

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of the Province of Saskatchewan. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crimes, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, and the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

I so present.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also present petitions on behalf of the citizens of the great communities of Melville and Grayson. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to present a petition on behalf of the citizens of Regina.

Whereby your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice

department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I rise as well on behalf of citizens of Regina to present a petition. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crimes, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, and the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to present a petition on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by citizens of Regina, namely from the areas of Grayson Crescent, McTavish Street, York Street, Boucher Crescent, Rae Street, Selby Place, Scarth Street, and . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The hon. member will recognize that in presenting petitions he is only to refer to communities.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, this petition is presented by citizens of the city of Regina, and all across the city, I might add.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise and join with my colleagues today in bringing forward petitions on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a

police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are from the Balcarres, Lebret area of the province. I so present.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens concerned about the growing problems of youth crime. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, those who have signed these petitions are from the city of Regina. I so present.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise today to present petitions of concerned citizens throughout the province concerned about the escalating wave of property crimes. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

The petitioners are from the city of Regina. I so present.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise with petitions on the issue of young offenders. My petition is signed by citizens of the community of Kamsack:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its

fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problems of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to present petitions to do with the problem of youth crime. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to establish a special task force to aid the government in its fight against the escalating problem of youth crime in Saskatchewan, in light of the most recent wave of property crime charges, including car thefts, as well as crimes of violence, including the charge of attempted murder of a police officer; such task force to be comprised of representatives of the RCMP, municipal police forces, community leaders, representatives of the Justice department, youth outreach organizations, and other organizations committed to the fight against youth crime.

The petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from the towns of Kamsack and Pelly.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens petitioning the Assembly to establish a task force to aid in the fight against youth crime.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I

shall on day no. 36 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Justice: (1) what is the total number of charges laid against young offenders for violent crimes in 1994; what is the total number of charges laid against young offenders for property crimes in 1994; what is the total number of charges laid against young offenders for all other Criminal Code offences in 1994?

And, Mr. Speaker, I have similar questions for 1995 and 1996. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature, three guests in the west gallery. Visiting Saskatchewan from Alberta is my sister-in-law Marilyn Bradley and Phyllis Hohtala from Red Deer. And accompanying them today is my husband Gary, from Milestone.

They decided to take a little trip to Saskatchewan from Alberta. I think it was to visit our fine legislature, their wonderful relatives, and to see the best government in Canada in operation. And a little side trip, I guess, the Casino Regina.

Anyways, I'd like all members to join me in a warm welcome to my friends, my guests here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce a gentleman in the east gallery. I think I was noting one of the pages had a special interest in this gentleman and we'd certainly like to welcome him to the Assembly this afternoon. His name is John, and I think Claire would like to extend a special welcome as well.

Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Earth Day

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the 19th century chief, Seattle, said, and I quote: "We did not weave the web of life. We are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves." He recognized then what has become glaringly obvious today, that when we abuse the environment we endanger ourselves, Mr. Speaker.

To remind ourselves of the matter of this pressing necessity, every year on April 22, 100 countries around the world celebrate Earth Day. The purpose of Earth Day is to remind us to take positive action to protect the environment and the resources on which we all depend. Individuals, schools, organizations, and communities are encouraged to take part in activities that are friendly to the environment.

The actions we can take are simple and crucial, Mr. Speaker. We can, for instance, reduce the amount of waste we produce and the amount of resources we consume. We can turn off the lights and we can turn down the thermostat — not too far though. We can recycle; we can recover; and we can reuse.

Basically, Mr. Speaker, we can take the lead of the 25 individuals who first met 26 years ago to discuss the precarious state of our earth and then to do something about it. I encourage all of us to do that today and every other day of our life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Women of Distinction

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It was my pleasure last evening to attend the YWCA's Women of Distinction Awards Dinner in Saskatoon. There were 47 nominees, which is a record, Mr. Speaker, and there were some 600 family and friends in attendance, and just a wonderful event.

It was exciting for me on a personal basis, if I can be permitted to say that my wife Gwen was up for an award in the health and education category. And her aboriginal nominator highlighted her profound knowledge and understanding of aboriginal culture and traditions, and so that was a special highlight for her.

But I commend the YWCA for recognizing important contributions of women in our communities. I congratulate all the winners in today's paper. All the nominees were winners or are very special. And I commend all the women for their leadership and dedication to strengthening our families, communities, province, country, and of course, our global community.

And I know all members will want to join me in this special tribute. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right to Information Week

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is Right to Information Week and it is an appropriate time for us to acknowledge the strides that have been made by all levels of government in making government less secretive and more accessible to its citizenry. And I think we acknowledge that in order for government to be truly of the people and for the people, it is necessary that information be readily accessible and not hidden from them.

I think that we have made great strides, say, in all levels of government in the last two years, but there are some remaining issues. While I'm pleased to note that we do in this province have an Information and Privacy Commissioner to whom appeals can be made — and I congratulate him for his work; I think we should acknowledge that — I do think there is one problem in that we have not designated an alternate or deputy,

so that when the commissioner is unavailable or out of the country, there is no-one to hear information appeals.

I invite and encourage the Minister of Justice to consider naming a deputy as privacy commissioners who can act in the absence of the commissioner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Digital Embroidery Business in Weyburn

Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Speaker, how many people do you know who would invest a substantial portion of their savings into a new business they have little experience or knowledge of operating? My guess would be very few.

However I know of a Weyburn couple who have taken that risk, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very happy to say that they are once again proving that Saskatchewan people are first-rate entrepreneurs.

Abe and Donna Wolvers, owners and operators of DI-GI-DAW (Digitizing by Donna and Abe Wolvers) have created a successful and a world-renowned business from their home in Weyburn.

Embroidery is nothing new to most people. But what made DI-GI-DAW special is that it is digital. Mr. Speaker, this means the designs created by Donna and Abe can be scanned into a computer and saved on diskette. This in turn allows their designs to be sent to other companies which can automatically use their design or they can design patterns for their own machines.

The Wolvers invested approximately \$70,000 into their new business and they have no regrets. They are successful. They are exporting their designs to many parts of the world. They are extremely busy and, most importantly for entrepreneurs, they are having a lot of fun.

I want to congratulate Donna and Abe on taking the steps to establish DI-GI-DAW and the success they have enjoyed since.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Young Women Hockey Players

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, as critic of the Women's Secretariat, I am very much aware of the difficulties women face as they continue to strive for equality. Fortunately the barriers are merging and women are getting positions in jobs and sports that were considered traditionally for men. One such sport is hockey.

Kelvington is well-known for having produced such great hockey stars as Wendel Clark, Barry Melrose, and Joey Kocur. It is also becoming known for the number of female players on the boys' hockey teams.

In the Mallard Hockey League the Kelvington teams had the

highest number of girls playing hockey in the novice section. These girls are not just token players, they are a very valuable part of the team and they're doing their fair share of goal scoring.

Kelvington has three girls — Rheanna Len, Crystal Mottram, and Lacey Shultz — who have been attending Saskatchewan First, an all-girl tournament, as well as playing on home teams.

Crystal and Rheanna's goals are to make the 1999 Saskatchewan girls' team for the Canadian Winter Games, and Lacey is aiming for the national women's team and the Olympics.

Another girl who has played all her minor hockey with boys' teams is Nicole Knittig of Annaheim. Nicole currently plays with the Naicam Midgets as well as the provincial Saskatchewan First female team.

Nicole was part of the Saskatchewan team that won bronze at the 1997 Midget Girls' National Championship at Summerside, P.E.I. (Prince Edward Island). At this tournament Nicole was presented with the most sportsmanlike player award.

Congratulation to the women hockey players.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ecol Laser Services Provides Environmental Leadership

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to pay tribute to a company that is observing Earth Day every day, and I'm speaking of Ecol Laser of Saskatoon.

In fact Ecol has received an environmental award from the Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council for their environmental practice of recycling laser printer cartridges, reducing plastic and cardboard materials that would ordinarily wind up in our landfills. During the past 12 months Ecol has re-manufactured some 8,000 laser printer cartridges — using the plastic several times, the cardboard several times over, and saving individual businesses some 30 to 70 per cent on the cost of new laser printer cartridges.

Ecol Laser is also donating up to \$10 a cartridge to City Hospital Foundation in Saskatoon for each cartridge that is returned to them. On top of all this, as if that wasn't enough, Ecol is sponsoring a community volunteer clean-up, along with the Pleasant Hill Community Association in Saskatoon, Loraas Disposal, and Saskatoon Funeral Home.

And so we have, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon a company that is leading the way in cleaning up our environment and observing Earth Day. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Recognition for Salvation Army

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege a few moments ago, or actually this afternoon, of

attending a luncheon in honour of the Salvation Army and their work, not only in the province of Saskatchewan but certainly around the world. I think, Mr. Speaker, that each and every one of us in this Assembly at some time or other have heard about or been involved with projects that the Salvation Army has been involved in.

We're aware of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that they have had some misfortunes in the last little while as well, the fact that they had a fire in one of their clothing depots. And yet the spirit of giving in Saskatchewan was certainly shown as people reached out to help replace that which was lost.

Mr. Speaker, I think that there is no question that the objectives brought forward by General Booth in his idea of reaching out to meet the needs of humanity, not only in the physical but the spiritual realm, continue to be evident today and I certainly would like to congratulate the Salvation Army for everything they do, for not only Saskatchewan residents but people across the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Meadow Lake Co-op Has Best Year Ever

Mr. Sonntag: — The cooperative sector is an important part of our provincial economy. But their importance is nowhere more pronounced than in rural Saskatchewan. Co-op stores and farm centres provide our rural residents with services that, in many instances, would not be available otherwise.

The Meadow Lake Co-op is no exception, Mr. Speaker. Over the years it has provided residents of the area with exceptional service. An indication of the co-op's importance to the community is its total sales, and last year it set a new record with over 18 million in total sales. Its net savings reached \$1.4 million.

But, Mr. Speaker, a co-op's importance to the community it serves goes beyond its bottom line. Its importance also rests with its commitment to the community. The Meadow Lake Co-op has shown its commitment. It has expanded its service centre in order to enhance customer service. It employs 87 individuals and pays \$1.7 million in salaries. And more importantly, Mr. Speaker, the Meadow Lake Co-op paid out almost \$870,000 in patronage dividends to its members, proving that it works for the benefit of those who own it — the people.

I want to congratulate the management and staff of the Meadow Lake Co-op, with its branches in Goodsoil and Makwa, for the dedication they have shown to the community to provide quality service.

I would also like to commend the approximately 5,000 members of the association for their commitment to their co-op. Working for its members and enhancing the community — it is the cooperative way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Child Prostitution in Regina

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the city of Regina has a new report showing as many as 100 children — some as young as eight years old — regularly being preyed on for sex. A young 12-year-old girl named Amber is profiled in the report. She approached street workers for a condom so she could make some money to buy milk and diapers for her brother. This is heartbreaking and a sad commentary on the state of many children in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the city of Regina report proposes many of the same measures included in my private members' Bill — a Bill I presented more than a month ago.

But time is running out for the growing numbers of children experiencing this horrendous nightmare. Will the minister finally tell me if he plans to support my measures to combat child prostitution Bill?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, as we have indicated in the House on many occasions, the member opposite and this government, I'm sure all members, share a deep concern about this issue, and it's reinforced by the kind of numbers that we see in the paper today. I expect that within a matter of two weeks that there will be further announcements coming from this government that I am sure that that member for one will be very supportive of.

Let me respond very specifically to the matter of legislation. The professionals who advised me, looking at the limited change that the member has suggested to The Child and Family Services Act, indicate that the suggestions that she brings forward in fact are already contained within the Act. The provision is already contained within the Act, the two provisions that the member suggests.

I'm not satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that there is not yet room to be considering some of the ideas that the member has discussed, and I will be reporting further to her and to the House in a matter of a couple of weeks.

I do want to say to the member that one of the difficult issues in child prostitution is getting successful convictions against those johns who are abusing our children in the streets. We know, Mr. Speaker, that we require some significant change at the Criminal Code level to make it easier to get those prosecutions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the point is that people are tired of waiting. We have had a chance, many chances, to look at the Bill, the existing legislation. And people in this province are really getting very tired of asking the question of how many empty words and broken promises will these children have to hear before this government finally does something to help them.

The government often accuses us of politicizing the issue, but every day that this government waits to take action is one more day that they are politicizing the issue. It appears that these children are not a priority with this government. If your government had the political will to push through the IPSCO Bill in one day, where is the political will to support a Bill that will help end the nightmare many of these children are living?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the member either purposely or accidentally fails to recognize the work that is happening in this community, in the community of Saskatoon, and the communities across our province, Mr. Speaker. In the most recent budget the member will know that we allocated some new and significant funding to projects that will assist, directly assist, children on our streets. Since that budget day to this day, there have been a significant number of meetings, gatherings, discussions at the community level. When the member suggests that something is not happening in the province, she is not being true to what is happening in our communities.

Now on the specific point of legislation, on the specific point of legislation and political will to get legislation accomplished, everybody in the country agrees that we should amend the Criminal Code, amend the Criminal Code that we can get some successful prosecutions on these people who are abusing our children on the streets. We have likely, we have likely days left in the current parliament. If the political will of the Liberal Party was there, those changes would have been made to the Criminal Code.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, we have heard time and time again where this government constantly talks about what the federal government can do. We know very well and so does everyone in this province that this government has some responsibility and ability to take the legislation that they have and do something with it in this very province. It is time that this government was made accountable to our very vulnerable children.

If the minister will not accept my proposal or won't accept the numerous other proposals that he's correct in saying communities have put forward, I want him to give me a straight answer and tell me, why does this government continue to play politics with the lives of these children, who are not only being exploited by the men who prey on them, but are in essence also being neglected by this very government which so far has done nothing to end their suffering.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, this kind of rhetoric belittles the status of that member and her colleagues, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me refer very specifically to the legislative changes that that member has proposed. She would propose,

under our Child and Family Services Act, to extend the age of protection to 18. That's proposal number one. Proposal number two would make it possible for the minister and Department of Social Services to receive gifts to provide for these children.

Both of those opportunities, Mr. Speaker, I repeat, are available in the current Act. They are available. If that is the extent, if that is the extent of the member's proposals, we need something more than that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rural School Closures

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, another rural school has been given its last rites. The Humboldt Rural School Division voted yesterday to close the school in Englefeld at the end of this current school year to solve a quarter of a million dollar deficit problem. Board chairman Jordon Bergerman justified the closure by stating, there's nothing wrong with it; it's a matter of public funding and balancing budgets.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's something very wrong when a board is forced to close a school because the government has failed to properly fund education.

