; a pension plan that affects a few people across this province, most of them public sector people. And, Madam Minister, that pension plan is going to cost the people of Saskatchewan more money than the Saskatchewan Pension Plan ever would have cost.

The realities are, Madam Minister, even if it had some problems, some minor changes . . . and people would have

accepted that, would have addressed some of those concerns. And so I don't think it is a good enough excuse to say, well we had to dump it because it wasn't affordable. The realities were it was brought in by a former administration . . . wouldn't look to continue with something that may in the long run be a benefit to the people of the province.

So I for one, I'm sorry, cannot buy the fact that it was unaffordable when we've got a major public pension plan right now that's going to be a major cost to governments down the road. Your ministry in the beginning, starting with your government, as members retire and draw on that plan . . . and should the Premier retire before the next election, he's going to be one of the first individuals who's going to benefit from that unfunded pension liability.

And Madam Minister . . . And we've got the member from Regina South chirping away again. I enjoy it when he gets into the debate.

Madam Minister, you made a comment about a number of services, and I'm not exactly sure. You were listing a number of services to either the member from Humboldt or the member from Kelvington-Wadena. You mentioned about the availability of 1-800 sex line, the farm stress line, and abuse program. And I just don't remember all the programs.

But does your department administer . . . are you involved in these programs at all, Madam Minister? Or are they just programs available through other services and areas?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We don't directly program. We're a policy, information and, on some level, advocate within government. But we don't do direct program delivery. We do provide some training in areas of new legislative development and what not, so that people know how to implement the legislation. But we're not a direct service body.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Minister, for that clarification, because I wasn't exactly sure if you were actually providing those services. My understanding was that they're available in other government agencies and covered there, and that you're not really directly involved in the funding of them.

Madam Minister, we talk about women. How many deputy ministers or women in deputy minister roles have we got in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — At this particular point at that particular level, there are none.

Mr. Toth: — I think that's unfortunate, Madam Minister, in view of the fact that there's been a lot of proposals brought forward, or suggestions brought forward that this is important.

But, Madam Minister, I guess when I look at that, and I'm sure that maybe in your position as a minister of the Crown, even the Premier's position, the fact that there aren't any today, at the present time anyway, maybe just eats a little bit away at it because of the fact that that's one of the things you've been promoting for so long.

What about women heading Crown corporations? How many women are heading Crown corporations in this province?

(1630)

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — There's a number of women in senior levels of the Crowns, but none heading the Crown corporations.

One of the tasks I've certainly set myself as minister is to make some effort to bring forward names for consideration. Because one of the difficulties is that often when jobs are available . . . I hope I don't make any of my women associates angry when I say this, but there's two parts to a job. One is the job being available and the other one is believing that you are a person who might do that job.

It's not much different than the decision I made when I ran for office. I had never considered myself as a person who might run for office. And sometimes in those instances you had to actively encourage people to recognize that they have the skills, they have the ability, and what's holding them back.

So it's sort of a two-part thing. Sometimes you need to make a little extra effort there to equalize the result.

Mr. Toth: — I certainly agree with you, Madam Minister. And I think for all intents and purposes many of the women, if not all of the women across this province, would like to feel that the reason they received a certain job or got a certain job was because, number one, they saw a job offered and they made an application because they believed they could do the job — that they were qualified. And at the end of the day that job was given and awarded to them based on their qualifications and their ability to perform their duties, or perform that job, fulfil the roles of that job rather than the fact of their female gender.

And I think that's very important, and it's maybe time we recognized that and acknowledged it even more.

The fact that you're here today is an indication that the people in your constituency felt that you had the qualifications and the abilities to represent them in this Assembly. And on many occasions I have to admit that you're doing an excellent job, and we appreciate that.

However, Madam Minister, of the \$901,000 that you're spending in Women's Secretariat, how much money really is tied up in administrative procedures and how much money actually goes into real services that benefit the people of this province?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I would say that if it were not for some of the work done by the Women's Secretariat, there would be a great deal of services and money that would not end up in a lot of people's pockets. And you can't look at a policy non-service delivery organization in the same way that you would look at a service delivery in terms of per cent of administrative costs, because we are a policy body; we're not a service body.

