LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN March 23, 1998

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find out all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures are from the communities of MacNutt, Yorkton, Wroxton, and Rhein. I so present.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I also have petitions to present today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find out all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

These petitions come from the Kamsack, Runnymede, Saltcoats, Yorkton, Churchbridge, Langenburg, and Rhein areas. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present to the Assembly, and I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find out all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

And this petition is signed by individuals from the Cudworth, Bruno, Humboldt areas, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to present. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

The communities involved, Mr. Speaker, are Churchbridge, Langenburg, Runnymede, Rhein, Kamsack. I so present.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition, and I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry into all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

And these come mainly from the community of Saltcoats.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to present today:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people who signed this petition are from Spruce Home, Wroxton, Langenburg . . . (inaudible) . . . and Runnymede.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, I as well have a petition to present to the House this afternoon surrounding the whole issue of Channel Lake and Jack Messer. These people that signed this petition come from Langenburg and Saltcoats, and they are very interested in the issue. And I am pleased to present on their behalf.

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan. I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

And the signatures on this petition are from the good people of Neudorf, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition.

Your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains hospital by enacting legislation to prevent its closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

Your petitioners come from Coronach and Big Beaver.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too bring forward petitions in regarding . . . in regards to the Plains hospital. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued

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

Mr. Speaker, the people who have signed this petition are all from the Coronach area of the province. I so present.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens concerned about the closure of the Plains hospital. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

Those who've signed the petitions that I have this afternoon are from communities of Springside, Ituna, Melville, and Killaly. I so present.

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition today:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to enact legislation to completely ban the practice of night hunting in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by some folks at Ituna, at Beaver Dale, Willowbrook, Crooked Lake, Melville, and Neudorf. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I have additional petitions from citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned that we have more effective ways to deter youth crime and to protect society. The petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the Parliament of Canada and the legislature of Saskatchewan enact legislation and policies to deal with the problem of youth crime.

The petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from Wakaw, St. Benedict, and Cudworth. I so present.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to present a petition this morning with a little different flavour for the people of Maple Creek. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reach necessary agreements with other levels of government to fund the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway in Saskatchewan so that work can begin in 1998, and to set out a time frame for the ultimate completion of the project with or without federal assistance.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And of course the flavour here is strawberry jam; it was collected in a local restaurant.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Petitions with respect to funding the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway; petitions to save the Plains Health Centre; and petitions regarding the ending of the practice of night hunting.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day number 16 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: what are the names, positions, and home departments or agencies of all the current members of the disability income plan advisory council for the Government of Saskatchewan out-of-scope disability income plan?

I also give notice that I shall on day number 16 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: what criteria are used by each department or agency for the selection of the members of the disability income plan advisory council for the Government of Saskatchewan out-of-scope disability income plan; and what are the criteria used by the Department of Finance in deciding which government departments or agencies will supply members of the council?

I also give notice that I shall on day number 16 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: by what specific authority do the statutes, regulations, orders in council, ministerial policy or guidelines does the disability income plan advisory council make its decisions? And who is ultimately responsible for such decisions?

I also, additionally, give notice that I shall on day number 16 ask the government the following question:

Again to the Minister of Finance: what is the process followed by the disability income plan advisory council in making decisions regarding disability income claims, including the process by which a claimant is represented;

who represents the claimant before the disability income plan advisory council; and the course of action that may be taken by the claimant if he or she feels that the representation and the resulting decisions are not fair and reasonable?

Also, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I'd like to give notice of motion for first reading of a Bill. I give notice that I shall on Wednesday next move first reading of a Bill, the Tory bell ringing expenses indemnification Act, short title, who's Tory now, at \$28,000 a day.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day number 16 ask the government the following question:

In the 1997-98 provincial budget the Department of Social Services designated \$250,000 for the outreach program to assist children at risk. Has the \$250,000 in total been distributed? Please provide a breakdown of how this \$250,000 has been distributed by (a) location — city or town; (b) organization; and (c) dollar amount to date.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I would like to give notice that I shall on Wednesday next move first reading of a Bill, the protection of children involved in prostitution Act.

I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery are three people from the constituency of Canora-Pelly, and I'd like to introduce them to you and to all members of the House.

Carol Sleeva and her two sons, Mathew and Travis, come from the community of Canora. Carol has been a very active person in Canora, having served 12 years on the Canora School Board, now of course known as the Crystal Lake School Board.

Her sons, Matthew and Travis, are away from school today, and they're not playing hookey, Mr. Speaker, because today is a professional development day for teachers in Crystal Lake School Division, and they're here doing their own professional development, wanting to see for the first time the House and the Assembly here and see how things function.