Will the Minister of Education explain how her government can shrug off a \$16 million loss in SaskTel, how they can allow their \$160 million Liquor and Gaming slush fund to build, and how they can continue to support a wasteful Crown tendering policy, but they can't find enough money to fund education?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously the member wasn't listening when the Minister of Finance stood up in this House on March 20 and delivered her budget. And in that budget we approved an additional \$8 million in this province for K to 12 schools.

Now what the member doesn't acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, also in her riding is the Weekes School. And today they announced that the Weekes School was going to stay open. And why, Mr. Speaker? Because this government changed the small schools factor this year to put an additional \$8.3 million into rural schools in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the school of Weekes does thank you. But the school at Englefeld, I'm afraid the people there have nothing to be thankful for. School closures have always been part of history, and they were usually based on dwindling enrolments. But the Englefeld School has a strong enrolment. They have 90 students in K to 10.

Many of the parents there are employed in light manufacturing industries which are increasing the viability of that community. One has to question how a community is to hold on to a

workforce or to attract new employees when essential services such as education and health are being eliminated. We're not talking about eliminating a school, we're talking about eliminating a community.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Economic Development was questioned about this very issue in the House, and he said that there must be partnerships where local communities are very, very much involved. This government's new made-in-Saskatchewan job training strategy also recognizes the need for businesses to work together.

Mr. Minister, if your government is committed to cooperation, why are you doing anything but cooperating with the community of Englefeld?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the member will know that in this province The Education Act is very clear — it has been for decades — that school divisions make the decision as to whether or not a school continues to exist in the province of Saskatchewan. That is not something the Minister of Education or the Government of Saskatchewan is involved in.

What I can tell the member is that this government understands that it is more costly to provide an education to students living in rural Saskatchewan than urban Saskatchewan, and consequently we pay about an additional 25 per cent per student living outside of the major centres.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget we changed the small school factor in that we recognized that it costs a great deal of money to provide an education for low numbers of students in small schools that are some distance from other schools. Mr. Speaker, we increased the factor for kindergarten from \$440 to \$1,000 per student. We increased for all other students from \$800 to \$1,000 per student. Mr. Speaker, we put an additional \$8.3 million into those small, isolated schools, and that's why Weekes is still here, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the schools at Englefeld and Annaheim have released a joint press release and both of them oppose the closure of the Englefeld School. In fact both boards are involved in ongoing negotiations to move to the Humboldt . . . from Humboldt School Division to the neighbouring Tiger Lily School Division, which they believe would prevent the closure of the school at Englefeld.

This proposal is supported by Schulte Industries, which is the largest area manufacturer.

Madam Minister, you have the final say in allowing local school boards to transfer its land and schools to another jurisdiction. Will you make a commitment in the House today to approve the transfer for these local districts if there is a completion of negotiations at the local level?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I have in fact received petitions from the local boards of trustees in both communities asking to have their districts transferred to the Tiger Lily School Division. And in light of the decision to keep Annaheim open, we will have to know whether or not this position is still held by the people in Annaheim.

What I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we're talking about a transfer of huge magnitude — the land transfers are huge — and we will need to discuss this obviously with all of the people involved, both at the Humboldt School Division level, the people in Annaheim, the people in Englefeld. And I can say that in the province we have an independent Educational Boundaries Commission which could be available to review this case once we have all of the information.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Teachers' Salary Costs

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Minister of Education. Madam Minister, there's an old saying that goes: he who pays the piper calls the tune. And unfortunately in our education system doesn't work that way, according to the Provincial Auditor. He says school boards and local ratepayers are paying the piper but the provincial government is calling the tune because the provincial government sets teachers' salaries — the single largest expense for school divisions.

In fact in 1996, teachers' salaries accounted for two-thirds of the school divisions' budgets. Madam Minister, the auditor says the current system is inconsistent with the principle that the person raising the taxes should answer for how those taxes are spent.

Madam Minister, what are you doing to address this inconsistency?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, what the department is doing is working with the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials, or SASBO, to update and strengthen our budget accounting manual. And I can assure you that we are also reviewing the research report, financial reporting by Canadian school boards, to see whether or not we can comply with the auditor's recommendation. What I can assure the House this afternoon is that we will listen very carefully to what our Provincial Auditor has to say and we will determine, in due course, whether or not we can comply with his request.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You may be talking with SASBO, Madam Minister, but SASBO is not the decision-making body for the school divisions; they're the employees.

Madam Minister, this problem is only getting worse because of your continued cuts to many school divisions. Our caucus has learned that the Saskatchewan Valley School Division, north of Saskatoon, has had its provincial funding cut by \$1.4 million in

one year — \$1.4 million. That's a massive blow, Madam Minister. And what's worse, this school division only controls about \$4 million of its own budget. The rest consists of teachers' salaries set by your government. So they have to find \$1.4 million to cut out of their \$4 million they control. That's over one-third in one year, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, why are you continuing to make massive cuts to education while still refusing to give school divisions control over their biggest expense — teachers' salaries?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this member must not have been here on budget day either. We increased educational funding to school boards in the province by some \$8 million.

Now what this member fails to forget, I gather . . . or does forget, is that we're in a year of reassessment, Mr. Speaker. It was his previous administration that brought in the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency which called for reassessment in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our grants to individual school boards are based upon, for the most part, reassessment and enrolment numbers. In the case of the Sask Valley School Division, which encompasses a great deal of the area outside of the city of Saskatoon, I can say that their assessment has grown beyond the provincial average in the province.

Our grant is based on the principles of equalization — the higher your assessment, the lower your grant; the lower your assessment, the higher your grant. And I should add, Mr. Speaker, that there are many school divisions that were going to receive in excess of a 25 per cent reduction because of reassessment and this government capped the reduction for the next three years, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Welfare Fraud

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Minister, yesterday's report by the Provincial Auditor revealed that police in Saskatoon and Regina have stopped investigating cases of welfare fraud.

Mr. Minister, for years we've been questioning you about this welfare fraud and you have never once identified this problem. Last year in estimates on June 17, I specifically asked you if police forces investigate cases of welfare fraud, and you said yes, there are referrals to the police where charges may be laid and prosecutions can happen.

Mr. Minister, that isn't true. Police in Saskatoon and Regina weren't investigating these cases, and you knew it. Mr. Minister, why are we just learning about this now, only after it appears in the auditor's report, and why have you misled the Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to provide for the member and for all members some information around this issue. I would ask the member to note this lest he would want to exaggerate this problem.

In the province of Saskatchewan on a daily basis we have approximately 40,000 cases of social assistance. It's a little less than 40,000 now, but approximately 40,000. In 1995-96 we referred for investigation for fraud, 115 cases — 115 cases out of an average of 40,000 cases on a daily basis. In the course of a year, 60,000 cases will pass through our doors.

Just so the member understands the size of the issue, we're talking here about less than one-half of one per cent of all of those receiving social assistance in our province. Now is one-half of one per cent tolerable, Mr. Speaker? No, it's not. It's not, because we take the view that our resources for social assistance are limited, are limited resources, and we want those resources, every one of them, to go to those in real need.

Therefore we are today working with the city police force in Saskatoon and Regina to develop an arrangement where we're sure that those appropriate cases can be investigated and, where it's appropriate, brought to prosecution.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, any amount of fraud takes away from people who legitimately need help.

Mr. Minister, it's clear why you wanted to cover up the fact that police were no longer investigating welfare fraud. It's because this is a direct result of the NDP's (New Democratic Party) decision to disband the welfare investigation unit within Social Services. Both the Regina and Saskatoon police say that's exactly when the problem started, back in 1992, when the fraud investigation unit was eliminated.

We have questioned you about welfare fraud on numerous occasions, yet for five years you never said a word about the problem. So much for open and accountable government.

Mr. Minister, for five years there has been no real mechanism for investigating and prosecuting welfare fraud in Saskatoon and Regina because the police can't do it. Why have you been covering this up for five years?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm thankful that the member raised the issue of the former fraud squad that was put in place, as I recall it, by the then minister, the Hon. Grant Schmidt, who I recall also sought to be the leader of his political party.

Mr. Speaker, if the member is recommending that we should reintroduce the Schmidt fraud squad, let me tell you how effective that was. That fraud squad cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan \$600,000 a year to operate — \$600,000. The best that it ever recovered for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan was

\$230,000. Now if that's the recommendation, that we should spend the taxpayers' money, 600,000, to recover 230, I don't think the people want that kind of an arrangement.

Now, Mr. Speaker, further to that . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Now all hon. members will recognize the Chair is having difficulty hearing the answer being put because of interruptions from both sides of the House. Order. Order. And I'll ask all hon. members to allow the minister's response to be heard.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, Mr. Speaker, when we came to government in 1991-92, one of the first things we did was to unburden the taxpayer of that particular fraud squad.

What have we done, Mr. Speaker? The member fails to mention this. In 1992 we put in place 30 verification officers, social workers whose task it is to be sure that there is not abuse happening in our system. In '94 and '95 we made inter-provincial links with other provinces in western Canada and across Canada.

And last year, Mr. Speaker, we have built a link with the federal government through CPP (Canada Pension Plan) and Revenue Canada to ensure, as best we can, that there is not abuse of the system. The result, Mr. Speaker, the result is that we now see we have approximately one-half of one per cent abuse in our system, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Child Substance Abuse

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while I'd like to continue this line of questioning, I do have another question I'd like to raise. This one, however, with the Minister of Health.

Mr. Minister, at least one store owner in Saskatoon says children as young as six or seven are buying and drinking breath freshener with a high alcohol content. And I understand this store owner has taken the very responsible action of pulling the product in question off the shelves.

But, Mr. Minister, the problem remains. There are certain products that contain alcohol that are available for sale to minors. Mr. Minister, what are you and your department doing to address this problem? Do you think there should be restrictions to prevent minors from buying products containing alcohol?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this question relates to some of the kinds of products that are sold primarily in corner stores. And obviously the identification of this problem was made by, as I understand it, one of the owners in the store who saw there was an abuse of a product that they were selling. And that's something that I think is a positive thing for a person who owns one of these stores to do. And we know that other times that products have been identified that way.

I think practically, there are abuses of legitimate products that happen and it's quite difficult to set up laws that are specific on these kind of products. So I think what we would do is take the information from the store owners, take it from, also from the people who are involved in the community who identify these things, work together with all of the people and see what kind of a solution we can come up with.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Information Network

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've raised a number of times in this House, concerns about the establishment of a Saskatchewan Health Information Network. The development of this system will cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan at least \$70 million, using the Minister of Health's figures.

The Provincial Auditor has recommended that this government approve a long-term plan by preparing an in-depth cost/benefit analysis for the project. And given the fact that the health care reform of course went sour, as it has, is this fiasco going to continue in the same way?

Mr. Speaker, the auditor indicates as well that a study of the request of the required investment and benefits was to have been completed last month. Can the minister tell us today if the report has been completed and will he table it in the House today?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the member that the matter is certainly under consideration by the government, and I want to say to the member that I think the Provincial Auditor has some very wise advice for the government which we should take very seriously. And that is that before embarking on such a venture we should ensure that appropriate cost/benefit analyses are conducted. Before embarking upon such a venture, we should ensure that there are proper controls in place. And we're in complete agreement with what the Provincial Auditor has to say on the matter, and I know that the member will be very happy to hear that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that the government's attitude toward the Provincial Auditor has changed somewhat today and I'm not sure why that is but we can only assume. Mr. Speaker, the government has not yet told us who will be footing the Bill for this information network. Obviously the health districts don't have funds to spare; the chairman of SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations), Mr. Brian Rourke, says his organization and of course and its membership, which are the health districts, have used up all its reserves. Will the minister make a commitment in this House today as well and tell us who is going to foot the bill for this?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well I've already answered the question by indicating to the member, Mr. Speaker, that the matter is still under consideration, but I think we all know one thing, Mr.

Speaker. I think we all know that one party that won't be footing the bill will be the federal government.

Because as we all know, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are cutting money out of health care like crazy. We've had to back-fill \$100 million in the last two years. And that's why the most recent addition of the *CMA News*, Mr. Speaker, contains the headline, "Ottawa fails to protect medicare." So I know Ottawa won't be paying for it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 52 — The Community Bonds Amendment Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I move that Bill No. 52, The Community Bonds Amendment Act, 1997 be introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 53 — The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 53, The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 1997 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 54 — The Education and Health Tax Amendment Act, 1997 (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 54, The Education and Health Tax Amendment Act, 1997 (No. 2) be now introduced and read for the very first time.

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

Bill No. 55 — The Department of Agriculture Amendment Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 55, The Department of Agriculture Amendment Act, 1997 be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 56 — The Trust and Loan Corporations Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 56, The Trust and Loan Corporations Acts, 1997 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 57 — The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 1997

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 57, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 1997 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I wish to table the 28th annual report for 1996 of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Saskatchewan branch, and also to remind all hon. members of the annual meeting being held tomorrow evening.

Why is the Premier on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day pursuant to rule 46, I would like to seek leave of the Assembly — get unanimous leave and approval of the Assembly — to introduce this motion. If I may just read it so that they can make the judgement as to whether leave is granted or not:

That this Assembly declare its strong, continuing concern about the future of the Moose Jaw airbase; and notes that this facility is the only major military base in Saskatchewan; and that its loss would make Saskatchewan the only province in Canada without a base; and that government and opposition members have expressed their grave concern about the future of the base to the federal government on numerous occasions; and that this Assembly calls on the federal government to guarantee the future of the Moose Jaw airbase now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Leave granted.

MOTION UNDER RULE 46

Future of Moose Jaw Airbase

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do not intend to speak very long on this very important issue, although one could make a lengthy speech and certainly the gravity of the situation would warrant some lengthy speech. But I think most people know the importance of CFB (Canadian Forces Base) 15 — the Moose Jaw airbase — to the people of Saskatchewan, the people of Moose Jaw. Indeed I would say to Canada and beyond Canada.

As I see it, Mr. Speaker, I describe it as importance in historic terms, importance in economic terms, importance to the community, and reflective of community responses to CFB 15. And it's also important in a future sense.

Ever since the first declaration of possible intent to close down CFB 15 was made — those statements of intent made around 1994, 1995 — all people in Saskatchewan, regardless of political ideology, and most communities, rallied around the need to ensure that CFB 15 remained open for some of the reasons stated in the motion. But there are many other reasons, of course, in support thereof.

There is of course as we would say, as I said at the very beginning, the historic reason. We know the importance that Moose Jaw has played in the training of military personnel not only in Canada but on a worldwide basis.

If I may, to recount one personal anecdote, I remember being on an Air Canada flight to Toronto about two years ago at the time the issue first erupted in the public side and the captain of the Air Canada flight to Toronto invited me to come to the flight deck to watch this new airplane take off and the machinery and all of the fancy gadgetry on the airplane.