And where we would have impact is on things like maintenance orders, on things like the inability to kick a single parent family

out of a place where they're living, the need for pension reform to make sure that senior women are adequately provided for. So the money ends up directly in people's pockets by virtue of the changes that are made, but it would not be part of our budget to transfer it there.

It's really very difficult to measure this kind of an activity in that way. You have to measure it by the substantiveness of the changes involved.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Madam Minister, just one final comment before I take my place. I think, Madam Minister, when we look at the expenditure . . . and I realize the expenditure in Women's Secretariat isn't that large, but at \$901,000, it's a significant amount of money. We've seen over the last number of days, Madam Minister, men and women across this province becoming very distraught over the amount of services being offered in health care, and certainly education is another area that I'm starting to have people raise concerns.

Proposals have been put forward; they've been rejected. In health care specifically the issue . . . and many of the individuals we're dealing with who are calling us are actually widows or older individuals who are very concerned about the services that they have had and maybe began to take for granted because they were there. They were being taken care of, and now they may find they're going to have to look elsewhere for some of the services they need and require.

While I realize this 901,000 will not meet all the needs, I guess I come to one point, Madam Minister. I think it's time for governments, your government included, to really assess how they're spending the money and the importance of maintaining, if you will, departments or directorships versus cutting departments and looking at providing a need that meets the real need out there of, say, the women in our society.

And I guess my final comment would be this. At the present time, I do not know if the people of Saskatchewan are really benefiting from the Women's Secretariat. I believe a lot of women in this province could certainly receive the same benefits from many of the ministries that already exist and all the programs that are being offered there. And that the dollars in this program . . . even as the Premier commented today, he could pay his interest for one year just by looking at this department. And then use that other \$900,000 to provide services to meet the real needs that people are looking at in this province.

So while I acknowledge there are some areas that you certainly offer a service, Madam Minister, we certainly could provide services that . . . the bottom line for people is what really meets them at home today. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I do feel the need to respond to that. You're no doubt familiar with the term leveraging, and sometimes a small expenditure can lever many other dollars. And for the 900,000 that might be spent in us working on issues of maintenance enforcement, for example, we would lever a large amount of money out of errant fathers' pockets to go towards the support of their children in the province. So it would be

900,000 very well spent, because if we divvied that 900,000 up amongst all the women who were not receiving adequate maintenance support, it wouldn't go very far.

The 900,000 is well spent when it assists in new labour standards legislation that require people to receive pro-rated benefits. And if we divided that 900,000 up between all of those workers it would not create much result, but if used to lever those appropriate benefits from the pockets of their employers, then it probably is money well spent. Because if you can't make a living by working, then I would challenge someone to ask me how else you're supposed to do it.

And I think if you could look at it that way, yes, other departments may think of these things if we didn't exist, but the fact that the inequality has persisted over so many years would suggest that they don't always. So I guess a government needs a soul as well as services, and hopefully we provide a little chunk of that.

Mr. Toth: — I thank you, Madam Minister. And while we may agree to differ on some of our views and observations and the services, I want to thank you for your time and the of presence of your officials in the Assembly here today.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — And I'd like to thank all the members for their excellent and thoughtful questions.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. The men should enjoy this, but you know, a woman's work is never done, and I do have couple more questions that have come to mind, and actually some comments.

The member from Moosomin has just stated that he would hope that women should get the job of . . . jobs out there or management positions, etc., because of qualifications and their abilities and so on. And we will all certainly hope so too, but we know that this is not the case.

It is simply viewed out there that men . . . they're used to having men in those positions and there is quite a way to come. And I think that this is also an attitudinal change and it has to be coming from some of the males in our society if in fact his hope and his wish that this comes to pass, will be.

I just want to make one last comment about the situation of rural women, and again it refers to the member from Moosomin's comments. And you know, women are valued, parenting is valued, it really is. But it's a pretty lonely life. And I think that if in fact we do cherish and we do value the parenting skills and the women that choose to stay at home and to become home builders, community builders, and worth builders in children, you know, it's only going to come about if they understand and they know they're valued. And so that has to come from those spouses that are with them and the communities around them.

We have to up the profile, I guess, of the importance and the value of parenting and how very important it is that children are nurtured and that they feel that they have a place of importance and worth so that their energies that they have, you know, can

reach out and turn to everybody in society and to end up contributing and feeling good about themselves. That doesn't happen unless we have good parenting.

