

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to present petitions on behalf of residents in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take some responsibility for the ill effects of its gambling expansion policy, and immediately commission an independent study to review the social impact that its gambling policy has had on our province and the people who live here.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition today are from the city of Melville. I so present.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, today I'd like to present a number of petitions from injured workers in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to amend The Workers' Compensation Act so as to allow injured workers to bring legal action against health care professionals in the event of alleged negligence or other misconduct by health care professionals in the treatment of injuries covered by The Workers' Compensation Act.

As in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

The people that have signed this petition are from Hudson Bay.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would also like to present a petition 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. Deputy Speaker, are from the town of Kamsack.

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the rebuilding of Highway No. 155, thereby ensuring adequate access for residents of the communities linked by this road, including Dillon, Patuanak, Turnor Lake, Pinehouse, and an access road to Garson Lake.

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

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are from Ile-a-la-Crosse, they're from Saskatoon, they're from Tisdale, and they're from Green Lake. And I so present.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present petitions on behalf of citizens concerned about the unjustifiably high levels of farm input costs. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to urge the government to stop contributing to rising farm input costs and begin using its influence to hold farm input manufacturers accountable for their decisions.

And those who have signed this petition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are from communities of Crane Valley, Chaplin, the Moose Jaw district, Gravelbourg, Regina district, Ponteix, just to name a few.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present petitions on behalf of people in Saskatchewan that were affected by big game damage. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to change the Saskatchewan big game damage compensation program so that it provides more fair and reasonable compensation to farmers and townfolk for commercial crops, stacked hay, silage bales, shrubs and trees which are being destroyed by the overpopulation of deer and other big game, including the elimination of the \$500 deductible; and to take controlled measures to prevent the overpopulation of deer and other big game from causing this destruction.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are from the community of Oxbow. I so present.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to present petitions on behalf of Saskatchewan people as well this afternoon. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to take whatever action necessary to ban stripping in establishments where alcohol is sold; including the appealing the recent court decision

striking down the existing law banning stripping and invoking the notwithstanding clause of the constitution to enact legislation banning stripping in establishments where alcohol is served.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions come from all areas of Saskatchewan, numbering into the hundreds of people that are concerned about this issue, and I'm pleased today to present them on their behalf.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have petitions also from the people of Saskatchewan. The petition prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reverse the decision to force hunters to pay the entire cost of big game damage in the province of Saskatchewan, and instead once again offer big game damage coverage through the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation.

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

These petitions come from the Lipton, Fort Qu'Appelle, Wolseley, Regina, Saskatoon, Balcarres, Melville, Churchbridge, Lintlaw, Yorkton, Caron, Lebret, Springside — across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I so present.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a petition I wish to present to the Assembly as well, and this petition is addressing the problems that have arisen as a result of changes to The Labour Standards Act. And I would like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to recognize the fiscal reality faced by Saskatchewan people and immediately follow the lead of other provinces and make an exemption under The Labour Standards Act for Saskatchewan parents and seniors so families and care-givers together can decide what is best for that individual family and not have additional costs imposed on that agreement by government.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by a number of individuals from the Weyburn and surrounding area, as well as individuals from Oxbow and Glen Ewen. I so present.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too rise to present a number of petitions. And I will read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reverse the municipal revenue-sharing reduction and commit to stable revenue sharing for municipalities in order to protect the interests of property taxpayers.

And these petitions come from Turtleford, from Mervin, from Livelong, from Edam, from Eastend, from Moose Jaw, from all over Saskatchewan. Thank you.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens petitioning the Assembly to do the following:

To recommend to the provincial government that it keep the Big River Forest Nursery in operation and implement a buy-Saskatchewan seedling policy;

Petitioning the Assembly to develop a program to compensate people who are affected by the government's failure to properly inform parents and babysitters of changes to the labour standards regulations;

To establish a task force to aid the fight against youth crime;

To enact legislation banning all striping in establishments where alcohol is served; and

To cause the government to develop a plan that will address the housing needs of northern residents.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce a number of guests, some very important people from way on the other side of the province, and we're talking the far northern part of Saskatchewan. And I know it's quite a journey from Ile-a-la-Crosse, which is eight hours away in from Stony Rapids. You can almost guarantee it's quite a trip from that distance away.

However, sitting in the Speaker's gallery we have a number of students from grades 4 to 8; I believe there are 11 students. And they're here with their teacher, Renee Palmer. And Renee, of course, put a lot of effort in bringing her students out here and that effort most certainly appreciated. As well, they're accompanied by a number of chaperons and a guest. Chaperons, Suzanna Waldner and Rick Thibault, and of course, Otto Fietz is also with them today.

So I'd like to ask my colleagues in the legislature to make a special welcome for a group of guests that come a long ways to view the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members in the Assembly, 24 students from grade 4 and 5 that are students at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys School in my constituency. They're seated in the west gallery and they're accompanied by their teacher, Yvonne Reding, and chaperons, Brenda Betz, Murray

Ross, Rita Werapitiya — I hope that's right, Rita — Shirley Eger, and Janet Francoeur.

Mr. Speaker, they have come to see the proceedings in the gallery for awhile, go on a tour, and I'll be meeting with them later to answer any questions they may have. So I'm sure on this, our last day, we'll want to impress the students with our behaviour during question period. I ask all members to give them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's always a pleasure to have guests to introduce. And I think it's a particular pleasure today to introduce, seated in your gallery, Mr. Deputy Speaker, guests from Mandan, North Dakota — people who are visiting us, our American neighbours to the south.

We have with us today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 11 students from grades 7 to 9. And they are here, as I said, from Mandan, North Dakota, from the Immanuel Christian School.

They are accompanied by their teachers, Linda and Jerry Scheitel. And I know that they will enjoy spending some time here in the chamber, and after that they look forward to a tour of this fine building.

So please join me in extending a warm welcome to our American neighbours.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and to all members of the legislature, 22 students from Athabasca School who are sitting in your gallery, along with their teacher, Mrs. Joann Freisen.

And they're here to learn more about how our system works, and then have a chance to see this building which is located not very far from their school. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Bond Rating Increased from BBB High to A Low

Mr. Whitmore: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to bring some breaking good news about Saskatchewan's financial turnaround.

We've been to the bank, Mr. Speaker, we've talked about the mortgage, and we've brought the percentages down on the payments on the mortgage.

The Dominion Bond Rating Service upgraded the provincial credit rating to A low from BBB high. Saskatchewan's credit is now ranked in the A bracket by all four major North American credit rating agencies — independent proof again that Saskatchewan is on the right track.

Mr. Speaker, in making its announcement, the DBRS (Dominion Bond Rating Service) cited the provincial strong economy, economic performance, and sustainable fiscal program, and the falling provincial debt. But the credit today truly belongs to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whitmore: — It is their hard work and their dedication that makes this possible. Because of this their children are facing a brighter future — a future not weighted down by the millstone of debt. Mr. Speaker, that's what gives Saskatchewan people hope and optimism.

In March we brought down a budget that delivered the benefits of good financial management — investing in our social programs, cutting taxes, and paying down the debt. And today a budget well received by the financial community as well.

Mr. Speaker, again, thank you to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Pothole Patroller Invitation to the Minister

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Over the last few months we've impressed upon the Minister of Highways just how worried people are about the state of our highways. People remain concerned despite this government's promised highway strategy. As people travel across the province on their summer holidays, they'll be patrolling our highways and locating countless potholes. Hopefully your NDP (New Democratic Party) candidates' "bump" and "danger" will be there to warn those who aren't driving our highways just for the exhilarating off-road experience.

While this legislature might be done, school still won't be out for the summer for a few weeks, and I have an invitation from one of our pothole patrollers I'd like to extend to the minister. A bus driver who counted 207 potholes on a 40-kilometre stretch between Kayville and Avonlea says, and I quote: "I drive this four times a day. I welcome you to come ride the bus with me someday." After question period I'd like to give the minister the name and phone number of this person and encourage him to come for that ride.

In closing, while the government might miss the rough ride of a legislative session, due to the lack of priority they place on our highways they'll at least have plenty of rough rides facing them anywhere they drive on Saskatchewan's highways this summer.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Youth Job Record

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Another day, another favourable article in the press. Today written by Bruce Johnstone is an article which says that Saskatchewan leads the nation in the "good youth job record." Saskatchewan,

the story says, "ranks No. 1 in the country in employment conditions for people aged 15 to 24." Not only that, this is the second year in a row that we are the leader.

As the article says, one reason our youth employment record looks so good is because Ontario's and Quebec's numbers are so low. Also by comparison, Johnstone notes that the Tory record in the '80s was also very poor.

Where are the children, we hear our opposition cry. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the children in Saskatchewan are working — working in Saskatchewan. Roger Sauve, noted statistician and demographer, says it's so and wants our young people to understand this is true through the release of his recent report.

Mr. Speaker, we're proud of our young people and we're extremely proud that they're now working, and working in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Pothole Alert

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Over the last couple of months I've received pothole reports from all across Thunder Creek. Today I'll be sending the Minister of Highways a pile of pothole reports from my constituents.

According to Thunder Creek pothole patrollers, the plentiful pothole prize goes to Highway No. 334 from Corinne to Avonlea. Combined with Highway No. 339 from Briercree, this highway provides suspension-shattering access to tourist sites like the Claybank brick plant and Long Creek golf course. If you can't make many holes on the golf course, rest assured you'll hit more than enough on the way there.

The second most riddled road, according to patrollers, is Highway No. 363, the bulk of which is down at 52 of 128 on the government's priority list of repairs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my sincere hope that the minister will read these pothole patroller reports and take action. If he doesn't, one of our patrollers offers this final solution, and I quote:

Saskatchewan's highway conditions show government's lack of ambitions.

Don't get out the tar — much better by far, dumping negligent politicians.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Starting tomorrow and carrying on through Saturday, film buffs from all over North America will be treated to the best available short films and videos.

The 50th annual Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival is ready for launching, which is the oldest film festival anywhere on the continent.

For this festival, a national jury reviewed more than 400 submissions and made 131 nominations in 28 categories. Many of those nominees are from Saskatchewan, which is further evidence that the film industry in Saskatchewan is increasingly viable and that the talent to fuel this industry is largely home-grown.

The winners will be announced at the Golden Sheaf awards ceremony Saturday night, and before that there will be constant showings of quality short films and videos to the public.

I invite you all to join us in our fine city and share the film festival with us. And I want to once again congratulate all of the organizers and volunteers who worked behind the camera to put this event together. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Wondrous Beauty of Northern Saskatchewan

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Canada is often referred to as the best place to live in the world, and Saskatchewan is often referred to as the best province to live in the whole country of Canada.

But, Mr. Speaker, northern Saskatchewan is especially positively beautiful. And I want to share with the members opposite and the members within my own side of the House, some of the virtues of visiting northern Saskatchewan and northern communities.

The far northern communities are also part of this great province, and I would encourage all members to visit and tour some of the northern Saskatchewan communities and see firsthand some of the beautiful sights.

There's the Athabasca Sand Dunes, there's fishing, and there's also the people of the far northern communities that really appreciate visits from people in southern Saskatchewan and across the land.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would encourage and I would really extend a hand in friendship to all members of the Assembly to tour and visit the far northern communities to really appreciate northern beauty and Saskatchewan hospitality.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Treaty Day on Little Pine Reserve

Ms. Murrell: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A week ago I was pleased to attend Treaty Day on the Little Pine Reserve, a day which commemorates the signing of Treaty Six of the Little Pine Reserve on July 2, 1879, and the founding of a new partnership between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Saskatchewan people.

This year Treaty Day was an opportunity for the people of Little Pine to celebrate the grand opening of Little Pine's new community hall. This beautiful hall is a first for the people of Little Pine, and its construction is a testament to the hard work of a lot of people.

Chief Marianne Stoney, who is the first woman ever elected to be chief at Little Pine, deserves a lot of credit for all of this, as do the members of the band council, including Lawrence Kennedy, Blair Sapp, Victor Schekosis, Leslie Schekosis, and Shirley Thunder.

Other events on Little Pine Treaty Day included an outstanding performance by some young first nations dancers and a number of individual achievement awards.

All in all I feel privileged to have been able to share this important day with the people of the Little Pine First Nation, Mr. Speaker, particularly since it gave me an opportunity to recommit myself to a successful partnership with the first nations community of this province.

I ask other members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating Chief Marianne Stoney and the council on the grand opening of their new community hall. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Canada Day Poster Challenge

Ms. Bradley: — We all have a vision of what Canada represents. Sometimes we take what we have for granted. We become complacent with this wonderful country and our vision may become blurred. Each year there is a Canada Day Poster Challenge for youth 18 years and under. This poster contest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, challenges our youth to convey their vision of Canada.

In Saskatchewan over 3,000 posters were submitted from 141 schools, each depicting a vision of this country. I am proud to say that Jessica Peterson of Ogema high school in Ogema won first place in Saskatchewan. With over 37,000 entries from across Canada, Jessica and her vision of Canada as depicted in her Saskatchewan work will now compete in the national competition to be held on July 1 — Canada Day — in Ottawa.

I want to congratulate Jessica for her achievement. I'm certain that her vision of this great country will encourage others to take the time to reaffirm their commitment to Canada. I'd also like to congratulate all the participants in the competition for believing in our great country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health Care Reform

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is sadly ironic that the four-year anniversary of the NDP government's Health Districts Act falls on the same week that we are preparing to

wind down this legislative session. How sadly ironic it is that the initial fears many Saskatchewan residents had at the onset of this so-called reform process have come true — and then some.

It's no coincidence that four years after this government began its version of health care reform our chronically ill and our elderly continue to fall victim to the wellness model. Mr. Speaker, during this four-year period more than 50 hospitals have been converted to wellness centres; many of those have been downgraded again to health clinics and are now threatened by closure; 2,200 nursing positions have been eliminated; 16,000 hospital beds have been closed and 500 long-term care beds no longer exist.

Will the minister tell this House what analysis his government has undertaken to measure both the positive, and especially the negative, aspect of health care reform?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what I find sadly ironic is that it wasn't too long ago in this legislature — and everyone here would have heard this — that that member was on his feet saying that in this province we have the best health care system in the world. He said that twice within the last few weeks.

But I think that the good news, Mr. Speaker, from the point of view of the people of the province, is that this session has made some things very clear. It has made clear that they believe, in that party, in going back to 450 separate health boards with 4,000 members hand-picked by the Leader of the Liberal Party. We believe in moving forward with 30 democratically elected health boards, less administration, more coordination and integration.

There's a big difference from what they believe and we believe, Mr. Speaker, but we're going to stick with the democratic, public medicare system that we have in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Premier summed it up two or three years ago. I think it was just before the last provincial election when he said, regarding health reform: the train is leaving the station and anybody not on it will be left behind.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the sick and the elderly have been left behind — that's what's happened.

The members opposite talk about two-tiered health. Well they indeed have created a two-tier health care system, Mr. Speaker. Take a trip to some of our rural and northern communities and compare the level of health care there to our urban centres.

Furthermore, this government's gutting of the prescription drug plan by some \$3.3 billion, or 37 per cent, makes it virtually impossible for many people to afford much needed medication. For example, diabetics; those who need oxygen to survive; our MS (multiple sclerosis) sufferers; and of course there are those

forced to go to Alberta to receive eye surgery because of the huge waiting-lists that have been created due to the wellness models. Mr. Minister, clearly what is needed is a review of our health care system. Will you swallow your pride and make a commitment to review a system that is clearly in trouble?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know why that member is talking about two-tiered health care because on STV, on STV a year ago, on May 1, 1996, this is what that member had to say. He said, he said, Mr. Speaker: if there are people that are prepared to pay, then I think we have to let them pay. That's what he says about health care.

Then he said . . . Then his leader said, Mr. Speaker, in response: private hospitals — I don't have a problem with that. That's what they said, Mr. Speaker.

And what we say is, we are going to keep the public medicare system. We don't want a two-tiered system; we don't want to make people pay. But I repeat again, Mr. Speaker, what the Canadian Medical Association says, which is that Ottawa fails to protect medicare. Ottawa and the Liberals may fail to protect medicare, Mr. Speaker, but we're going to protect medicare, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskTel's Failed United States Venture

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when our Crown corporations were created their mandate was to provide quality, affordable utility service to the people of Saskatchewan. Who would have thought their roles would have changed so much?

As we have highlighted during this session, our Crowns today are little more than a source of back-door taxation for the NDP government. Our Crowns are recording record profits on the backs of Saskatchewan people. Our Crowns are cutting cheques and throwing away precious tax dollars in risky ventures like NST and Guyana electrical company. Our Crowns are even purveyors of pornography.

To make matters worse, the government refuses to be open and accountable to the people of Saskatchewan. When legitimate concerns are raised about the reporting practices of our Crowns, as the Provincial Auditor did, he is attacked.

As a show of faith to the public, will the minister in charge of SaskTel waive the confidentiality clause in the NST deal as its private sector partner from Vancouver is prepared to do? Will you open this investment up to the public scrutiny as it should be?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, it's passing strange that that member, a member of the Crown Corporations Committee, had every opportunity to ask every question that he

wanted an answer to in that context. I think it maybe was because there wasn't any media there, Mr. Speaker.

And I also find it passing strange that the Liberals in Ottawa spend over a billion dollars on the boondoggle Pearson airport deal. And these are also . . . these are the members . . . the Liberal Party wanted us to sell the Cameco shares, — in the press, with letters, in this House — sell the Cameco shares when they were at less than book value.

We didn't listen to that advice. We waited until they went up and this province is almost a billion dollars better off because of it. And so you would single out one enterprise out of \$300 million of successful enterprises. We have no apologies to make for that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crown Corporations Review

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Madam Minister, I think the word you were looking for there for a minute was grandstanding — that's the word your government's been using all session long to get away from answering the questions properly.

Obviously you just answered any question the Saskatchewan people might have about the honesty and the accountability of this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, as this House is aware, a review of our Crown corporations has been taking place for some months. A final report is expected next month, and the Premier has indicated that decisions related to the future of our Crowns will be made this fall.

Will the minister in charge of Crown Investments portfolio tell this House if the NDP government plans on honouring the recommendations of this final report even if that report includes privatization?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, note the question that the hon. member poses in the light of various competitive questions and themes that the caucus has been posing to us over the session.

All the while they say, we're too arrogant and we don't listen to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. Now what does he say? Take the report's recommendations prepared by experts and implement them regardless of what the people of the province of Saskatchewan say. How contradictory can you get?

What is it, Mr. Member? What is it, Liberal Party? Do we listen, and do we consult with the people of Saskatchewan, and then rely on their advice? That's what we're going to do. We're not going to follow yours, which is to simply say, down come the recommendations and, black or white, we're accepting them because some experts tell us we should accept them pure and simple.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Municipal Government Amalgamation

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've known for some time now that there is an agenda over there to ram amalgamation down the throats of our villages and RMs (rural municipality). As long ago as October 26, 1993 there was a report circulated in the NDP caucus which reads as follows:

It may eventually prove desirable to politically amalgamate the towns and villages with their adjacent rural municipalities. This would create larger units to more effectively support local government, while normalizing the population.

Would the Minister of Municipal Government be kind enough to explain to us if her savage cuts — 29 million from revenue sharing to municipalities — is an attempt to starve the municipalities into submission and force them into the amalgamation she has been pushing for since 1993?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of what the member is reading from. But we have agreed with municipalities and municipal associations that any change to the governance structure of local government in this province should be done at the local level on a voluntary basis. We are doing absolutely nothing to encourage municipalities to change their governance structure. That's the answer that I would give, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, and Madam Minister, if I may continue, I'd like to read to you if I may, a portion of your party's 1991 election platform as the party that always keeps its promises, always abides by its commitments:

The New Democratic Party will work to keep down property taxes by working with municipalities to develop a fair and stable revenue-sharing program — a program they can count on — by providing an increased share of school costs from municipal grants.

Well, Madam Minister, I know that in public you claim to believe that all is well in municipal land. But I'd like you to tell us how your actions are in any way connected with your promise in 1991, how your actions of cutting 29 million from municipal grants, cutting the futures program, promising 10 per cent VLT (video lottery terminal) revenues to the municipalities and taking it away . . . What's your own private report card? How do you think you're really doing in municipal land to keep your 1991 promise?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, municipalities are not institutions. Municipalities are made up of people. And when we asked the people of Saskatchewan what their priorities were, they say health care, education, and social programs, highways. What did we do? We put more money into health; we put more

money into education; we put more money into highways; and we retained the social safety net for the least fortunate among us. Those are the priorities that the people of Saskatchewan has identified for us, and that is what we're responding to, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Social Justice Policies

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, currently children in this province as young as eight are being forced to sell their bodies on the streets. Over 55,000 young people a year don't get enough to eat. Residents are worried about their safety because of crime. And more and more people are fighting an addiction to gambling.