And so I'd ask all colleagues to welcome these three individuals to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saturday, March 21 was the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The day commemorates the 1960 Sharpville Massacre in which South African police opened fire on anti-apartheid demonstrators, killing 69 and wounding 178.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I state the obvious. We all live in the province of Saskatchewan, a province where tolerance is not only accepted but expected. The people of Saskatchewan come from western European, eastern European, Asian, African, and many other countries. Saskatchewan is also blessed with the rich aboriginal heritage.

Tolerance is not so widespread elsewhere, nor is it something we can allow our children to forget. This is why the Canadian Human Rights Commission, in partnership with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, has issued a poster designed to provide young people with information to help combat discrimination. The poster will be distributed to all grade 7 to 12 teachers. The poster gives information about the danger of hate groups and how to deal with discrimination and hate when they encounter it.

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has adopted the theme of "March 21 every day" with the view to promoting the elimination of racial discrimination every day — not just in remembrance of the Sharpville Massacre on March 21. Although we can be proud of our collective multicultural heritage in Saskatchewan, we must continue to fight back against racial discrimination and teach our children to value this multi-ethnic province of ours. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Party Membership

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some very exciting news. As you know, the Saskatchewan Party became an official registered party in this province just six months ago — December 17, 1997 to be exact. That very night we sold our first few party memberships at meetings in Rosetown and Humboldt.

Mr. Speaker, since then we have managed to sell a few more memberships. Last week was the cut-off date for membership sales for our leadership convention, and after some long hours by our party staff inputting those memberships over the weekend, I am pleased to announce that there are now 4,579 card-carrying Saskatchewan Party members.

Mr. Speaker, these are not long-time party members simply renewing their memberships. And no one is having their memberships renewed for them like some other parties are doing these days. These are 4,579 brand-new members of a brand-new party, joining together to provide one clear choice and a better future for our province.

They will be voting to select the new Saskatchewan Party leader who will lead our party in the next election. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank every one of the 4,579 Saskatchewan men and women who have made this commitment to a better future for our province by joining the Saskatchewan Party.

Expression of Sympathy

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, if I may with leave, I would like to, on behalf of the official opposition, extend our deepest sympathy to the member from P.A. (Prince Albert) Northcote on the recent passing of his mother. Our condolences are

expressed on behalf of all the members of the official opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Job Creation

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last year Saskatchewan businesses and cooperatives created 13,000 new jobs. That's one of the best records in Canada on a per capita basis. Mr. Speaker, we will do more.

In our budget we continue to make job creation our number one priority. We are doubling our investment in organizations like regional economic development authorities — local authorities that help promote job creation across the province.

We are encouraging innovation and growth through targeted tax cuts for companies spending money on research and development. We are investing \$14 million this year in agricultural research and development. We are helping create jobs in film production with a film employment tax credit. We are helping ensure the oil and gas industries continue to create jobs by adjusting royalties.

Last year was a very good job for ... very good year for job creation in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It showed what can happen when everyone works together. Our budget continues to help Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan businesses, and Saskatchewan cooperatives create jobs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Lack of Specialists in Swift Current

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday I told this House that specialists in Swift Current had reached the boiling point and would not be performing any on-call services. Today I would like to read from a letter I received from a senior specialist in that city who writes, and I quote:

Some areas of special concerns need attention. I would advise against deliveries being done here unless the attending physician is of the opinion that transferring the patient will endanger the life of the baby or mother. Trauma cases and acute abdominal emergencies should be stabilized, and if assessed to be fit to be transferred out, should be referred to an appropriate centre. I would like to emphasize that no case should be admitted for observation if complications and life-threatening situations might arise. Such cases should be referred out if they present after hours or at weekends.

Mr. Speaker, specialists in Swift Current serve a population of about 50,000 people. And those people are waiting for answers from this government — not excuses and not finger pointing. They want answers and a resolution to this serious problem immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to send copies across to the Premier, the Minister of Health, and the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Swift Current, who remains silent on this issue in regards . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

International Hockey Game in Eston

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, last Friday in Eston, my home town as you know, we had an international hockey game of note. The Canadian national team squared off with the national team of Belarus, a former . . . or, pardon me, a republic of the former Soviet Union. There were 1,100 people, Mr. Speaker, at the game. Sponsors included Royal Bank, Imperial Oil, Nike, and many others.

It was a spirited contest featuring a home town favourite hockey player, playing at an international level, a young man, Evan Marble, from Eston, Saskatchewan. Many people felt it was on a par with some of the Canada-Russia series of years ago. Then we only got to watch it on TV. This was live and it was very entertaining.