Turns out that the captain — if I recall his name correctly — was Captain Ottison, who took his first flight training in Moose Jaw during the Second World War as a Dane in agreement with respect to Denmark and Canada and the Allied forces in the preparation and the training of fighter pilots in defence of freedom, in defence of the western democracies, in defence of the threat that faced all the world at that time — at the Second World War occasion.

And Captain Ottison was describing to me his many wonderful experiences; that how he felt the circumstances for training were so perfect, not only in terms of the quality of the staff that did the training — the lecturers — but the actual flying conditions, the weather conditions, the support of the community which embraced people from all over the free western world to take part in this noble cause.

(1430)

It's one small little side story — an anecdote perhaps — but I think it's reflective of hundreds of those kinds of stories where there have been bondings and friendships and relationships formed on a worldwide basis out of CFB Moose Jaw. This is an important historic fact which I think warrants consideration, does warrant consideration, continued consideration, for the continued maintenance of this particular CFB base.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the economic arguments of CFB 15 are equally clear. The economic profile has been documented on many occasions. I have a little number here in front of me that says that the \$50 million annual payroll, the \$135 million annual operating budget clearly is a major expenditure on an annual basis — 185, \$200 million both for the city of Moose Jaw, but for the province of Saskatchewan. A military staff of about 1,300 plus 500 civilian employees represents about 13 to 14 per cent of the working men and women in that city directly. A thousand school-age dependants attend school; they represent 15 per cent of the school population. The estimated direct local expenditures by CFB personnel are upwards of 21 million — and that's back in 1991 so one can anticipate that those figures are higher. And I could go on with statistics that basically make

the same point that I hope I have made and should be clear to the members here.

This is a very important economic factor to the continued viability and health economically of the people of Moose Jaw and the people of Saskatchewan, because the tentacles, the activities, are spread out in such a far-ranging, wide-ranging way in the province of Saskatchewan from CFB 15.

I said a third reason — moving from history and economy — a third reason is community. Apart from the dollars and cents, what we see here is what Captain Ottison talked about, the welcoming and the intermingling in a very positive way of people in Moose Jaw. People who have come from all over Canada to take their training, and other parts of the world, they've contributed — the people at CFB 15 — to the life of Moose Jaw, elevating it. And vice versa, Moose Jaw has contributed to CFB.

One can see that any time that you attend there — and I've been there on many occasions — that there is a close interrelationship. This is surely a value that we want to preserve and protect, not only in the Saskatchewan context but, if I may say so, in a larger Canadian context as well.

And there's another dynamic about community which very much impressed me when this first announcement took place that CFB 15 was under threat of closure, made back in the 1995-96 period. And that is how the community rallied. Whether it was the mayor of Moose Jaw and the councillors; whether it was the MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly); whether it was the MLAs on the opposition side, Liberal and Conservative; whether it was the Members of Parliament of all political ideologies, we came together and formed a coalition. And in fact the former Liberal leader, the member from Greystone, I'm sure will well remember a meeting that we had in room 218 here in the legislature, where in fact the coalition — if I may use that word — was formed to advance in a positive way, in a non-political way, the historic, economic, and community impact, positive impact, of CFB 15.

And in the consequence, I myself have written to the Prime Minister on two or three occasions, and the Minister of Defence, on this issue. We've all at the government level spoken to the appropriate federal authorities in this regard.

I remind the members of the House that back on February 16, 1994, this legislature unanimously passed a motion, unanimously passed a motion that indicated support for the continued existence of No. 15 Wing along the lines of the motion which I have, and thanks to the members, with their leave, I've introduced here today.

So there has been a great deal of activity involving the members directly from Moose Jaw and area, the member from Thunder Creek, the members from the Legislative Assembly generally — this is community action in a positive way to preserve a very vital entity for Moose Jaw and for the people of Saskatchewan and for Canada.

May I conclude, Mr. Speaker, there is, in my judgement, a

fourth obvious reason why this motion should be supported. And that is the future. I've talked about the past, I've talked about the current, the economy, and the community, but I want to talk a little bit about the future.

As we all know, what is taking place and has been taking place, partly as a result of the coalition's activities and partly as a result of the federal government's responsiveness to the coalition's activities, to the non-partisan nature of people rallying behind CFB 15, we have been exploring the option of using Moose Jaw as the base for the training of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) pilots all over the world, NATO pilots in Moose Jaw.

I know you, sir, were there, and other members of the Assembly were at a special reception where we met the NATO technical team from all parts of the NATO grouping of countries, who toured the base, who wanted to meet the political leaders, the community leaders, individual men and women in Moose Jaw, to talk about what NATO would gain if in fact it selected Moose Jaw as the site.

I was very impressed again here with the quality of the international observers. Their skill and their training in aviation was obvious. But more than that, they had a commercial sense, they had an international sense of politics. They had a knowledge of Canada's historic role that I talked about, referring to the Air Canada pilots and other examples. And I got a very good feeling out of it that there was a symmetry, an ideological symmetry, a western, free world understanding of the importance of CFB Moose Jaw, CFB 15.

Since this time, this initiative has expanded to involve people like Bombardier, the Bombardier corporation of Quebec, and a variety of other air corporations and the federal government. And I'm very, very hopeful that very soon the federal authorities will be able to announce that they have been, that we have been . . . It's not only theirs, I'm sure that they would be the first to admit. Minister Young, Prime Minister Chrétien, would be the first to admit that this was a team effort. This was truly a Team Saskatchewan, Team Canada effort.

I'm very hopeful and optimistic that we can see out of this very, very quickly an announcement that CFB 15 has been selected by NATO as the training facility for NATO, which would in effect preserve all the things that I've talked about in this motion in introducing it — the historic, the economic, the community, the cultural, the interrelationship, the future, positive direction that we can paint for people of Moose Jaw. And for the guarantee of our partners in the free world in NATO and elsewhere, our partners, the guarantee that we make to them that their people will come out of that base the best trained that they can be anywhere in the world at all.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think with those few words — perhaps I've spoken a little longer than I'd intended to — with those few words I want to underline the importance of this motion, which I expect, anticipate, will receive the unanimous support of the members of this House, a motion which I would now like to introduce, leave having been granted and, may I say, with the consent of the official leader of the opposition, the member

from Canora-Pelly, who has seconded this motion, to move:

That this Assembly declare its strong, continuing concern about the future of the Moose Jaw airbase; and notes that this facility is the only major military base in Saskatchewan, and that its loss would make Saskatchewan the only province in Canada without a base; and that government and opposition members have expressed their grave concern about the future of the base to the federal government on numerous occasions; and that this Assembly calls on the federal government to guarantee the future of the Moose Jaw airbase now.

I so move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to the words of the Premier, I'd like to add a couple of things as well. It's a position that our party has taken many times in the past through our member from Thunder Creek in terms of members' statements, in terms of questions during question period, and in fact in terms of meetings with federal ministers that have been going on in the province of Saskatchewan when those ministers have been present.

As the Premier pointed out, I think the greatest concern here is the future. We can't turn back the clock; we can't look back at the past and say how important the base was to Moose Jaw in the past. It is the future. And we are very concerned, and the people of this province are very concerned, about the fact that the success of the base at Moose Jaw must be integral with the success of the province of Saskatchewan. And we look forward to that.

As the Premier has pointed out, the possibility — the possibility of securing the NATO base and having pilots trained means that this is a long-term commitment to the province of Saskatchewan. We know that a 20-year commitment from the federal government will mean \$150 billion worth of funding to that project, and in fact a further \$150 billion from the NATO countries must be part of the project to make this viable.

The positive spins to that kind of a project of course are huge. There will be jobs; there will be stability. There will be long-term viability of not only the city of Moose Jaw but, as the Premier has pointed out, we know that there will be students who will be in school. We know that there will be jobs, and there will be employment, and there will be people that will be paying taxes.

The delicate negotiations that are under way right now I think must be stressed. These are very important negotiations that are taking place right now. And I encourage all political parties and all individuals to ensure that our remarks as individuals cannot be misconstrued in any way, to in any way damage the negotiations that are taking place right now.

We understand and we're very hopeful that a positive announcement will be made soon. And on behalf of the official opposition, we are very proud to support that motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1445)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Conservative caucus I'm pleased to rise and include our comments in this debate and in this motion. The CFB Moose Jaw is a historical airbase, Mr. Speaker. It goes back to the Commonwealth air training program which played a very big part in training Canadians and indeed members of the Commonwealth for air combat in Europe during the Second World War.

If you travel around the province of Saskatchewan — indeed all the Prairies — you spot old air strips all over the Prairies from the Commonwealth air training program. And of all those airports, the only one that's currently active as a military base I believe, Mr. Speaker, is the one at Moose Jaw.

There is a lot of long-term benefit for the community of Moose Jaw. I have family living there as you know, Mr. Speaker, and they make me very aware, when I discuss this situation with them, what the benefits of the airbase actually is to the entire community of Moose Jaw. It helps to keep that community young and vibrant and growing, Mr. Speaker. The loss of this airbase would be a tremendous disappointment and a tremendous impact on that community, Mr. Speaker.

It's a very major airbase, Mr. Speaker. It's the only major military base in Saskatchewan. We have the militia base at Dundurn, but Moose Jaw is the visible evidence that the federal government is present in Saskatchewan.

When you look at other provinces, you see very many other structures, other institutions that provide a federal presence, Mr. Speaker, but in Saskatchewan, the Moose Jaw airbase is probably the most visible. We don't have the GST (goods and services tax) centre as P.E.I. does, Mr. Speaker, but we do have the Moose Jaw airbase. And it's important that that base remain open.

Mr. Speaker, we have lost various federal institutions in this province over the last few years, such as the Crow rate, but the loss of this airbase will have a major psychological impact on the province. While it will have a very large economic impact on Moose Jaw, it will have a psychological impact on the entire province. That's why it's important, Mr. Speaker, that this airbase be carried on.

My former colleagues and former leaders, Grant Devine and Rick Swenson, were very supportive of keeping the airbase in Moose Jaw. They spoke out at every opportunity to encourage that, to ensure that it remained in place. In fact, Mr. Speaker, retired Colonel Yogi Huyghebaert, a Snowbird pilot, was our past candidate in the Wood River constituency, Mr. Speaker, and he is very involved in the project to get the NATO training base moved into Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker.

Because of all of these reasons, Mr. Speaker, because of the benefit to Saskatchewan, we will be supporting this particular motion to encourage and keep the Moose Jaw airbase active in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I only have but a few words to add to the eloquent words that have been put into debate by the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and the member from the third party. And that, I think, is to speak on behalf of the local constituencies of Moose Jaw most affected of course by any decisions around 15 Wing.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, in one's life in this legislature, in the course of events in public life in the province, it's rare that we encounter an issue which so enjoys the unanimous support of all political parties. Since the discussions began back in 1994 about the future of 15 Wing, it is my observation that in each and every one of those discussions, there has been a unanimity of public figures in our province.

In the initial discussions with Ottawa, we enjoyed the support of our Premier, the support of the then leader of the opposition, the member from Saskatoon. And we've enjoyed, as the member recently pointed out, the support of the third party.

Mr. Speaker, it is this kind of a common voice from this legislature and from this province in support of 15 Wing for all of the very good reasons that have been identified by the Premier and others that makes this such a significant, such a significant motion.

Mr. Speaker, we're ... as a community of course we understand the very significant role that this base plays in the life of our community — not only in the economic life of our community but very much in the social life of our community. And we've known over these last number of years a strengthening of the ties between the city of Moose Jaw and the district around Moose Jaw and 15 Wing, its personnel and its civilian force. There has been a real deepening and strengthening of the ties between the base and the civilian community, and that has enriched both.

And that I believe, Mr. Speaker, is one of those, one of those major selling points that we have to offer to those nations who would send their young men and young women to Moose Jaw for training — that there is that deep link with the community of Moose Jaw and with the province of Saskatchewan. That's one of our real strengths.

Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate, on behalf of the citizens of Moose Jaw and district, the support of all parties and all members in this legislature around this motion.

There is one thing else, Mr. Speaker, that I think we would all be very, very grateful to see as a result of this motion, as a result of all the work that the federal government is doing and others are doing, and that would be to preserve Moose Jaw as the home base of the Canadian Snowbirds.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, they just had their initial show, their approval show, just days ago. I believe today, Mr. Speaker, they are somewhere in California presenting their very first show of this season.

They are international ambassadors for Canada. They're a symbol of this nation, a symbol of our Canadian unity, and we would hope equally that the Snowbirds might maintain their home base in Moose Jaw and in the province of Saskatchewan.

With that, Mr. Speaker, again I appreciate the support of all members in this House for this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to *nemine contradicente*.

The Speaker: — Why is the Deputy Premier on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, I move, seconded by the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow:

That the preceding remarks of all parties be forwarded to the Hon. Doug Young, Minister of Defence, Mayor Ray Boughen of Moose Jaw, and Colonel Jim Hunter, Commander of CFB 15 Wing.

I so move, seconded by the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Drug Patent Legislation

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: — I'm not leaving. I'm not leaving. Mr. Speaker, after that very warm applause, I'm happy to make the following motion, seconded by the member from Lloydminster:

That this Assembly urge the federal Liberal government to repeal the drug patent legislation, a law which costs the province of Saskatchewan \$10 million a year in additional prescription drug costs and jeopardizes the ability of all governments at all levels to institute a pharmacare program as recommended in the report of the National Forum on Health.

I so move. Give this now? Okay. Speak first? Okay.

That's an indication, Mr. Speaker, of the motion. I wanted to get that on the record initially. And I have no doubt that the sort of spirit of cooperation that was evidenced earlier will continue as this House unanimously passes this motion which can give a strong message to the government in Ottawa about how we feel in terms of the drug program.

Mr. Speaker, there's much one can say with regard to Bill C-92,

which I'm specifically going to talk about. Obviously I'll just be able to hit a few highlights and my colleague from Lloydminster will add a few comments as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important seriously to give a clear message from Saskatchewan, from this House, in the few days remaining in the — perhaps — the federal parliament that this Bill, that this review that was undergone over a year ago come to some conclusion in the best interests of Canadian people in regard to the accessibility and affordability of drugs in the future.

Just a brief review is in order, Mr. Speaker, regarding the whole drug patent protection situation. In 1987, Bill C-22 extended patent protection of the multinational drug companies. And then in 1992, an additional Bill, Bill C-92, passed by the then Mulroney government, passed a law giving monopoly patent protection for foreign brand name drug companies.

And, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is well-known because the debate has been raging in Canada. This Bill essentially delays market competition by keeping cheaper Canadian generic drugs off the market for a period of 20 years. Now patent drug companies, Mr. Speaker, are actually wanting to even extend that protection for a longer period of time if you can believe that.