With the escalation of these social justice problems, one would think that the government would do more, and it's not as though they don't have the means or the opportunity, Mr. Speaker. We suggested a private members' Bill to fight child prostitution; they refused. We suggested a youth task force; they refused. We called on the government to address the social consequences of gambling; they refused. These are clear examples of the NDP administration abandoning its social conscience for the almighty dollar.

Will this government give hope to the children on the street, to those with empty bellies, to gambling addicts, and to those who are victims of crime, by constructing a comprehensive social justice policy?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, that was a wide-ranging presentation. Mr. Speaker, when that member or any member of the Liberal caucus in this House or any Liberal in Canada talks about a wide-ranging social program, they should immediately — immediately — get on the phone to their counterparts in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, here is the political party — and I never thought I'd say this, remembering Mulroney and the Conservatives — but here is the political party that has done more to destroy the social fabric and the social safety net in Canada than any other party in this nation's history, Mr. Speaker.

And the provincial . . . Well it's little wonder that the federal candidate in the Palliser riding, Mr. Tony Merchant, got up last night and said that they're headed for a minority government. That's what they're saying in Moose Jaw last night, the Liberals. And is there any wonder, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, this government's total incompetence has been revealed once again when the Minister of Social Services refused our call for a public inquiry into child deaths.

By the minister's own admission, seven children under his

department's care died from violent abuse or neglect. At least that's what he said last year. This year he said there were no deaths due to abuse and neglect. It is evident that in order to determine the circumstances that led to these deaths, to prevent further tragedies, and to allow for public input, a public inquiry is essential.

Mr. Speaker, in B.C. (British Columbia) an inquiry was held with the death of just one child. The deaths of these Saskatchewan children are tragic and the member opposite dishonours them by refusing to investigate.

I am asking the Minister of Social Services to forget that we are on opposing sides and to forget our political stripes. I am asking him to think of the children who have died and those who are at risk, and please launch a public review.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, that's a reasonable question. Mr. Speaker, here again are the facts of the matter.

Last year the member asked for some information about abuse and neglect and violent death in the province. We provided that information accurately without reservation. This year she asks questions about children under the care of the Department of Social Services. Mr. Speaker, the information has been provided accurately. There is no contradiction, Mr. Speaker.

What the member did just yesterday in this House, Mr. Speaker, was to in some ways belittle the work of a sincere group of people in this province who are looking at these issues in cooperation with government — chaired by the coroner, chaired by the child advocate — who are reviewing all of these circumstances and will be coming with recommendations.

Mr. Chair, I want to say this. We will listen very carefully to any recommendations that are made by that group of responsible Saskatchewan citizens, leaders in their field, professionals, before we will listen to recommendations that are made at the close of a session in some effort to gain headlines.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Open Government

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, throughout this session we have seen an increasing arrogance from your government. On one hand you put forward very little substantial legislation to debate. On the other hand you refuse to allow any real debate on the failures of your government, like the health care crisis, the NST fiasco, the Guyana deal, your broken promises on VLT revenues, your ministers attacking the Provincial Auditor, and most recently we've seen three of your members demonstrate their arrogance and intolerance by characterizing one of your political opponents as a Nazi.

Mr. Premier, what happened to your promise of an open and accountable government? Why have you become so arrogant that you're refusing to answer questions about your failing

promises and your failing policies here in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, surely the Hon. Leader of the Conservative Party is living in a time warp. He must be thinking of his party when it was in office. I remind the Leader of the Conservative Party that this government — I won't go through the litany — that this government and this party has made so many reforms with respect to the legislative proceedings, with respect to tabling of documents, the activities of committees, the answering of questions. And nobody limits the debate.

You, sir, have the right to debate any one of those issues that you've raised. In fact you've raised them. You may not like the answers for your own political reasons, but we provide the answer to them as best as we can and as honestly and as truthfully as we can.

This is a government which has exhibited a high degree of honesty, and even in the words of the Provincial Auditor, has opened up the books in such a way that they are unprecedented in terms of openness in the history of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskPower Proposed Project in Guyana

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question is also for the Premier. Mr. Premier, your government is about to spend 31 million taxpayers' dollars on a crumbling third-world power company, and yet you refuse to answer the most basic questions about this deal.

You keep saying, trust me; I'm from the government and I'm here to help you. Mr. Premier, if this is such a good deal, why won't you lay the letter of intent on the table before you go running off to South America with a suitcase full of money? What are the terms? What are the risks? What is the value of the company? How much are you going to have to spend to fix up this crumbling company?

Mr. Premier, why should we trust you after the NST deal? Since being in this Assembly I've learned that this is question period and not answer period. But, Mr. Premier, get off your arrogant high horse and answer these basic questions before the deal is consummated.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, let me say in the closing days of this session that member has really asked I think, what is a pertinent question: why should the people of Saskatchewan trust this government? And I think the people of Saskatchewan should trust this government because of the commitments that we made to them in '92 that were reaffirmed in '95 and that have been kept.

We promised an open government; we promised sound fiscal management; we promised to balance the budgets; and we promised to reduce taxation; and we promised to reduce the

debt of this province. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that member asks why this government should be trusted. Those are the answers as to why this government should be trusted.

They should be trusted because before Public Accounts, the government of this province brings openness with respect to the expenditures of the executive arm of government. Before the Crown Corporations Committee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we bring before this the Crown corporations, where the scrutiny and the expenditures of those Crown corporations are open and debated openly with members of that party.

So they ask why they should trust us, Mr. Speaker. That's why the people of Saskatchewan do trust us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Care Reform

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Premier, Saskatchewan people continue to give failing grades to your handling of health care. Nearly two-thirds of the people in this province expect our health care system to deteriorate over the next 10 years. Yet you are too arrogant to listen to any alternatives.

Yesterday your government voted to defeat our health care bill of rights and your member of Saskatoon southwest told us that everyone in Saskatchewan already has access to 24-hour emergency care. Mr. Premier, one has to ask, what planet are you and your members living on?

People in rural Saskatchewan do not have access to 24-hour emergency care, a direct result of your attacks on the health care system. Mr. Premier, why are you too arrogant to admit that health care reforms are failing and why won't you listen to any alternatives?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. Conservative member — Conservatives and Liberals — those in the province of Saskatchewan who work so hard to destroy medicare never wanted to see it live.

You remember the KOD? Were you a member of the Keep Our Doctors committee or were you not a member of the Keep Our Doctors committee? Which of you Conservatives, which of you Conservatives were out there at the doorstep with the Liberals fighting the implementation of medicare? And you now have the audacity to get up right now and say you're in defence . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh no, he pretends that he wasn't there; he pretends he wasn't in the fight against medicare.

You are to this day. You and the Liberals are for two-tier medicine. You and the Liberals are for private hospitals. You tell us to keep on looking for Premier Klein as the example. He's setting up a private, for-profit hospital in Alberta. That's what you'd do. And you have the audacity to ask us?

Tell us why are you so arrogant that after a 35-year love affair with medicare in the province of Saskatchewan and in Canada, you Conservatives and you Liberals want to destroy it while we

want to protect it? Tell us that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Video Lottery Terminal Revenues

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, municipalities have also been hurt by the arrogance of your government. You continue to cut revenue sharing. You've botched reassessment. You broke your election promise to share 10 per cent of VLT revenues — just like Jean Chrétien and the GST (goods and services tax).

Mr. Premier, two weeks ago your government voted to defeat a PC (Progressive Conservative) Bill to share VLT revenues with municipalities, a Bill that would have simply honoured your election promise. Since that time, about 20 towns, villages, and RMs have written to us supporting our private members' Bill.

Mr. Premier, if you're too arrogant to listen to us, at least will you listen to the municipal councils? Will you honour your promise to share 10 per cent of VLT revenues with the municipalities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I followed everything the member opposite says until he got to the point where he compared us with Jean Chrétien. That hurt. Yes. That made me angry.

Mr. Speaker, we have, in the context of the municipal round table and the memorandum of understanding, been working with the municipalities on these issues and we will continue to do that with a positive attitude.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

New Democratic Party Government's Record

Mr. Boyd: — My final question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, it is clear what the plan was in this session. You were going to just wheel in here and have a nice, quiet little session. You'd just simply refuse to answer any controversial questions, and this would translate into what you thought was going to be tons of seats for the federal NDP.

Well, Mr. Premier, what's happened? The NDP no longer has any credibility on health care because people have seen what you've done in health care. Instead of . . . Your members going around have been making intolerant remarks in this Assembly. Instead of talking about jobs, your federal leader is ranting about civil war, and as a result your party is going to get a thumping in the federal election.

Mr. Premier, Mr. Premier, the arrogance of your government has obviously backfired. The question is, have you learned anything from all of this, sir? Are we going to see you put an end to the arrogance in your government or are we going to see the voters put an end to your arrogance by voting you out of office in the next provincial election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, first of all I'm very pleased that what might be the last day of this current session — I don't know, but what might be the last day of the current session — I'm at last being asked a question or two by the two official opposition parties. I thank both of you for giving me the courtesy of doing so. Nothing prevented them for the preceding 55-odd days or whatever we've been sitting here.

But I'm also very pleased to say that unlike, unlike the Conservative leader who arrogantly, arrogantly proclaims that our party is going to get thumped, unlike him, unlike him and his Conservatives, none of our party members on this side have been hiding under a bushel afraid to be associated with our party nationally, like you have been with respect to your party nationally.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Or like the Liberals have been hiding under a bushel being afraid to be associated with their candidates as well. I don't know what, I don't know what'll happen on the evening of June 2, but I have one fair bet — the NDP will get a higher vote than you will get, that's for sure.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

MOTION UNDER RULE 46

Chief Electoral Officer Report

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise under rule 46 to request leave for an emergency debate for an urgent and pressing necessity. And if I may ask the indulgence of the Chair and of hon. members to briefly explain why I think an emergency debate is required this afternoon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in view of the fact this is probably our last afternoon in session, this is also the last chance that the people of Saskatchewan have to see the Kuziak report into provincial fund-raising prior to the June 2 election.

We've been told already in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Justice department has recommended the report be suppressed because of a policy. The elections minister says there is no such policy.

We've been told that the Chief Electoral Officer is an independent officer, but the Chief Electoral Officer himself has said that he's acting under advice of the Justice department. And in view of this, I'm requesting leave to bring a motion, if I may read it at this time; if I may read the motion:

That this Assembly call upon the Minister of Justice to withdraw and retract the advice which his officials gave to the Chief Electoral Officer to the effect that he should delay the release of the report arising from his

investigation into the provincial political parties' fund-raising practices until after June 2, 1997 federal election, and replace such advice with advice that the said report should be released immediately.

I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — The hon. member from North Battleford has requested leave for emergency debate. Is leave granted?

Leave not granted.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order.

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ruling on Debate on Bill No. 67

The Deputy Speaker: — Before orders of the day, the Deputy Speaker has two rulings that he would like to bring before the House.

Yesterday the member for Saskatoon Southeast raised a question of privilege regarding statements made in the House by the member for North Battleford. And I have had an opportunity to review the verbatim record of the exchange in question on Bill No. 67, The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 1997.

The words used were as follows, and I quote page 1820 of the *Debates and Proceedings* for May 20, 1997:

So here we have an NDP that not only stood up for single-desk marketing, but opposed a vote, and actually opposed the exercise of freedom of speech. Freedom of speech was going too far when you had people with the gall to stand up and say they didn't think there had to be a monopoly. How outrageous. Those people should be in a concentration camp.

It is evident from the transcript that the member did not state that government members belong in a concentration camp, but indicated that certain members believed others should be.

I find this matter does not constitute a question of privilege but is rather a matter of order. While the orders themselves . . . while the words themselves may not be unparliamentary, the effect of the type of allegation is to cause disorder and adds nothing to the debate. Beauchesne's 6th edition, paragraph 486 states in part the following:

It is impossible to lay down any specific rules in regard to injurious reflections uttered in debate . . . much depends upon the tone and manner, and intention, of the person speaking . . .

I caution members to be more temperate in their remarks and to avoid exaggeration, which can tend to diminish respect for this institution by trivializing the effect of historically abhorrent and anti-democratic events. In this vein — order — in this vein, I ask the member for North Battleford to withdraw the remarks

and apologize to the House.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to apologize. I would point out I retracted the remarks yesterday and I'm certainly pleased to confirm that.

The Deputy Speaker: — And apologize to the House.

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, I do so, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ruling on Bill No. 229

The Deputy Speaker: — The second ruling that I have before this House, standing on the order paper for second reading under private members' public Bills and orders is Bill No. 229, The Education and Health Tax Amendment Act, 1997 (Indians off-reserve).

This Bill was introduced by the hon. member for Kindersley on May 20, 1997. This Bill seeks to repeal an exemption from the tax provisions contained in The Education and Health Tax Act granted to aboriginals living off reserves. The effect of this Bill will be to increase the incidence of taxation and thereby create additional revenue for the Crown.

Bill No. 229 is essentially identical to Bill No. 116 introduced by the hon. member for Moosomin during the last session. On June 4, 1996, Bill No. 116 was ruled out of order on the ground that it required a recommendation from the Lieutenant Governor. At the time, the Speaker referred members to Beauchesne's 6th edition, in paragraph 601 where it stated that:

The recommendation of the Crown is needed for such measures as bills relating to . . . the repeal of an exemption from an existing duty, as the burden of duty is (therefore) . . . augmented . . .

Accordingly, I find that Bill No. 229 contravenes the parliamentary principle of the Crown initiative in financial matters because it requires a recommendation from the Lieutenant Governor. The member for Kindersley is not a member of Executive Council and cannot obtain such a recommendation.

Therefore I must rule Bill No. 229 out of order and direct it be removed from the order paper.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 34 — The Young Offenders' Services Amendment Act, 1997

The Deputy Chair: — I invite the minister to introduce his official.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. We'll be assisted this afternoon by Mr. John Labatt, who is the director of community youth services, and the family youth services of the Department of Social Services.

Clause 1

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I might say that certainly the Liberal opposition has no difficulty with this Bill. However it has of course been pointed out that although there are some youth justice committees informally functioning in the province, there have in fact been no formally appointed ones pursuant to the Young Offenders Act.

I assume that this amendment is an indication that formal appointments of justice committees are to take place. And I would invite the minister, and request that he outlines some of his plans in this regard for us.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the member I think essentially has put his finger right on the plan. Once this legislation is through, then we'll be in a position now then to go to the existing committees working . . . and this would actually happen through the Attorney General under the Young Offenders Act of the federal parliament.

We'll be going to the existing committees, working with them to get them formally established as youth justice committees as defined by the federal Act. And then as we look to expansion of this kind of programing across the province, we'd be looking to new groups. But the first thing will be to get this passed, get all of our legislative framework in place, and then go out and work as soon as we can with those committees.

(1430)

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Deputy Chair, some significant steps have been taken in the last two years to establish justice committees on our reserves, and I think of course these are important steps forward in bringing first nations people into the system.

While I appreciate that there is a desire to encourage voluntarism, the Young Offenders Act appears to preclude paying remuneration for people on youth justice committees. And I'm wondering if the minister thinks that that will hamper the sort of dedication and work that we would hope these committees would do, or if he considers that to be an issue here.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I am informed that in fact yes it is a provision of the Young Offenders that there should not be a salaried circumstance here. But there apparently is provision that one for instance could provide some honorarium to an elder or elders who may be involved. So we'd want to be looking at whatever honorarium provisions might be available to us and the ones that might be applicable on any given circumstance. But there is not the opportunity to use a salary kind of a situation.

Mr. Hillson: — Could the minister indicate to us how many justice committees are out there waiting in the wings that you would be in a position to formally appoint as soon as this Bill goes through?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I don't want to . . . first point, I don't want to mislead the member in any way, that it's not quite as immediate as passage of the legislation that we could

then go and appoint, because there are a number of steps, including doing some orientation, training of members and so on, before we'd actually move to the formal appointing.

Currently we have two — the Shaunavon committee which we've talked about; there's a committee on the Onion Lake Reserve which I've had the privilege to visit and sit in with. We've had an expression of interest from Nipawin and an expression of interest here from Regina. So that would be four initially. But it will take some time to work with the committees and do the orientation process.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you. My colleagues and I are content for this Bill to move through committee. I thank the minister and to Mr. Labatt.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 66 — The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act

The Deputy Chair: — The committee will start by having the Minister of Justice introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to have with today, Madeleine Robertson and Andrea Seale, who are Crown solicitors with the Department of Justice.

Clause 1

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Deputy Chair, I've made clear in some of my submissions earlier on this Bill that the Liberal opposition doesn't oppose it. Living wills are a reality of modern society — something that we do need. And they are coming in in other provinces and indeed in some respects this Bill merely formalizes a process which is already going on.

My concern however, is to know the extent to which we have consulted with various groups. And when the minister answers this, I would request that he also address the issue of members of the general public. Because while clearly there are some experts in this field, in the health care field and the palliative care field, it strikes me that this is legislation which affects each and every person in the province, at least potentially. So it's not just a, quote "experts' Bill;" it's a people's Bill.

And I think that it does require broad consultation of the population generally to know how they feel about living wills. And I would encourage the minister to tell us what sort of process has been undertaken by the department.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, I'd be very pleased to do that. This legislation was brought forward at this time as a result of extensive consultation throughout Saskatchewan. And if I could characterize the initial groups that wanted to proceed with this, were seniors and people who did work in hospitals — they identified the need.

But from there we have gone to many groups. And if you'll bear with me, I will advise you of the various groups that have been consulted with respect to this legislation: the Saskatoon Council of Churches, Regina Council of Churches, Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Medical Association, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, Saskatchewan Palliative Care Association, Saskatchewan Ambulance Association, Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, Regina Health District, Saskatoon Health District, Santa Maria Senior Citizens Home, Saskatchewan Action Committee for Death with Dignity, Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism, Saskatchewan Seniors Association, Saskatchewan Voice of People with Disabilities, Saskatchewan AIDS Network, Canadian Mental Health Association, Saskatchewan Branch, the Alzheimer Association of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation, Canadian Bar Association, Saskatchewan Branch, the health law sections in both north and south Saskatchewan; the Provincial Interagency Network on Disabilities, the Saskatchewan Pro Life Association, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the Hospital Liaison Committee for Jehovah's Witnesses.

And in addition to all of those groups, there have been requests and attendances at public meetings by staff within the Department of Justice to discuss this. I've personally also met with all of the Catholic bishops in Saskatchewan to discuss this legislation and explain what we're doing. And I think that there is broad-based support throughout the province for the legislation.

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, I thank the minister for that list, and I think he's certainly satisfied my colleagues and I that a lot of significant groups have been contacted for their input.

But again I have to make a point that this is a Bill that affects just plain people; it affects each and every one of us. And I'm wondering what opportunity there has been for simply members of the general public to understand and appreciate what is being done here.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think the best way of answering that question is to talk about the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism and the Saskatchewan Seniors' Association.

These people have presented a number of times over the last years — based on working with their members, who are seniors in Saskatchewan — that they would like to have some clarity in this whole area. And in many ways the legislation that's come forward has been a response to some of their concerns.

And I would say that the people that are part of all of the groups that we mentioned . . . We're talking with people; we're not talking with organizations. And my own sense is that there's been broad consultation throughout the province and the point that we want to make is that there are many, many people who want this legislation and we've come forward with the proposal which we think meets the needs of most of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Deputy Chair, there's one specific issue I

do wish to raise with the minister. I realize that, you know, times are changing and our culture is changing, particularly in regards to the issue of common-law relationships — far more couples today are living together without having been formally and legally married.

Now in clause 15 the Act gives priority and precedence in the naming . . . the appointment of a proxy to a common-law spouse, who of course is defined there as someone who has cohabited in a relationship of some permanence — cohabited as a spouse in a relationship of some permanence.

I certainly recall from my own legal practice, and I'm sure the minister does too, that there can be a lot of family wrangling over whether there is a common-law relationship here or not. Have you got two older people sharing a house? Or is it something more than that? And oftentimes I have found that the "common-law spouse" doesn't necessarily have the same understanding as the children.

Now what concerns me here is that it may be very difficult to say whether there is in fact a common-law relationship of some permanence existing or not. And this will have to be determined presumably by the doctors and health care providers at a time of extreme crisis and emotional high point. And the possibility that the family will be fighting seems to me to loom very large. And this is going to make it very, very difficult for the health authorities to know from whom they are to take their directions.