Now it's really incumbent upon the men in our society then and/or the other spouse, whoever it may be, if in fact the father is at home as the primary care-giver, for the woman to give him that encouragement. But I think that's been a major problem with women in the past — everybody wants to feel that they're valued and they're important, and if they're not told this, it can't just be assumed.

So that's one way I think that men could help and it wouldn't cost any money. So I thank you, Madam Minister, for your comments and your help today. Thank you.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2 agreed to.

Vote 41 agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 91 — An Act to amend The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 1996.

The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990 prescribes the procedure to be used for administering the charging of offences created by provincial legislation. It also prescribes the court's powers and duties respecting provincial offences and the enforcement of fines resulting from conviction.

Pursuant to this legislation, over 100,000 tickets are issued each year for contravention of provincial regulatory statutes. Most of these tickets are for offences related to driving. However, a broad range of activities is regulated which can lead to offences. Some examples are the sale and use of alcohol, fishing and hunting, the use of provincial parks facilities, corporate behaviour regulated by The Securities Act, and the use or abuse of the environment.

This legislation is used on a daily basis by peace officers, court staff, judges, and municipalities. It is changed every few years to respond to requests for additional clarity or to deal with new issues that have arisen.

Suggestions for improvements to the summary offences procedure come not only from persons who administer the legislation on a regular basis. On occasion, a citizen affected by the outcome of a case brings to the attention of the Minister of Justice a change that can improve our judicial system. For instance, a recent change to the regulations allows peace officers issuing a ticket to require a court appearance in any case where the commission of an offence results in the injury or

death of person.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — In these circumstances, the individual would not have the option of simply paying the amount shown on the ticket. Previously a court appearance could be required in these circumstances, but the administrative procedure to achieve this was cumbersome.

This change was made in response to requests from a person who feels that the system was deficient in its handling of a particular case. The change to the regulations is one small step to improve these kinds of situations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — It may appear to be insignificant, however it demonstrates not only that we are listening and we'll make improvements to the legislation to make it as fair as possible, but also that individuals can make a difference in our legal system.

One amendment I am introducing at this time will allow judges to specifically order restitution as a sentence. This will give judges the ability, in appropriate situations, to order a person convicted of an offence to repay persons whose property was lost or damaged as a result of the commission of the offence.

Currently, people who have suffered property losses due to an offence are able to initiate a small claims action to repair or replace their property. However, if it is a case where the judge thinks restitution is a proper remedy, this amendment will enable a judge to spare the victim from taking this additional action. This amendment is modelled on a similar restitution remedy which has been added to the Criminal Code and which is expected to come into force this year. Our new restitution remedy is not expected to be widely used. However, we think that it should be available in appropriate situations.

Another amendment will allow judges to issue distress warrants for seizure of the goods of a corporation where the corporation has outstanding fines. In fact this enforcement remedy is also expected to be used rarely. Generally, most corporations pay their fines, and we have a low level of outstanding corporate fines. Nevertheless, effective enforcement remedies should be available.

From the public policy point of view, fines are an inexpensive method of penalizing an offender. At the same time, fines generate revenues which can be used to offset some of the costs of providing the administrative services to deal with contravention of provincial laws. Failure to make effective efforts to collect outstanding fines can call into question the credibility of the court process and the justice system. The amendments I have just described are consistent with the objective of having the person or corporation convicted be accountable for his, her, or its actions.

Another amendment I am introducing will prevent municipalities from using provisions of The Urban Municipality Act, 1984 to bypass the usual summary offence procedure with respect to traffic offences. The availability of photo-radar technology makes it possible to obtain evidence without an officer being present to witness the offence or serve the ticket.

A provision in The Urban Municipality Act, 1984 allows municipalities to set a fine to be paid by a person who has contravened a designated by-law offence and avoid prosecution for the offence. This provision is typically used for parking offences. The person who receives a ticket can pay a reduced amount to the municipality and not be charged with the offence.

This amendment will ensure uniformity and consistency throughout the province respecting procedures and consequences which apply to speeding and other moving traffic offences.

Two other amendments are being added to increase consistency with Criminal Code provisions.