Mr. Speaker, since 1992, which is well documented and no one in this House will deny, prescription drugs have sky-rocketed in Canada. And this has drained money from health care, which is in short supply already, and further aggravated by a number of federal transfer cuts as they've tried to get their budget under control. But, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Could I have leave to introduce guests?

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Yes, I thank the members for the leave. Mr. Speaker, over at the west gallery we have William Dumais. We have councillors from Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation — Cornelius Ballantyne and Louis Bear. And also we have Alex Morin. I would have all members please welcome them to the House.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Drug Patent Legislation

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join my hon. colleague in welcoming our guests as well. Hope you enjoy the debate.

Mr. Speaker, in return for the monopoly protection, as I was saying, to the drug companies, the patent, multinational drug companies promised that there will be stable prices for new

drugs. They promised there would be job growth in the industry, and especially in Canada. And they promised that there would be additional funding in the areas of research and development for drugs.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fairly clear what has happened in reality, as again is well documented. And that is what many people were predicting at the time, Mr. Speaker. That is that just the opposite happened in all of those areas. For example, what we've seen are higher drug prices for new drugs, substantially higher prices. We've seen major Canadian job losses by the patent companies, except we've seen some additional job creation by the large patent companies in the area of marketing the drugs.

So they're spending about a billion dollars a year marketing the drugs, the new drugs, and only about 78 million in research and development, which has resulted in job losses in Canada and actually expanded plants in the United States. So the jobs have really moved to the U.S. (United States). And so the promises by the drug companies have had the opposite effect in the last five years of our experience.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Bill to protect the drug patent is more than broken promises by the drug companies, but has meant massive public subsidies by Canadians to them. And, Mr. Speaker, there's been a 30 per cent return, research has shown, on new drugs — a 30 per cent return on investment. Now the manufacturing sector as a whole has about a 10 per cent return on investment under the best scenario.

So there's a 30 per cent return on new drugs in the area of health care which has meant, Mr. Speaker, that many people cannot afford the drugs. As all hon. members likely know, 3.8 million Canadian people had access to no drug coverage.

So, Mr. Speaker, relative to the other drug . . . or to the other health care costs, in the area of drug costs there has been no control put on. So the average cost per year of additional drugs has been 12 per cent per year, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, as people know, the Canadian parliament has been reviewing this particular Bill and they've been doing this for the last year or so. And I guess the concern we have — a number of concerns, but one is that they're not reviewing it with regards to the impact on health care. The committee on competitiveness is reviewing the impact of the Bill from the competitive advantage within the drug industry and we think that's the wrong focus.

But, Mr. Speaker, Canadians need — and I know that all members would agree here — that Canadians need affordable, accessible drugs. They need safer drugs, safer controls, and in many cases more appropriate dosages and so on. And as I say, the 3.8 million Canadians with no drug coverage of any kind is just not acceptable in a country like Canada.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that Canada is only . . . Canada and the United States are the only two countries of the 24 industrialized countries with no drug program, no national drug program, which I find is interesting, the two North American

countries.

Mr. Speaker, what we need, according to the Canadian health coalition of many seniors' groups and other consumer groups, the federal government's own forum on health care, and of course our provincial government led by the minister last week who made a presentation in Ottawa, we need a national insurance program so that we can be . . . join the industrialized world, if you will, where everyone but us and the U.S. has a national drug program now.

(1500)

And, Mr. Speaker, I would urge members to support this motion. We could fax the unanimous support to Ottawa today to urge them to deal with this, to repeal this Bill before the House is dissolved for the election.

Mr. Speaker, in the face of massive cuts by the federal government to the provinces in health care, it just isn't acceptable that it not do anything about the sky-rocketing drug costs which gives provinces and territories less and less money to work with. And certainly there are planned cuts in the future in health care.

So it's even more critical that the costs of drugs come under some control, especially the way they're expected and anticipated to increase over the next . . . each of the next year to the point of settling in at about 14 to \$18 million additional money to, say the Saskatchewan drug plan. So surely we can do something about this in order to have better management of the overall health care program, including drugs.

But, Mr. Speaker, just a few stats. Since 1993, just since '93, the last three years, there's been, in the research area alone, 2,228 job losses in research and development in the drug industry in Canada. Now the U.S. drug imports have gone up 200 per cent in this same period. Again, testimony that the jobs are being created there and more drugs are being imported in from the United States.

Drug costs are up anywhere from . . . some drugs, 28 per cent to some drugs have gone up 100 per cent in the last three or four years.

Mr. Speaker, the patent protection drug costs are, on the average, 50 to 70 per cent higher than their generic counterpart. Case in point, Prozac. Recently we saw a decrease of 70 per cent — 70 per cent decrease in Prozac when the generic equivalent came on the market. That's a 70 per cent decrease in the cost. Imagine what you can do with that kind of additional money.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Health Coalition — just a couple more indications of data to give the flavour — they indicate that of all the new drugs released from 1991 to 1995, 92 per cent of them did not improve the therapy that they were prescribed for; 92 per cent of them, which even questions the effectiveness of the drug research and the development of new drugs. In addition, as they say, they highlight that the percentage of the health care budget spent on drugs is the only

area of spending that is out of control.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the indicators and there are many more. These costs — these additional costs, Mr. Speaker — will be borne by citizens, employee insurance programs, by provincial drug programs. Only three provinces have a provincial drug program. We're thankfully one of those. But that program's capacity to respond and meet the needs is limited as the prices sky-rocket.

Mr. Speaker, if maintaining the health care system is a priority by the federal Liberal government, and there are some people who are questioning that it is their priority — I'm not saying that — but if it is their priority, then they've got to do something about controlling drug prices because they're the only body that can do this. And I think Canadians are expecting that they will deal with this.

Now the generic companies, contrasted to the patent, large drug companies, have actually increased the Canadian jobs. The generic companies have actually increased the Canadian jobs by 140 per cent since 1990. In research and development they return a higher rate of investment back into research and development than do the patent drug companies.

And, Mr. Speaker, the generic companies — unlike the patent, multinational companies — also are very involved in developing prevention programs, education programs in the proper use of drugs, in safer dosages, and in terms of better communication with pharmacists and physicians and so on.

Mr. Speaker, I like the national strategy for drugs as promoted by the Canadian Health Coalition — a five point plan. I'll just briefly highlight their view which I agree with. One, establish a national, universal drug insurance plan in Canada. Secondly, ensure that generic drugs reach the market quickly by allowing for compulsory licences after four years of exclusive patent protection. Number three, commit sufficient public resources to monitor quality and effectiveness of private research. And number four, make the drug approval process safe and publicly accountable, which it isn't now. And number five, control prices for all medicines including generic drugs; make drug prices reflect the true cost of research and development.

Prices should not be based on what drug companies think the market will bear but what is reasonable and affordable to Canadian people to ensure that there's a good level of health care. Mr. Speaker, I concur with that five-point strategy.

Also, Mr. Speaker, if the federal government does not want to listen to the Canadian health care coalition, they could listen to their own health care forum chaired by the Minister of Health, and the Prime Minister, because basically their observations and recommendations are the same. And I think most Canadians agree that the health forum approach and recommendations are looking for a balanced and comprehensive, affordable program.

Now there's many more things I could say, Mr. Speaker, but my time is almost up. As I say, I urge unanimous support of this motion, and let's make a difference from Saskatchewan in

the past . . . or in the future like we have in the past. And I would just like to close by reading the motion, seconded by the member from Lloydminster, my colleague:

That this Assembly urge the federal Liberal government to repeal the drug patent legislation, a law which costs the province of Saskatchewan \$10 million a year in added prescription drug costs and jeopardizes the ability of governments at all levels to institute a pharmacare program as recommended in the report of the National Forum on Health.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members and I feel confident that all members will support this motion and we can fax it to Ottawa today. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting this motion because since 1993 I have actually been appalled that the Government of Canada would pass a Bill like C-91. When I think of all of the people that depend on medication in my constituency and in this province, I cannot believe that they are giving in to multinational pharmaceutical firms instead of the health of the nation.

From 1969 to 1993 Canadians enjoyed the benefits of a system known as the compulsory licensing. Under that system, Mr. Speaker, Canadian-owned generic drug companies could produce more affordable generic drugs.

But what happened? Two Bills were introduced by the former Conservative government of Brian Mulroney: C-22, and in 1993, C-91 extended patent protection for these drug companies.

And what this means, Mr. Speaker, is that people often cannot afford the drug prices. We in Saskatchewan have had a plan, and post-deficit, post-deficit we would like to go into a plan again, but not with the cost of drugs as they are today because of this Bill C-92. The Tories and now the Liberals claim that this legislation was necessary in order to stimulate the pharmaceutical research and development in Canada. That's not true, Mr. Speaker.

I'll tell you what has aided pharmaceutical research and development in Canada. What has aided that has been a generous tax break for pharmaceutical companies. In fact what has happened is not only have we passed this Bill to favour the drug companies, to give them 20 years where they can make more money, now the generic drug companies that used to do a lot of research and development aren't able to do that research and development any more because they aren't able to stay in business and compete. So that isn't a valid argument at all.

And it costs our government, all Canadian governments across Canada, millions of dollars in extra health care costs each and every year. And the Minister of Health was just to Ottawa, and in his recent presentation to the House of Commons Industry Committee reviewing Bill C-91, the Minister of Health from Saskatchewan estimated very conservatively that the cost to

consumers of our drug plan in 1996 was \$3 million more because of this Bill. It went on to point out that this does not include the cost of prescription drugs in hospitals, which we have to pay.

This rise in costs has led many provincial governments, including ours, to restrict the drugs covered under their formulary. Now that is the thing. Because of the cost of drugs, not as many drugs can be covered, Mr. Speaker, which is the list . . . the list of drugs that the plan pays for has been shortened.

Former Tory Health minister Benoît Bouchard admitted himself that the legislation would mean a \$30 million increase for all the provinces in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

You know, like I said before, our province has been providing some form of pharmacare for over 20 years. And again as we move to the post-deficit era, we'd like to expand it but the rising cost of drugs is preventing us from doing so.

The recent report on the National Forum on Health, co-chaired by the Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, and Health minister David Dingwall, supported the creation of a national pharmacare plan. The Liberals are paying lip-service to this proposal in the period prior to the election. And that's what irritates me.

Did they take this review to a health committee? No. They took it to a committee that is concerned with industry. So that tells me that the committee reviewing the legislation is the House of Commons Committee on Industry, and not the Committee of Health. And this tells me that it seems to suggest that the Liberals consider Bill C-91 a competitiveness issue, not a health care issue.

This is not how New Democrats see the issue. As our Minister of Health said when he was in Ottawa, your interest may be in the health of the pharmaceutical industry; my interest is in the health of individuals and the effect this legislation has on the overall population health.

This is just another example of the way Liberals operate. They speak one way and then they act another way. When they are in opposition they speak like us; when they are in government, they govern like Tories. And that is dishonest, Mr. Speaker.

Bill C-91 should be rescinded. It should be repealed. And I don't have any faith that the present federal Liberal government is going to do that.

So I just want to end my remarks by saying there are so many people in my constituency that could benefit with a pharmacare plan. And it is my hope and dream before I finish my duty in this House to see the drug plan implemented and the children's dental plan implemented.

Now it's easy for the opposition to keep saying to us, well you blame the federal government. We do not have the ability to tax like the federal government. The opposition full well knows that we rely on a lot of transfer payments from the federal

government. And we as a provincial government are the second level of government.

They full well know that we rely on the federal government to pass laws to help in national programs. And we cannot do it alone. And C-91 should be repealed, and to give us the assistance that we need to bring in a pharmacare program.

And that is my remarks. I will be supporting the hon. member from Saskatoon Eastview and I wish that the opposition members do so too.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my pleasure to join in this debate today. One of the problems I have with the motion presented today is the fact that it is pretty much open-ended. And I would wonder how much forethought has gone into this motion, Mr. Speaker, in saying let's repeal the legislation, Mr. Speaker, period. No if's, and's, or but's whether we should shorten the length of protection or not.

And that lends itself of course to the credibility of the government and the members opposite. Of course the mover of the motion, the member from Saskatoon Eastview, does have a lot of credibility in that regard and because of that I'm happy to speak to this motion.

(1515)

The reason that the members opposite do lack in a lot of credibility is because of what they started back in 1991, Mr. Speaker, and that of course was health reform and the wellness model itself. Nothing the matter with health reform. We all know that we had to do that in whatever sector there is. But the wellness model was flawed, is flawed, and will always be flawed in this format. And that is the reason why this government has a lack of credibility in bringing forward a motion such as this.

When the government . . . if I could, Mr. Speaker, for a minute talk about the wellness model as it relates to the drug plan, both provincially and nationally — is that one of the major problems with the wellness model, Mr. Speaker, and to the member from Saskatoon Eastview, is that there were no yardsticks set up. The government of the day did not know where they were headed, they had no plan, and to this day there are no yardsticks to see if they have gained indeed or if they have not.

And that is why I question the credibility of such a motion, Mr. Speaker. The associate Health minister of the day I believe, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, I believe that he was the one that started this plan of a repealing of this legislation. And of course because the associate minister, Health minister of the day was part of the wellness model in initiating it, I think it takes away some of the credibility of him as well in regards of this type of a motion regarding health and drugs in the province.

Now of course I would certainly support anything that will help the people of Canada and certainly the people of Saskatchewan

in being able to obtain drugs at a reasonable price to meet their needs, their illness needs. That goes without saying, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure every member in this House would agree with that.

The problem with this, as I noted earlier with this motion, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that I think it is short-sighted in that it's just to repeal the legislation and there it ends. And that's where we have a problem.

One of the major thrusts of this government's wellness model, Mr. Speaker, was to balance their budget, to balance the books — a noble feat. But when it's done on the backs of the sick and the elderly, Mr. Speaker, it's very inappropriate.

If I could go back, Mr. Speaker . . . And I heard the members opposite, both the mover and the seconder, the member from Saskatoon Eastview and the member from Lloydminster, talk about wanting people to have access to drugs at an affordable price. I just want to go back and just if I could, Mr. Speaker, give a little history on the Saskatchewan drug plan itself.

Of course back in 1991, Mr. Speaker, the deductible was \$125 for each family unit. The deductible was \$50 for single seniors and \$75 for senior families. Certain consumers with high drug costs were granted certain privileges to purchase prescriptions with upfront payment of 25 per cent of total prescription costs with a waiver of the deductible.

Now in 1992 — of course it was the fall of 1991, Mr. Speaker, when this government came into power — in 1992 the NDP altered the plan. Beneficiaries now paid the full cost of drugs up front and submitted claims to the prescription drug plan to receive a 65 per cent rebate on all costs in excess of the deductible.