In the end, Team Canada did us proud and proved to be too strong for the other side, winning by what eventually turned out to be a rather lopsided score of 8 to 2. Congratulations to the Canadian national team and thank you to the sponsors and organizers for a job well done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Partnership in Education Program

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to highlight a partnership in education program that is working very well. The Department of Highways and Transportation sponsor students from Campbell Collegiate with a partnership in education program. The department offers a work experience scholarship annually to a graduating student who will be studying civil environmental systems or transportation engineering at either of Saskatchewan's universities. The scholarship provides summer employment and cooperative education placement to the student until graduation. Currently there are four students in the program, three women and one man.

The department's human resource staff provides consultation and counselling to grade 11 and 12 students on career choices, job and market research techniques, résumé writing, and interviewing techniques. The department provides work experience for grade 12 credit classes and experience for students with physical and/or mental challenges.

Continuing with our commitment to education, our government has plans currently under way to expand the work experience scholarship program to include one student per year entering the faculty of computer science. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Meeting to Discuss Death of Community Home Operator

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two weeks ago today, a strong and proud woman by the name of Valerie

Montgomery-Bull travelled all the way from Battleford to request a meeting with the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Speaker, the minister did not meet with Val that day but she was encouraged by his statements to the media that he would be travelling to Battleford to talk with her and her family.

Mr. Speaker, it has been two weeks since this commitment, but Val has heard nothing. I think all members of the Assembly can appreciate that you must be careful not to jeopardize the imminent trial but, Mr. Minister, Val lost her mother and her children lost their grandmother.

Mr. Minister, Helen Montgomery lost her life . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I want to remind the hon. member that remarks brought to the House should be directed through the Chair, and I'm sure that he'll want to abide by that protocol.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Helen Montgomery lost her life while she was providing a service to a government department. For the life of me I don't understand why no action was taken to express condolences to her family, but it really is never too late to do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to challenge the Minister of Social Services to make immediate arrangements to meet with Valerie and to give her some assurances that her mother's death was not in vain. And I would close by saying that I'll be following up with his office to ensure that this challenge is met. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation Session

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation is holding an informational session regarding how Saskatchewan's international development funds are spent. Everyone is invited to join the council to view information displays and to meet with representatives of agencies that participate in Saskatchewan's matching grants program.

This year's theme is: "Saskatchewan's people-to-people linkages for global development." Three Saskatchewan people with direct links to development projects will give brief comments on how Saskatchewan aid has had an impact on global development.

Presentations will take place between 5:15 and 6:30 today. Jim Mercer will speak on his innovative project to improve survival rates of land-mine victims; Michele Beveridge will speak about the National Farmers Union communications link with Mexico; Jeanette Dean, chairperson of UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) Saskatchewan, will give a slide presentation about Saskatchewan's contribution to improving the lives of third-world children.

Everyone is invited to Room 218 of the Legislative Building between the hours of 4 and 7 tonight to join in celebrating Saskatchewan's success stories in global development.

Congratulations and thanks to the many caring and sharing people involved with the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Inquiry into Channel Lake

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for the minister responsible for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan). Well, Mr. Minister, it's spring, the ice is melting, and the stink at the bottom of Channel Lake is starting to come to the surface; and also it looks like Jack Messer's going to rat you out. I guess \$300,000 wasn't quite enough to keep him quiet. Jack Messer says the SaskPower board and the ministers on the board were aware of what was going on and they could have stopped it at any time. But they didn't. You didn't. You have covered it up.

Mr. Minister, it is now clear that the only way to get to the bottom of this whole dirty deal is to hold an independent public inquiry. It's the only way to clear the air and to clear up the whole mess surrounding Channel Lake. Mr. Minister, will you commit and announce a public inquiry today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, in the reverse order, no I'm not about to call a public inquiry today. But for your information that you passed on to the House — I'm not sure whether you got it from my report to the House on March 10 or not — but the fact of the matter is that we clearly set out the scenario that you refer to about how Channel Lake came to light, the review that was called for on December 9; and the result and the bottom line that I referred to a week ago or two weeks ago tomorrow on Tuesday when I said on page 10, "This government is extremely disappointed (about) events that I have described." I said that. I said as well, "We deserve our share of criticism for letting it happen. We ordered a detailed review, we have made the review public," i.e., the Deloitte Touche report.

