

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My petition reads, 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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions come from the Gull Lake area, Mr. Speaker, from Midale and south-eastern Saskatchewan, from Govan, from many places in Saskatchewan. I so present.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well to present petitions to the Assembly, and reading the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action to ensure that the required level of service in radiology is maintained in the North Central Health District and the priorities of its board be adjusted accordingly.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

And this petition is signed by individuals from the Kinistino Melfort areas of the province. I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to present on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to put an immediate halt to all investments in foreign countries by all Saskatchewan Crown corporations and instead invest Crown corporation profits in Saskatchewan.

As is in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The communities involved, Mr. Speaker, are the community of Lemberg and Neudorf. I so present.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens concerned about adequate funding to support a regional radiology service in Melfort. Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the community of Melfort, of course, but also from St. Brieux and Pathlow. I so present.

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take

immediate action to ensure the required level of service in radiology is maintained in the North Central Health District, and the priorities of its board be adjusted accordingly.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people that have signed this petition are from Star City, Beatty, and Melfort.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present to the Assembly as well this afternoon, amazingly still dealing with the severance payments to Jack Messer issue and the call to recover . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Now the hon. member will want to avoid wandering into debate as he presents the petition and I'll invite him to present the petition in the normal manner.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't realize I was wandering anywhere but anyway the petitioners come from the Carnduff, Carievale areas of the province and I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise once again on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan with respect to our health care crisis. The prayer reads:

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 are from the good citizens of Yorkton and Ituna. I so present.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to present petitions concerning the dangerous and confusing entrance to the city of North Battleford, and pointing out that there have been two fatalities at that intersection in the last two years.

Your petitioners this afternoon requesting the removal of Highway 40 from the entrance to North Battleford come from the communities of Gallivan, Battleford, and North Battleford. I so present.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I bring forward a petition on behalf of people in their efforts to stop the closure of the Plains hospital:

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 essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

Mr. Speaker, the people who have signed the petition are all from Moose Jaw. I so present.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also stand to present a petition. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to address the issue of reducing the high costs of power rates in the North.

And the people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, on this particular petition are from Patuanak and other petitions from all throughout the land. And I also present . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise again today on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan with a petition. 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.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners' signatures on this petition are from the community from Bethune in that nice constituency of Arm River. I so present.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of citizens who are unrelentingly wanting justice for men and women who have lost spouses in work-related accidents, and I'll read the prayer as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to have The Workers' Compensation Board Act amended for the disenfranchised widows and widowers of Saskatchewan, whereby their pensions are reinstated and the revoked pensions reimbursed to them retroactively and with interest, as requested by the statement of entitlement presented to the Workers' Compensation Board on October 27, 1997.

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

All the signatures today are from Regina.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions on behalf of people in northern Saskatchewan who would like to be full partners in all of the services available to all Saskatchewan residents. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to take immediate action to allow the North to join the rest of Saskatchewan.

I so present. Oh, these petitions are from Uranium City, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, I rise to present the following 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.

These folks today come Waldeck, Eastend, Robsart, Consul, and Regina, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to present it on their behalf.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly on the following matters: the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway; the saving of the Plains Health Centre; putting a moratorium on the closure of the Plains Health Centre; having the Workers' Compensation Board reinstate pensions for disenfranchised widows; the relocation of Highway No. 40 to alleviate congestion at the entrance to North Battleford; action to allow Steven and Kimberley Walchuk to remain in the custody of their grandparents; and to taking the action in health, education, jobs, etc., to allow the North to join the rest of Saskatchewan.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question, again:

As of March 31, 1997, the reported accumulated deficit in the summary financial statements was \$9.3 billion. What is the forecasted accumulated deficit of the government as a whole, not just the General Revenue Fund, as of March 31, 1998; and what is the forecasted accumulated deficit of the government as a whole for March 31, 1999?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you today and through you to the members of the Assembly a group of students who are seated in your gallery. The group is 20 grade 9 students, and they are from Balfour Collegiate in the constituency of Regina Victoria. They are here today for a tour of the Legislative Building, to take in question period, and I look forward to having my own question period with this group.