The deductible became a semi-annual charge of \$190 and then a 35 per cent co-payment to a maximum of 375; then a 10 per cent co-payment. Seniors' deductible remained at the former levels but became semi-annual with a co-payment of 35 per cent on the first 375 and then a 10 per cent co-payment — a fairly complex plan.

Now in 1993, this is when this government did its best work. This is when they really took a shot at the sick and the seniors, the founders of this province, with the drug plan, Mr. Speaker. The deductible for most families rose to a semi-annual payment of 850 bucks. Now that's well over \$1,500, Mr. Speaker.

A special program was brought in to aid low income families, which is wonderful. And we have lots of low income families in this province — families eligible for special support whereby a subsidy is determined on the basis of family income and the co-payment based on that subsidy level. Seniors receiving the Saskatchewan income supplement or the federal guaranteed income supplement and residing in a nursing home have a semi-annual deductible of \$100 and a co-payment of 35 per cent. Other seniors on GIS (guaranteed income supplement) have a \$200 semi-annual deductible and a 35 per cent co-payment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if you talk about those numbers and say them fast, it doesn't maybe mean a lot to a lot of the members opposite. But 17 or \$1,800 deductible for people that are on fixed incomes or low incomes that can't afford it, it's a major feat for them to receive the necessary drugs that they need.

I talked to many people, Mr. Speaker, certainly in my constituency, from right across the province, who tell me that there is a problem with them obtaining the necessary drugs. Now you could talk to many druggists around the province as well who will substantiate that very notion, that many of our people, especially our seniors that are sick and need drugs, are having problems obtaining the necessary medication that they need.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the problems may be that these people aren't using the total amount of drugs that are prescribed by their physician, whether it's family or whoever. But the point is, Mr. Speaker, that they're still doing without them, whether they cannot actually afford to go and buy the prescription, fill the whole prescription. When they get home, maybe they're short on a prescription and take it in a much smaller dose than they originally were told to do so by their physician.

The problem with that, Mr. Speaker, is that not only are the drugs not working as they should for these people, it provides a continued burden on the health system. Because, Mr. Speaker, these people do not get over the illness. They have to go back and eventually they end up in some sort of an institution in this province where there is a bed available to get treatment because the drugs haven't cured the illness that they were treated for.

Now the reason that the Saskatchewan drug plan has a lot to do with this motion, Mr. Speaker, is the fact of credibility once again. I go back, as I talked earlier. You've got a government across the way talking about the national drug plan, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, this is no laughing matter; this is serious. And the members opposite may think it's humorous, but it's a dead serious problem that we have here. And it's one of credibility across the floor, Mr. Speaker — that these very members across the floor, this very government, talk about a national drug plan. They condemn the federal government for what they're doing. They take a short-sighted approach to a national drug plan, to the pharmaceutical companies.

And don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker, I'm not standing here protecting large, multinational pharmaceutical companies because of who they are. I want to ensure that the people of Canada, the people of this province, have the necessary drugs to do the job.

We continually hear about immunity to antibiotics, Mr. Speaker, that's occurring in humans. It's occurring in the animal sector. In agriculture we have the same problem there, where animals are building up immunity to certain drugs. And certainly we can extend that in the field of agriculture, Mr. Speaker, to plants, where we've seen immunity to chemicals to treat certain plants.

So the thing we need to ensure, Mr. Speaker, is that if, if we do

take back and shorten the protection, Mr. Speaker, that the research will still be done. And as we move . . . I heard the Premier talking earlier about the future. We have to look into the future and say well, what will happen in five years if we don't have these companies that are providing the protection and producing these new drugs.

So, Mr. Speaker, you see the problem with the member's opposite motion is that there is a lack of credibility there because of the whole health reform process in Saskatchewan, and I would like to take them to task on that today.

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise this afternoon and speak on behalf of the motion by my colleague, the hon. member for Saskatoon Eastview. My remarks in the time I'm permitted this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, will first entail a bit of a background which I hope to be a little more non-partisan than the remarks of my colleague, the member from Arm River.

I'll also refer, Mr. Speaker, to a couple of reports done by third-party interested parties. One is a report done by Price Waterhouse, Mr. Speaker, entitled "The Bill C-91 Review: What are the Consumer Issues?" And also, Mr. Speaker, I'll refer a little bit to a study done by the Canada Health Coalition, entitled *A Prescription for Plunder* — "Ending the monopoly for multinational drug companies is necessary to control drug costs and protect Canada's health care system."

Mr. Speaker, first of all for a little bit of background on this C-91 debate and process that's going on. Recently the House of Commons standing committee has been hearing presentations from witnesses on the subject of Bill C-91. The federal Liberal government has claimed to oppose this legislation, opposed this in opposition, now declare that they are prepared to accept only minor changes to this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

New Democrats stated, Mr. Speaker, in 1993, that this legislation would be damaging to our health care system and subsequent events have proven us right, Mr. Speaker. If we cannot persuade the Ottawa Liberals to scrap this legislation or at least to make some drastic changes, Saskatchewan and other provinces will never be able to afford the cost of a national pharmacare program as recommended, Mr. Speaker, by the National Forum on Health.

Mr. Speaker, from 1969 until 1993, Canadians enjoyed the benefits of a system known as compulsory licensing. Under this system, Canadian-owned generic drug manufacturers could produce cheaper copies of prescription medicines developed by foreign-owned pharmaceutical multinationals and compensate the original manufacturer by paying them royalties.

Bill C-22, introduced in 1987, Mr. Speaker, instituted a form of patent protection for drug manufacturers. Bill C-91, passed in 1993, extended the period of patent protection to 20 years and applied this retroactively to 1991, Mr. Speaker.

These changes have resulted in higher prescription drug prices for provincial drug plans, for hospitals, and for individual Canadian consumers. The Saskatchewan Health minister

recently estimated that the Bill cost Saskatchewan people \$3 million in 1996, Mr. Speaker. This is forecast to rise sharply in the years ahead. And a recent study by the Queen's University suggests that the annual cost to Saskatchewan could end up being in the 13 to \$18 million range, Mr. Speaker.

In 1992 our former minister of Health, the current Minister of Social Services, went to Ottawa and suggested if Ottawa were determined to pursue this course it should be willing to compensate provincial health plans. Instead Ottawa Conservatives, and now Ottawa Liberals, proceeded with drastic cuts, Mr. Speaker, to federal funding in all areas of health.

Federal Conservatives and Liberals have suggested that Canadians are benefiting from an increased number of pharmaceutical research and development jobs. This claim ignores the fact that Canada has some of the most generous tax breaks in the world for research and development jobs, and any new jobs can probably be attributed to not just the patent protection.

Bill C-91, Mr. Speaker, also dealt our generic drug industry, which was a major employer in this country, a serious blow. Immediately after the Bill received Royal Assent, one generic manufacturer put plans for an expansion of their plant in Winnipeg, Manitoba on hold.

If Ottawa Liberals aren't prepared to scrap the legislation, they should at least find ways of coping with some of the more damaging aspects of the legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Our Health minister recently called for an end to the practice wherein a slight modification to an original product can give a drug company the ability to extend the original patent. He also called, Mr. Speaker, for an end to the regulations that put roadblocks in the way of generic manufacturers seeking to enter the market, even after the 20-year patent has expired. These are sensible suggestions, Mr. Speaker, and Ottawa Liberals should listen.

Our Minister of Health also, as recently as a week ago when speaking to the federal committee reviewing this, suggested that the interest in the health . . . that Ottawa is more interested in the health of the pharmaceutical industry.

Mr. Speaker, those have been some actions done by our government and our Minister of Health. But, Mr. Speaker, let me also talk about some recent reports — and I'll refer to one done by the management consultants firm of Price Waterhouse, prepared in September of last year.

This report was entitled, Mr. Speaker, "The Bill C-91 Review: What are the Consumer Issues?" And I'd like to quote a little bit at length from the introduction of this report, Mr. Speaker, because I think it brings a good, third-party, objective view to the debate we're talking about here this afternoon.

(1530)

I quote from the introduction of this report by Price

Waterhouse, and where they say:

Everyday, the media provides us with new evidence of Canada's health care crisis. Hospitals are closing, private clinics are springing up, seniors are being asked to pay user fees for medication they need, doctors are threatening to strike, the provinces are reducing services — the list of symptoms is almost endless. According to the people responsible for closing hospitals and introducing user fees, health care costs are out of control and there simply is not enough money available to maintain the existing level of service.

I continue in this quote from the introduction to the Price Waterhouse report:

What does any of this have to do with Bill C-91?

And it goes on to say:

Until Bill C-91 was passed by the Conservative government in 1993, generic drug companies were able to use compulsory licences to manufacture . . . products while they were still under patent. In return, these generic companies paid a royalty to compensate the patent holder. Since generic drugs are priced significantly less than comparable brand name drugs, compulsory licensing saved consumers and taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars annually. In terms of health care expenditures, (Mr. Speaker, the report goes on to say) drugs were a big ticket item. In 1994, drugs accounted for 12.7 per cent, or roughly \$9 billion, out of Canada's \$72.5 billion (in annual) health care expenditures. Drugs (also) represent the fastest growing category in health care expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, Price Waterhouse goes on to say that:

By eliminating compulsory licensing and delaying the introduction of generic drugs, Bill C-91 will cost Canadians billions of dollars over the next fifteen years. (This, Mr. Speaker) At a time when health care services are being cut back, why would the federal government pass legislation that increased health care costs by millions of dollars?

Why would Ottawa do this? Very good question, I think, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the introduction of this report goes on to say, and I quote:

Since the damage has already been done, the answer doesn't really matter. The more important question is what can public interest groups do about (this)?

There is a committee that's going on and has been getting a lot of input from various groups, not just provincial governments like our own, but a variety of interest groups interested in this very vital matter.

The review of Bill C-91 amendments will give advocacy organizations with an interest in health care, the opportunity to express their concerns and the impact of this legislation on our

health care industry.

Mr. Speaker, I maybe just would also like to quote a very short conclusion on the Price Waterhouse report in talking about this, where they say, and I quote again:

Advocacy groups strenuously opposed to Bill C-22 and Bill C-91 (have every right to take the government to task) . . . In hindsight, many of the arguments raised by the Consumers' Association of Canada, the Manitoba Society for Seniors, the Fédération nationale des associations de consommateurs du Québec, the National Anti-Poverty Organization, One Voice . . .

and other organizations have played an important role in trying to identify the problems of the legislation to the costs of our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, as my time is almost . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The hon. member's time has expired and debate will continue.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to enter this debate today because I think we have to inject just a little bit of reality into this discussion. And I soundly concur with my hon. colleague from Arm River that there was not too much thought gone into the presentation of this motion.

Matter of fact, one might even consider it somewhat frivolous. However, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the reasons that the members opposite would want to debate this issue. After all, we have a general election on the horizon and the federal NDP have staked out drug cut legislation as one of their issues.

It's ironic, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that refuses to debate its handling of young offenders because they say it's a federal responsibility and not in the purview of this House — which of course is untrue. Yet they are willing to debate in this House this federal statute which it has no jurisdiction over.

Again, Mr. Speaker, it just shows the hypocrisy of this government and that party. However we're getting quite used to that from those members. They won't debate any issue they have some clear control over; but they will debate C-91 only because they feel it will benefit their federal counterparts.

I understand a similar resolution was debated in the B.C. (British Columbia) legislature with the same purpose in mind — to help Alexa McDonough. And admittedly, Mr. Speaker, what's left of the NDP federally does need a lot of help. Whether that's the purpose of this legislature, I'm not sure. At any rate, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to inject a little bit of realism into this debate.

After listening to the members opposite, it's quite obvious their federal party hasn't changed much since being decimated in 1993. They still view anyone in business as the enemy of the people, not just our major, brand-name drug companies. At the very root of the NDP remains the very real notion that if you're in business you must be out to hurt people. Canadian

corporations remain the NDP's bogeyman to throw in front of the voters at election time.

And we've seen how well that strategy has worked federally — never in power, never will be in power, and not even an official party.

Mr. Speaker, the federal NDP leader has decided to use Bill C-91 as a plank in her campaign platform. She says if she were prime minister, she would immediately repeal it and severely limit the patent protection for the brand-name pharmaceutical companies.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — And it's very easy, Mr. Speaker, it's very easy for Alexa McDonough to say that because she knows she'll never be prime minister and does not have to face up to reality. In fact she says so. According to the newspaper the day after the federal convention, Ms. McDonough had already conceded defeat.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. Now all hon. members here will want to provide the opportunity to the hon. member from Melville to have his remarks heard. The Chair appreciates the enthusiasm of the hon. members and reminds them that there will be opportunity for comments and questions later if you can't get into debate.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They're doing that because they know they'll just cut into my time about some real sound, solid comments that I have to make here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Here we are just perhaps a few days from an election call and the NDP have already conceded defeat. What an inspiration, Mr. Speaker. So I think the people watching should take the NDP's promise to scrap C-91 just for what it is — a promise made by a party which admits it has no hope of forming government now or ever.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite would have us believe that if the 20-year drug patent legislation were repealed, everything would be just perfect when it comes to drugs, and in particular, drug costs. The NDP would have us believe that a 20-year patent is somehow out of line.

But reality just doesn't bear this out. In fact most countries in the world have 20-year protection for brand-name drugs. In fact most intellectual property has 20-year patent protection. That's how business is done, Mr. Speaker.

If a company is willing to put up their money for research and develop — tens of hundreds of millions of dollars in the case of patent drugs — you've got to offer them sufficient protection. And unless the NDP (New Democratic Party) is willing to have the government itself put up all the cash, do all the research, do all the development, to take all the risks, it's got to allow the drug companies to have a reasonable patent protection. And moving to a 20-year protection from 17 years brought Canada

into line with most of the world.

But maybe the NDP does advocate that the government develop all the new drugs. That's about as realistic as anything else the federal NDP advocates these days.

Mr. Speaker, in debating the 20-year patent protection, I guess the first question for the members opposite is, if 20 years is too long, what is the proper length of time? If the fact that most intellectual property has a 20-year patent, isn't that good enough? Tell me why not. If the fact the rest of the world extends a 20-year patent protection to drug companies, tell me why Canada should be different? Canada is no more an island unto itself in the world than Saskatchewan is an island unto itself in Canada.

But, Mr. Speaker, again we are talking about reality here, not something the federal NDP will have to deal with. That's a luxury that party has. It's not a luxury everyone enjoys, however.