And we have said as well that we will have an inquiry in the Public Accounts Committee, that is if your members and your desk mate, your desk mate who is in control, who is in control of calling the meeting which will allow for the inquiry into this issue in Public Accounts . . . We intend that you should be at the meeting when it comes on March 31.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, everyone in this province wants to get the truth on this whole Channel Lake affair, and a public inquiry is the only way to do it. The Saskatchewan Party is calling for a public inquiry; 87 per cent of the callers to the *Leader-Post* phone poll are calling for a public inquiry; now even Jack Messer is calling for a public inquiry. The only people who don't want a public inquiry are the NDP and the wholly owned subsidiary, the Liberal Party.

Mr. Minister, what are you hiding? Who are you protecting? Why don't you clear the air for all of Saskatchewan taxpayers and call a public inquiry?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — To the member opposite, we have an inquiry planned, the work being done by members of this Assembly, if you can convince your desk mate that she should come and call the meeting to order so that we can ask the questions and get the answers.

I say to the member opposite that all he would have to do to get this inquiry started — and he knows it full well — is pat your desk mate on the shoulder and get the meeting started. We are calling for the inquiry to start by Public Accounts on March 31, and we really hope that you have the courage to come there and ask the questions that you say you have to ask.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, the only thing you want is a complete whitewash of this whole thing so it'll go away and leave you alone. Jack Messer is strongly suggesting that the NDP (New Democratic Party) cabinet ministers know a lot more about Channel Lake than they've been letting on so far.

We need the answers, Mr. Minister. Who knew, who knew all about all of this dirty affair and when did they know it? Who is involved in the cover-up, Mr. Minister? You must have found out about Channel Lake back in June right after you became the minister responsible and you didn't take immediate action to get to the bottom of the deal.

No, you didn't do anything. You covered it up until December 9 and then you launched, only then you launched an investigation — after the Provincial Auditor brought it to life. Mr. Minister, you sat on the file for six months — six months you sat on the file. You knew what was going on the whole time; you were the minister responsible . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now the hon. member has been extremely lengthy in his preamble and I would ask him to put his — order — to put his question directly.

Mr. Boyd: — You were the minister responsible. Will you take responsibility for this whole mess, and will you do the right and honourable thing and that's tender your resignation?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to that member opposite, I understand why he resigned as leader of that party. Because he wanted to tell the people of Saskatchewan that it really isn't the Tory Party. And they would have an old Reformer — a defeated Reformer — or possibly an old Liberal run the Conservative Party to try to trick the public that you really aren't Conservative.

So I understand why you resigned, but I want to tell you this. The fact of the matter is that you should resign because you're unwilling to carry on as the official opposition and call the committee that you chair. And if that's the case, why don't you turn over official opposition to the others in opposition — the real Liberals — and let them carry on with the committee work?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I'm not surprised you want someone else in opposition, given what has transpired in the last while in this legislature.

Mr. Minister, this morning Jack Messer admitted — admitted — that SaskPower lost money on the Channel Lake deal. You lost money in spite of the fact that you said you made \$2 million. Mr. Messer says you lost money on the deal.

Mr. Minister, you can't even get . . . you can't even tell the truth about the most basic facts in this whole situation. The only way to get the truth is under oath, in front of a judge, at a full public inquiry.

Mr. Minister, will you admit that everyone, including Jack Messer . . . Will you admit what everyone knows, including Jack Messer, that you did lose millions of dollars in Channel Lake?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — To the member opposite, if he would read the Deloitte Touche report, he would read that there was an \$8 million loss in arbitrage. There's no doubt about that. But as the assistant provincial auditor said ... but as the Provincial Auditor said through his office, there was \$2 million made overall in the project.

As it would relate to Mr. Messer's call for a public inquiry, that's a great deal different than what he was saying last Thursday when he said he's confident the Public Accounts Committee will get to the bottom of what happened in Channel Lake. That's what he said Thursday.

I haven't talked to him. I haven't heard reports what he's saying today, but one has to wonder why Mr. Messer is saying on Thursday he agreed with coming to Public Accounts and why today he's saying something different.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — It is indeed a good question, and that is exactly what a public inquiry would find out.

Mr. Minister, who knew about this and when did they know about this whole Channel Lake affair? How far up the NDP food chain does this thing really go? It is now clear that it just wasn't the bottom feeders who knew about Channel Lake. We think that when the public inquiry starts tracing who knew what, it's going to leave a pretty interesting trail from the former minister to the current minister right to the Premier of this province — right up to his desk.

That's what you're afraid of, isn't it, Mr. Minister? You don't want to tell the truth. You can't handle the truth. You paid Jack Messer \$300,000 to keep a lid on the truth, and now he's going to rat you out, and you know it.