Now I realize the purpose of this Bill is so the health care professionals will know from whom they get their directions. But my fear is this particular clause is going to create more problems than it solves in that the health care professionals now have to make a determination. They have to make a decision on whether or not this is a common-law relationship of some permanence. And they're not going to get always agreement on that point.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think the first thing I should do is point out the section that you referred to is a fall-back position. The ideal position would be that the person would name a proxy and it would be quite clear.

And actually the wording that we have here is wording that is more in use now, and it does come out of the consultations that we did with the various groups. Because they did identify this as an area where somebody who was significant and living in a relationship would participate in care and then all of a sudden would be excluded.

And I think in many ways what we're trying to do here is provide some flexibility to allow for those situations where there are common-law relationships that might not fit into a one-year living together or two-year living together definition like we used to use or where we still use in some older legislation.

So I take your point. I respect your comments about this because you've identified an area where there could be some concerns. But I guess what I would say is that ideally there

would be a proxy, but we wanted to leave some flexibility if there isn't a proxy for those situations.

Mr. Hillson: — I guess I still have to put to the minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, though, what is the doctor in practical terms supposed to do when he has a patient in crisis and an older lady comes forward saying, I'm his common-law wife, and the kids come forward to say, well she's mooched off dad but she's certainly no common-law wife of my father. What is the poor doctor supposed to do in that sort of situation? And I don't think I'm putting a bizarre, off-the-wall hypothetical to the minister. I think I'm putting something that's very, very real.

(1445)

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think that that question can be answered by saying two things. The first thing is that this definition is right out of The Department of Health Act, section 18, so it's already an existing provision. The second thing is that the hypothetical situation that you've described creates dilemmas in many ways, and it's not always easy to answer to the doctor exactly what they should do, or to the health care professionals.

But I think practically, what we are doing in this legislation is providing many, many more guidelines than they have now. Because even proxies or the health care directives have a standing at this point which is unclear. What this legislation does is clears up the role that those documents have, and this particular point may still have some ambiguity. But I think it's . . . a better way to describe it would be to say it's flexibility that allows for some of those difficult situations.

Mr. Hillson: — One small question of the minister, if I may. I understand the province of Alberta has placed this legislation under the administration of the public guardian. That would seem to be a natural place for oversight of this legislation. Has that been considered by the department as say a natural place to house this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think that you should note that there's a difference between this legislation and the legislation in British Columbia and Alberta, because they have many more personal-care decisions that are included in their legislation. And so some of those things are dealt with I think, in our dependent adults Act, which is different legislation. But practically, we're not in a position where we think that that makes sense at this point.

Mr. Hillson: — The last issue I would like to raise with the minister is that in the event that a proxy puts unfair pressure on a critically ill person, is the legislation provides for a fine of \$1,000 and the disentitlement, and the disentitlement of that individual. Now The Wills Act provides for the disentitlement of that individual's spouse as well.

Now the concern, which I have flagged before in second reading debate in this matter, is that if say a son-in-law puts undue pressure on a critically ill person, then that son-in-law's spouse would presumably not be disentitled from inheriting, and the only penalty I see coming up here would be a \$1,000

fine. I understand in the province of Alberta the fine is \$10,000. And I say, under The Wills Act, it's my understanding that the disentitlement extends to spouses as well as the individual exerting the undue influence.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well what I can respond is that Saskatchewan, with this disentitlement clause, goes further than any other jurisdiction in this kind of legislation. The other thing is that there are quite a number of checks and balances in the legislation to deal with the particular concern that you've raised.

The first one is that the maker can revoke that directive orally. The court is able to supervise the proxies. There are some restrictions on its use, and also there's a requirement that if there are no specific directions in the proxy, then the person who is acting on the proxy must act in the best interests of the person who is requiring the treatment.

So I guess what I would say is that there's a . . . first we have the disentitlement clause in our legislation and then we also have these other checks and balances.

Mr. Hillson: — But I take it the minister did consider that the disentitlement under The Wills Act you say covers spouses as well as the person exerting the undue influence. I only point this out because I think it's obvious that in most cases the proxies, we expect, would also be the beneficiaries.

So I realize that the legislation is trying to ensure that decisions are made in the patient's best interests. But I say there is the reality that a proxy is in all likelihood also a beneficiary, or at least the spouse of a beneficiary.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I didn't hear any question so I'll . . .

Mr. Hillson: — This is not parallel with The Wills Act. I mean, did you consider that issue?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — No, we did not make it parallel to The Wills Act. This was what was requested in consultation so this is what we put in.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Just a couple of comments, Mr. Minister. Just quickly going through the Bill and looking at its intent, I recognize what you're trying to do, and I think it's something that's appropriate. I think we've heard about this for a number of years.

We've heard situations where individuals have been . . . As a result of the changes in the technology and the ability to sustain life, a number of people, certainly many people, are quite concerned that if they reach a stage where in some cases, while you can basically keep a body functioning but it really doesn't mean quality of life to an individual, that a person should be able to indicate in their will what they feel is sustainable. And I think that's what the Bill does.

But I do have . . . And one other point I was also going to make out. I think it's also appropriate that you've acknowledged the fact that there . . . As in all walks of life, there may be places

where someone would take advantage of and maybe conceal, damage, falsify, or forge directives. And in clause 24 I see where you've put in a clause that basically deals with this and holds people accountable. You put some responsibility . . . and holding people responsible for their actions.

But there's one comment I just . . . and one question I want clarity . . . I want one thing clarified. In clause 2 you talk about adult as being a person, meaning 18 years of age or older. But then under the directives, in clause 3, you talk of: "Any person 16 years of age or more who has the capacity to make a health care decision may make a directive."

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, whether or not that should be reading 18 as well. I'm wondering why you've chosen 16, when I think in most cases as far as adult decision, we still look at the age of 18. And I'm wondering if you can give me an understanding as to why you've added the age of 16 into this one directive.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think the way it's set up is that only an adult can give a proxy. And with the health care directives, we looked at that issue and ended up choosing the age of 16, after consultation.

And part of the issue relates to those younger . . . people younger than 18 who are involved in various medical situations and are able to give instructions to their doctors at that point. And so we ended up using the age 16 as the particular age, after some consultation, and I think practically because we wanted to recognize that there are some 16- and 17-year-olds who are in a situation where they give directions to their doctors.

Mr. Toth: — So what you're saying then, Mr. Minister, is that you did consult in . . . through consultation . . . and you gave quite a list of different groups you consulted with. And most of the groups, if I'm not mistaken, basically would be comprised of individuals over 18 — 18 and over.

Mr. Minister, in your consultation process, did you talk to persons that would be, say 16 or 17 years old? Or what . . . how did you arrive at the use of the age of 16? Was it because someone a little older in life looked back at a circumstance that they were involved in and suggested that that might be an appropriate age to certainly give the ability to make a directive to? Is that how you arrived at that — at the age of 16 versus the age of 18?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think it was a combination of things. One of the issues became, would we allow the health care directives to be used by the definition under common law, which was basically people who are old enough to give independent directions for medical treatment. And that ends up then having an age that's not entirely clear.

So what we did do is we looked at other jurisdictions to see what they did. And in Manitoba they have a clause that they use where there's a rebuttable presumption in favour of a person being 16 and over, that they can actually do this, with the ability to challenge that if somebody has questions about it. And also there's the ability of a person under age 16 to make a

health care directive if they can show that they have the capacity to do that. And that's the same definition that's actually used in Ontario.

Prince Edward Island uses the age of 16. Newfoundland uses the age of 16. British Columbia uses the age of 19, Alberta the age of 18, and in Nova Scotia and Yukon it's the age of majority, which I presume is age 18.

So there's a bit of an array. We ended up, I guess, in a sense taking something that's somewhat in the middle, like we usually do here in Saskatchewan.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 27 inclusive agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, Mr. Chair, I'm very pleased to thank the officials I have with me today for their hard work on this Bill, and also to thank at least one member in the gallery who has worked on the consultation process, and that's Rev. Bill Portman from here in Regina. Through those people I would like to convey thanks to all of the people in Saskatchewan who have assisted us in preparing this Bill.

And with those thanks I'd like to move that we report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Hillson: — I wish also to thank the minister for the way he answered our questions this afternoon and for the assistance of his officials and their attendance this day.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. And I too wish to extend my thanks to the minister and his officials for their presence and for their response to our concerns. Thank you.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

(1500)

Bill No. 69 — The Police Amendment Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, Mr. Chair, I'm pleased to have with me today Doug Moen, who is the executive director of community justice; John Baker, who is the executive director of law enforcement services branch; and Darcy McGovern, who is the Crown solicitor in the legislative services branch.

Clause 1

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. In second reading, I believe, my colleague from Saltcoats and I both indicated that the principle that all residents of the province will have to make some contribution to policing services is a fair and reasonable one and one which the Liberal opposition supports.

However we have also made it quite clear that we cannot and will not support this Bill until there is at the very least some ministerial statement as to what rural municipalities and

villages are going to be forced to contribute now. I think it would be negligent on our part to pass this Bill, not having the slightest idea of what we're actually approving on behalf of our rural municipalities and our villages.

So I ask the minister if he is prepared at this time to publicly indicate what's going to happen the day after this Bill is granted Royal Assent. And I hope that he is prepared to indicate what the situation will be for our villages and rural municipalities and then we can debate that. But if it is a case that this House is still being asked to approve some sort of formula, some sort of payment from your rural municipalities and we don't have the slightest idea what it is, then I have to say that the Liberal opposition cannot support this legislation in its present form.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well as I set out in the second reading debate, this legislation in its present form is to provide us with some of the tools so that we can enter into the negotiations with SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) around the report which was a joint report that came from SUMA and SARM and government officials as it relates to a fairer way of sharing police costs across Saskatchewan.

And we're in a position where we haven't completed those discussions and so what we are doing here is preserving the status quo but providing the ability to make the changes when some consensus is reached — so that we can then proceed with the changes that are necessary.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Chairman, if the discussions are not completed, the plan has not been formulated, the policy is not here, would it not make some sense to do that and then come back to this House and we can discuss that? But to simply pass permissive legislation and we don't have any idea what we are approving on behalf of our villages and our rural municipalities would, as I say, I think be a gross dereliction of our duty here in the opposition and we simply cannot do that.

And may I also say this, that the tragedy, as I see it, is not that rural municipalities will have to make some contribution to policing services, that's fair enough, but that it's coming at the same time, at the same time as their revenue-sharing grants have been chopped, their road grants have been chopped. They're facing one pressure after another all at precisely the same time, and it's just all . . . (inaudible) . . . One factor after another is imploding on our villages and rural municipalities and now we're asked, in effect, to sign a blank cheque.

Now I don't know if my colleague from Saltcoats has any specific questions, but with that I will say that the Liberal opposition is not prepared to put their signature on a blank cheque. And I will be moving an amendment to clause 12 that this Bill will not come into effect until the Assembly has seen the plan and had an opportunity to debate and approve it. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I would just like to respond briefly to that comment. Under the present legislation, all of the costs and all of the expenses related to policing are not set out in the Act, and the reason for that is very practical.

These costs change from year to year, sometimes from month to month. And what we are doing is setting out an overall framework and we're looking at a sharing of the policing costs across the total population of Saskatchewan in a way that hasn't been done before. But we would not, in any event, have all of the kinds of things that the member has referred to in the legislation.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Minister, I just have one or two things, and I'd like to concur with what the member from Battleford has said here too. I think we find this Bill has the appeal that we would like to support it, but being that the numbers are not included there is no way that we can.

Go back to the provincial round table talks I believe you have had with SARM and SUMA. And I believe you know, Mr. Minister, that SARM, it's no news to either one of us that SARM is really not all that happy with having to pick up some of the cost of policing.

But they feel that at some point here they're going to have to. I think what scares them so badly was exactly what we've been saying, that without the numbers how do they really say yes we can agree to this or no we can't.

Where SUMA comes in I believe, they are also kind of torn between . . . over this issue because they represent towns, as you know, over 500, and towns under, and so on. But I believe SUMA has the same position, that really how can they take a look at the Bill that you're presenting here and agree or disagree with it when there is no numbers involved.

An Hon. Member: — A blank cheque.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Yes, a blank cheque.

Mr. Minister, I did think at one time, and I know as a taxpayer of a rural municipality that we felt — and I'm not sure if it was last fall but — at some point we felt that we did know really what was . . . we were going to pay as rural people out there. And an understanding we had, and not that we had to agree with it, but that it would be \$15 per capita for rural residents in Saskatchewan. At least what that told us is we knew what we would have to pay. And I guess my question is, Mr. Minister, did I not know what I was hearing here or was there at some point when you were sitting with SARM and SUMA, was there numbers like that at one point, on the table?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, I think that I can say quite clearly that that report had a recommendation based on the costs at that time of \$14.80 per capita. And it's anticipated that that's the range that we're talking about as it relates to this legislation.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. I was sure I had an understanding that that was right. And I think if, Mr. Minister, if you'd had included those numbers — and I realize they will change in time, that nothing will stay the same — but we would have had a basis to judge this Bill on. And I honestly think you may even have had our full support on this because we know at some point everyone has to share with policing.

Although being MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) that represent, as well as yourself and members on that side . . . we represent both sides of the coin. And it is not a popular thing for any politician to, on one hand, say yes you're going to pay and on the other hand, help the towns over 500 — which by the way my hometown is caught in, of 540, and it's been a bone of contention with them. I think they pay upwards of \$40,000 a year.

So I know where you're coming from. I know how contentious an issue we're dealing with, but I would have liked to see the numbers in. And I believe you may have had our full support on this, or least we could have judged it by that and decided whether we could support the Bill.

With that, I'll pass it back to my counterpart from North Battleford.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair.

Mr. Minister, you've heard over the past few weeks some real concerns regarding this Bill, and we're not hiding the fact that there are a number of individuals, and certainly rural governments more so than urban governments, that are taking some issues with the Bill; although I would gather that there's been a fair bit of debate, having been at some of the SARM conventions and SUMA conventions.

Certainly SUMA delegates have been arguing that some of the policing services and costs should be shared more so with . . . and rural residents in smaller communities and rural municipalities should have part of that cost.

Of course SARM has taken the other view. They feel they've already had enough of a cost and in many cases they just don't feel that they really have the . . . Well they may have access via telephone line to police services to meet a specific need. Visibility, I think, is an issue that they feel . . . What they're asking at the end of the day, what visible presence will we have for the monetary dollar we're being asked to contribute.

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you could give an indication what discussions have taken place in regards to that? What commitment is there? Is there a commitment to a visible presence, or what is intended by the sharing of funds and moving that . . . making sure that there is some visible presence for the costs that will be incurred by rural residents in policing services?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I'm not sure if you're wanting me to reiterate what I've said during the second reading speech about service but, practically, some of the things that I said then which do relate to this question of the presence in the rural areas — there's an addition of a million dollars to the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) provincial policing budget base which will provide additional RCMP staff for 12 rural detachments. And that's effective April 1, 1997.

There's also a new radio system that will allow for greater use of laptop and mobile computer terminals by the RCMP, which therefore means they won't have to go back into the office to

write up reports, do things like that, or check for information. And we know from what the police have told us that that will actually increase the ability of the police to be out in the rural community throughout the whole territory that they cover.

We're also looking at some other ways which will allow for reduction in the paperwork that the RCMP have to do in their policing, which will also increase the presence of the RCMP in the community.

So I think that that's part of this adjustment that we're making within the RCMP. It also dovetails with this fairer sharing of the cost of the RCMP throughout the province.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I did acknowledge, I think, the other day as well some of the comments you just made and some of the changes in direction.

One of the issues that crops up continually is especially when detachments are in specific locations and they're serving communities. And I'll just for example, I'll use an example in my area because I'm quite familiar with it.

The Broadview detachment serves the area of Grenfell and Whitewood communities at the same time. And communities like Whitewood and Grenfell feel that they're putting a fair tax dollar into policing services but they don't have the visible presence, if you will, or a police officer living within their community. And they feel they're paying for that or that should be part of it.

Now I think they have in the past, and I'm not sure, it may not be there right now . . . but if I'm not mistaken, certainly in Grenfell one of the officers was more than willing to reside in the community. And I'm wondering what . . . or if any discussion has taken place as far as where officers reside and the area they cover, whether or not suggestions have been made that maybe the RCMP and different detachments should look at a member . . . a major community in the area may not have the visible presence as of an office, that with the changes, with the access to computers, that an officer would be encouraged to look at residing in a community that's part of that whole policing area. Was there any discussion along those lines?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think you've asked a very good question and I can answer it by saying that there has been quite a great deal of discussion about residency. There is a residency policy now that requires the officers to live within the area of their detachment.

The other thing I would say is that the proposed policing cost document that I have referred to previously has in there a differential for those communities that actually have the officers living within their town as opposed to down the road a few miles. And that there may be some discussion again about where exactly the office is located because of the fact that there will be a differential in cost that relates to that.

(1515)

Mr. Toth: — Just a couple more comments and questions. In

the original Bill, Mr. Minister, I understand the minimum size was specified. There was a minimum size specified. And under the amendments, clause 6 in section 23 amended, the minimum size has been moved to the regulations.

And the view here is that whenever something is moved to the regulations, the question, the concern, the question is why? For the simple reason that we always have a concern because when you put something into regulations, regulations can be changed quite easily, and they're basically done through orders in council without any consultation or opportunity for consultation.

And so I'm asking, Mr. Minister, why was this done? Why would you do this, or why do you need the power? And are you planning to drop the minimum size even further so that tiny communities with little revenue have to chip in for policing?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think that as you know from the discussions that you've had with the various towns in your constituency or other neighbouring constituencies, it's been a fair bone of contention that the number was 500 because you'd have communities that were just slightly over 500 and some that were just under 500. And that's one of the specific problems that we're trying to fix in this legislation, which is only the tool that allows us to continue the consultation around that particular problem.

And so what we have done is set out here that we are going to put in the regulations the size of the community. And at this stage, I think it will be that all communities will share and there won't be a minimum size. That's my understanding of what it would be once we've implemented the whole process.

But we've left that ability to change the numbers for a couple of reasons. One of them is that at this time we are using RCMP policing and we have another 15 years in our contract with the RCMP to provide policing across Saskatchewan. But 15 years from now, if there was some other form of policing that occurred, we may need to adjust some of those numbers, and so we've left some flexibility there. Also, through the discussions and negotiations, we may end up with another level which is more appropriate and makes everything fairer.

So we wanted to just have the flexibility so that we didn't need to come back to the legislature just over the size issue.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. A further question. I understand the Bill provides the minister with power to negotiate global agreements with the RCMP on behalf of the municipalities. And I guess a couple questions out of this. What sort of global agreements are you talking about here, or referring to? And, Mr. Minister, does this mean that you would have the power to negotiate agreements? It says, on behalf of, but could those negotiations be done without any consultation? Are you still talking of consultation with the municipalities when you get into agreements and negotiation agreements?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think there's two parts to this answer. The first one is that municipalities under that section 5 there will have to elect to participate. So they have a choice about

whether they go in. The other thing is that the overall negotiation with the RCMP, on behalf of these extended communities, the smaller communities, that negotiation can only work when there is consultation with all of the communities affected.

And we plan to continue the kinds of consultation that we've had so far. Because it's the only way that we can do it in Saskatchewan, is to all work together as it relates to these policing issues.

Mr. Toth: — I thank you. Mr. Minister, one further question, and before I ask that question I'll just thank you for your responses and having your assistants on hand, your staff members on hand, to respond to the questions.

But, Mr. Minister, in view of the changes that will be taking place, do you have an idea of what type of monetary costs rural municipalities may be facing as a result of the shift and being asked to participate in cost-of-policing services versus where they are today as far as the costs that they face in running their municipalities?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think the answer is similar to the answer that I gave before. The report, based on the figures that they were using, were looking . . . we looked at a figure of about \$14.80 per capita. And so there's a range that would be somewhere in that area of \$15 that we're looking at with some other adjustments as recommended in that report.

But it's a consultation process and we're working with all of the particular idiosyncrasies and differences of different municipalities in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Toth: — I thank you, Mr. Minister. I think, Mr. Minister, that the concerns and the issues that are being raised today, while money certainly is a concern, at the end of the day I think what most people are looking for in the province of Saskatchewan . . . And certainly some of the tragic events just recently such as the circumstances in Kyle, and we hope this doesn't happen elsewhere. But many even smaller communities, people are finding that incidents are taking place that we used to think of just taking place in centres like Regina or Saskatoon. And the visible presence of policing can go a long ways to enhancing a safer society that we're living in.