But, Mr. Speaker, I get back to the question of what the drug patent legislation should be. What period would make prescription drugs suddenly so affordable that a national drug program could be implemented immediately and everyone's drug costs for everything would be covered by the government.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, such a program with provincial participation is a laudable goal, and I'm sure if it becomes possible for governments to pursue such a program, either in the near future or further down the line, the federal government will do so. But I hardly think the 20-year patent law is the only thing that's stopping such a program from being implemented now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic that this government opposite is now trying to paint itself as the champions of a drug plan when it was the government that completely gutted our own drug plan here in Saskatchewan.

Look at the history of this government. In 1991 when the NDP came to power, the deductible for the drug plan was \$125. That's the deductible that party decried when it was implemented by the Conservatives.

In '92, this NDP government opposite slashed away at Saskatchewan's drug program, raising the deductible to a semi-annual payment of \$190 with a co-payment of 35 per cent. The next year they took their axe to the program again, this time completely gutting it. Deductibles rose to \$850 for most families, with a further payment of 35 per cent of the costs. So much for a commitment to affordable drugs, Mr. Speaker. And all this came before the passage of the 20-year drug patent protection.

The members opposite will have us believe that removing patent protection from drug companies will drop the cost of drugs right now. But I don't hear them talking about what it would do to the drug manufacturing industry in Canada. They stand there and say that these companies which risk hundreds of millions of dollars of developing these drugs should have no

protection. What they're arguing, Mr. Speaker, is that our country shouldn't have a drug manufacturing industry. And let's face it, the pharmaceutical industry has benefited from the 20-year patent. There's no question about that.

But as these companies have benefited, so has research and development of new drugs right here in Canada. With the passage of C-91 the pharmaceutical companies promised to devote 10 per cent of sales to research and development by 1996. That was actually achieved in 1993. And this year, twelve and a half per cent of sales will be devoted to research and development. That means new and better drugs, Mr. Speaker. And almost as important, it means more jobs in the pharmaceutical industry.

The members opposite don't seem to be interested in these jobs, Mr. Speaker. Again, it shows the hypocrisy of that party. Their leader has also tabbed jobs as one of the priorities of a mythical NDP government, as they should — as any party should. Here we have a high-quality, high-paying jobs, and the NDP says they're not important.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let's look at the 20-year patent protection. The members opposite would have you believe that the clock doesn't start ticking until the drugs hit the shelves. That's blatantly untrue. In fact the clock begins as soon as the company applies for the patent. The average drug takes six to nine years of clinical trials before the company can apply for approval of the drug.

So, Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult that at this point in time there would be such an argument, or not a well-thought-out motion, to present for this kind of a debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1545)

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly glad to be able to take part in this debate. Most of the issues have already been covered but being a schoolteacher, I found out that sometimes it takes a repetition of things in order for some people to understand it. So let's take a look at this.

An Hon. Member: — Don't forget to talk slow for them.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you.

I, and most Canadians, believe — and we strongly believe — that it's not only unethical but also immoral to make huge profits on the backs of people who are ill. I really and truly believe that. Health care is in the public domain and as such should not be looked upon as a means to making absurd profits.

Mr. Speaker, prescription drugs — unlike other commodities such as grain, cattle, oil and lumber — should not be used to make these exorbitant profits which are being made by the multinational companies. As stated by the National Forum on Health, a committee which was established by the Liberals and chaired by the PM, the Prime Minister, stated:

The profit motive in financing health care is both inconsistent with the view of health as a public good and moreover leads to high administration costs and inequities in access and quality. International evidence suggests that public funding and administration are the best way to achieve fairness and value for money.

That's what the public forum on health stated. This is not what we are seeing from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, this statement confirms that which we have always stated — that privatization of health care is wrong, not only for Canada but for the rest of the world. However we know that medicare is under attack by the federal Liberals — slashing the health transfers; giving up their national responsibility in maintaining strong health standards; and in their support of Bill C-91.

From 1969 to 1993 Canadians were protected by a compulsory licensing Act. The Canadians who owned generic drug companies could produce more affordable generic drugs. And then they would pay the foreign-dominated, multinational drug companies a royalty.

The multinational companies were doing very well. But they wanted to have more, so they went running to the prime minister who at that time was Brian Mulroney. And they had the Bill C-22 passed, which gave them patent protection for a certain number of years.

But that still wasn't good enough. Then they wanted 20-year patent protection and they went and they got C-91 passed — a shame and a bluff. And the Liberals, in their "red book," were adamant that they would do away with C-91. But look at what happened. Just like all the other promises they had, you know and I know what happened.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — How could the Liberals agree to this horrendous Act. How could they?

An Hon. Member: — Because they don't care.

Mr. Wall: — Because they don't care. The multinationals stated that this added protection would lead to a lot of research and development, would lead to many, many jobs and so forth that they would generate in Canada. We all know that the tax breaks which are given to research and development by the Canadian law are the things which encourage the research.

Do you realize that there's been a total of 2,055 jobs eliminated — that's eliminated — by the brand-name pharmaceutical companies. When did they do this? Between 1990 and 1995 they eliminated over 2,000 jobs. Guess what the generic companies did? They made over 2,000 jobs. And these people can't agree. They don't know.

This is a true example of Liberal job creation. That's why we're sitting at 10 per cent unemployment. We sure in the world are not sitting in that in Saskatchewan where we have a decent

government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — The cost alone to consumers in the private health plans and the government drug plans are in the millions of dollars — we know that, and I think everybody agrees that it costs more. We've got to.

In fact the estimated cost of such monopoly patent protection to consumers and taxpayers by the year 2010 will be anywhere from 3.6 to \$7.3 billion.

An Hon. Member: — Billion?

Mr. Wall: — Billion — not million — but billions of dollars.

The federal minister of Health at the time when they introduced C-91 predicted that there would be an increase of at least 30 million. This at the same time when the federal Liberals were brutally butchering the health care program by slashing hundreds of millions of dollars from the health transfer payments. The Liberals claim they are protecting medicare when their actions are just the opposite. Judge not by what is said, but by what is done.

The introductory costs of course, are supposed to be controlled so that they're supposed to be at a reasonable level. However they have become prohibitively high, and they've been based on the highest two countries, Switzerland and the United States, which have the highest costs of drugs — not the average, but the highest. This is the way the Liberals operate. Okay? And so that these prices . . . Then they say that they have a reduction in them. These high prices are not . . . they are immoral and reprehensible.

An example, just recently a drug used to treat heart attack rose by \$500 — \$500. This drug, if you want to look it up, is Activase. Guess what it costs for one treatment of Activase for a heart attack when you're being treated in the hospital?

An Hon. Member: — How much?

Mr. Wall: — Two thousand five hundred dollars. They weren't making enough on the 2,000; they added another 500 onto it. Shame on them.

That's what the industry does when they get a monopoly. It gouges the individual, it gouges the private health plans, and it gouges any of the government drug plans. This drug alone will cost an additional 680,000 each and every year.

What is happening is that profits are placed ahead of individuals. It is a time for change, a time when human beings become more important than profit, a time when compassion, concern, and cooperation replace the greed, the selfishness, and the disregard for the common good as portrayed by these multinational companies and endorsed by the Liberals in Ottawa, the federal Liberals in Ottawa. I say it is time to expose their hypocrisy and let the people know the truth.

The Liberals are reviewing Bill C-91. A year before the review, they already stated that there would be no amendments made and that there would be no repeal of it. They went through the motions because they had to. And that is all that we can say about that.

Where is this being reviewed? It's being reviewed by the Committee on Industry. Can you believe that? It's obvious that it should be the Committee on Health. But I suppose this is no different than the Leader of the Liberal Party appointing the member from North Battleford as critic of the North when bypassing a native son who grew up in the North, who lives in the North, who spent his entire life in the North, knows the concerns of the North, and is an eloquent orator. No different. Oh well, such is life in the ranks of the Liberals.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry; I digress. I guess Bill C-91 is an economic issue, not to be confused with the health of the individual.

Mr. Speaker, our concern is for the health of the individual, not the health of the multinational companies. And we know that this Bill must be amended. We must replace the discredited patent law — which has caused drugs to become the fastest-growing health care cost — with a law that makes affordable and effective generic drugs available earlier whenever that will improve the health of Canadians.

I ask the Liberals to join with us in supporting this motion; to bring compassion, care, and concern not only for ourselves but for our fellow man. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, I've been enjoying the debate from hon. members opposite. I enjoy the volume. I enjoy the rhetoric and the bluster. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to see very well because this whole debate is nothing but a giant smokescreen designed to try and deceive the people of Saskatchewan about the real issues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Well what are the real issues? Mr. Speaker, since I got elected as MLA for North Battleford, I have been phoned by one senior after another, devastated by high drug costs since the provincial NDP government gutted our drug plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Who would have thought, who would have think it, Mr. Speaker, that even the Tories have more compassion, more social conscience for our seniors, our sick, and our elderly than those guys.

And yet here are the facts, Mr. Speaker. Here, here are the facts, and they can't be denied. In 1991 over 91 million went back to our seniors and our sick who needed drug protection. Last year, 58 million.

That's what this debate is all about — the calls I'm getting, Mr. Speaker, from people who say no coverage for my oxygen, no coverage for my insulin. Last week an 83-year-old lady phoned me at home in tears. She can't make things go. She can't go out to visit her daughter any more because she can't afford the portable oxygen cylinders that . . . the coverage has been cut out.

Used to be covered under the Tories. The Tories are humanitarians, are humanitarians. I mean they are social benefactors compared to what's been done across the way. Who would have thought it.

So this poor old lady, she wants to go visit her daughter in Alberta but she has to take these portable oxygen cylinders. She can't afford them any more since the NDP took them away from her.

Well the calls I'm getting, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that members opposite are also getting. It's going to be a problem for them in the election.

So what do you do when you get a problem? Well you try and shove the blame onto somebody else and the blame is going to be to say there should not be patent protection in this . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Pursuant to rule 17, the first 65 minutes of debate has expired and the House will now entertain 10 minutes of comments and questions.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the hon. member from Saskatoon Eastview if I could. In this motion they talk about repealing the drug patent legislation just point blank, plain and simple, no if's and's or but's. My question would be, was how would the member in this government deal with the huge price increases in the drugs, given that the pharmaceutical companies will try and recover their research costs in a much shorter time frame than they are presently doing now, and what would this government do to protect the consumers from that problem?

Mr. Pringle: — Mr. Speaker, I don't buy that argument for a minute because in fact I already outlined a plan as proposed by the Canadian Health Coalition on what should be done — a five-point strategy that will be *Hansard* tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, if the Bill was repealed, any credible study would indicate that the generic companies would be free to research the drugs and provide a counterpart, you know, the equivalent, and the costs would go down. So I don't accept his argument.

Now I have a question for him if . . . could I ask question? No? Okay.

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the member from North Battleford. My question is: will the Liberal Party be accepting donations from the pharmaceutical companies again this federal election?

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I am going to rule the question out of order according . . . Order, order. By rule 17,

questions must be directed to the content of the speeches and I rule that question out of order. Next questions or comments.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly saw a lot of crocodile tears from the government side how this particular patent legislation is a severe imposition on the ill of this province. They were, Mr. Speaker, they were crocodile tears because if this government opposite was truly concerned about people who buy drugs, who are ill in this province, they can save the entire \$30 million that is supposedly projected to cost the government, by rolling back the CCTA (Crown Construction Tendering Agreement).

They've increased power. They've increased SaskTel rates. They've increased SaskEnergy rates. I would like to ask the member from Lloydminster what her government is going to do to make up for those increased, substantial costs to the ill of this province.

(1600)

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you very much for the question. And the hon. member is right — we are paying more. We are paying more because of C-91 and we always pay more when the Tories and Liberals are in power. They say they are free enterprisers and we would expect them to invite competition. But we know from past experience, I know from experience to the last party, they don't want competition.

What they want is legislation that will protect exorbitant profits and that is exactly what they're doing here — protecting exorbitant profits. I can tell you that the drug companies make profits that are exorbitant. So I'm telling you right now: yes we are paying more for our drugs; and yes we would repeal C-91 if we had the power to do it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the hon. member from Arm River. I will like to ask him if he agrees or disagrees — not with me — but if he agrees or disagrees with the Canadian Health Coalition and the National Forum on Health, those two studies. If he agrees or disagrees, first of all, that drug costs are too high in Canada, yes or no. And secondly, that Bill C-91 is one of the largest factors for those drug costs being too high. Do you agree with those two questions?

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I agree with, Mr. Speaker, is the fact we need to do what's best for the people of Canada and the people of this province of Saskatchewan. And one thing that this government hasn't — and I'm a little surprised at the member for asking me the question — that this government hasn't done . . . and they've continued to cut services to the people of Saskatchewan, both in terms of health services and drugs.

And when they're cutting the drug program from 1991 to 1992, from 91 million down to 58 million on the backs of the sick and elderly in this province, I think they have little room to talk about what the federal government had done, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the member from Swift Current. Mr. Speaker, many of us this time of year are afflicted with various viral and cough symptoms, and one of the things that I've heard and understand, that there is an incredible change in the effect of antibiotics on these various bugs and diseases. And so what's got to happen, Mr. Speaker, is that we have to have some very significant changes in the antibiotic system that's available as medicines in Canada.

My question to the member is: how this great challenge of increased resistance of antibiotics . . . to drugs of diseases, how is the member going to propose that the necessary research is going to be done and funded in order that this very serious issue is addressed?

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for that question. On the field of research and development, out of a total of 400 drugs, which they said came out that were new, there was a total of six that are known as breakthrough drugs. The other drugs had minor modifications made into it, and those minor modifications added another 20 years onto the patent. Now suddenly we have a pill which is protected for 40 years. And that's what you are in favour of? Shame on you.

Mr. Whitmore: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the member from Arm River, if I could. As we're talking about Bill C-91, which deals with patent protection in terms of drugs by these chemical companies, in many cases these chemical companies also produce farm chemicals, and there's been a great struggle in the farming community to lessen these patents because of the monopoly situation, and it's proven by farmers, the high cost of inputs. Would the member agree that these patent laws that exist to farm chemicals create a high cost for farmers there, and also at the same time create high drug costs for individuals?

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the input costs to our agriculture product producers in this province are enormous and are a major burden for the province. But the member will remember back some 10 years, when a generic Roundup was tried to be brought forward in this province. And there was people in our community that worked to try and get the generic Roundup, which conceivably would lower costs of that chemical — which is a terrific chemical — and it didn't get off the ground. So I think that many of the people in this province, including the farmers, recognize the benefits of having the research done by these chemical companies.