Mr. Minister, what are you hiding and who are you protecting? Is it the former minister? Is it yourself? Or is it the Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, who asks the questions and then gets his colleagues to yell and holler so the answer can't be given, I say to him clearly: the fact of the matter is there will be an inquiry in this

Assembly whether you like it or not, whether you like it or not, and you can try to filibuster to avoid the tough questions in this committee. That's what you're doing. You're trying to avoid the tough questions that will be asked of some interesting people that you may have some experience with. You have no questions to ask. Is that what you're saying?

I'm saying if you're not willing to do the work, if you're not willing to do the work of the inquiry that we have in Public Accounts, then turn the important work over to what is becoming the real opposition — the Liberal and the member from the Battlefords — who will come and ask the tough questions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Plains Health Centre Closure

Mr. Toth: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, last week the official opposition asked you to explain the NDP plan for dealing with widespread public concern over your government's closure of the Plains hospital. As usual your non-answer demonstrated your arrogance and lack of concern for the . . . and the public's concerns in the province. You said the NDP's version of health reform should be a model for other provinces. Unbelievable. A model for other provinces; I believe that's a joke, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, when you look at what's taking place in this province; when you see how the public are reacting; when you see the number of petitions that have been brought forward to this legislature; when you get the letters that are coming; Mr. Premier, will you now do the right thing, and as we see in the communities of Kipling and Carlyle, will you ask, Mr. Premier, the Regina District Health Board to hold the meetings that they had called rather than cancelling them?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I want to answer this question one more time for the members opposite because they've asked me this now three or four times on a weekly basis. And I want to say to the member opposite that the decisions around the closure of the Plains Health Centre has been made five years ago. That decision around the closure of the Plains Health Centre has been supported, Mr. Speaker, by a number of people.

And just recently in the letter from the member from Earl Grey who sat on the board today, says this, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Plains Health Centre, and I think it should be reinstated. And she says this, she says:

That I am confident that the process to complete the closure of the Plains hospital will ensure the best acute care services in this province. These services will not only benefit the people from the Regina district but will benefit people from all across southern Saskatchewan. No services will be lost and no beds will be further closed.

The Plains Health Centre will continue to provide the top services that they've had in the past, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — And a further question to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, the Regina District Health Board planned meetings for the communities of Kipling and Carlyle, and many people in those communities and the surrounding area were looking forward to sitting down with the Regina District Health Board to discuss health care and discuss the closure of the Plains health care centre.

Mr. Premier, or Mr. Minister, isn't it true that the reason the meetings were cancelled is because the Premier had ordered you to order the Regina District Health Board and your appointee, Garf Stevenson, the chairman, to discontinue the public meetings because of the criticism that you knew would be coming out of those meetings? Is that not true?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the member gets his information from, but I have no sense of what he's just said to me today in response to the discussions that the district health board has had with . . . in terms of closing off any kinds of discussions. The Regina health care district has visited districts to the south now — we think it's eight districts that they visited — and confirmed that there is going to be an even enhanced working relationship than the past.

But I can't believe for a minute, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite doesn't believe in the process. I mean now we have three elected, appointed health boards that have made this decision. Three elected and appointed health boards.

They've had two studies on this particular issue, Mr. Speaker, and if the member opposite doesn't support the democratic process of how people get on the board, the member should stand to his feet and say what he believes.

Two-tiered health care system by the member opposite from Moosomin; to user fees by the member opposite from Moosomin, and the member doesn't believe in the democratic process of people getting onto district health boards.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the campaign to save the Plains hospital continues to mount because people are afraid. Patients are afraid, doctors are afraid, and now those who run ambulance services are telling us that they too are afraid of what will happen if this government is allowed to take the wrecking ball to the Plains hospital in 222 days from now.

Steven Wald, who operates an ambulance service in Assiniboia, writes that the Plains must be saved because of its easy access for rural ambulances, which is essential in an emergency. But above all, he is concerned about the chronic bed shortage which will only get worse if the Plains is allowed to close.

Mr. Premier, why do you ignore the input of patients, doctors, nurses, and ambulance drivers? Before you personally turn off the lights, will you agree to have a public meeting to hear the views of the people most affected?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to again reiterate to the member opposite around the decisions and how they're made relating to the Plains Health Centre.

I've already said that on ... over the last five years the decision about the Plains Health Centre has been made by three different boards — boards that in fact have been appointed and have been elected. And they have had two studies, Mr. Member, and they in fact have made the decision that the Plains Health Centre will close.

At the same time that they made the decision to close the Plains Health Centre, they are going to enrich the services that are going to be provided from those facilities.