They are accompanied today by their teacher, Pat Maze, and I would ask all members to make them feel very welcome here today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very

pleased to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly 26 grade 8 and 9 students from Lake Lenore School. Accompanying them is their teacher Wade Weseen and their chaperons Glen Berscheid, Gene Brockman, and Kelly Poppl.

The students are in Regina today to observe question period and the proceedings of the legislature. They are also going to be visiting the IMAX centre this afternoon. I had the opportunity to meet with them this morning and to hear some of their questions and their concerns and also some of their thoughts and I very much enjoyed that. So I do wish you a very fine day and I ask the Assembly to extend a warm welcome to this group from Lake Lenore.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce to you and all members of the Assembly today, seated in your gallery, two members of the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Society of Saskatchewan, better known as Lou Gehrig's disease, who are here with us today in the spirit of raising awareness of this disease. I'd like to introduce you to Gloria Miller who's the president of the ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) Society, and Marianne LaCoste who is the secretary.

I'd ask them to stand please and have all the members of the Assembly join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can recall as a youngster that when I was working at a place I would always appreciate my family coming to see the place I worked in. And today I'm very, very pleased and I have the honour of introducing to you, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleagues here in the Assembly, Mrs. Eleanor Renkas, who is the mother of Cara, one of our hard-working pages. And she wanted to come here to see just how hard the pages did work in this Assembly and I'm sure you've seen that they do work very, very hard. Mrs. Renkas please stand up. Also with Mrs. Renkas is Auntie Pearl Kreway.

Mrs. Renkas works at the health care centre as a lab and x-ray technician in Ituna and I just want to tell you a little about the family of the page that works with us here, Mr. Speaker. Her dad Casey is the manager of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool in Ituna and her brother David is in his second year of an agricultural studies. The family has been residents of the great and beautiful community of Ituna for 28 years and I ask you all to please welcome them here to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to all members of the Legislative Assembly two constituents of mine who've travelled from Saskatoon to visit the legislature. They are both keen observers of the legislative proceedings but this is the first time they've had the opportunity to actually be in the chambers.

I'd ask members to welcome Mr. & Mrs. Coleman who are

sitting in the west gallery. Mr. Coleman is a veteran of the Second World War having served in the Royal Canadian Air Force and he retired a few years ago from Canada Post. Mrs. Coleman is also a veteran having served in the British Air Force as a young woman during the Second World War. Mrs. Coleman is one of those who we affectionately refer to as a war bride, having joined Mick to start a new life in Canada following the Second World War.

They're joined today by their daughter, Judy Rice, who is a resident of the city of P.A. (Prince Albert). So I'd ask everyone to join me in welcoming our three guests.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to my colleagues in the legislature, Mr. Norbert Lepage seated in the gallery opposite. Mr. Lepage is the secretary-treasurer of la Fondation de la Radio Saskatchewan. And he is here this afternoon for Committee of the Whole for a private members' Bill and is very interested in the proceedings. And I'd just like to welcome . . . have you welcome him here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister has already said, June has been declared Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month. ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease is a progressive, terminal neuromuscular disease that attacks motor neurons that convey messages from the brain to voluntary muscles. Although victims of this disease retain their intellectual capacities, they become prisoners of their own bodies. Most people who are diagnosed with ALS die within two to five years.

People today wear cornflowers to raise awareness of this disease that afflicts 7,000 people across Canada. Each year about 2,000 of these people die while another 2,000 are newly diagnosed. Currently 65 people in Saskatchewan suffer from ALS. As mobility and even communication becomes impossible, victims of ALS require constant care.