So I would just like to say in closing that I think it's certainly appropriate that we're working together with all levels of government to come up with ways and means of providing that safer environment and certainly enhancing the policing services in our province. And I thank you.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 11 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 12

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. As I indicated previously, I do have an amendment to this section. I'll read as follows:

This Act shall come into force:

- (a) only after the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan has granted legislative approval to the formula for calculating the cost of policing services to be borne by municipalities; and
- (b) on proclamation, which shall take place after such legislative approval."

Mr. Deputy Chairman, again, if I may say, while the principle of this Bill has been supported by the Liberal opposition, we simply are not prepared to put our signatures on a blank cheque on behalf of the rural municipalities and villages of this province. And that is what is being sought by the minister, and that is what we find objectionable.

We ask the minister to accept this amendment, to vote in favour of it, in order that we will know exactly what we are approving on behalf of our smaller communities and our RMs before we approve it.

If the minister is not prepared to accept that, then this legislation will not have the signatures of the Liberal opposition on it. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, I would just like to speak briefly and say that we will not be accepting this amendment. And the reason for that is that we have worked out a scheme which will allow us to do the necessary consultation before this adjustment is made to provide fairer policing costs, but also a clear, visible presence throughout the province, of the police. And this amendment would not assist in that process.

The division bells rang from 3:26 p.m. until 3:29 p.m.

Amendment negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 12

Krawetz	McPherson	McLane
Gantefoer	Draude	Bjornerud
Belanger	Hillson	Julé
Aldridge	Toth	Hepner

Nays — 22

Van Mulligen	Atkinson	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Whitmore	Goulet
Upshall	Kowalsky	Crofford
Bradley	Lorje	Nilson
Stanger	Murray	Wall
Kasperski	Ward	Sonntag
Jess	Langford	Murrell
Thomson		

Clause 12 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill on division.

(1530)

Bill No. 67 — The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 1997

The Deputy Chair: — I invite the minister to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left is Dale Sigurdson, assistant deputy minister. On my right is Roy White — that rhymes, doesn't it? On my right is Roy White, the secretary of the Agri-Food Council.

Clause 1

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I welcome your officials here today.

And I do take note that we have very few rural back-benchers in the House today, Mr. Minister. And I think while we're going through the Bill today, it'll become somewhat obvious as to why. And I appreciate you counting.

But you and I both know, Mr. Minister, that what you have done here with this Bill by bringing it in at the end of the session the way you did, that what you have done, what you have done is tried to ram through something against the producers of this province — something that you and I both know is not going to be seen to be held in high regard by the producers of this province, Mr. Minister. And we'll get into this a little later.

I know that the member from Thunder Creek has already asked that some amendments be distributed to some of the members and yourself. And you will see the thrust of our points, Mr. Minister, are that you should not, you do not have the right, Mr. Minister, to take the — democratic right — to take the control out of producers' hands.

And it of course is very confusing for the farmers of this province when they take a look at the Bill that you have brought forward, Mr. Minister. Because on one hand you're out there — you, your members, your government — you've been out there for some years selling yourselves as the champions for the little guy, fighting for all their causes; for their single-desk marketing system.

You spent thousands and thousands of dollars during the barley vote that was recently held to give the appearance, I guess, that your government supports the farmers having a democratic right to decide their own fate and to control their own marketing system.

Mr. Minister, you've got your federal campaign party right now is distributing information; you know, distributing information in regards to single-desk marketing especially, I guess, on the Canadian Wheat Board. But you've got members out there selling themselves as the champions of single-desk marketing and giving producers their democratic right — letting them decide their own future.

We've got one candidate right here from Regina, Mr. Minister, that is selling that message. You have others on the front page of *The Western Producer*. I believe this one is Dick Proctor,

NDP candidate in — what is that riding?

An Hon. Member: — Palliser.

Mr. McPherson: — Palliser — also talking about single-desk marketing and producers' rights.

And yet, Mr. Minister, you feel compelled to take it upon yourself, to take it upon yourself to have full control over these boards, commissions, those producers that are part of those boards and commissions; that you have the right with the stroke of a pen to decide their future. And you're doing that, Mr. Minister, without really going out and asking their opinion to find out what they want, to where this should go.

Mr. Minister, can you stand in the House today . . . And I only ask some of these questions for the reason that I myself was away seeding while you brought the Bill in and I was unable to listen to some of the speeches in second reading.

So I would like to hear it in your words, I'd like to hear it in your words why you, Mr. Minister, why you, Mr. Minister, feel that you should do exactly what the Minister of Health did last year — is bring in a Bill that sets out all the . . . everything that the boards should be doing in health boards out there, but at the end of the day, he's got the power to decide what's going to happen.

And now you have done the same in agriculture, Mr. Minister, and I'd like to hear from your words why you feel you have that right.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Chair, I'll just go over for the member some facts. This Bill simply . . . I'll just do it; I know you weren't here.

By the way, when you started, you were talking about back rural members, and as I looked around you must've been mistaken or couldn't see that far because every member that was in the House except for two or three were rural members.

So just for the record — just for the record. I know you like to get away with these things but you're not going to get away with that one. In fact we have more rural members in the House than you have entire members. So that's . . .

An Hon. Member: — Just get to the point.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Anyway, yes, I know you want me to get to the point. I'll just do a quick background for you. I won't go into what the Bill does . . . and it does a number of things, like allows for a national check-offs and a few other things.

But the point that you're getting at is the power of the Executive Council. Now it's not the stroke of the pen of a minister. I want you to be clear on that. This is simply enabling legislation. Simply, this is enabling legislation. It has to go through the whole process of Executive Council, to a cabinet decision item; so that debate comes to cabinet, then to caucus, before anything's done.

So as far as this Bill is concerned, the controversial provision where the government would have the right to change unilaterally after it went through due process, would have the right to change a marketing board structure without listening to the vote of members, is true. That's true. I'm not denying that.

Prior to 1990 . . . Just let me . . . (inaudible) . . . It doesn't deny members a vote. Under the Act, the Agri-Food Council still can be approached by a marketing board to have a vote to determine what should happen to their board. And we would think that would be the normal process.

But there are some abnormalities that do come forward. But prior to 1990, the government of the day, the then Tory government, had the authority through legislation, like every other government in Canada, like every other government in Canada, had the authority to unilaterally change a marketing board if necessary.

This is not something new. It was taken away by an amendment in 1990. When they put the amendment in in 1990, they didn't even realize what had happened. It was only last year when our Justice people said, you don't have any authority over the . . . like other provinces do, to change marketing boards if you had to. So then that's why this Bill is here.

So the amendment in 1990 took it away. We're putting it back, and every other province has the power.

But here's my question to you. And I think if we're going to get into this debate, I want to know where you stand. I'll put a little test, a question — two questions.

Number one, you're saying this is a power grab by government and we're going to wipe out the small producers and all this kind of stuff. Have you corresponded this thought with other Liberal governments in Canada, other provincial governments, who have this legislation or similar legislation? Have you written them and said, you're going to wipe out small producers; you don't have the authority to do this?

That's number one question. Have you done that? And if you haven't, are you going to do it? Because let's be consistent. If you're saying it's wrong to do it here, then you should be lobbying every Liberal government in Canada to take away their power so we're on a level playing-field here.

Question number two. Question number two is: if, as happened in Manitoba, a packing company like Schneiders . . . This is what happened in Manitoba. Schneiders comes in to the minister — the Government of Manitoba — says, I'll put a \$50 million packing plant in; you kill single-desk.

I ask you, if you were the minister of Agriculture in five years time or two or three or four years time and a company comes in to . . . it doesn't have to be . . . pick your marketing board, says, we'll put a 20, 30, 40, \$50 million plant in here, we'll employ 1,000 or 1,500 people, and you kill the marketing board, my question to you is, what would you do? What would you do?

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'll start by saying that

I'll be asking the questions here today and hopefully you'll be giving the answers. But I'm glad you asked those couple of questions because they raise some very important questions of my own for you.

It's not, Mr. Minister, so much whether we have consulted with governments or parties in other provinces. But, Mr. Minister, have you consulted with the producers affected by this legislation here in Saskatchewan, in the place that we represent these people? Have you done that?

(1545)

Don't talk to me about what we should have done in other provinces unless I know for sure that you have consulted right here in Saskatchewan. And I dare say you haven't.

On the fact of enabling legislation, you're still trying to sell this as something not such a big deal — enabling legislation.

Well let's be clear on what you are saying, Mr. Minister. You are saying that you don't have to go out and consult with any of the affected people, those people that are spending the hundreds of thousands of dollars in agri-business, on family farm operations. You're not consulting those people.

What you're saying is you're going to consult with and discuss with, your cabinet colleagues and your caucus — no other member of this legislature. So that's what you're doing.

What you have got here is complete power, really in your hands. I mean as Minister of Agriculture, if you can't influence your cabinet and your caucus . . . well I suspect you can. I'm going to give you that credit. I'm sure you can. You're a very . . . you have a lot of influence in your cabinet, I'm sure.

But what this is doing, you have the right, Mr. Minister, to close down board operations without a vote. Simple as that. You can decide whether to consult with . . . by way of producer vote, as to their future. You have . . . well you don't have to allow a vote, but if you do allow a vote, you don't have to accept the outcome of that vote. You can decide how the vote should be handled. You can decide the minimum number of voters. You can decide the percentage of voters that would constitute a vote to be valid.

But most importantly, Mr. Minister, you, and you alone — well your cabinet and your caucus — you and your caucus can decide whether or not the future direction of these boards or producers should be handled by you or them.

And you've chosen, you've chosen the latter . . . or the first. You feel that you have better knowledge of the business, that you know where things are going, that you and your department should be able to decide people's investments far better than they. And I disagree.

Now you raised another very interesting point when you talked about what if I were a minister and in a situation as the minister in Manitoba found himself in. Well what you told this House today, Mr. Minister, is that someone of incredible size,

marketing size — right? — has put some pressure on you and you succumbed to the pressure. Did he not say that? It happened in Manitoba. It's going to happen here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, perhaps you should stand in this House today and tell us who is applying that pressure to you.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well I know that you were . . . would not like to respond. But I'll tell you: in a fair debate you have to tell me where you stand.

An Hon. Member: — On what?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — On this issue. I want to know. Put yourself . . . let's go into fantasy land here for a minute and say the Liberals won government, won the next government. Let's go to fantasy land because that'll never happen.

But let's say you won the next government and you were the Minister of Agriculture and you were put in a position — the same position that I'm put in — where you're not on a level playing-field with Alberta and Manitoba or any other province. Therefore you don't have the opportunity to develop the economy of this province the same way that Alberta and Manitoba might.

And in terms of the industry, the industry's changing so quickly. At one time, you know, a couple hundred thousand bird kill a day was a packing plant . . . eviscerating plant for chickens, for turkeys. Right now we're up to a quarter of a million in — after today's announcement — in Wynyard, and the plants now are aiming at a million bird kill as the efficiency.

This is nothing to do with anybody except they've decided that's what they have to be to be efficient and that's what they're shooting at. And they'll get there.

The hog industry used to be 20,000 kill a week, was sort of the norm. You know what the efficiency measure today is? Is 40,000 kill one shift.

So what I'm saying is there's going to be fewer plants. There isn't going to be a couple plants in Alberta and a couple in Saskatchewan and a couple in Manitoba. There's going to be one or two.

And if that plant . . . if those plants . . . This has nothing to do with my philosophy on marketing boards. I'm the old socialist marketing board; they've done a hell of a — excuse me, Mr. Chair, a heck of a job. I withdraw that remark. A heck of a job. They were put in many years ago. They've done a good job. Times are changing; you've got to be pragmatic.

And I'll tell you, I'll tell you, put yourself in that position, Mr. Member. Five years down the road without this legislation and somebody like Cargill or ConAg or the Maple Leaf or Sask Wheat Pool, Fletcher's or Intercon comes to you and says, I'm going to put in a 40,000-kill one-shift plant in Saskatoon or Calgary or Winnipeg, but we don't want marketing boards because this is the way the industry's going. What would you

do? How would you direct the economy? How would you be in the same playing-field as Saskatchewan and Manitoba — I'm just not quite finished, so you might as well sit down — because you wouldn't have that opportunity.

I'll sit down by telling you that the fact here is, the consultation process, you're dead right. You're dead right. We didn't go out for 12 months and talk to every producer and producer group under supply management. That was my decision for a good reason. Because I'm not sure that you understand — as opposed to the Tories who understand this thing because they're agreeing with it — that you and the Liberal Party understand what business is all about. You would be up and grandstanding despite the fact, despite the fact that you supported this Bill in second reading.

Now let's think about this: you supported . . . if you weren't here, your colleagues all supported it. There wasn't one no vote. There wasn't one nay in the yeas and nays. So you supported it. Your party supported it in second reading; now you're coming in to change it. So I don't know . . . with amendments; so I don't know. But anyway, here's the reason.

I wasn't sure, because of the politics that you would throw into it and convolute with half truths — you and others — you and others, like Mr. Morris out of SPI through a Liberal press release, I wasn't particularly sure that this legislation would pass.

And I'll tell you another fact. I know that in our caucus as well, there were many members, including myself, saying what are we doing here? This is not what we're all about. But you know what? You have to look at the world through clear glasses — not rose-coloured.

Had we gone and held a year ahead and done the consultation process . . . And the way I sum it up is, there's a time to lead and there's a time to follow. And I believe this is a time to lead. Because had we done that — and you would have convoluted, whipped everybody up — maybe this legislation wouldn't have passed. And I sincerely believe we need it, not for some hidden agenda, but simply to put us on the level playing-field as far as business is concerned in terms of the way the world is going as far as packing plants are concerned, to make sure that we have an industry.

You're saying I would destroy and others then would destroy industry. No, we're doing this to make sure we have an industry. Because if that packing plant, whether it be chicken or hogs, goes to Calgary or Edmonton or Winnipeg, do you know where the production is going to be? It's going to be within a hundred miles of Calgary or Winnipeg or Edmonton — not in Saskatchewan. There'll be some, but not like it could have been. And that's why I did what I did and I know I'm going to take criticism for it, but I'll tell you, logically, I still believe it was the right thing to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — You see, Mr. Minister — as soon as the urban members that are clapping for you are finished — Mr.

Minister, the problem with your argument is that you're trying to sell to us that you had no time. That you had no time to go out and consult Saskatchewan producers . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well you did say that. You were saying that this had to be done now, can't be done next year.

Do you think for a moment that I'm going to sit here and believe that somebody moving in with a \$50 million operation is just walking in and saying, you know what, Saskatchewan, you've got two weeks to decide. Now that's not how that kind of business works, Mr. Minister; you know it and I know it.

And not only is that not how it works but what would you do . . . Mr. Minister, let's go back to your fantasy land; I don't live there but I'll enjoy visiting for a moment. Okay. But let's just think for a moment what's going to happen, or who do you and I represent? We represent Saskatchewan people, producers, family farms. That's who we represent.

And so you are saying to us that you're more comfortable if Tyson Foods — I think it's Tyson Foods from the States — moves up here, an operation that really could supply all of Canada's needs with one day's operation. Is that right? I believe I heard that from you a year ago. Okay. So who are we running roughshod over top of? We're running roughshod over Saskatchewan producers.

And we are not saying that we are not pro-business. You know that you're using half-truths in that sense. But all we're saying, is this the only way that you have of helping business or promoting business? To say, let's forget about Saskatchewan producers; we've got some large entrepreneur out here that can come in and just take over everything? Are you not concerned at all about the thousands of producers that you are affecting here in the province? Do you see no way that they can fit into this picture that you're trying to paint? What about them?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — But see, that's where we fundamentally disagree. I think my job is to grow the industry. What you're saying is, your job is to stymie the industry. That's not true. Because if we're going to produce enough hogs in this province to make sure we have a packing plant, we have to have everybody producing.

And look at Manitoba. The producers were upset when single-desk ended. If you read the reports out of Manitoba, they've got a stronger marketing arm now than they had before. I was just reading yesterday — stronger than they had before. Because the fact of the matter is, if you're in Manitoba, Saskatchewan . . . take the U.S. (United States). They've got huge marketing co-ops. There are some integrated hog-kill facilities that market on their own, true. But there's huge marketing co-ops that all the producers, or the majority of the producers, belong to because they know there's strength in numbers. So whether it's legislated or not, there's going to be a marketing division.

But here comes the problem. I want to try to grow this industry because I see the potential. And I'm not the only one. Alberta is doing it, Manitoba's doing it, the U.S. are going great guns expansion because there's a huge market developing in the

Asian countries, and in Russia to some degree.

So we need everybody to produce. We're not killing the little producer . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, that's not what they think . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . They can't compete. The member says they can't compete. With what? This legislation will be enacted, and the day after that are they all going to go out and sell their farms? No, they're not going to, because they're going to have a marketing division.

Did Manitoba's industry shut down when they killed single-desk? Of course it didn't. Did Alberta shut down when they don't have single-desk? Or Iowa or any place in the States? Of course it didn't.

Are they getting more money than we are, or less money than we are? No. In fact some of the problems with some of the production is that Saskatchewan's prices weren't as high. And that's got nothing to do with single-desk. That's got everything to do with the management of the marketing boards.

(1600)

And we want to make the best product that we can have here for marketing boards. But here's the factor. From 1990 to 1996, there was 1,112 hog producers exited the industry. All but 12 of those were under 100 sow units; 12 of them were under 200 sow units. In the same time, in the same six years, there were 33 new entrants, all of them over 200 sow units. This legislation wasn't even in in 1996. It's the trend in the industry.

I mean you can do your politics about this, and I'll take my lumps and I'll get calls from small producers who are all afraid that we're going to destroy them. It's not true. Smaller producers are leaving this industry of their own volition, before this legislation. You know why? I know why.

When I lived at my parents' home when I was younger, we had hogs. They had hogs — 20, 25 sows until a few years ago. But do you know what happens? You've got 25 sows, you've got a hundred head of cattle, you've got 12 or 14 quarters of land, and you work so long. And all of a sudden you say, you know what? — this isn't paying me much. What's the first thing to go? It's the 20, 25 sows because it's the most labour intense.

You can feed a hundred head of cattle with a tractor and round bales and a feed system with very little work, compared to hogs. The same amount of work on 20, 25 sow hogs, you could probably have 5 or 600 sows.

And it's those producers, it's the industry going that way that's going to grow this industry. And that's not me directing it; it's not you or anybody else. Look at the numbers. It's simply economics. And if we want to make sure that we can compete with these other two provinces, we have to be on the same playing-field as they are, the same rules. We don't have their rules; we're at a disadvantage. I just believe we should be with the same rules.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, you see really there again some of the problems with your argument. And don't try and

confuse the issue of whether or not everyone in this House or in this province wants us to have a much more viable pork industry or chicken industry or egg industry. Of course we all do. Let's accept that up front. But the point is, Mr. Minister, why do you feel you need the power to control it? Why do you feel you need the power over the producers to decide their future and their fate?

That's the problem with this Bill and that was the problem with the health Bill of last year — that you can have all the legislation you want, but with the legislation, if at the end of the day you with the stroke of a pen can decide where it's going, I don't think that people are comfortable with that. The producers aren't.

Of course we want these huge operations. And you yourself are saying that, well the industry is going in a certain direction regardless of what member in this House stands ideologically or not for whatever. And you're right; you're right. We aren't going to influence it that much because I think the industries will go where they are going. So then the question is, why do you feel you need this power? Why do you need this legislation if it's going there regardless?

Mr. Minister, I got a number of — well I guess it's what? nine of them — of the different boards and commissions that we've talked to. And I would have to ask you, have you consulted with them? You and I both know the answer is no. You haven't taken the time to consult with them or to find out their feelings or how they feel they could have played a role here.

And so by not doing that we have to assume that whatever mandate the boards and commissions had and whatever accomplishments they have made, you, your department, someone over on that side of the House, is going to take those roles and responsibilities over and try to achieve like accomplishments.

Take the Vegetable Producers of Saskatchewan. They were established by a producer vote in March 1994, and they've had a hundred per cent growth in the seed potato sector. So are we to assume now that's going to be done out of your office, if by the stroke of a pen you can say we don't need them any more? So are you doing that?

The Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board, there's the . . . where are we? They represent 1,300 producers who raise 83,000 lambs per year. And so whatever, for whatever they're doing, whether there's strategic plans to build that industry — I take it you're going to do it right out of your office.

Saskatchewan Pulse Crop Development Board, founded in 1984 after a producer vote — are you going to take over, are you going to take over the accomplishments that they've had in developing new strains of pulses and such? Are you going to do that?