There will be no further bed reductions; they currently have 675 beds in this district that serve not only Regina but the southern part of the province. No more reductions in beds is what they've said. They're going to add an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging); they're going to add a new CAT (computerized axial tomography)scanner; they're going to add some additional services around cardio services.

We're going to have — in their opinion, Mr. Speaker — not only a better, two better health care facilities, but enriched health care services for people from Regina and all of southern Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the minister in Health and the Premier, I'd like to send across letters from the Wald Ambulance service so that they can find out firsthand what people in southern Saskatchewan think.

Mr. Minister, in this letter Mr. Wald tells us that the chronic bed shortage is something he and the patients he transfers are forced to deal with on a constant basis. He writes of one recent incident in which he was transferring a patient in extremely critical condition to Regina. And as he entered the city, he radioed ahead to one hospital but was told there were no beds. Several minutes later he arrived at a second hospital and began to unload his patient but was then informed there was no bed available at that hospital either.

As Mr. Wald tended to the unconscious patient in the hallway, a doctor phoned other hospitals, trying to free up a bed. Finally the patient was loaded up, headed to another hospital where a bed had finally been found.

Mr. Minister, what's the case? Are you so out of touch that you don't understand there's a major problem here? Or are you so arrogant that you just don't care?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that in this province we've assured people of Saskatchewan that they would have equitable and efficient health care services across the piece. And that statement's been made by people who serve in capacity of district health board folks who are elected and appointed by all of us. That decision, Mr. Speaker, has been made.

Now I want to say to the member opposite, when he talks about

the accuracy of his numbers, two days ago, or last week, the member from Thunder Creek stood up in this House and said to the public that in fact there were a period of 10 days where there have been no beds available in the system in Regina — he said that.

Today, the member from Wood River stands up and reinforces that same statement. Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely inaccurate. There are days in the system where it is tight — there's no question there are days where it is tight. But there are no occasions in this province — no occasions — where emergency services to the people of Saskatchewan are not provided, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, what the Minister of Health is really saying to us is, he's not saying our numbers are wrong, that he can't believe us, he's telling the people that are out there in the field dealing with this day after day that they are liars. That shouldn't be allowed in here, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now I think the hon. member will recognize that excessive language which questions the integrity of hon. members directly or by implication are not in order and I'll simply ask him to be very cautious about that. Go directly to his . . . make his point, go directly to his question.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, Stephen Wald says the incident I just described is not isolated. He indicates that other ambulance services could tell you similar horror stories. He writes, "The situation is at a crisis level already, and the closure of the Plains hospital can only make things worse." Mr. Minister, how many people have to die before you understand that there is a crisis on your hands?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ensure the member opposite and the people of Saskatchewan that nobody has died in this province who required emergency services. No people have died in this province, nor will they, Mr. Speaker, because we don't have available emergency services. Not correct.

But I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member opposite about the process and the thinking of the members opposite, I have here an interview that was done by their leader in 1996, and what does he say about the process of people who run health boards in this province? I mean he says that the governance needs to be highly educated, highly knowledgeable in health care delivery. And that you need to get that through the democratic process.

Then asked what his solution would be, he says that he would remove from the district health board, would remove from the district health board the democratic process and would appoint people to it.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite do not believe in the democratic process of how people serve on boards, don't believe me. They do not believe in medicare system. They believe in the privatization and the two-tiered health care system. Given the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, they would

abandon the process of medical services, medical health services in this province. They would . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. Next question.

Child Prostitution

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, the members of this Assembly should be interested in what Alberta has just passed as Bill No. 1 in their Assembly reflecting Premier Klein's priority as the healing of victims of the child prostitution trade. The Alberta government has budgeted \$5.2 million over the next three years with a goal of abolishing the child prostitution trade by the year 2000.

Mr. Premier, your NDP government had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, to even acknowledge the significance of the sexual exploitation of Saskatchewan children.

Will you demonstrate that you are as concerned as Premier Klein and commit to equal funding by the Government of Saskatchewan, placing the health, well-being, and safety of our children as a top priority?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As the member knows, we undertook last year a major, a major strategy to combat child prostitution and the abuse of children on our streets. That has involved — very successfully, Mr. Speaker — involvement with community organizations for public education. We have new street workers on the streets and again working with community-based organizations.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to stand in this House today and announce, as a result of the budget delivered here last week, we have not doubled, Mr. Speaker, the amount of money available for this, for this strategy — we have tripled it in this budget, Mr. Speaker, to \$750,000.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is outrageous that this government claims to be committed to this issue, and yet they treat this specific issue so very trivially. And I refuse to allow them to continue to ignore the problem. The problem of sexual abuse of children by johns and pimps is as acute as it has always been, and it is not going away. It requires urgent and targeted action, Mr. Minister.