Care is very costly for ALS patients and while the ALS Society has many dedicated volunteers, more are always welcome. The society is a non-profit organization that works to ensure patient access to all new drug therapies and to encourage increased funding for ALS medical treatments. There are currently many promising drug treatments for ALS and some of these drugs are available in Saskatchewan under the early release program.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues in the Assembly to help the ALS Society in its work to educate people about this debilitating disease. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as well, I would like to make a few comments regarding Amyotrophic

Lateral Sclerosis Month and the recognition of the problems that are caused by the disease that most people would recognize as Lou Gehrig's disease.

Mr. Speaker, all members wear the blue cornflower as a symbol of hope for all those who suffer from Lou Gehrig's disease. And hope, Mr. Speaker, is one of the most important things we can give to these people. Lou Gehrig's disease is a very devastating illness that slowly robs its victims of muscle function, their ability to speak, and eventually for many their ability to breathe.

Mr. Speaker, sadly those who suffer are given a short life expectancy that makes medical research for a cure extremely important. I would like to commend the work of the ALS Society for their efforts in making their search for a cure possible. I would also like to extend my thoughts and prayers to all those who suffer from this disease and the loved ones who stand by their side and hold their hand through the tough times.

I am told, Mr. Speaker, that many that suffer from Lou Gehrig's disease lose the ability to communicate with their loved ones in the final stages of this disease. But expressions of love and support for them are invaluable to their spiritual and physical well-being. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, we wear the cornflower today, to say to all that suffer, the fight for a cure continues and we are behind you 100 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Regina Habitat for Humanity Program

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I had the pleasure of participating in the Habitat for Humanity's ground-breaking ceremony with Mayor Doug Archer and Reverend Bob Gay. They will be building six new homes for Regina families on Pasqua Street.

Mr. Speaker, Habitat for Humanity was formed by former president Jimmy Carter. It was his idea to provide homes for low-income families by using sweat equity or participating in the building of your own home. It's an integral part of Habitat for Humanity's success.

Along with the mayor and many others, we kicked off the 5th annual Ed Schreyer work project known as a "blitz build". The six houses that will be built in Regina will be built during a five-day period from July 19 to July 24. This blitz requires a tremendous commitment on the part of sponsors, volunteers, and dozens — perhaps hundreds — of people from Regina and area who will help in this worthwhile project.

Mr. Speaker, if I could, I'd like to acknowledge some of the sponsors and volunteers. First of all, Cairns Homes, Brentwood Construction, Fiorante Bros. Construction, Sthamann Homes, Sunwest Construction, Home Depot, Dow Chemicals, Royal Building Systems, Farm Credit Corporation, the Royal Bank, Petro-Canada, Harvard Developments, Hotel Saskatchewan, John Deere Foundation, Kelsey's, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), our Power corporation, SaskTel, as well as SaskEnergy, the credit union system, Toronto Dominion Bank, Weyerhaeuser, Workers' Compensation Board, Casino Regina, and the Association of Regina Realtors, as well as Nu-Fab.

Mr. Speaker, I join with you in welcoming this project to Regina.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Level of Health Care in Saskatchewan

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we said that we have received a number of letters from people pleading for help for one man who is battling life-threatening cancer. Alick Paterson was diagnosed with metastatic melanoma on May 15. He was told he would have to wait four days for an appointment with an oncologist, but was later told that he would have to wait until June 11.

The life expectancy for someone with this form of cancer is about seven months and Alick Paterson was told to wait weeks before he could see a specialist or begin anti-cancer treatment. Mr. Speaker, Alick Paterson is now receiving care at Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon, but only because his pain has become so severe he had to be admitted through emergency.

What has happened to our health care system when a cancer victim has to endure agonizing pain before he receives medical attention? Why has this government allowed its bean counters to determine what is an appropriate level of health care? What has happened to the care and compassion that our health care system was founded on?

Mr. Speaker, there are no longer cracks in our system; there are gaping holes in the system. At what point, Mr. Speaker, is this government going to open its eyes, acknowledge the fact that they have crossed the line, and begin working to repair the system?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Wilfred Hunt School — A Green School

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Tuesday I had the opportunity to be part of a celebration at Wilfred Hunt School. Students of the school participated in the "Learners in Action" Green School Program and they became involved in the green program by completing 250 projects for green status and they have now achieved emerald status by completing an additional 500 environmental projects. This is a tremendous achievement as just 200 schools in all of Canada have achieved the emerald green status.