Saskatchewan Broiler Hatching Egg Producers' Marketing Board, formed in 1985 after a producer vote. Their accomplishment: achieving major price increases for the benefit of producers.

And these, Mr. Minister . . . I mean we were in contact with them and we were asking them their major accomplishments, and I'm just going to touch very briefly for . . . you and I both know we don't have long, much time here today. But I have to ask you, Mr. Minister, if, if each and every one of these boards and their accomplishments . . . who will take it over? Will it be you personally?

The Saskatchewan Canola Development Commission — long-term goals to increase producer profitability, to increase canola research and market development opportunities which will benefit producers, keep producers competitive in global markets. Mr. Minister, are you going to take over those responsibilities?

What about the Chicken Marketing Board and the turkey producers? I mean all of their accomplishments — am I to assume, Mr. Minister, that you are now going to take over all the responsibilities? Or are you going to say no, it's going to go wherever it's going to go and those producers out there can't play a role in where Saskatchewan ends up?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well there was many, many questions there. First thing I want to say, I told you why, how the concept . . . that there was no long-drawn-out consultation with producers. I told you why that was . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Why? Because I think you would convolute this enough out in the public, whip people up with falsehoods and half-truths, that it may not have passed — and I think it's important it passed. I take full responsibility for that process, full responsibility.

However I've said since I've been minister, a year and a half or more ago now, on every occasion, I believe we should be internally reassessing our current marketing systems to ensure that they're giving us the best value, that they're giving us the best return for our product in the new world trade environment in order that we might grow the industry. They've said that consistently. Chicken producers, hog producers, all marketing board producers. And they're doing it. The milk producers have gone to western pooling instead of provincial pooling. That's a step in the right direction.

And you know why? You know why? You ask . . . and I've asked this question 100 times if I've asked it once. In five years time do you think we're going to have — or 10 years time — do you think we're going to have marketing boards as we know it today? Or marketing boards, period? You know what the consistent answer from producers is? No, we probably won't. Because you got World Trade Organization coming up in 1999.

You know the pressure that was on last time in '95, the pressure to get rid of marketing boards on the world scale. They're not going to quit. All I'm saying is lookit, if you answer that question yes, which they all have . . . I mean anybody I talk to in a marketing board, they all think that it's going to be . . . come a time between 5 and 10 years, or maybe sooner — 1999 is the next WTO (World Trade Organization) round — that we're not going to have marketing boards. All I'm saying is, let's get prepared — let's get prepared for that time. Do I like it? No. But I think I'm a bit of a realist.

You can't just sit on your laurels, bury your head in the sand, and all of a sudden one day you wake up and say, the rules have changed, and holy smoly, we better get to work; try to be able to compete and catch up. All I'm saying in the industry, the broad consultation, when I talk to them I say lookit, we've got to keep looking at ourselves.

Canadian Wheat Board did the same thing. Looked at it; there's some changes in. Too bad your federal colleague there, Mr. Goodale, didn't have the nerve to put those changes through before the election. That's another question. But you've got to have it.

Now I want to make a point about the Vegetable Growers. If we let this legislation through, the Vegetable Growers came to the Agri-Food Council and said, we want to disband, so how do we do this. Well the rules are that you have to have a vote of your producers. Okay, so we'll have a vote of producers. They had a vote of producers. Producers said yes, we want to disband; it was disbanded. That process cost about \$10,000 to somebody — taxpayers.

Under this legislation, if they would have come to the government and said, we've decided through our democratic process — because they have members and they have delegates and they have boards of directors, all these organizations — we've decided through our democratic process that we want to disband, I can say okay, take it to the Executive Council, and it's done — saving money and achieving what they want to achieve.

If the cattle people who want a national check-off, they come. Do we demand they have a vote? They've come to us as an association and say, we want to have a national check-off for R&D (research and development) and whatever else. This would accommodate that; we could just put it through Executive Council and make the change for them. But this is about growing the industry, not killing it. And I will try to convince you of that for as long as you want because . . . I'll make one more point before I sit down, and I enjoy this debate because it's an absolutely fundamental, important debate that we have to have in this province.

Because we have good systems in place but they were put in place 25 years ago. The question is, are they still good? And are they good for whom? Is the person that produces 50,000 weanlings a year and expanding, does he have the same influence over the industry as a person producing 1,500 weanlings a year? Those are fundamental questions; that's why this debate is so important.

I'm going to give you an example, and I'm going to use the chicken industry. I'm not picking on the chicken industry, but it's the best example that I can give you. There's 72 chicken producers in this province. If we were to access . . . if somebody . . . a plant were to come in here and say, okay, we want to put our plant here. And as you know, if you know the chicken industry, the DOAs (dead on arrival) go up after — I don't know, 50 miles; they're probably less than that — the DOAs on the plant go up quite dramatically because the length of haul is important. So what happens is your chicken industry

grows around the plants.

Should there be no change — by the way, they can still have a vote . . . If I could just have the members' attention because this is important. Should there be no change — and they have to have a vote — and those 72 producers said no, we don't want a change in the marketing board, we don't want that new plant and those 1,000 jobs or 500 jobs with the feed mills and the trucking companies and everything else . . . Just go to Wynyard and see what a chicken plant does for you. Go to Wynyard. Today they announced a \$10 million expansion, from 365 workers to 465 workers. Do you know what that does for that town? It's incredible.

So my fundamental question is, if the 72 chicken producers . . . and I know they vote this because they're forward-thinking; they're looking at their industry. I've had talks with them and we've had disagreements at times, but I know they know that the world is changing. But should they vote, have a vote and say no, we don't want that plant; we don't want the economy in this province to grow, should they be able to hold ransom the government? That's the question. And I ask you. I want you to answer.

Whereas with this legislation, the government has the authority to say look, we've got this many jobs in the plant; we've got this many jobs in expanded production in the barns; and we've got this many jobs in feed mills; and this many acres of feed wheat or wheat that these chickens will consume. Boy, you know, maybe we better say to those chicken producers that voted no, sorry, we understand your point but it's in the best interest of this province to make that change.

See, what would you do? Do you agree that the government should have the power? Do you agree? Like I'm not picking on chicken producers, but it's the best example because they're a small . . . there's only 72 of them. You could take any other industry as well and just . . . the numbers change.

But shouldn't the government have the right? Does the government not have the right, like every other government in Canada does, to control the economy?

And people will say they're cheap, they're cheap jobs. They've got all these cheap jobs. You know, cheap jobs because they're going to be all vertically integrated and they're all going to work in the barns for minimum wage.

Do you know what a 1,200 sow-farrow-to-finish barn manager makes in this province? It's in the range of 50 to \$60,000 a year. In Alberta the bigger 2,400 sow units, they're making up \$100,000 a year. There isn't one . . . In the barns that I'm familiar with, there's isn't one minimum wage job in the hog barn. So don't get carried away with the rhetoric.

The question I ask you, and please answer: under the scenario put forward by the chicken people, do you think the government shouldn't have the right to direct the economy and that they should be able to hold the economy ransom?

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Minister, let me say one more time:

it's not that anyone is opposed to expansions, large expansions in this province. We want to be on the same footing as other provinces. We want to have the huge operations here. But, Mr. Minister, you're saying that it's only you in your office, in your cabinet room that should be able to direct or drive where this is going. And we're asking why you're uncomfortable putting it to Saskatchewan producers to decide.

On one hand, you're telling me that the industries are going in a certain direction regardless. Fine. Let them go. They are expanding. We all know that. The small ones are eventually dropping off, as they are in every industry, in farming and you name it.

But I look at my own farming operation where a few years ago, strictly durum. And about five years ago I started into canola. Now my farm operation is half canola. And you know, we've tried lentils. We try a number of things. But I didn't have to have the Minister of Agriculture, out of his office, decide or drive where I was going to go with this.

Producers should be allowed to decide their own future. Not at the expense of stopping industry, but at least have them part of the game, Mr. Minister. And that's where you're making a mistake. You're shutting out people in this province, and that is going to cost you.

(1615)

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well no, I want to reply to that, part of that question. And under your scenario, my assistant deputy points out, if there would've been a lentil marketing board you wouldn't be able to grow those lentils because the quota would be tied up. So I mean, don't get into that; don't go down that road.

I want to make one point. There is no change. The provision for votes is still there. It's still there and will be used.

I know you're trying to fearmonger and say to the people that we're taking their voice away. It's only an extreme situation. I would hope I'd never have to use this. But I'll tell you, the government has to have the right to direct the economy. Direct the economy, that's what we have to do. That's our job.

Now the little bit of a twist here is that you've got a federal government pushing deregulation, pushing deregulation — transportation, the grain trade, and everything else — and we have been put, in western Canada, in a box.

You've taken away . . . I'll take two minutes . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I know, but this is . . . okay, I mean I won't, I will not cut the other member off. I'll be real quick here.

We're in a box. You've got a deregulated environment that is costing farmers more money to move their grain. You took away the Crow benefit, the federal Liberals — 320 million bucks a year. I'm not whining, it's gone. So how do we have to respond?

Value added meat products in Saskatchewan, that's the best growth area we have. Value added meat production. But we have national agreements that give Ontario more quota because of the way it was set up originally. The quota was set up as far as population was concerned. They had more population, they got more quota than Saskatchewan.

So we've got a federal agreement handcuffing, handcuffing us, after you've deregulated the system. You can't have it both ways.

If you want to deregulate the system, then agree with that, with your federal counterparts, but don't come to this House and say, oh, well, but you guys are taking the power away from producers. We're responding to the new realities in the deregulated world . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right, we're just simply responding. And you're being a little bit inconsistent with your arguments.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Minister, and welcome to your officials. Mr. Minister, I think that the . . . What I see happening here is a shift from one monopoly to another — from marketing boards which have a monopoly to large corporate monopolies. Now one of those is no better or no different from the other.

In an instance like this, I think what we have to reflect on is the role of government in a time of global change. Many citizens and producers of this province are, apparently, finding themselves caught up in the transition. And so that has to be, I guess. But I believe that it's government's role and their responsibility in respect for its citizens to provide policies that at least provide some measure of cushioning to these changes.

Now had the government introduced this Bill a year ago or so and provided adequate time for marketing boards to prepare for the change, through some discussion with their own members, and in order to prepare for the change and to give time for members of this House to hear from them, this might have give them a fighting chance — to map out their destiny in view of what's happening.

Now would that have not been a reasonable way to go about it, Mr. Minister? Do you think that this is a fair measure for any government to take in respect of its citizens?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — I think I must have caught you off guard by telling you the real reason that the consultation process was none, because you're going to do your cheap politics and I think this is important to do. And you're going to try to whip up all the little producers and say that this is going to be the end of them — which is not true. The day after this legislation passes, tomorrow, nothing is going to change, nothing is going to change.

So I'll tell you — there's a time to lead and there's a time to follow. And I'm willing to take that flack because I think it's that important. We have lots of concerns, and I understand your concerns. But it's got nothing to do with this — nothing is going to change tomorrow. People are going to still produce, they're going to still try to grow this hog industry.

You think this legislation is going to go bang. Why didn't it happen before? Why doesn't it happen in other provinces?

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Minister, we're talking here about some very fundamental principles on democracy which your government often expounds from that side of the House. Now there was no level of democracy whatsoever when people are not at least approached with changes that are coming about in order to give them some opportunity for input.

I'd like to just shift over to a recent article in the *Leader-Post*, Mr. Minister. This article outlined concerns that small hog producers have with regard to the elimination of the marketing board. Would the minister give us in his opinion . . . his opinion rather, as to what effect the change in legislation that you're bringing about and possibly the elimination of the hog marketing board, would have on small hog producers.

Now you did allude to this a bit but I don't think it was a very clear answer. I would appreciate right from the heart, your feeling on what effect this legislation is going to have on small hog producers in the province.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — I would venture to say it would have zero impact on the small hog producers, and I say that based on the experience in Manitoba. First of all, zero impact in terms of like, tomorrow nothing changes. We're not going to tomorrow stroke the pen and ending it. All this is doing is putting us on the same playing-field. And as far as if the decision was made by the board themselves or by the government to end the hog marketing single-desk, then I think there's still no change.

Go over to Manitoba — I mean, I'm not promoting this. I'm just saying this is simply putting us in the same playing-field — go over to Manitoba and ask them. Their small producers didn't change. We're seeing a trend where small producers are dropping off simply because of the cost/benefit of that size of production — the viability.

But I want to say something. This government — this is the difference between Liberals and New Democrats — this government to 1990 made one pile of tough decisions, many of which there was no consultation on because we had to do it. It was the right thing to do in terms of directing the economy.

And I can remember 1993, 1992 very well. The Liberals were jumping for glee because they thought they were going to win government because we were making so many drastic changes. It didn't happen.

This is the same thing. It's not because I want to kill marketing boards. I want to ensure this industry grows. And this puts us at the same position as every other province and gives us the same advantage. Right now we are disadvantaged.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Minister, the SPI Marketing Group has stated that they fear the loss of the hog marketing board will cause a loss of hogs for in-province processors to out-of-province processors. How would you address that concern raised by SPI: that if the government moves to an open marketing system, hogs will start moving out of the province rather than being

processed here?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — First question I want to ask is, who was the representative from SPI that said that? I'd like you to answer that because there's been a certain member of the staff of SPI who's been saying things that are not true.

And secondly, if the producers are going to be selling out of province, logically, you would think maybe they're going to get a higher price because it costs more to ship them out. So if they're going to get . . . if that's the reason then — I mean that's the only reason I can see them going out of province, because we've got packing plants here — if they're going to get a higher price, then you have to ask yourself the question, is there something wrong inside the province?

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Minister, I would suggest that you call the general manager of SPI and you do that yourself. It is your responsibility because you are the government bringing in this legislation.

Mr. Minister, as I understand the Act and the Bill, the changes being made are in order for the government to have control over the existence of the marketing boards for the reason of being able to market the province to potential processors and investors. Specifically we understand that the government wants control over the board so that they may be abolished to make the province more attractive to processors.

Is there a pending announcement in the works that a company such as Maple Leaf Foods might open up a plant in Saskatchewan that would warrant such a drastic and immediate change to the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — The answer to your question is no.

But I ask you a question. If there were, if there were — Maple Leaf came in and said okay, we'll do 40,000 kill a week plant in Saskatoon; you kill the marketing board, what would you do? I asked your colleague the same question. What would you do? Would you say no, I don't want it; you go to Manitoba or Alberta?

I want you to answer that question, please, because I think it's a very, very important question. And your question is important as well.

Maple Leaf have never indicated — ever indicated — to us that they would come or not come because of the marketing boards. That's off.

I want to tell you something. When you direct me to talk to the general manager of SPI, Mr. Jim Morris, your party put out a press release last week where they quoted Mr. Morris as saying that this Act, that this Act was the reason for lay-offs in Moose Jaw. That was a direct falsehood.

What I did is I went to the person who is not the employee of SPI but the Chair of the board, Mr. John Germs — Mr. John Germs. I've called him. I said, I see this press release; I see Mr. Morris's report in the May 5 hog report where he's again

talking about this legislation being the cause of Moose Jaw plant's . . . I said, is that true? He said to me, no. I said, please then I have to have something in writing from you to say that this is not true.

I have a letter in front of me that he wrote to me. "The Board of Directors" . . . This is from John Germs, Chair of SPI Marketing Group to myself. "The Board of Directors" . . . And this is May 14, 1997:

The Board of Directors of SPI Marketing Group has decided to downsize the Moose Jaw Packer plant for two reasons:

1. The hog shortage problem in Saskatchewan; (which by the way is right across Canada, not just Saskatchewan, and
- 2)

. . . The Directors are not prepared to subsidize its Provisions Account through the weekly pool.

Nothing to do with the legislation. The decision to close Moose Jaw was made before this legislation was known to Mr. Morris. And the question that I ask you and the Liberal Party is why you put yourselves together with somebody who doesn't tell the truth about this industry. Please answer that question.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Minister, I have a question for you. If Maple Leaf wanted to open up an expanded flour mill and they ask you to do away with single-desk marketing of the Wheat Board, would you do that?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — I really wish we had a few more hours to this.

An Hon. Member: — I wish we had a few months here.

(1630)

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — So do I, because two months . . . it'll take me two years to explain to you people, to you people the way the world is working these days.

You can't compare the Wheat Board to this. The Wheat Board has had an analysis done, has had analysis done. And it provides money to the farmers over and above the street price.

Here's the difference. Here's the difference. I live in Saskatchewan and I'm a grain farmer. I'm in the Wheat Board area. If I don't like the Wheat Board, I can go pick up and move to Manitoba or move to Alberta. Guess what? I'm still in the Wheat Board area.

If I'm a hog producer or a chicken producer or any other producer living in Saskatchewan and I don't like the marketing board that I'm under for whatever reason — not doing a good job, maybe I don't think it's giving me enough price, whatever, it doesn't matter — I can pick up my barns or I can leave my barns here, build my next ones in Manitoba and Alberta, and it will make a difference.

It's apples and oranges. I know you're trying to simplify the issue and convolute it, but just think about it logically. It's apples and oranges totally, and you know that. And there's a lot longer debate to be had on this, but just for simplicity reasons I just want to say, that's the fundamental difference and you can't compare them. Every one has to be looked at on its own merits for the benefit of the industry. The Wheat Board is still by far benefiting the Canadian farmers.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Minister, according to the Farm Products Agencies Act, federal, there are some statutes in place that may affect how marketing boards are changed. To quote from the Act under delegation of powers, it says:

An agency may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, grant authority to any body authorized under the law of a province to exercise powers of regulation in relation to the marketing locally within the province, of any regulated product, in relation to which the agency may exercise its function relating to interprovincial or export trade in the regulated product that the agency is authorized to perform.

Now our interpretation of the clause would be that the federal cabinet can grant authority to create a marketing board, so long as it is allowed for under provincial statutes, to market any regulated product in a province.

My question would then be to you, if this is the case, could this federal statute be used by a group of producers to reinstate or re-create a marketing board in the province by a federal cabinet decision?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Again it's an apples and oranges situation because they have jurisdiction for interprovincial trade, not for trade within the province.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you for that in-depth answer. Mr. Minister, I am asking these questions on behalf of producers that have put the questions to me and I ask this on behalf of the chairman of the Turkey Producers, Mr. Dennis Billo from Bruno. Now he wants to know, should the government abolish any marketing board, how will this abolishment affect any national quotas that exist?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well for example in the hog industry, there is no . . . the difference . . . you're talking about two different things here. You're talking about supply management versus single-desk selling. There's no supply management in the hog industry. There's no supply management in the hog industry. There's single-desk selling in Saskatchewan, which is basically the only province with single-desk left.

In the chicken industry, there's single-desk in Saskatchewan plus supply management agreement nationally through the Canadian chicken marketing association; Your colleague over there knows all about this. And the turkeys through the Canadian turkey marketing association.

Ms. Julé: — Does the government have any plans to abolish any other particular marketing boards like the turkey marketing

board in order to try and promote a certain industry in the province? I mean it's obvious that SPI is probably going to be gone. But I'm just wondering whether government has any plans to abolish any other particular marketing board.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — No.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Minister, just one last question. I'm wondering if you've considered how the abolishment of marketing boards will affect Saskatchewan producers' access to other markets, either national or international.

I'm just wondering if the minister has considered how the abolishment of marketing boards will affect Saskatchewan producers, their access to other markets, either national or international.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well first of all, you keep talking about abolishing marketing boards. That isn't what this is all about. That isn't what this is all about . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member says we've got the power to do it. Yes. I go back to my original question to that member and maybe his colleague can answer it for me.

Do you believe that other provinces should . . . Do you believe that we should be on a level playing-field, number one? Do you believe that Saskatchewan should be on the same plane as every other province?

If so, and you're arguing here — even though you voted for this Bill on second reading — you're arguing that we shouldn't do this, then you better start your lobby to all your Liberal colleagues across every province in Canada to change their legislation so that we're on the same level playing-field. If I thought that we could do that, that's probably the preferred route.

We can't do that; you're not going to do it. Because they know, as we knew prior to 1990 when the legislative authority was taken away inadvertently by an amendment to the Act, that the governments have to have the authority to control the economy. Every other province knows that they have it. It's nothing to do with demolishing or destroying. It's everything to do with ensuring the building.

Answer the question. You folks over there, I mean you can ask all these questions and do your cheap little politics, but I'll tell you, I'll tell you . . . Answer the question. What would you do, what would you do in the Manitoba scenario?

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Well it certainly has been enlightening listening to the minister here this afternoon espousing his philosophy on one side or the other about marketing boards in this country.

An Hon. Member: — It wasn't his philosophy. He was forced into it.