A small but important step is the proposed establishment of a safe house in Saskatoon spearheaded by an organization known as Saskatchewan community . . . Saskatoon Communities for Children. This group was awaiting word from your department at budget time as to whether it would receive \$250,000 required to operate that safe house.

Mr. Minister, will you do the right thing and provide at least this lifeline to those children at risk?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have had the, have had the opportunity to meet on a number of occasions with the Saskatoon Communities for Children. We are working very, very closely with the Saskatoon Communities for Children in

strategizing for mechanisms to deal with the abuse of children on the streets of Saskatoon, as we are working with the community organizations in Regina, as we are working closely with community organizations in Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat, this government takes this as a high priority. We have said very clearly, very clearly to those who would abuse children on our streets, that the full extent of the law will be brought to bear. We have in this most recent budget, I repeat, tripled from 250 to \$750,000 — three quarters of a million dollars — in one budget year; not in three budget years, but in one budget year for battling this problem.

That, Mr. Speaker, in addition to all of the work that is happening across this province through the child action plan to assist families and children at risk.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the money targeted by this start, issued forward by this government in the budget, hardly reaches the Alberta priority in their funding — \$1.7 million per year to fight child prostitution and to help heal those children. This doesn't compare.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have put forward notice of a Bill, the protection of children involved in prostitution Act. I am asking whether or not the minister and his government will support this Bill to deal with this very grave issue in a very targeted and meaningful way.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the member will be able to do the arithmetic and know that this province is putting in more dollars per capita than is the province of Alberta. But, Mr. Speaker, but that is not what is key to the solution of this province.

The key is working with community organizations. The key is working with people who are actually on the streets, not just in the legislature, but working with people who are actually on the streets. And that, Mr. Speaker, we are doing.

We are doing it in Prince Albert, we're doing it in Saskatoon, we're doing it in Regina, we're doing it across the province. And this, Mr. Speaker, will provide in the short, medium, and long term, a real solution. I'm looking forward to further discussions with the Saskatoon Communities for Children and their concept of the safe house. I'm looking forward to conversations with groups here in Regina, Prince Albert, and across the province.

Again I reiterate, Mr. Speaker, this province takes this problem very seriously. We have dedicated very significant resources in this budget towards it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, to ask leave to make a comment with respect to condolences to the members of this House.

Leave granted.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Condolences

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, afford our sincere condolences to the member from Prince Albert Northcote on his recent loss of a dear loved one. And from all of us, Mr. Speaker, I would like to express that to the member and his family.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 240 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Northern Village of Air Ronge)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill No. 240, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Northern Village of Air Ronge) that it be read and moved at the present time, Mr. Speaker.

The division bells rang from 2:23 p.m. until 2:33 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

D'Autremont Draude	Bjornerud Heppner	Toth
	Nays — 20	
Shillington	Mitchell	Atkinson
Tchorzewski	Johnson	Whitmore
Calvert	Teichrob	Trew
Renaud	Lorje	Cline
Serby	Hamilton	Sonntag
Wall	Kasperski	Murray

Hillson

Jess

Bill No. 241 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Alameda)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move Bill No. 241, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Alameda) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The division bells rang from 2:35 p.m. until 2:45 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Bjornerud	Toth	D'Autremont
Boyd	Draude	Heppner
,		11
	Navs — 19	
	rays 17	
G1 :11:	3.57. 1. 11	m 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

Shillington	Mitchell	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Whitmore	Calvert
Teichrob	Trew	Renaud
Lorje	Nilson	Cline

Serby	Hamilton	Sonntag
Wall	Kasperski	Murray
Iess	-	•

Bill No. 242 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Albertville)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move Bill No. 242, The Channel Indemnification Act (Village of Albertville) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The division bells rang from 2:46 p.m. until 2:56 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Bjornerud	Toth	D'Autremont
Boyd	Draude	Heppner
	Nays — 17	
	nays — 17	
Shillington	Mitchell	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Whitmore	Calvert
Teichrob	Renaud	Lorje
Nilson	Cline	Hamilton
Sonntag	Wall	Kasperski
Murray	Jess	

Bill No. 243 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Resort Village of Alice Beach)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move Bill No. 243, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Resort Village of Alice Beach) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Trew): — Order. Order.