Yes, our input costs are enormous and yes, chemical companies do make a lot of money. But they do, as well, continue to create a lot of research. And I think the generic Roundup was a good example of some of the confidence that a lot of our farmers have in the research area of chemicals.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, I see the hon. member for Lloydminster is dying to catch your eye so I will give her the chance to stand up here. She says that she would like to see generic drug companies do more research and development. Is

she not aware that generic, the definition of generic, is that they don't do research and development? They piggyback on other research and development? And does she not realize that without some limited patent protection there will be no drugs come on our market? And does she not think that the gutting of the drug plan by this province has more to do with high drug costs than anything the federal government has done?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Well, Mr. Speaker, poor research again. I'm disappointed in the member from North Battleford. That isn't true. What he just said is not a fact. I'll tell you right now that opportunities in research and development in the generic drug industry as a result of the implementation of this legislation . . . After Bill C-92 received Royal Assent, generic manufacturers, and I'll give you an example, Apotex, announced that plans for an expansion to Winnipeg were on hold. This generic drug company was doing research and development. I gave you the name of the company, and I'll tell you, because of this Bill and because they could not compete, they weren't able to go ahead.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, again these free enterprisers are scared of competition. That's one thing the New Democrats aren't scared of. We're not scared of competition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Time has expired for the seventy-five minute debate. As good luck will have it, it will be on the agenda again in two weeks.

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 301 — The Lutheran Church-Canada, Central District Act

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 301, The Lutheran Church-Canada, Central District Act be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Bill No. 302 — The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company Act, 1997

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 302, The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company Act, 1997 be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Bill No. 303 — The TD Trust Company Act, 1997

Ms. Murrell: — Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 303, The TD

Trust Company Act, 1997 be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No 3 — University Tuition Fees

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand today in the Assembly to talk about an issue of some great importance to many thousands of people in this province and that is the current tuition increases that the universities are considering.

Mr. Speaker, we've had a fairly spirited debate in this Assembly so far today on the question of drug costs and some of the things the governments, and in particular the federal government, are doing to increase those. Unfortunately, this motion today is necessary for very much the same reasons and that is very much the inaction of the federal government in terms of supporting post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take some time today to outline some of the pressures facing our universities, obviously some of the pressures facing our students, and some of the things that we're trying to do here in Saskatchewan to alleviate some of those problems.

I think it's important for us to start by recognizing that the universities are an integral part of both the province's fabric but also its economy. And the role that they have to play in Saskatchewan is extremely important in terms of its education, the research and development that goes on in the province, and the betterment and enlightenment of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, this province has since 1905 basically, been committed to providing affordable, accessible education. University of Saskatchewan is one of the oldest institutions in this province. I believe it was incorporated in 1907. It was one of the first Acts of this Assembly. And I think it shows the importance to Saskatchewan people that our universities have played at a time when many people didn't even attain any grade school education.

The people that sat in these chairs, in the start of this province, saw that it was important for us to provide institutions of higher learning to allow people to provide and attain an education, an advanced education.

Mr. Speaker, I think today what we are facing is very much a challenge. We are facing a vital change that the federal government is forcing onto our provinces and onto our institutions, which is almost unprecedented in Canadian history.

I think that it is important for us to understand, as we take a look at the post-secondary sector, that there are various different parties that have participated in terms of funding it and driving it forward. Basically those big three are the federal government, the provincial government, and the individual

students.

Over the years, while we have moved away from the idea of tuition fees in the K to 12 system, we've continued to allow this idea to continue within our post-secondary system. The belief is, is that the person who goes through higher education will attain greater benefit, greater employment opportunities, and better income. As a result we essentially justify tuition as a payment out of future earnings.

I think it's an interesting issue. Although we could get into a debate whether or not we should continue to have tuition fees, I think it's important to recognize that for the time being we are going to have tuition fees. So the question becomes one of, what is the level? It becomes a question of what is the responsibility of the two senior levels of government to funding these universities; and what is the responsibility of the individual student?

Central to that though also is what is the responsibility to the universities in terms of ensuring that students are getting a good bang for their buck, ensuring that the monies are well allocated, the expenditures are justified, and the education is in fact first rate.

We have a system of universities in this province I think that is largely unparalleled. We have two excellent universities. The University of Regina is an excellent mid-size university. It is, I think, one of the best in the country in terms of its liberal arts education. It has pioneered many important programs like the co-op education program which is very important and a very positive piece in terms of helping students go from the university into the workforce in a smooth transition. It also provides a role for employers to play in terms of helping out.

But, Mr. Speaker, the problem is that today we are getting to a point where the return from education . . . the return on the investment a student makes in education do not necessarily match the costs that they're being asked to bear.

(1615)

Our government has, in this most recent budget, announced that we will back-fill 100 per cent of the federal cuts. This is a very important commitment to the universities. This is an important commitment to the students. We understand that when the provincial government cuts money, that there is only a couple of other places that the universities can go. They could obviously undertake internal downsizing — like we've been forced to as an administration here — or they can go to the students for increased revenues.

The situation that we looked at this year in making these budget decisions is that we were not prepared to see more costs passed on to the students. We understood that the federal government making massive cuts to its post-secondary education budget through the CHST was going to have a very dramatic impact on tuitions in this province.

That is why we changed our position and decided to put in all that money that the federal government cut, rather than simply

pass it on through. And it was important I think for the universities to understand this. That money that we have provided is money we are providing to offset tuition. That's the purpose of it. It's not there for really any other particular reason except to offset tuition increases.

Mr. Speaker, it concerns me somewhat as I read the newspapers both in Saskatoon and here in Regina about the assumptions that the university administrators are making on why this money is being provided. And I want to start by saying I appreciate the diligence that both President George Ivany in Saskatoon and President Don Wells here in Regina have made to attempting to minimize the impact on students.

But I think it's also important that we understand that there is a bit of a hedging going on here. I'm looking at an article dated April 18, which is Friday, in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* in which President George Ivany says that he'll be recommending to the board of governors that tuition be raised 6.3 per cent this fall and an additional 7.9 per cent next year. Now granted he said this will be instead of a 10 per cent increase that he was previously considering.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the provincial government is already fronting the money that would have been raised from that 10 per cent tuition increase. We are already providing that to the universities. So the question becomes one of whether or not a tuition increase at all should be considered this year or whether the university should be looking for other alternatives.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several years we've seen, as I mentioned earlier, some fairly significant changes in the way that universities were being funded. Perhaps one of the most dramatic of those is obviously the change being made at the federal level as the federal government moved from a system previously known as established programs financing, or EPF, to the new CHST, Canada Health and Social Transfer.

This change, to be charitable about it, I think is really a . . . it's much more than simply housekeeping. It's much more than simply a change in accounting. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this change is in fact a way to mask a massive budget cut and a massive offloading of post-secondary education responsibilities onto the provinces. And this has come at great cost to both the province and our provincial institutions.

I think that it's interesting to note that between 1991 and 1997 that the funding provided from EPF and now CHST has declined by \$157 million — \$157 million that otherwise would have been targeted to the universities, to health care, and to social services.

It is unfortunate that there has not been the ability of the province to pick up the increases that were necessary or that the universities were seeking. As we all know — and I won't go through it again — the province of course inherited when we came to office in 1991, a financial crisis. We had a government that had a spending problem, a fairly significant one. It was running approximately a \$1.2 billion deficit. And we had to get our own control on our own spending.

Mr. Speaker, that meant that everyone had to share in carrying that burden. And I appreciate the work that the universities did in helping to meet and share with us in carrying that load. But, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to overstate that. Because to a large extent that load has been carried not by the university administrations, not by the universities as institutions, but by the individual students.

While we looked at a \$157 million decrease in EPF and the CHST payments, what we saw during that same time period, in 1991 to 1996 — and I'll use the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) as an example — is an increase in their overall budget of \$19 million during that time period. Fully 16.9 million of that came from tuition fee increases. Eighty-eight per cent of all the increases in the university budgets have been funded solely on the backs of the students. That is unprecedented in terms of the growth of this fee.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it begs us to ask the question of what in fact do we do now to have the universities to take a look at providing real relief when they have the opportunity to do so. We've said we're not going to pass on the federal cuts. I asked the universities not to pass on tuition fee increases. I want to say it again. This government has fronted the bill. We have paid the tuition fee increase bill for this year on behalf of the students, and we've done that because we're concerned about that rise in tuition.

Mr. Speaker, our government has gone through restraint. I know different sectors of the public service have gone through restraint. The question is, have the universities? And to what extent have the universities gone through restraint? Now we've seen the universities' budget grow. We know that it's grown largely through tuition.

I listened with interest some days ago as the Leader of the Opposition stood in this House to say that well, the budget had to grow because of the increase in electrical bills. I find it interesting that utility bills at the university increased in Saskatoon's case by \$200,000 last year. Yet I find it interesting to note that tuition went up by almost 2 million.

I think that what we have to come to grips with here is that we have got to start looking at the universities as part of the overall Saskatchewan economy, as part of the public sector. And we have got to start looking at them as part of the solution in terms of helping to ensure students get education at a reasonable cost that is affordable and accessible.

Mr. Speaker, I worry about accessibility in our universities. I find it interesting to note that for the past several years, enrolment has been dropping. University of Saskatchewan alone there was a drop of more than 200 students last year, in terms of enrolment. Could be that students, because of the improving economy, are deferring their education, deciding to simply go into the workforce directly.

But to be quite honest, I think that what is happening is the tuition has reached a level now where it has become a deterrent fee rather than simply a tuition fee. And this causes some, I think, concern for all of us. Because what we do not see from

the numbers immediately is what the impact is on older students, on students that are traditionally being denied access to the education system — in this case women, single parents, native students, low income students — people without that white-collar experience in their family; without that tradition of a university education. And I think we, over the next several years, will have to watch this more closely.

Clearly this is a difficult issue and it's not really one where I think we need to lay blame. Of course I appreciate that there were ways to avoid this situation. If the federal government had not made the drastic cuts that it chose to; if it had shared the burden of its federal budgetary problems across all sectors rather than simply focusing in on health, education, and social services, as it has chosen to do; if it had continued developing a national role for government in terms of post-secondary education, I think we could have avoided some of this.

I was interested to read the other day that the Minister of Post-Secondary Education for this province recently appeared before the Senate subcommittee on post-secondary education in Ottawa, and the message I think is an important one for all of us to take note of. What he argued is that Canada needs a national system for post-secondary education; that there is in fact a federal role in this. And it is a relatively straightforward and simple argument I think, in some ways, to take into account.

The argument is basically this. In today's labour market, where people are highly mobile, where the economy booms in some areas, decreases and declines in others, the labour force is extremely mobile and moves across the country. The federal government has opted for a policy which ignores that. It ignores the fact that there is in fact people coming into various differing institutions across this country to be educated and then they move off to another province to seek work. The result is that they have offloaded onto provincial taxpayers, a system of education and a cost of education that is not necessarily returned through future taxes.

This is a problem. This is a very serious problem, particularly when we have universities such as the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, which are nationally acclaimed and renowned in certain areas. We have people come from across Canada to attend the University of Regina in the school of journalism. We have people from across Canada go to the University of Saskatchewan to attend the College of Medicine. Increasingly, increasingly those programs are being paid for by Saskatchewan taxpayers, almost exclusively by Saskatchewan taxpayers. And that trend will continue as the federal government continues to cut back on the CHST payments.

This is a problem for us. The universities, as a response, have decided that the students should bear more of the cost. Perhaps it makes some sense in terms of a public policy debate, but the problem is that it does not make any sense in terms of labour force development in Canada.

What we have got to start to do is take a look at our national post-secondary education system as a national system. We must start to look at our universities working in cooperation with

each other to start to build a national training and education and research system in this country.

Mr. Speaker, when the . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the federal Conservatives were in office the Mulroney government embarked on a program that it started to call the centres of excellence program. The purpose of that was to identify programs at the various universities across Canada that were of national renown, that were in fact the best in the country, and focus research dollars into these institutions to essentially encourage the best and the brightest students to attend these provinces and then go to work throughout the country.

Not surprisingly the University of Saskatchewan was named I believe in five of those nodes of centres of excellence. That was a very encouraging development I thought on the part of the federal government. And I have to say that the contrast between where the Mulroney government was in terms of its post-secondary education strategy, and where the Chrétien government is, is shocking and disheartening. Because to be quite honest, we didn't expect much from Mulroney, but the expectations from Prime Minister Chrétien's government I think were high.

And I think they should have been borne out by a traditional Liberal approach that understood the importance of post-secondary education to our economy and to people throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to take a look at that because it has been an unfortunate reversal of fortunes on the part of the federal government to move forward with these drastic cuts that will continue well into the new century.

I think what we should do though is just take a . . . setting aside this federal problem, I want to focus for a second on what exactly has happened in the universities with tuition. Mr. Deputy Speaker, between 1991 and 1996 tuition increased at the University of Saskatchewan by 69 per cent. I'll say it again. It increased by 69 per cent. That was the amount of money tuition fees brought into that university — a 69 per cent increase.

Last year that brought in \$41.4 million. Well I can assure you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that is not solely a result of an increase in enrolment. In fact enrolment has been steady or declining at the university. So what this is a sign of is in fact escalating tuition fees.

Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent on all of us, as people interested in post-secondary education and people interested in the future of our province and our economy, to look for ways to resolve this. I appreciate that we are not able to look to the federal government for leadership. I regret that we are not able to look to them for help even on this situation.

We have made a tough choice here in this caucus and in this government to provide additional funds to back-fill, to provide new money to replace the money that the federal Liberals have cut from the universities. And I think now it's incumbent on the universities to look internally to find ways to cooperate, to

reduce expenditures, to . . . although maybe not reduce tuition, although that would be certainly an ideal. I think for the time being what we should be calling on them to do is simply freeze it.

Mr. Speaker, it is a . . . this motion, a private members' motion, obviously does not have the force and effect of law; it's not an Act. It simply serves I hope as moral suasion to our members on the boards of governors, to our university administrators, and I hope also to the public, to think about the importance the universities do play in our economy.

(1630)

The approach that we have taken here is to be upfront and cooperative with our universities. We have provided the money. We have provided assistance. We have even asked Mr. Harold MacKay to work with the universities to find ways of greater cooperation within the province.

I think now it is time for the universities to ante up their share. I think it is time for the universities to start to talk outside of this province with their counterparts across Canada about how they can better make use of the scarce resources and the declining resources coming from Ottawa.

I think that it is time for them to start to treat the students with . . . I won't say that. I will stop before saying that. But I think that it's important that they look to the students and give the students a break on the tuition fee increases.

Mr. Speaker, the situation that we are facing is a difficult one and I appreciate it's a difficult one for the universities. But we must get a hold of this. We must stop the offloading and the downloading of tuition fees onto the students. And we have got to start to deal with it.

The students' unions, I have to say, have been extremely progressive in terms of their approach. In other places throughout Saskatchewan . . . or throughout Canada, the university students' unions have taken a very strident approach. They've essentially said no to tuition fee increases.