Mr. Aldridge: — Well yes, we did hear that as well, didn't we, that his hand was forced. And yet on the other hand we hear he doesn't have any memorandum of understanding in his hot little

hand from any particular big companies around this world, that if you take and strike our marketing boards out of existence we're going to come to your province. How far do you go?

You talk about being out in la-la land — what did he call it? Fantasy land. Taking us to your fantasy land. Well I guess that is where we are. We're dealing in the hypothetical here, aren't we? You've admitted it.

I'll give you an opportunity in a minute to admit it again. You've got no memorandum of understanding from any particular company saying, you change The Agri-Food Act and we're coming here to your province and we're going to create jobs and we're going to create processing in the province, and the list goes on and on.

So let's take that one step further. If you're prepared, based on a hypothetical situation, to take and undermine the democratic rights of producers in this province by making these changes to The Agri-Food Act, what's next in the province in order to entice these imaginary companies to come to the province? What do we do next? Do we go after The Labour Standards Act? Do we make changes to occupational health and safety in this province to entice these big companies to come to our province? I'd be interested in hearing the minister's remarks about that a little bit later.

But you know the meat of the issue, the essence of this issue, surrounds one week ago in this House. And the minister can stand there and he can suggest that we had an opportunity to vote against this Bill yesterday. Well do I need to remind you, Mr. Minister, that yesterday I gave you the opportunity after taking my place to adjourn the debate on this very Bill, following up on a promise that the Premier made to us one week ago today in this House.

And I'm now going to quote from *Hansard* just for the benefit one more time of the minister, who seems to have quite conveniently forgotten. The May 14 *Hansard*, the Premier on this very Bill, and he says and I quote:

You ask your constituents how you should be voting on this Bill. You want time to consult with your constituencies? We'll give you time to consult with your constituencies, Mr. Speaker, but make sure you consult with them in fact and in substance and in all honesty.

Well that's what we've done. And you knew that. I've stood in this House a week ago tomorrow and I said we're following the advice of the Premier. It's good advice. He promised to give us time to consult with our constituents. I told you we've sent letters out.

As we speak the member from North Battleford comes into the House, he tells me there's people contacting his office. They have concerns about The Agri-Food Act. You've saw some of them, I'm sure. You've saw some them; you're not being honest with this House today. You're not letting on that you're getting these calls.

I've got one here from some individuals in Waldeck, and I'll

send this across to you later. But here, I'll quote:

Bill 67 has serious implications not just for SPI but for all marketing boards. To propose that any government should have the power to implement such drastic changes without a producer vote is completely asinine and must be opposed.

And, Mr. Deputy Chair, that is in fact what we're going to do.

The member opposite asks, what would you do? You're going to find out shortly. You know what we're going to do. You've got the amendments in front of you. I gave you the courtesy of sending them across to you earlier. What would we have done if we were in your shoes? We would have put it to a binding vote of the producers that are involved in every one of these boards and the commission that you are affecting in this Agri-Food Act this afternoon.

That's what we would have done. That's what these amendments do. And that's what I'm telling you for the benefit of all your back-benchers right now. That's what this vote's going to be on. When we talk about these amendments, are you in favour of the democratic rights of producers in this province or not? Or are you going to toe the party line, toe the line of cabinet? Is that what you're going to do? Because we're going to make sure that everybody in your constituencies know what you stood for. It wasn't for their democratic rights, it was for what the cabinet says.

Broken promises again — that's what we have before us here this afternoon; a Premier who only a week ago promised to give us time. And now you're trying to let on that there never was intent to consult — not trying to let on, you've in fact . . . I was quite astonished by the admission. You had no intention of consulting with anybody. You were afraid to, I guess is essentially what you were saying. You couldn't put the vote to the producers, the very producers who are being affected by this Act. We're only now starting to get the calls of concern, as a result of taking the Premier's advice and actively and genuinely consulting extensively in this province with producers affected.

And now you're saying, now you're saying we're playing cheap politics. Well, sir, you're on record saying that, as well.

So all I can say is that when your members stand to vote against the amendments that we're going to be proposing shortly, that they're voting against the democratic rights of producers in this province to decide their own destiny. And I think you've somewhat effectively this afternoon communicated just how well they've done with the boards as they were without your meddling, without you having that ultimate hammer, the right to strike away their boards without their consultation, without any prior notice. Just like you've rammed this Bill through.

So, Mr. Member, Mr. Minister, and members opposite, that's what this is about. When these amendments come forward shortly, I hope you think long and hard about it.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

(1645)

Clause 7

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. The amendment we're proposing is to:

Amend clause 7 of the printed Bill:

(a) in clause 12(1)(b) as being enacted therein,
(i) by inserting the word "binding" immediately before the words "vote of producers" where they occur therein;
and

(ii) by deleting the word "or" following the clause;

(b) by deleting clause 12(1)(c) as being enacted therein;

(c) in clause 12(5)(b) as being enacted therein, by deleting the word "or" following the clause;

(d) by deleting clause 12(5)(c) as being enacted therein;

(e) by deleting the expression "or (c)" where it occurs in the general words preceding clause 6(a) as being enacted therein; and

(f) by adding immediately after the words "For the purposes of amending a plan" where they occur in subclause 12(10) as being enacted therein the following:

" , following a binding vote,".

I so present.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Just by way of clarification, we won't be accepting this amendment because what it does is it kills the whole intent of the Bill and the member knows that. And again that would put Saskatchewan, that would put Saskatchewan at a disadvantage compared to other provinces.

Mr. Aldridge: — So I'm glad to hear the minister agree, Mr. Deputy Chair. It does kill the whole intent of the Bill and we all know the intent of the Bill — to take away the democratic right of producers involved in these boards and commissions.

So there we have it — again on record. I'll say no more. Let's put it to the vote.

The division bells rang from 4:49 p.m. until 4:51 p.m.

Amendment negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 8

Krawetz	McPherson	McLane
Gantfoer	Belanger	Hillson
Julé	Aldridge	

Nays — 25

Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Goulet	Upshall
Kowalsky	Calvert	Pringle
Koenker	Lorje	Nilson
Stanger	Murray	Wall
Kasperski	Ward	Sonntag
Langford	Murrell	Thomson
Boyd	Toth	Heppner
Haverstock		

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Also with respect to clause 7 of the printed Bill, I wish to move an amendment to:

Amend clause 7 of the printed Bill:

- (a) in clause 13 (1)(b) as being enacted therein,
 (i) by inserting the word “binding” immediately before the words “vote of producers” where they occur therein; and
 (ii) by deleting the word “or” following the clause;
- (b) by deleting clause 13(1)(c) as being enacted therein;
- (c) in clause 13(5)(b) as being enacted therein, by deleting the word “or” following the clause;
- (d) by deleting clause 13(5)(c) as being enacted therein;
- (e) by deleting the expression “or (c)” where it occurs in the general words preceding clause (6)(a) as being enacted therein; and
- (f) by adding immediately after the words “For the purposes of amending a plan” where they occur in subclause 13(10) as being enacted therein the following:

“, following a binding vote.”.

I so present, Mr. Deputy Chair.

The division bells rang from 4:55 p.m. until 4:56 p.m.

Amendment negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 8

Krawetz	McPherson	McLane
Gantefoer	Belanger	Hillson
Julé	Aldridge	

Nays — 28

Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Goulet	Upshall
Kowalsky	Crofford	Calvert
Pringle	Koenker	Bradley
Lorje	Scott	Nilson
Stanger	Wall	Kasperski
Ward	Sonntag	Langford
Murrell	Thomson	Boyd

D’Autremont	Toth	Heppner
Haverstock		

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Finally, also with respect to clause 7, and this is the real crux of the whole problem we have with this government. In it we’re talking about the minister’s right just to arbitrarily discontinue any given plan that’s before us here within this Act.

So I would move with respect to clause 7 of the printed Bill to:

Amend clause 7 of the printed Bill:

- (a) in clause 14(1)(a) as being enacted therein,
 (i) by inserting the word “binding” immediately before the words “vote of producers” where they occur therein; and
 (ii) by deleting the designation “(a)” and the word “or” following the clause;
- (b) by deleting clause 14(1)(b) as being enacted therein; and
- (c) by adding the words “following a binding vote” immediately after the words “For the purposes of discontinuing a plan” where they occur in subclause 14(5) as being enacted therein.

I so present.

The division bells rang from 4:59 p.m. until 5 p.m.

Amendment negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 8

Krawetz	McPherson	McLane
Gantefoer	Belanger	Hillson
Julé	Aldridge	

Nays — 29

Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Goulet	Upshall
Kowalsky	Crofford	Calvert
Pringle	Koenker	Bradley
Lorje	Scott	Nilson
Stanger	Hamilton	Wall
Kasperski	Ward	Sonntag
Langford	Murrell	Thomson
Boyd	D’Autremont	Toth
Heppner	Haverstock	

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 11 inclusive agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Chair, I move that we report this Bill without amendment.

The division bells rang from 5:03 p.m. until 5:04 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 29

Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Goulet	Upshall
Kowalsky	Crofford	Calvert
Pringle	Koenker	Bradley
Lorje	Scott	Nilson
Stanger	Hamilton	Wall
Kasperski	Ward	Sonntag
Langford	Murrell	Thomson
Boyd	D'Autremont	Toth
Heppner	Haverstock	

Nays — 7

McPherson	McLane	Gantfoer
Belanger	Hillson	Julé
Aldridge		

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Bill No. 59 — The Education Amendment Act, 1997/
Loi de 1997 modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation**

The Deputy Chair: — I invite the minister to introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — To my left is Craig Dotson, deputy minister of Education; and to my right is Michael Littlewood, executive director of third party funding and legislation.

Clause 1

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. Welcome to you, Madam Minister, and to your two officials.

We ended questioning of this Bill not too long ago, and I didn't have an opportunity to find out what your intention was regarding section . . . or clause no. 17, section 186.1. You've indicated that there was a possibility that you were going to address the situation regarding the ability for an appeal procedure to take place in regulations. And I'm wondering if we might begin there by asking you whether you could clarify what your intentions were and whether or not you're going to be addressing this in some other fashion in the education regulations?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — What I can tell you, in regulations we plan to link placement with program so that parents can't simply appeal placement issues. That there would have to be other issues associated with the placement issue, i.e. the kind of program the student is receiving.

Mr. Krawetz: — Could you indicate when you expect that to be in regulations?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — We expect to have the regulations in place by the fall.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Madam Minister. One other question regarding this clause is the whole idea of cost of appeals. I suspect that as you've worded it of course, it's the process of appeal must be established by the board, which is where I think it should be. But are you expecting that the board is going to pick up the entire cost of any of the appeals that will be heard?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — We don't expect that if the parent were to bring in an expert from out of province or from some other place, other than where the school division is located, that the school board would be expected to pick up those costs.

This is not expected to be a quasi-judicial process. We don't expect this to be an expensive process. School boards obviously would be responsible for their own costs. There would be an independent review committee, but it would not be a quasi-judicial process.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Historically speaking, do you have any statistics that would indicate to us as to the number of such appeals that have taken place over the last year or two?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — No appeals have taken place because parents didn't have the right to appeal.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The other clause that we began last session was section 19 and section 20. And I think we have to have some clarification there, because we've been hearing from . . . I've been hearing from trustees and boards of education, and I've been hearing from teachers and schools regarding how the clause will be interpreted. And I need to get your interpretation of what really is meant here.

And I guess I'm referring more to section 204, the new section 204. That section says . . . beyond the first two or three words, it says, "to a teacher who is employed in a school."

Now the scenario that I'm looking at, Madam Minister, is this. That if we have some of the amalgamations or restructuring take place that you've talked about that are in the process right now across this province, and two school divisions actually become a new school division so there isn't one that remained, and then a community that contains a school joins that new school division, as I read this clause, your intention here is that the local agreement that was in place for those teachers in that school would remain in place. Is that true?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Yes it is.

Mr. Krawetz: — Okay, Madam Minister, then if a teacher who was in that school prior to the negotiation of a new collective agreement for that new school division, if that teacher moves to another school in that new school division — and I hope you follow this because I'm using the word new so many times here — if that teacher moves to a school that was under the contract A or contract B, we'll call them that, will that teacher bring contract C with them? Or do I read this section to say that only in that school will contract C remain in place?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I understand from the officials that the teacher would take the contract with them.

Mr. Krawetz: — Madam Minister, can this clause not be interpreted differently where it says, “to a teacher who is employed in a school.” Now I’ve used the example that a community with a school has moved. How do your officials interpret that now that it says that the teacher can move to school X or school Y or school Z when it says that “in a school.”

Teachers are wondering about this clause in terms of whether it means now that . . . you know, if you have five teachers that have moved out of school C, they’re now going to be in five different schools in a school division and they will have influenced what contract is in place in each school.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well I just have to draw the member back to . . . Let’s use the example of the Prince Albert amalgamation where the school division, without the legislation, has agreed that the various teachers in the various divisions that are soon going to be restructured will keep their collective agreement until such time as a new collective agreement is negotiated.

I suspect that the board of education, the new board of education, and representatives from the local teachers’ association will move very quickly to negotiate a new collective agreement.

Mr. Krawetz: — I agree, Madam Minister, that of course that new school division, the board of education that represents that new school division will begin the negotiation process. And it may take a while. I don’t know whether it’ll take half a year or a year or two years.

But I think the question here, and the teachers that I’ve talked to are wondering about this clause — not that they’re opposing it or anything — they’re wondering whether or not it creates dysfunction within a school.

And I guess the agreement that I’m looking at might be that within a collective agreement there could be a section that deals with early dismissal for professional purposes once a month, okay? The other scenario might be that the school division, the school where the teacher has now gone to, doesn’t have that provision.

So now in a single school you will have some teachers who will have a contract that does not allow for early dismissal on one day or another, and in a different scenario, there may be that. Does it not put students, the education of students in jeopardy here because we’re now dealing with the scenario where . . . I don’t know how a principal will make this work.

(1715)

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well I expect that people in the situation that you describe will use their heads and that common sense will prevail.

But what I can say to you is that this is no different than provisions contained within The Trade Union Act; that if a new employer takes over, people get to keep their collective agreement until they are able to negotiate a new collective agreement between the employers and the employees.

So I guess my short answer is, I think common sense will prevail. I think that you are giving a scenario that will be . . . I understand the difficulty but I expect that people will negotiate a collective agreement very soon, very quickly, and that common sense will prevail.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I think you’ve indicated a different scenario here. And while I’ve stated in this House that I fully respect the fact that teachers should be able to carry their contract, when we’re talking about a whole school, moving from one school division to another, it’s essential that the teachers’ rights be protected. No argument. I support that.

The scenario though that I’ve just described, I think, and I know you’re saying that common sense will prevail, but we need to have a clear intention of what this clause is saying. And this clause is not restricting it to the fact that, you know, when you’re moving a school, the school keeps the agreement — no question. When an employee moves from one location to another, I guess the question is, will they now be subject to the contract that’s in place at that other workplace? You’re saying no.

The other question that I need clarified then is, what will you do with new teachers coming on board that will be actually signing a new agreement in this new school division, whatever it may be called. Will they take the contract that is in place at that school?

The majority of the teachers at that school, the fact that you might have two contracts that are actually being dealt with in a particular school, and the staff may not be large, it may be only six or seven, so you may have three teachers under one contract, three teachers under another contract, and a seventh teacher is now — a new teacher is hired. What contract will they be under?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — The collective agreement that was originally with that school.

Mr. Krawetz: — Madam Minister, you’re saying that it’s the collective agreement of the school. There’s no such thing as a collective agreement for a school. The collective agreement is for the school division. So I’m wondering now, are you saying that it’s the school that was within the school division?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Yes.

Mr. Heppner: — Good afternoon, Madam Minister, and welcome to your officials. We got briefly started on this last day, so I think there’s probably a fair bit to cover here.

I heard you just mention a little while back that there’s going to be some of this information or clarification is going to happen through regulation a little later on. And I guess I must express

that I'm always a little leery, in fact very leery of things that go through regulations, because they can come and they can go. We're never sure what kind of input goes into those sorts of things. And so it's government really ruling by decree, which gets awful close to dictatorship. And I'm not at all in favour of anything that comes through on regulation.

Now back to something we got started on last time. Part of your responsibility in your department is basically to operate an education system, keeping in mind all — the word that we tend to use, which is stakeholders. And I think education probably has more stakeholders in it than any other department, which gives you a fair responsibility because you have, number one, at the top of the list, you will have all the students. They're part of your stakeholders that you have to be responsible for. Immediately alongside that come the parents.

Then you have the teachers, and you have a large group there. You have the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), you have the taxpayers. And by the time you finish putting it all together, there's very few things in this province that involve as many people as education does, and very few things that people take as seriously as their kids, or their grand-kids, or whatever happens to be the case.

So when we're dealing with education we're dealing with how this was all approached. That's a very major agenda that you have to undertake when you're going to deal with something and bring in some new legislation. And we didn't quite get finished with this last day.

Why were all those stakeholders not approached and given a chance for some input on your Education Act, because that's something that's definitely very important, because it's one of the things that's nearest and dearest to their hearts.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I think it's fair to say that we did have discussions with our various partners about school days and school year. We had a committee that was put in place. My understanding is that this committee is supportive of the amendments to the legislation because we needed to clarify the authority of the school division and the authority of the minister.

In terms of the decisions around collective bargaining and local LINC (Local Implementation and Negotiation Committee) agreements, successor rights, I can say that these discussions came later in the process, given that we had the P.A. (Prince Albert) rural, Kinistino and the Carlton amalgamation.

As well in terms of how we elect trustees. I think it's fair to say that the P.A. group that is working on the restructuring in their area wanted, at the end of the day, to have a process where school board members within a rural school division could be elected, either through a ward system or through the at-large system. The present legislation does not allow people in rural school divisions to be elected at large.

And I guess in terms of the P.A. rural-Kinistino-Carlton, this is the first rural-urban amalgamation. And the issues became much clearer as we worked our way through that particular

amalgamation, and the discussions that the school division had with both myself as the minister, and the department as support people, to that amalgamation.

Mr. Heppner: — The concept of amalgamation, Madam Minister, has been around for a long time. And I'm a little surprised that suddenly when there is an urban-rural amalgamation, we wake up and say, oops, now we've got a problem we hadn't conceived before. Surely somewhere in the plans of your department, that was a possibility that was out there a long time ago and why it wasn't taken in consideration.

As I stated last time, the last thing we want to see is have teachers' contracts torn up. If ever we have a concern . . . We've seen what your side of the House has done with things like GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contracts being torn up. So we've gone on record as defending contracts and defending . . . not tearing them up, and we're on the same side there.

However, your legislation again doesn't address that adequately. There should be a process, as I mentioned last time, in place to assure that those things happen and don't just hope they'll happen.

It's nice to stand here and make a statement and say that clearer minds will prevail and all those sorts of things. And they do usually, but they don't always. And it should be your responsibility to make sure that those things do occur on those instances where it doesn't happen.

A specific question: the drafting instructions that went into this — who all got copies of those?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I can say that the amendments around school year, school day, placement, those kinds of issues, I'm advised by the department that our partners in education received the drafting instructions.

The later amendments, i.e., successor rights, and the issue around the ward system, I believe that that came in March or later in terms of what we were intending, given some of the issues that came out of the restructuring in Prince Albert. And I'm not sure that those instructions were shared with our various partner groups.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Truly amazing that when you're dealing with something that you know from your experience — and you've made statements in the House that you've had a long running time as Minister of Education; I believe when you headed out east you were one of the senior members, not due to your chronological age but due to your experience — and now something comes up and these things aren't shared. I think that would be something you would expect from someone who doesn't have much experience in the department to do.

And I would suggest to you, Madam Minister, that it's because exactly those sorts of things that some of the turmoil that's being created now is there. Had those things been shared as they should have been, had you been straightforward from the

beginning, I'm sure all the groups, all the stakeholders, would have a good chance to air their opinions. And you could have probably looked at those and said, okay some of these things you feel you're right and you stand firm on and some other things you make some suggestions.

You're already talking about making some changes to regulations, so obviously you're not totally satisfied with what's happening here as well. That could have all been done decently and in order and we wouldn't have had the difficulties right now. Why didn't you provide for all of this in your consultative process?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — What this is really talking about is successor rights. That is the issue that you're talking about. Successor rights are a long-held tradition within the trade union movement that when an employer or an employee has a new employer, they are allowed under The Trade Union Act to take their collective agreement with them. This is not a new concept or a new idea. We are in the process of restructuring education — public education — in various parts of the province.