The division bells rang from 2:58 p.m. until 3:08 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Bjornerud

Krawetz

Yeas — 6

D'Autremont

Boyd	Draude	Heppner
	Nays — 17	
Shillington	Mitchell	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Whitmore	Calvert
Teichrob	Renaud	Lorje
Nilson	Cline	Hamilton
Sonntag	Wall	Kasperski
Murray	Jess	

Bill No. 244 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Alida)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, from my home town now. I move first . . . I move the Bill No. 244, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Alida) be

now introduced and read for the first time.

The division bells rang from 3:11 p.m. until 3.21 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Krawetz	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
Boyd	Draude	Heppner

Nays — 17

Lingenfelter	Shillington	Mitchell
Tchorzewski	Johnson	Whitmore
Teichrob	Renaud	Lorje
Nilson	Cline	Hamilton
Sonntag	Wall	Kasperski
Murray	Jess	

Bill No. 245 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Allan)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move Bill No. 245, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Allan) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The division bells rang from 3:23 p.m. until 3:33 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Krawetz	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
Draude	Heppner	

Navs — 18

Flavel	MacKinnon	Shillington
Mitchell	Johnson	Whitmore
Kowalsky	Teichrob	Renaud
Lorje	Nilson	Cline
Hamilton	Sonntag	Wall
Kasperski	Murray	Jess

Bill No. 246 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Alsask)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move Bill No. 246, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Alsask) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The division bells rang from 3:35 p.m. until 3:45 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Krawetz	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
Boyd	Heppner	

Nays — 19

MacKinnon	Lingenfelter	Mitchell
Whitmore	Kowalsky	Teichrob
Trew	Renaud	Lorje
Nilson	Cline	Hamilton
Sonntag	Wall	Kasperski
Murray	Jess	Murrell
Belanger		

Bill No. 247 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Alvena)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move Bill No. 247, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Alvena) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The division bells rang from 3:47 p.m. until 3:57 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Krawetz	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
Boyd	Heppner	

Nays — 21

MacKinnon	Lingenfelter	Shillington
Mitchell	Johnson	Whitmore
Kowalsky	Teichrob	Trew
Renaud	Lorje	Nilson
Cline	Hamilton	Sonntag
Wall	Kasperski	Murray
Jess	Murrell	Belanger

Bill No. 248 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Aneroid)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move Bill No. 248, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Aneroid) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The division bells rang from 4 p.m. until 4:10 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Krawetz	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
Boyd	Heppner	

Nays — 20

MacKinnon	Lingenfelter	Shillington
Mitchell	Johnson	Whitmore
Kowalsky	Teichrob	Trew
Renaud	Lorje	Nilson
Cline	Hamilton	Sonntag
Wall	Kasperski	Ward
Murray	Belanger	

Jess

Bill No. 249 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Annaheim)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move Bill No. 249, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Annaheim) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The division bells rang from 4:12 p.m. until 4:22 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Biornerud

Krawetz

Jess

Stanger

Ward

Yeas — 5

D'Autremont

Boyd	Heppner	
	Nays — 19	
MacKinnon Tchorzewski Kowalsky Renaud Cline Kasperski	Shillington Johnson Teichrob Lorje Hamilton Ward	Mitchell Whitmore Trew Nilson Wall Murray

Bill No. 250 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Antler)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move Bill No. 250, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Antler) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The division bells rang from 4:24 p.m. until 4:34 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Krawetz	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
Boyd	Heppner	
	Nays — 21	
MacKinnon	Shillington	Mitchell
Tchorzewski	Johnson	Whitmore
Kowalsky	Calvert	Teichrob
Trew	Renaud	Lorje
Nilson	Cline	Hamilton

Wall

Murray

Bill No. 251 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Resort Village of Aquadeo)

Kasperski

Jess

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move Bill No. 251, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Resort Village of Aquadeo) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The division bells rang from 4:36 p.m. until 4:46 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Krawetz Boyd	Bjornerud Heppner	D'Autremont
	Nays — 19	
MacKinnon	Shillington	Mitchell
Atkinson	Tchorzewski	Johnson
Whitmore	Kowalsky	Teichrob
Trew	Renaud	Lorje
Nilson	Cline	Wall
Kasperski	Ward	Murray

Bill No. 252 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Arborfield)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move a Bill, No. 252, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Arborfield) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The division bells rang from 4:48 p.m. until 4:58 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Krawetz Boyd	Bjornerud Heppner	D'Autremont
	Nays — 20	
Flavel	MacKinnon	Shillington
Mitchell	Atkinson	Johnson
Whitmore	Kowalsky	Calvert
Teichrob	Trew	Renaud
Lorje	Nilson	Cline
Wall	Kasperski	Ward

Jess

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.

Murray

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