The first is our definition of prosecutor. The present definition involves extra paperwork to appoint agents in situations where a Crown prosecutor does not conduct all or part of the prosecution. The extra procedural step in our present legislation does not exist in the Criminal Code or the provincial offences legislation of most other provinces. The change to the definition does not change who will prosecute offences, and no change in practice will occur. However, the extra red-tape aspect of the definition is removed.

The second change that will ensure consistency with the Criminal Code is a change to reference section numbers of the code that will change when the new federal sentencing Bill comes into force. This is expected to occur in September 1996.

Finally, a minor amendment will clarify the rule relating to when judges may order that a person will be incarcerated for failure to pay a fine. The rules set out in the legislation are not being changed. However, there appears to be some lack of consistency in interpretation; thus any ambiguity which may be giving rise to this inconsistency is removed.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act seems to be mainly a housekeeping Bill. Therefore I would just like to speak briefly on some of the changes and their implications before it passes on to committee stage.

Mr. Speaker, most of the amendments proposed in this Bill are making small changes to existing legislation. In the case of section 4, the changes are necessary because the Criminal Code is changing and our provincial laws are borrowed directly from the code. The renumbering of the sections in our provincial Act must mirror the renumbering in the Criminal Code. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, we have no objection to these types of changes.

They will have little effect on the average person, which is who we are in this House to represent.

Other simple changes outlined in the Bill may have a small effect on municipalities, however. For example, the Bill expands the definition of peace officer to include by-law enforcement officers appointed under The Rural Municipality Act. Since it already includes officers under the urban and northern municipality Acts, this does seem like a logical amendment.

It's nice to see that this government can make a change that actually benefits rural municipalities. Usually all we have seen from this government is hit after hit on our RMs (rural municipality), which of course, Mr. Speaker, brings up another proposed change in this Bill.

This is a section which prohibits municipalities from offering discounts on speeding tickets. Mr. Speaker, apparently this government is worried that communities will buy photo-radar machines and issue a lot of speeding tickets and offer discounts to people who will pay them within an early time frame. From my understanding, the government doesn't want discounts offered by municipalities on speeding or other moving traffic offences. Mr. Speaker, the municipal representatives we have spoken with resent the government's attempt to clip their wings.

So many of the Bills introduced in the House this session have shown that the government wants to take control away from the municipalities and put it back into their own hands. Unfortunately, even when municipalities protest, the government doesn't listen and these changes go ahead anyway.

Mr. Speaker, we don't want municipalities using speeding tickets as a cash cow either. Speeding is a serious offence that can cause accidents and claim lives, so it should be prevented in the name of safety, not in the name of profit. But it would be unfair to assume this is what municipalities are planning to do. It shows that this government has very little faith in local governments. And I think that's a sad statement of this government's faith in the people of Saskatchewan. Once again, the government seems to be saying that they know best and that no one else can be trusted.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we believe our local governments can be trusted and will be acting in the best interests of their people. Maybe the government is scared that the municipalities will need to raise money because they won't be able to withstand the deep funding cuts imposed on them by the NDP government. Maybe the members opposite know that municipalities are staggering under these cuts and trying desperately to survive. Maybe that is the reasoning, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's one section of this Bill that we feel is particularly positive. That's the section that will allow judges to make people pay restitution to victims of provincial offences.

How many stories have we heard about break-ins or car thefts or vandalism, where the innocent owner ends up carrying the

costs? This is especially true in crimes committed by younger offenders. The court gives them a slap on the wrist while the victim is forced to forgo a vacation to pay insurance deductibles. I don't think this acts as a deterrent to the offender. They are not forced to realize that they have significantly affected the lives of their victims. Instead of taking personal responsibility for their actions, they are allowed to slough it off as society's problems. By no means is this fair, Mr. Speaker, and I am happy that this government has realized this and taken at least this small step to try to change it.

As I understand it, this Bill will let judges order the offender to cover the cost of restoring or replacing property. This will even be enforceable when the property is sold to an unknowing third party. That's great news, Mr. Speaker. It's about time our society stopped punishing the victims and started punishing the criminals. It is what people have been telling politicians for years. It's about time that someone listened and made a positive move on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, there are several other small changes in this Bill and we will have some questions for this government when it reaches the committee stage. However at this time we see no reason to hold it up. Our concerns will be better addressed at that later time. Thank you.

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

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.

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