Every single, solitary school division that has entered into restructuring discussions with their local teacher associations, as represented through the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, has entered into an agreement whereby teachers get to take their local collective agreement with them once that school division is restructured. We have put that in legislation because the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation felt more comfortable with the notion of successor rights being contained within The Education Act, as it is contained within The Trade Union Act.

I would suggest to the member that restructuring would not occur in some parts of the province without this provision, which teachers see as a protection. That's what I can say to the member.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Madam Minister. It seems to get close to the tirade that you let out the other time. We're saying this was the first major attack on STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) that you heard in your life.

And if you listen very carefully to when I started this discussion this evening, that's not where the discussion is going. The discussion was going, and I was directing it, Madam Minister, to the turmoil that you've created because of your inadequate way that you're setting up this whole process. Had that been done properly this would have probably all been passed, would all have been taken care of nicely, but you didn't do that effectively — because of your mishandling the real issues, such as the areas of these Bills aren't focused in the discussions as they probably should be. And instead of that, you're dealing with these other issues and trying to bring in those particular red herrings and deal with those.

Possibly both 59 and 60 should be pulled off the order paper till you do your consultation properly. And I think that's something that needs to be considered because it hasn't been done to date.

So you're taking . . . and you've talked to one group and you're dealing with one group. You deal with them all, and if you do

that correctly, Madam Minister, by the time you bring the legislation here there shouldn't be any problems with it. And as I said earlier on, we do not want those contracts torn up. There's all the other sorts of issues that are in there as well. And I'm wondering, Madam Minister, do you see any value at this point opening up some of that consultation process that you haven't allowed so far?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I think what I can say to the member is that this came as no surprise to our various stakeholder groups. This was not a surprise that the government was looking at the notion of introducing successor rights into the legislation.

You can criticize me, and that's fair comment. But I would say to you that it wouldn't have mattered how much consultation we had. At the end of the day we made a decision — I'm not sure we would have developed consensus on this issue — and at the end of the day we made a decision.

And I would submit to you that that's what leadership is about. You try and get a consensus. If you can't get a consensus, at the end of the day you go forward with the legislation. And I would submit to you that there was no consensus possible on this issue.

(1730)

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Madam Minister, just a couple more questions. And as you've indicated in this House and your officials have indicated to me, that you followed a different consultation process. And indeed your comments in the last *Hansard* clearly indicate that you did not share drafting notes with your stakeholders. That's what your comments are in *Hansard*.

I'm disappointed, as I indicated to you, that the consultation process that I think everybody in Saskatchewan is very proud of in education, that indeed our stakeholders have the ability to get together around a table and to discuss issues . . . Yes, there is the possibility that there will not be consensus reached, and that's something that we're also very proud of. Because the stakeholders, the two very important stakeholders in this province, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the Saskatchewan school trustees, have the ability to at least discuss the clauses and their interpretations and find out how they will affect each of their associations.

So that's something that I've indicated to you — that I'm disappointed — and as my colleague from Rosthern has indicated, I think as an opposition we're not pleased to see that this process did not occur. And indeed, as I've indicated before, the division that has occurred between these two stakeholders may have been preventable.

Madam Minister, you've indicated the process that you see unfolding regarding the movement of teachers from one school to another school, and the fact that there may be two or three or more contracts in place. What kind of leadership will your department, your officials, provide to that new school division? Because I would assume that there will be additional costs administering the three or four contracts that are in place right

now. Those immediate costs, will your department be involved in picking up some of those initial costs before a new contract is negotiated?

And then my second question that I'll ask at the same time is: will your department be providing financial assistance, personnel assistance, to boards of education, to these new boards of education in terms of helping them arrive at a newly negotiated contract?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — As the member will know, having been the president of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association for some years and having been a trustee for some years, there is a regime in place where trustees at the local level negotiate local LINC agreements. That isn't going to change.

I can share with the member that in the case of the Blaine Lake-Sask Valley-Hafford-Battleford amalgamation, each of those schools got to take their collective agreement with them to the newly restructured school division. And they will negotiate a collective agreement at the local level that deals with issues that can be negotiated at the local level and not the provincial level. School divisions will negotiate their local agreements and they will do so without financial support from the province.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I would also like to add to that a little bit of a biography, that indeed I was a teacher for 11 years and a principal, and my wife is a teacher of 24 years. And I'm very pleased to say that my son, who's in grade 12, has just been accepted into the U of R (University of Regina) College of Education. So I come to you with two hats on, one from representing boards of education and being the president of the association for two years; but also one who has been a teacher and who is very, very involved with the teachers' federation.

So my question though is not so that we have a very expensive kind of negotiations. What I want to say is that we have leadership provided by your department. And I know amalgamations and restructuring are going to be difficult in this province. They are occurring in two school divisions that are in my constituency. And I wish them well because I have indicated in this House that there is a need to restructure to provide students with greater opportunities, and I think those things can occur with restructuring.

My question is not to interfere with the board of education; my question was whether or not your department will be providing leadership in assisting, financial or otherwise, to ensure that contracts are in place for these eight or nine or ten possible amalgamations that you've described.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Up until the present, we have not been involved in negotiations at the local level. Those negotiations, the negotiations and the LINC agreements, have been negotiated by the school division. We do not anticipate being involved in local collective agreements. What I can tell you is that the province is an active participant in provincial bargaining.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 24 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 60 — The Teachers' Federation Amendment Act, 1997

Clause 1

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair, and Madam Minister. Last session you've indicated that you have a number of amendments to this Bill. And I think we've had . . . you've shared them with us on an embargoed basis. And before we can get into discussions of how one section may affect another section, I think I'd like to be able to ask you whether or not you would be willing to release those amendments now, rather than at the clause by clause; so that we can have some discussion about them?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — They're being released.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you for your indulgence, to all members, to ask for some clarifications.

Madam Minister, I'd like to refer to clause 7 and the section 20 that's amended on page no. 3 of the Bill. And I note that in discussion with you, you had talked about the word bylaw and policy, and some of your amendments to section 45 deal with the word policy. And I'd ask you to clarify for the House what the word policy in section 7 means that is different than what the word policy or policies means in section 45.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — In section 7 the council can make, amend, or repeal bylaws or policy. When we move to section 45, we're talking about collective interests of teachers with respect to collective bargaining, with respect to terms and conditions of employment, with respect to teachers who bargain with a local group and bargains on his or her own behalf.

Now it says that the council, in section 45, can make, amend, or repeal any bylaws or policies. Now we're proposing in 45 to get rid of policies that are not . . . inconsistent with this Act for the purposes of this section.

One section, section 7, has to do with the powers of the council. This section has to do with what represents the collective interests of teachers and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation being able to discipline a member. They're two distinct sections.

(1745)

Mr. Krawetz: — With that explanation, Madam Minister, I would concur with you that indeed section 7 and the new section 45 are two entirely different concepts.

Section 45, Madam Minister, is the section of great controversy, contention, and everything that you want to throw into the mix. I know that you've had the opportunity since this

Bill was introduced on May 2 to hear from teachers and to hear from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; to hear from the school trustees association and boards of education about their concerns. And as we've stated before, I think that a process of consultation beforehand may have avoided this. But what's past is past, and we have to be clear as to what this Bill intends to do regarding the collective interest of teachers and its definitions.

Now I note by your amendments that in section 45, if I might refer you there, you are talking about the deletion of the word "policies" from the clause (c), 45(1)(c), and it leaves the word "bylaws".

Now, Madam Minister, I guess my question then is: do you see that the . . . Is it your intention that the bylaws referred to in section 45(1)(c) and 45(2) only refer to the internal administration and structure of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — When we delete "policies", the conduct for which a teacher could be disciplined would either have to be inconsistent with the statute, with rights collectively bargained, or be prohibited in a bylaw. A policy can pass with a simple majority. A bylaw can pass with a two-thirds majority of the democratically elected council.

So from the point of view of the department and the government, it made sense to remove "policy" because a policy is something that a person could easily violate. It would be more difficult to violate a bylaw.

Mr. Krawetz: — In speaking with many teachers in the province, Madam Minister, I know it's very clear that teachers probably are in violation of many policies of the STF.

And I know that the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation indicates very clearly that policies are goals. They're objectives that they wish to attain. And some day I'm sure that the federation hopes that they will attain all of their policies, but right at the moment there are many teachers who, I know, teach and do things that are in violation of existing policies.

When you refer to clause (b) or subsection (b) of that first clause, you have indicated that the collective interests of teachers: "(b) with respect to the terms and conditions of employment pursuant to section 209 of *The Education Act*, . . ."

Now section 209 is a very broad section and when we take a look at that, like there are so many things that deal with in *The Education Act* . . . that are dealt with in *The Education Act*. We talk about regulations, we talk about the Act, we talk about all the clauses, the duties of a teacher, the duties of principals, how the discipline procedure must occur. I think the Act also covers lengths of school year and in many sections it covers all the kinds of things that are dealt with in terms of the appeal procedure.

What parts of section . . . of *The Education Act* and the regulations are you referring to by mentioning section 209?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I believe I've already shared that with

you in written commentary.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The written commentary, I need some clarification if you would. The first clause that you've indicated says that the reference to section 209 in the definition of collective interest of teachers does not mean that a teacher could be disciplined under these new provisions for errors of omission or commission in carrying out their duties. What are you referring to when you say the new provisions?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — The new 45.1 dealing with collective interests.

Mr. Krawetz: — In section 209, the final context I think, it says that the teacher who failed to carry out his or her duties under the Act can of course be dealt with right now, as every board of education and every teacher knows that there is the need to carry out your professional work.

The STF, as I read this, is it now going to be the provision within this Act that would now allow the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to further discipline a teacher for violation of its contractual obligations to the employer?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — There are two distinct sections of *The Teachers' Federation Act*. One deals with the teachers' federation's ability to discipline a teacher for misconduct that is unbecoming to the profession. This section deals with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation being able to discipline a teacher who does not act in the collective interest of teachers.

An example might be trying to negotiate their own collective agreement when it comes to certain procedures or processes that would be contained within a collective agreement.

An example could be, I suppose, early retirement or something like that, where a teacher goes around the collective bargaining process and negotiates their own deal.

Mr. Krawetz: — Madam Minister, currently, as I've indicated, there are many, many STF policies regarding goals. Do you foresee that some of the policies will now move into the condition of bylaws, to be able to indeed have a broader base?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — It's possible that policies could move into bylaws with two-thirds support from the council. But what I can say to you is that all bylaws have to come through this Legislative Assembly, so there is the opportunity for sober second thought. And I think the teachers' federation understands that and acknowledges that their bylaws come here.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Madam Minister. One of the contentious issues that's been around for a number of years, and I think teachers are very concerned about it as well, especially those new teachers seeking jobs, is the ability for a school division to be declared "in dispute." And I've read the Act, I've read regulations, and nowhere do I see the words "in dispute."

What process is followed for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation or some other basis to be declaring a school division in dispute?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well since 1946 I'm advised, so for over 51 years, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation has followed a policy of naming a school district, school unit, school division as in dispute if the teachers in that division are experiencing extraordinary difficulties with their board of education.

And in that event, if a school division is declared in dispute, teachers are advised not to apply to that school division for a teaching contract until such time as these extraordinary problems can be resolved.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you for that explanation. And I agree with the minister, it doesn't happen often and to, I think, the betterment of education.

My concern I guess is that . . . you've indicated I think since '46 this was a policy. And I would venture to say that it's possible now, as you've indicated, that the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation may consider it to be a bylaw. Will this pose a problem for delivery of education in a system then if indeed teachers may be disciplined? Because now this is a bylaw and if a teacher does happen to accept a position in that school division, they could be disciplined.

Do you see that possibility of some difficulty?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well what I can share with the member is that bi-level bargaining, provincial bargaining and local bargaining through the LINC agreements was established in 1973. That was over 24 years ago. And there have only been four school divisions in that 24-year history that have been placed in dispute. That, I think, is a good history.

I just might also point out that we've never had a provincial strike in this province since bi-level bargaining came in in 1973.

So I think what I can say is that once a school division is placed in dispute, significant negotiations go on in order to resolve this dispute in order that teachers can apply for teaching contracts within that division.

Mr. Krawetz: — Madam Minister, I think maybe one or two final questions. I've heard from a number of teachers their concerns about the things that went on in Saskatoon when there was the possible strike action by teachers, and indeed there was some concern about lockout by the board of education. This is a number of years ago.

And as you've mentioned, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is not under The Trade Union Act and there are . . . those provisions aren't dealt with in The Education Act or The Teachers' Federation Act, regarding strike, regarding lockout, regarding votes. All those kind of things are not there. And I think some teachers have expressed some concern on that issue.

On the other side of the coin, I think I'm hearing from boards of education that indeed there are some concerns about the process, the process that you've just described that's been in place since 1972 or '73 around local negotiations, provincial negotiations, how we arrive at a provincial contract.

Is there any process in place within your department to take a look, with your stakeholders, with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, with the Saskatchewan trustees' association, with LEADS (League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents), to take a look at the whole collective bargaining process that it's in place in this province?

And indeed, do you see the need for a review of this process to clarify some of those things that have been around already for a number of years and seem to have created greater and greater difficulties?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well I see the member has his Saskatchewan School Trustees Association hat on with this question in that this is . . . because this is certainly what the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association have been arguing for.

Let me say this to the member. That we do not share the view that this Bill changes the overall collective bargaining process or puts it in a piecemeal fashion. We don't share that view.

I think, and I've been to every province in this country where we have collective bargaining with teachers, and I think that both the SSTA and the STF would acknowledge that we have an overall, province-wide, teacher bargaining regime which is the best in Canada. I think that they would say that.

If you look at the kinds of disputes that take place in every provincial jurisdiction, we have not had those kinds of disputes since we went to province-wide bargaining in 1973. Our system has served this province well over the last 25 years. We have never had a province-wide strike as there have been strikes in other jurisdictions.

Now from my point of view, it works; it works well. I think the changes to The Teachers' Federation Act are fairly straightforward. They are consistent with the broad principles of province-wide bargaining that we've had in this province for the past 25 years. They are consistent with the principle that the teachers' federation, as the collective bargaining agent, should be able to discipline its members for certain actions in a union or bargaining context, but should not be able to deal with those same actions in any way which attacks a teacher's professional reputation or standing as a professional teacher.

And what I can say is that this flows directly from the Court of Appeal decision of 1992, which came out of the Regina dispute. I think that we should all be proud of our bargaining record and our bargaining system because we do not have the difficulties that other jurisdictions have.

(1800)

And I would say to you that if we were to review the entire

regime . . . The member talks about tensions that exist presently between the teachers' federation and the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association. I would suggest to the member if we were to enter into a review of how we bargain in this province, I would suggest to you that you won't have seen any tensions yet.

The other point I want to make to the member is that teachers also have difficulty, not unlike the trustees, with the way we bargain. We have a protocol agreement that we've entered into with the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association where in essence we have jointly agreed to Chair. Teachers don't like it. And there are times, since I've become the minister in the past four years, that the government does things that the teachers don't like, and the government does things that the trustees don't like.

But I think that on the whole we have struck a fairly effective balance. And sometimes it's better to be in trouble with everybody, and sometimes it's better to be in trouble with some groups, because that's what I call leadership. And maybe some day the member will be sitting in this chair and he will have the opportunity to try and stickhandle — and that's what I'd call it — competing interests, and try and get to a point where you don't please all of the people all of the time, but you do please some of the people some of the time. And that's not such a bad thing to do.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Madam Minister. And yes and you can't fool all of the people all of the time neither, okay? So therefore when you suggest that I've suddenly ended with my trustee's hat on, I'm raising issues for you from calls and letters that I've received over the last three weeks from teachers, from teachers who have said there is a problem right now with the bargaining process that's going on.

You've indicated that they have some difficulty with the current bargaining structure. We know that the last agreement was not signed by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, so for you to say that this is a system that is working and there is no need to look at it, I think that's maybe stretching the point a little bit. I think there are some concerns.

Whether it's a full scale review of the process that creates more divisiveness than actual solutions, maybe that's accurate in terms of your description. But I think there's a need to address the concerns of all of the stakeholders in this process. So the question wasn't to ask you whether or not there's a full review planned by your process . . . by your department. The question was whether or not you're indeed looking at the entire picture of all of the stakeholders, all of their concerns, and how will you deal with that problem?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I have to ask the member . . . you know it's fine and dandy to try and walk both sides of the fence. I know that's what, with all due respect, Liberals do. You know you sort of try and walk both sides of the fence. And I notice that the member has tried to do this very carefully, trying to stickhandle this issue and that's why I was interested to see that the members of the Liberal Party did in fact vote for The Teachers' Federation Act on second reading.

What I can say to the member is this. I'd like you to tell me which collective bargaining process is better in any other part of Canada? Tell me that. Is there any other system?

When the member talks about review, what is he talking about? Taking away the teachers' right to strike? Taking away boards of education's right to lock out teachers? Is he talking about getting rid of the protocol agreement? Is he talking about teachers shouldn't have successor rights? Is he talking about teachers shouldn't be able to discipline people for crossing a picket line? What precisely is the member talking about?

He wants to review collective bargaining. That's obvious by his question. What is he talking about? And I think that everybody, all of the stakeholders need to know what the Liberal position is because you know obviously we'll be into election a couple of years down the road. And it's not good enough to stand here and ask questions without indicating to all of us what precisely is your position when it comes to collective bargaining in this province. Do you want to get rid of local bi-level bargaining? Do you want to go back to the days where every school division negotiated their own collective agreement? What precisely is the member's intention?

Mr. Krawetz: — Madam Minister, my intention is that all stakeholders in this province are heard. And if you struck a committee and you had people on that committee and you wanted me to sit on that committee to give my perspective, I would do that for you. And I would share those concerns with you. Until I hear all of the concerns from all of the stakeholders, I don't know what all of the problems are. I don't want to stand here and tell you that I understand all there is to do in education, and nor do you, I'm sure.

But my comment was so that indeed all of the stakeholders have an opportunity to voice their concerns so that you would hear them. And you have indicated that in this process leading to these two Bills, you followed a different procedure in that you didn't have them together because you said that you didn't see that consensus could be reached. That may be true.

You must then recognize, if you've taken that stand, that there are some problems out there; that you can't bring the two most important stakeholders together at a table to debate the issues, discuss the issues and come up with something that is acceptable by all. You've admitted that by the fact that you didn't follow the procedures that you've always followed. Okay.

So in that respect, in terms of whether or not there is a review, I want to find out from you, is it your intention to take a look at, collectively, with your stakeholders, as to what problems there are and see whether or not they are insurmountable?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — What I can say to the member is we didn't consult the teachers when we decided to enter into the protocol agreement. I even think that you might have been the president of the SSTA association when we entered into the protocol agreement.

We did not consult teachers. That was a decision that was made

by the government, because we saw the trustees and the government as the employer. What the employer does is the employer's business. What teachers do is teachers' business when it comes to their own collective interests, as long as they don't violate the rights of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Now what I will say to the member is if you have some ideas about how we can improve the process, I would welcome your ideas. I know that every spring the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation has a spring council. You've been in this legislature. You've been a member of the legislature for two years. You have never been to a spring council.

Your former leader was there representing the Liberal caucus at the spring council one year ago, and your present leader was there representing the Liberal Party at the spring council this year. Both people were at a disadvantage in that they didn't know a lot about educational policy. You, sir, do, and I would hope that next year that it will be you at the STF spring council pontificating on what the position of the Liberal Party is when it comes to all kinds of issues. Because I think teachers would like to hear that.

Mr. Krawetz: — Madam Minister, for your clarification, the request of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to the Liberal opposition was that the leader attend and serve on the panel.

The leader last year attended and I was in attendance with him and I discussed matters with teachers on a individual basis. This year the invitation was to the Leader of the Liberal Party and he attended and so did I, along with two other colleagues, and we did meet with teachers. So I think your comments are very, very unreasonable.

Mr. Deputy Chair, I'd like one other comment to make. The fact that indeed we voted on the Bill as a party to move it from second readings to Committee of the Whole was for the opportunity to hear from you what kinds of changes you suggest to make this a better Bill.

That's our job, Madam Minister. Our job as an opposition is to hear from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, to hear from the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, and to try to do a better job.

And, Madam Minister, we did hear from them. We have reports from school boards, from trustees, from schools, from teachers, and they have expressed some concerns about making this a better Bill. And with your amendments this might be a better Bill, and I'd ask you to explain some of the amendments that you propose.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well I'd like to indicate that as we move through the clauses of the Bill, I will be proposing five House amendments. These amendments have been discussed with both the SSTA and the teachers' federation, and they were both given advance copies by the government. And I understand that the official opposition and the third party also were given draft advance copies of the House amendments.