Here — and for many years now — the students have worked with the administrations to work out a balanced approach to tuition. They've accepted that they want the universities to stay strong and they've accepted to pay more.

But I say, reading the press release from the students' union at the U of S, that I think the day has come now for the universities to say thank you, and to give some payback to the students.

I note the comments by Cory Exner, who is the current, I'd say outgoing president of the students' union in Saskatoon. He says that, and I'm quoting here from his press release:

Ivany is recommending that only 1.6 million of that 7 million is used for tuition relief. We find this absolutely unacceptable.

I understand that there's always a dynamic between student union presidents and university presidents. In fact I had more than one tussle with Dr. Ivany myself as a student union president. But the time I think has come to listen to what reasonable student union presidents like Mr. Exner say.

I think it is also important to listen to what the new voice of that student union is saying, one Natashia Stinka. Ms. Stinka says, quote — I'm quoting her here from this same press release:

It seems they're more interested in preserving the status quo than in keeping education affordable for students.

This is an important point. Affordability is coming into question — is coming into question because of these massive tuition increases.

Mr. Speaker, we have called on the universities to heed our call to keep the tuition increases to a minimum. We have made good by putting the money up front. And, Mr. Speaker, I would say that now is the time for the boards of governors and the university administrations to look within their own administrations, and find the way to provide a tuition increase that is zero. As I say this motion serves as moral suasion only, but there are alternatives.

In the '70s we had a Provincial Universities Commission in this province — would help to allocate the resources between the universities and help to set the tuition fees. In British Columbia they've gone so far as to legislate a freeze in tuition when the universities wouldn't listen. Mr. Speaker, I hope we don't come to that point in this House. I hope that we don't come to a point where we have to step in as a legislature to protect the interests of students. We've tried to do that in our budget by paying for the tuition fee increase up front, out of the provincial coffers not the students' pockets. And I would hope that the universities will take heed of that and that they will do the right thing this week as the University of Saskatchewan sets its tuition fee.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with that, I would move:

That this Assembly express its sincere hope that Saskatchewan universities will recognize the provincial government's decision to back-fill 100 per cent of the federal cuts to universities and cancel planned tuition fee increases.

Mr. Speaker, this is moved by myself, seconded by the member for Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am so excited about this particular motion. I am so proud and honoured to second this motion from the member from Regina South dealing with university tuition fees.

Our young people — primarily young people, although not exclusively — who attend university face for the most part a tremendously exciting time of their lives as they try and prepare themselves literally for the future — not simply for a job skill; universities are part of a much broader education. And it's just

a very powerful growing, personally growing time for students while they're at university and I am always proud to stand up and speak out on their behalf.

I do, like the member for Regina South, I do hope that the universities acknowledge the 100 per cent back-fill that the provincial government has done, back-filling the federal government cuts to post-secondary education. The hundred per cent back-fill-plus, that we have been able to come up with in the budget that the legislature is dealing with, I am hoping will allow the universities to reduce, hopefully even eliminate, tuition fee increases.

Tuition fees at the U of R (University of Regina) are heading to \$2,640. And if you say it quick, it's not that bad, Mr. Speaker. If you say it quick, it's not that bad. But then add to this, because university students too have to live, and you will have room and board or rent and buying some groceries. I estimate the cost of that at about \$3,200 for a semester; transportation, give or take, \$600 per semester.

I mentioned earlier that university students are not . . . pardon me, that this is a growing time of their lives. Entertainment is a part of that, Mr. Speaker; entertainment I calculate about \$800 and I don't even . . . actually I think I'm low at that. Books for a semester, about \$500 — it's just this horrendously, horrendously expanding cost of books. I'm being heckled by my own members, Mr. Speaker, that \$500 is low.

I was trying to put together what I thought was a low-ball estimate of the costs for universities . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . As my colleague, the member for Regina Victoria, points out, things have changed in the last 20 years since I attended. With telephones — and I figure that for many students they will have considerable telephone costs. Often they're away from home — I figure about \$400 for a semester.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this little total comes to over \$8,000 — 8,140. And I think I've estimated the cost for university students for a semester rather on the shy side. This makes it all the more important that tuition fees, that tuition fees as a significant component of the cost of this education, be lowered or reduced or at least let's stop the climb in tuition fee costs. University education is just too important to leave it alone.

The result of this cost that I've outlined per semester is in addition to the fact that while a student is going to university, they're not working at a full-time, career job. Now many, many students work at part-time jobs and they're able to offset a portion of this cost. But as everyone in the real world knows, part-time jobs that university students get tend to be at the bottom end of the pay scale and come nowhere near paying more than \$8,000 in a semester. So you know that university students are going to be going in the hole fiscally while they're attending university.

All of this of course begs the question of what about single parents or special needs students, Mr. Speaker, who face even greater costs.

Well of course there's student loans. Talk to students on the

University of Regina campus, and I suspect it's very similar at the University of Saskatchewan campus. Talk to students today. They will tell you that all too often what they have, Mr. Speaker, is they graduate from university and they have got a student loan payment that is the size of a decent mortgage payment. The difference is they don't have the house. So they're saddled with the equivalent of a mortgage payment and they're still basically on the street in terms of a place to live.

So students all too often graduate, look for and hopefully attain their first career job, and then they're stuck, saddled with, as I say, the equivalent of a mortgage but they still have to find living accommodations, they still have to furnish their living accommodations and set up shop — all of the things that come naturally as we leave home.

Tuition fees increasingly are causing a hardship for university students. This is what this motion is all about, is urging the universities to acknowledge the fact that the provincial government has back-filled the cuts that the federal government has imposed upon us; we've back-filled it 100 per cent, dollar for dollar, penny for penny. And we'd just like the universities to acknowledge that and reflect that in the tuition fees that they charge to the students.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about university tuition fees and I think it's somewhat instructive if we look at the Saskatchewan provincial budget. And I want to compare Education and Post-Secondary Education for the years 1996-97 and the budget that we're debating in the . . . or that is before the legislature these days, in this session, that is the '97-98 budget.

In Education 1996-97, there was a total of \$542 million expended. In this budget that's proposed, it's \$550 million — \$8 million more. That's in the Education portion of the budget.

In the Post-Secondary Education and Skills portion of the budget, it went from last year, \$351 million to \$386 million this year, a \$35 million increase in Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. This is a commitment that this government feels we owe to the future of our province.

We owe it, Mr. Speaker, to the students. We owe them our diligence as we do everything we can to see that an education is not something that depends on the size of your wallet but rather depends on the size of your intellect. That's what our goal is.

(1645)

Unfortunately for us, we are doing what I've just outlined — increasing our support for Education and Post-Secondary Education and Training by significant amounts, some \$43 million this year over last. And we're doing that, Mr. Speaker, to try and keep a lid on tuition fee increases in our post-secondary education centres, and in particular our university and SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology).

We're doing this all in a background of the federal government that has just offloaded costs onto the provincial government

year after year after year. I see the Liberal member for Arm River going, oh. Well, Mr. Liberal Member, let me point out, 1990-91 estimates, total transfers from the federal government to the provincial government were estimated — and get this, because it's in the 1991 *Estimates* book — \$1.499 billion, the year 1990-91.

The member for Melville says, that was then, what about now? Excellent question. Now 1997-98, the total transfer from the federal government to the provincial government for things like the Canada assistance program, established programs funding, and equalization have dropped to \$650 million.

Mr. Speaker, that is a drop, a drop of \$849 million — \$849 million drop. I hear again the member from Melville saying it's equalization payment drop, because the provincial economy is growing.

To some small degree you're accurate. I'll point out, in 1989-90, equalization payments — that's recognizing have-not provinces — \$440 million. This budget, 1997-98 equalization payments, \$129 million. You do the math, and it's \$311 million, \$311 million of the lesser transfer payment from the federal government; \$311 million is because of provincial economic growth; 311 million out of \$849 million. I invite the member from Melville to square that. Where's all the rest of that money coming from, and why is it that post-secondary students all have to carry such a weight of this burden?

Mr. Speaker, what we're doing is trying our level best at a time when the federal government, the federal Liberals, are just off-loading on the province of Saskatchewan like there's no tomorrow. We are doing our very best. And often it feels like we're on a treadmill just running as hard as we can just to break even.

Now we've been blessed. We've got more than just over a million people in the province of Saskatchewan. Those just more than one million people have rolled up their sleeves; they've gotten to work. The economy is growing. I don't care what portion of the economy we're talking about: agriculture, mining, forestry, employment. The job numbers are up. Hog production looks good. All kinds of things — good news in Saskatchewan.

Now is it perfect? No. Should we do better? Absolutely. That's what we're determined to try and do. Grow the economy so we can further reduce this equalization payment that we're getting from 129 million not only to where we don't receive it, but where we can actually pay to have-not provinces. That's our goal. But that goal is sure not helped when the federal government, in the time we've been in office, have cut their total payments, total transfer payments to the province of Saskatchewan by \$849 million.

That is just an astonishing number, and it's a credit to the million people in Saskatchewan that we've been able to grow our economy, make up for that, and make up for that and more because — I remind the member from Melville — when this government took office in 1991, we had a \$1.1 billion deficit, 1.1 billion annual deficit.

That is gone. We've made moves . . . Again credit a million people of this province who have really pitched in, really helped. They're all in this together. We are all in this together. They've done it. My hat goes off to the people of Saskatchewan. Everyone has dug in.

Now what the member for Regina South and myself and others, I trust, are going to be saying to the universities is everybody has been doing the level best that they possibly can. Will you look at this tuition fee question? Take a special look at it. Try and stop cold, tuition fee increases.

The member for Regina South talked about a legislative proposal — it's actually legislation — that British Columbia has done that prohibits tuition fee increases, Mr. Speaker.

Because of the question of governance, the universities have a unique or somewhat unique relationship. The provincial government is the major funder of the university. We're the major funder. They have a separate governance Act. And they've got their board of directors — board of governors, they call it — and it's duly set up, and it's representative of the entire province. I'm not in any sense trying to be critical of their governance. I'm just pointing out they have their governance mechanism, much like the province has its governance mechanism.

We elect MLAs to do the business for us; universities have their board of governors. We fund the universities. They then must set their budgets. And part of their budget, frankly, is tuition fees. Part of their budget is tuition fees. We all want the system to work. It's in the universities' interest for it to work, as it is in ours.

Students and certainly parents want tuition fees to be at a reasonable level so that our children and their children can go to university. It's important for the future, not only of Saskatchewan but of the world. It's important for our collective future that we have a well-educated population to lead us in the next millennium to lead us. So we all owe this effort, our best effort, to see that students can in fact have a post-secondary education.

If universities, Mr. Speaker, raise tuition fees too quickly or unnecessarily in the views of students, they run the very real risk of student rebellion, and that rebellion can take different forms.

Being a product of the '70s, I remember the good old days when we'd just march or hold a sit-in or something like that. Fortunately things have moved along from that. And I say fortunately; it maybe wouldn't be so bad to have a sit-in. But there are other ways of dealing with it, Mr. Speaker, that are probably more effective in today's milieu.

Students of course have every right . . . If you lived in — I'll pick — Outlook, Saskatchewan, and you wanted to go to the University of Saskatchewan or the University of Regina, in either case you're living away from home. In either case the University of Edmonton or Calgary or Manitoba are equally accessible. There's no reason that you have to stop at the

university that happens to be right closest to you. So it's in the university's interest to keep their tuition fees in line with those of other universities, not only the two universities in Saskatchewan but universities in neighbouring provinces and even farther afield, quite frankly.

Our plea at a time, Mr. Speaker, when students are facing hardships . . . jobs have not been all that plentiful. Canada has an unemployment rate in excess of 10 per cent, at a time when we must recognize that it isn't that easy to get a good-paying job so you can earn your tuition fees and your room and board and all of the other associated costs, books and so on, of going to school.

It's important that, in that milieu where students are facing real hardship as they attend post-secondary education — and in this case, particularly universities — at the same time the provincial government is doing everything we humanly can . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Everything we can to back-fill, to see that there is no lack of effort, no lack of funding on the part of the provincial government. As I've pointed out, Education funding, up 8 million this year over last; Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, up 35 million this year over last, at a time when the federal government has been slashing and cutting its transfer payments to the province of Saskatchewan.

I pointed out, it's not simply equalization payment cuts. In fact they tend to make up a very small . . . or I shouldn't say very small . . . certainly less than a third of the cuts are equalization payments that are due. Those equalization payments relate directly to how the provincial economy is going.

But the rest of the cuts are in things like established program funding: the Canada Assistance Plan, other federal-provincial programs, all those sorts of things that have been cut and slashed. Eight hundred and forty-nine million dollars worth of cuts since we took office, from the federal government — \$849 million.

And it is incredibly difficult for us to try and maintain the funding for education. And education is not alone. We've got health care. Everybody is concerned about health care — everybody. It's in no small part why every one on this side of the legislature decided to run. We're concerned about health care. Medicare, Mr. Speaker, is our program. We want to defend it forever.

All of this, Mr. Speaker, ties in to what we're trying to do with tuition fees, post-secondary education funding because you can't simply fund one thing without being aware of how it will affect something else.

It would be like . . . I have three children. It would be like me giving one of them a thousand dollars when I've got a total of a thousand dollars extra in the entire year. I give it to one of my children? What about the other two? Now maybe I will give one of my children a thousand dollars. Maybe there's a special need. Maybe there is a special reason for it, a one-time unique

thing. But by gosh, I'd better be prepared to talk to my other two children to get that sorted out.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked about tuition fees. I've talked about \$849 million in transfer payment cuts from the federal Liberals. I have not mentioned that, at the same time that this has been going on, the federal government has caused more than 525 million additional dollars cost onto primarily the farmers of Saskatchewan, but all taxpayers, through the extra traffic that is going on our highways as we've lost the Crow rate. We see rail line abandonment in unprecedented mileage. We see seaway charges and other transportation charges. We see the costs just piling up.

Mr. Speaker, this \$525 million that I've just now entered into talking about is in addition to the cut of \$849 million from 1989-90 to '97 . . . pardon me, 1990-91 to 1997-98. Huge costs — I don't care how you slice it. Everyone has to kind of scratch your head when you take 849 million plus 525 million. That's extra costs to a province that has been struggling, struggling, struggling desperately to grow our economy, to provide jobs opportunities, to keep tuition fees low for our university students so that they can graduate without having a mortgage.

So, Mr. Speaker, our students can have a future, a future that depends on what's between their ears, not what's in their wallet. That is a critical part. We are sincerely asking the universities to acknowledge the 100 per cent back-fill plus that we're doing. Acknowledge all of that and don't increase tuition fees.

The Speaker: — Order, order. It now being 5 o'clock the House will stand recessed until 7 o'clock.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.

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