In keeping with the commitment that I'd made to the

opposition, I believe that these House amendments will address some of the concerns which have been raised by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and clarify the intent of the legislation. They all fall under clause 27 of the printed Bill or the section that deals with section 45.1 of the Act.

We'll deal with each of these House amendments in turn when we get to the appropriate clause. And I can say to the public that I have taken very seriously the concerns expressed by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and I think that these House amendments will deal directly with some of their concerns. And obviously I invite the opposition to join us, when we complete the Bill, in supporting the Bill.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all just a point of clarification. I think you said something about it before but I'd like to sort of make sure I had it correct. In discussing the part under section 7(a) where it talks about "regulating and governing members of the federation," in what way does that not impact on the same kinds of things we would find under 45.1(3) "engaging in conduct contrary?"

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — 45.1 deals with the collective interests of teachers. The section that you're referring to deals with the ability of the council to make amendments to bylaws, policies, and repeal bylaws and policies.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. Probably my last time. This is more of a comment than it is a question. My colleague asked most of the critical questions that I think we both had with regards to some of this legislation.

I think you've made a fair number of comments about how well you felt collective bargaining was going in the province because of the lack of strikes. And I think from time to time that has been both to the credit of the STF and sometimes to the credit of the SSTA, because they have acquiesced and given in. And you know, there have been various contracts where I think various ones of those have been unhappy about.

But I think what's unfortunate is, as was just mentioned, is that all the signatures of the people negotiating aren't on all the contracts. And I think that tells you very definitely that even though kids may have still been in school with teachers, the contracting has not been a success in total even though the strikes haven't taken place.

Last comment I would like to make is in the discussions that I've had with boards and teachers — and I've had quite a number of those over the past numbers of weeks — particularly in relating to the part on the 45.1(3), my statement always was that if that was removed or rewritten in such a way that any interpretation that I might have that would have been of some concern there, I would be supporting the rest of it.

Looking at what that particular one says and your amendment, I personally am not totally satisfied that the amendment removes all the possible concerns that I had, and for that reason, I will not be supporting it. Thank you.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 26 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 27

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I move that we:

Amend section 45.1 of *The Teachers' Federation Act* as being enacted by clause 27 of the printed Bill:

- (a) in clause (1)(c) by striking out “or policies”;
- (b) in subsection (2) by striking out “or policies”;
- (c) in subsection (3) by striking out “and includes any matter that the council considers to be inimical to the collective interests of teachers”;
- (d) in subsection (8):
 - (i) by adding “or” following clause (b); and
 - (ii) by striking out clauses (c) and (d) and substituting the following:

“(c) do either or both of the things mentioned in clauses (a) and (b)”;
- (e) by adding the following subsection after subsection (10):

“(11) Nothing in this section is to be interpreted as restricting a member’s freedom of expression or association”.

Amendment agreed to.

(1815)

Clause 27 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 28 to 31 inclusive agreed to.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I report the Bill with amendment.

The division bells rang from 6:19 p.m. until 6:21 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 45

Romanow	Van Mulligen	Wiens
MacKinnon	Lingenfelter	Atkinson
Tchorzewski	Johnson	Whitmore
Goulet	Lautermilch	Upshall
Kowalsky	Crofford	Calvert
Pringle	Koenker	Bradley
Lorje	Renaud	Scott
Nilson	Serby	Stanger
Wall	Kasperski	Ward

Sonntag	Jess	Langford
Murrell	Thomson	Krawetz
McLane	Gantefoer	Draude
Bjornerud	Belanger	Hillson
Julé	Boyd	D'Autremont
Toth	Heppner	Haverstock

Nays — nil

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Chair: — Before I invite the Government Whip to move that the committee rise and report progress, I just want to beg indulgence of committee members to simply say what a pleasure it has been to be the Chair. It's really a good Legislative Assembly and my congratulations go to all members for their conduct throughout this session. And of course I want to thank the Clerks for their very steady good advice, and all of the people that support us.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly now rise and report progress and not ask leave to sit again.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 34 — The Young Offenders' Services Amendment Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — I move the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 66 — The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act

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

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

Bill No. 69 — The Police Amendment Act, 1997

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

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

Bill No. 67 — The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 1997

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

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

**Bill No. 59 — The Education Amendment Act, 1997/
Loi de 1997 modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation**

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I move that this Bill be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

**Bill No. 60 — The Teachers' Federation
Amendment Act, 1997**

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I move that the amendments now be read a first and second time.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move that Bill No. 60 be now read the third time and passed under its title.

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

MOTIONS

House Adjournment

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Deputy Chair, or Deputy Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, it shall stand adjourned to the date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government, and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven clear days notice, if possible, of such date and time.

I so move.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

(1830)

ROYAL ASSENT

At 6:35 p.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills:

- Bill No. 50 - The Private Investigators and Security Guards Act, 1997
- Bill No. 18 - The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act
- Bill No. 65 - The Income Tax Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 62 - The Psychologists Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 71 - The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997/Projet de loi n° 71—Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard

- Bill No. 72 - The Children's Law Act, 1997/Projet de loi n° 72—Loi de 1997 sur le droit de l'enfance
- Bill No. 73 - The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act, 1997/Projet de loi n° 73—Loi de 1997 sur l'exécution des ordonnances alimentaires
- Bill No. 74 - The Family Maintenance Act, 1997/Projet de loi n° 74—Loi de 1997 sur les prestations alimentaires familiales
- Bill No. 75 - The Matrimonial Property Act, 1997/Projet de loi n° 75—Loi de 1997 sur les biens matrimoniaux
- Bill No. 12 - The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 41 - The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 56 - The Trust and Loan Corporations Act, 1997
- Bill No. 303 - The TD Trust Company Act, 1997
- Bill No. 15 - The Department of Health Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 16 - The Occupational Therapists Act, 1997
- Bill No. 1 - The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 49 - The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 26 - The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 64 - The Wascana Centre Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 44 - The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 40 - The Residential Services Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 58 - The Saskatchewan Assistance Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 51 - The Arts Board Act, 1997
- Bill No. 70 - The Archives Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 42 - The Wildlife Act, 1997
- Bill No. 11 - The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 9 - The Wanuskewin Heritage Park Act, 1997
- Bill No. 10 - The Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 63 - The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 2 - The Rural Municipality Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 3 - The Urban Municipality Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 13 - The Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 55 - The Department of Agriculture Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 36 - The Health Districts Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 46 - The Highways and Transportation Act, 1997
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- Bill No. 17 - The Dental Disciplines Act
- Bill No. 68 - The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 1997

- Bill No. 57 - The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 34 - The Young Offenders' Services Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 66 - The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act
- Bill No. 69 - The Police Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 67 - The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 1997
- Bill No. 59 - The Education Amendment Act, 1997/Projet de loi n° 59—Loi de 1997 modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation
- Bill No. 60 - The Teachers' Federation Amendment Act, 1997

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name I assent to these Bills.

- Bill No. 76 - An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Years ending respectively on March 31, 1997 and on March 31, 1998.

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this Bill.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 6:42 p.m.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've come to the end of another session, and a session that's been shorter than many sessions in this legislature, due to the fact that there were fewer Bills.

We on the government side would like to think it's due to the fact also that we've been able to manage the issues and keep everybody happy. The last session in the House we weren't quite as lucky. The opposition had a few more things to say. But this is an operation that I think has gone through this session with the opposition doing due diligence on all the Bills and in the estimates of Executive Council. It asked the tough questions and I think we've been able to provide those answers to those tough questions, and I think the people of Saskatchewan have been served well.

But to make this House run, Mr. Speaker . . . and before I say that, I guess I should say that I did try to get a hold of the House Leader just today. I was unable to get through, but I think I could say on his behalf anyway that he wished he were here, and I know all our thoughts are with him and his recovery from the operation he had.

And I have been I think, blessed with the opportunity to be the Deputy House Leader on this side and to work with the members opposite through this session. And with the great cooperation of all our members, I think we've managed to make it a pretty successful session, not just for ourselves and the opposition, but for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of people involved in making this House work, and at this point in time, I would like to thank some of those people.

First of all, I guess I'd like to thank all hon. members, because

we are the people that have been empowered by the citizens of Saskatchewan to represent them and to ensure that the laws of the land are such that we have a fair and just society. And we have Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and the third party doing their job and doing it, I think, very well. So to all hon. members I thank you for your cooperation at this time in making this House work.

But there are number of other speakers . . . other people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are without the Speaker tonight and I would like to thank him in his absence. I know he's in Ghana doing some very important work for the people of that country who are . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I don't think, I don't think he's suntanning. He's helping that country figure out democratic process and he's giving a seminar to the newly elected members. And so I'd like to thank him.

I'd like to as well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, like me have come from a deputy position to fulfil a role and it is a nice challenge to have to face. And I think you've done your job very, very well.

(1845)

Then there are what I would call the important people in this Chamber, not to diminish . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . yes, that's the third party; no. There are a number of people who make this Legislative Assembly run very well, starting with the Clerk of the Assembly, Gwenn Ronyk; assisted very capably by Greg Putz and Margaret Woods. Then there's Monique Lovatt, secretary to the Clerk; Pam Scott, secretary to the Clerk at the Table.

And of course, without having to draw his sabre once, without having to draw his sabre once, the very capable Patrick Shaw, Sergeant-at-Arms and security of staff.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd also like to thank the *Hansard* staff, Susan Hope, Donelda Klein, Darlene Trenholm, Barb Lindenbach, and the other folks who report all the glorious words spoken in this Chamber. We thank them very much for that, for the accuracy, and for sometimes bearing through the garbled talk sometimes when we speak too fast and get our words mixed up.

The *Journals* staff, Rose Zerr, clerk assistant; Teena Embury, assistant clerk; Marilyn Borowski, director of financial services; as well as Linda Kaminski and the people in personnel and administration services. People like Marilyn, the director of financial services — we all expect very much because that's where our cheques come from; so we have to make sure we always mention her. Visitor services, who do a very good job of presenting this building as a public building to the people who visit our province and from the people within this province in order that they might come and see the workings of this Chamber and come and see the process that goes on here in day-to-day operations.

Bob Cosman, Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk.

And as well we have five people who come — different people

— the pages in this Assembly. Of course you cannot repeat as a page in the Assembly, so we have a set of new pages every year. And this year . . . I'm getting some help here. Thank you very much. So the five pages that we have today, and I would like to thank them very much because they are really stuck right beside us as we go into the dog-days of Bills and estimates. There's Dapper Dan Abramson, there's Guy LaFleur Turton, and there's Clarabelle — better known as Claire LaBelle; and there's Master Michael Dowie, and Lean Lyle Cowles. We thank you very much for your tolerance and indulgence in this session.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Just to finish off, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would also like to thank Marian Powell and all the Legislative Library staff for the work that they do for us. And just might say that it won't be long before they're very busy because I'm sure the opposition parties will learn to use the library sooner or later. Just a joke — don't get upset. No, the very, very well-used library by all members — or most members of this Assembly.

The cafeteria, those people who help us to . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — To make sure — and now I'm getting heckled from my own party here so — to make sure that we are all well-fed, and as you see most of us don't miss many meals.

And the building staff who help keep the building clean.

And of course I'm sure we'd all like to thank the press gallery for their indulgences over the year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it takes a lot of people to ensure that this building functions well, from the members through everyone involved. And I would like to thank them. I would like to wish everyone . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. That's one thing I didn't have written down.

The only thing I had to remember I forgot. And that is the staff of the entire members from the caucus offices to the ministers' offices . . .

An Hon. Member: — Yeah, the constituency offices.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Keep coming. The constituency offices, the House business office, Executive Council, and all those people that I may have missed. We'd would like to thank . . . We jest, we jest, but it's so important. Without all those support staff, this Assembly simply wouldn't operate.

And before I end, I would like to say that in order that the people of Saskatchewan can see what happens in here, we have a very capable Mr. Gary Ward and staff who beam out this . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — . . . beam out our signal on cable TV right across the province and expanding.

And then of course we have as well the commissionaires, but I mentioned them — you see, I'm doing . . . (inaudible) . . . I mentioned them under the Sergeant-at-Arms so we're doing it twice.

I would like all members — all members . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It says Uncle Fred, too.

I wish all members have a very good summer. I know we will all be doing our work in our constituencies. We'll be coming back in the fall . . .

An Hon. Member: — In the fall or in the spring.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — . . . to start another legislative session; we'll be getting the Bills ready in the fall for the spring.

So, all members, thank you for your cooperation. It's been a good session and I think I'll sit down now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to add to the words of the . . . but I hope, but I hope that we can adjourn soon enough so that we indeed can get back in the fall.

It indeed has been an honour and I'm very proud to be part of the system that we have in this province in terms of the legislative experience. As a person who has accepted additional responsibilities this year, I've enjoyed each and every one of you as individuals in this House.

I want to pay a very special thank-you to the members that sit on this side in the loyal opposition, indeed for your support and your continued support. I do want to thank caucus staff, as indicated. I think caucus staff, the researchers that we have, the people that work with us, are essential.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — I do want to indeed extend a very, very, very heartfelt thank-you to each and every one of you. I know that we've had the opportunities to express our philosophical differences to one another here in the House, but we've also had the opportunities to share outside of this building. And that's the part that I found to be very, very appreciative and the fact that we indeed can get along once we are out of this House — the fact that our political philosophical differences are here in this building.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Without mentioning all of the names, I want to quickly thank the individuals here that sit at this Table — Gwenn and Greg and Meta. And of course the people that are outside as well in all the other departments.

I want to thank Pam Scott and Patrick Shaw and the pages. I

hope that your experience has indeed been a worthwhile one and that you'll treasure this experience, as I know I as an MLA treasure the experience of being here and representing the people of Saskatchewan.

I want to thank the people in *Hansard* and broadcast services, the visitor services, the Legislative Counsel and Clerk, who assist us in doing our daily jobs. The people in personnel and administration and of course financial services, who . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, without them we wouldn't be here. Thanks for the pay cheques.

We also want to thank the library staff and we do know where the doors are and I would hope that the member opposite also knows where those doors are; the cafeteria staff for changing the look — we appreciate that — and indeed changing the way the foods are served; cleaning and security staff of course have worked to make sure that this building runs properly and we want to extend a thank-you to them.

What I want to also say finally is a thank-you to the Speaker, who's on leave and I know an extended leave, so I'm not sure that he's involved in that very, very businesslike matters of the association, but I hope he has enjoyed the time away and I know he has represented this province very, very well. To you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for doing a very admirable job, and appreciate the fact that you've given the opportunity to all members to voice their concerns in debate.

I also want to end by extending on behalf of the loyal opposition, our indeed . . . our thoughts and our best wishes to the member from Regina Northeast. I know that he is going through a very tough time right now and we wish him the best and a speedy recovery and hope that he returns to this House in the fall.

With that I want to extend to all members a very, very enjoyable time away from the legislature, back in your constituencies, back dealing with all the people in your own constituencies. And I know that we may not have the opportunity to see each one another until the fall, so best wishes. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's certainly an honour to stand here this evening and just extend some thank-you's. We have enjoyed the time in this past session, being it's one of the shortest ones that I've experienced, considering the fact that I've been here through some summer months right into the fall, and we look forward to getting to that point.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would have to suggest that this has been an interesting session. It's amazing how far the government has come on a number of policies that we have brought forward and we hope that they move forward on the . . . (inaudible) . . . policy as well.

But we'd be remiss if we didn't just extend a hearty thank you to each and every one that's involved in helping this place

work. It's not just the MLAs. We're individuals here that represent the people. But the realities are, I'm afraid, that we would do a very poor job if we didn't have the qualified personnel certainly sitting at the Clerk's Table; the pages that serve us here; the *Hansard* and broadcast services; the Law Clerk — we certainly appreciate the work that's been done in helping us with our Bills; library services; visitor services; and cafeteria.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we'll all admit there's been quite a change in the cafeteria services and the food that they're offering, and we certainly want to congratulate them for what they've done and wish them well.

Financial services, cleaning staff, and I guess most of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would have to say that each and every one of us are probably mindful of the hard work and the long hours that our caucus staff put in as well. And we would like to thank our staff and extend a hearty thank you to all the other staff members, and especially ministers' staff people for the way they respond. I think on many occasions I found that ministers' staff have responded well and certainly responded quickly to a number of issues we've raised.

So without making this belated, drawn out thank you, thank you to each and every one of you. We certainly trust that you'll have an enjoyable summer. Enjoy getting back and working with the family, being part of the family.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, thanks so much for the good times. We look for better times ahead.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure now to move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — Before this House adjourns I have a message, if everyone else is done. The Speaker has left this message and asked that I relay it to the House.

I regret being unable to be in the House for the adjournment of the second session of the twenty-third legislature.

And I will tell the members that he is doing a very important job where he is, even though he has extended his stay, is to do important work for the province.

I would like to express my thanks to the many who have aided in the effective Assembly workings over this past session. I want to add my appreciation to those important people who help us do our work around the calendar, but especially when we come together in session.

To those in the Legislative Library, Marian and staff, whose valuable services provide us food for thought. And to those in the Dome Cafeteria under the direction of manager Peter Chartand, to the much appreciated food for the daily energy we need to sustain some long hours, we say thanks.

I also want to acknowledge *Hansard* and *Journals* with Rose, Donelda, and Susan and their staff for continuing to work so diligently as you wrap up today. Many of you this session have had the opportunity to explore a new web site and see just how efficient and accurate these two departments are. Each day's proceedings were on the Internet by the next morning.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the computer service technicians, Richard and Chris, whose hard work this past year has enabled us to stay up and running on the Internet.

Thanks goes to the visitor services, with Lorraine, Linda, and their staff, coordinating and welcoming the many people who come to visit the Legislative Building and their MLAs.

Thanks to the Sergeant-at-Arms and his staff for their security protection.

In broadcasting, Gary, Kerry, and Ihor, thank you for your efforts in achieving coverage of our proceedings in at least one location in every constituency in this province.

To the staff in financial services and personnel and administration under the direction of Marilyn and Linda, we appreciate your behind-the-scenes work and assisting us with the administration of the Legislative Assembly.

Thanks also to Bob, Allison in the Legislative Law Clerk's office for the drafting of legislation.

I want to say a special thank you to our pages, and if I may, on behalf of us all, we wish you the best in your careers. (He has asked that you please stand when you're being introduced) — Daniel Abramson, Lyle Cowles, Michael Dowie, Claire LaBelle, and Guy Turton.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1900)

The Deputy Speaker: —

To the staff in my office — Debbie, Margaret, and Rhonda, thank you for your daily assistance to me and for facilitating the members' access to the Speaker and to the Deputy Speaker since my absence.

A special thank you to the Clerk's office with Gwenn Ronyk, Greg Putz, Meta Woods, and their staff, Monique Lovatt and Pam Scott. Their hard work all year, but especially during session, is greatly appreciated by all of us in the Assembly, but especially for those of us who preside over the House. Their expertise and knowledge is invaluable.

I want to say thank you, as well, to the Deputy Speaker and the Chair of committees who worked, in my opinion, in a very expeditious way to assist in the conduct of the affairs of the Assembly.

To the members of the Assembly, I particularly appreciate the level of conduct of the partisan parliamentary affairs in the Assembly, having respected the dignity in the House and its place in the lives of the Saskatchewan people. As well, I commend the respect you have shown to one another, and therefore our institution of parliamentary democracy.

In conclusion, the members of the Parliament from Ghana have asked me to pass on their appreciation to our members for your support of their newly emerging democracy. Saskatchewan is certainly held in high regard in Ghana. Thank you to the hon. members.

And now I, as Deputy Speaker, would like to add my thanks to those of the Speaker. In the past week and a half I have gained a greater appreciation of the behind-the-scenes work that goes on each day that this House sits. That includes all those who work, as the Government House Leader has said, the important people — the Legislative Building staff, the staff of the Legislative Assembly, the House business staff, the people that work in the caucus office and cafeteria, and certainly is *Hansard*, a special ode to them, and many more that I won't go into right now.

In particular, I would like to personally thank the staff in the Speaker's office for their assistance — Debbie, Margaret, and Rhonda. Also my appreciation goes out to our extremely efficient table officers who I, as Deputy Speaker in the last week and a half, have relied very heavily on — Greg, Meta, and Gwenn.

And of course, to our pages for this session who have worked hard and showed a commendable level of commitment to this institution.

To all hon. members in the House, I say thank you for making this past number of days a pleasant and yet humbling experience. I appreciate your cooperation and understanding, and may I say that I am proud to be part of this democratic process.

I wish everyone a great summer, and God willing, we will meet here again.

This House now stands adjourned until the call of the Chair.

The Assembly adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

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