The young people involved understand that the environment is not someone else's responsibility. It is the responsibility of everyone who breathes the air, drinks the water, and eats the food of this planet. They have identified a need in our society to be more environmentally active and responsible.

The students of Wilfred Hunt School in my constituency have made a difference. They have made a difference to our environment. They have raised public awareness of the issues surrounding the environment and they have set a spectacular example of how to be environmentally responsible.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the efforts of the staff and students of Wilfred Hunt School and am confident they will achieve the

next level of earth status where 1,000 environmental projects are required.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Expression of Sympathy

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today with a feeling of sadness but also with a sense of deep gratitude for the life of a wonderful young Humboldt area woman who met her death in a tragic car accident east of Muenster last Friday, May 29.

Andrea Sylvester's magnetic personality and her genuine concern for the well-being of young people found expression through her work at Teen-Aid teacher for the Carlton Trail region.

Teen-Aid is a chastity-based program centring on self-respect and respect for others. And it provides students with an awareness of the importance of building positive relationships and self-knowledge.

Students from Humboldt, St. Brieux, Bellevue, Bruno, Watrous, Kelvington, Cudworth, Archerwill, Muenster, and many other communities benefited greatly from Andrea's attitude of encouragement.

My sincere sympathy goes out to Andrea's husband Dan and her family. Andrea's vibrant life will be fondly remembered by those whose lives she touched. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Annual Royal Canadian Air Cadet Ceremony

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 30 you and I were privileged to attend the annual ceremonial review of the No. 40 Snowbird Squadron Royal Canadian Air Cadets.

They demonstrated excellent drill team and parade techniques and were a vivid example of the value of cadets. Through partnerships with the military, local businesses, and parents, young people learn the skills of self-discipline and teamwork.

Their commanding officer, Second Lieutenant Scott Myers, is the youngest in Canada. He is only 22, yet he is successfully and competently filling the shoes of the much older man he replaced. At the banquet the cadets gave him a standing ovation.

Colonel Hunter, commander of Moose Jaw Air Base, told me that in 30 years of military service he has only seen such a spontaneous display of admiration and respect once before. Scott Myers may be young, but he obviously has leadership skills.

What is particularly remarkable is that he was raised in a single-parent family. His mother Susan has severe multiple sclerosis, and during Scott's teen years she probably spent as much time in hospital as Scott spent in cadet training, but she is

strong and determined and Scott has those same qualities. He is now passing them along to the cadets under his command. He is a young Canadian well worth bragging about. By the way, Mr. Speaker, did I mention that Scott is my nephew?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Girl Guides of Canada, Canada Cord Ceremony

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last night I had the honour of attending the Canada Cord ceremony in Melfort. This is the highest honour that a Pathfinder Girl Guide can achieve. It requires over a hundred challenges to be completed in the areas of home, community, camping, and the world.

There were five young ladies from the north-east of the province receiving this award. They are Lindsay Markland, Melissa Pederson, and Lindsay Yaremy, all of Melfort; Sarah Hunter of Nipawin; and Jaylene Mortenson of Naicam.

Lindsay Yaremy has also been selected as one of only 12 Canadian girls that will travel to England to participate in an International Girl Guide Camp this summer.

Mr. Speaker, the hours of commitment and effort necessary to meet the requirements of this award are obvious. I want to commend the girls for their determination and I also want to recognize their leaders and parents for their involvement and motivation. Would the Assembly please join me in congratulating these five young ladies.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Adequacy of Health Care Resources

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, Laurel Radbourne is an 18-year-old University of Saskatchewan student from Gerald. She was working at her summer job when she had her fingers severely injured in a meat grinder. She was taken to the Langenburg hospital; they couldn't help her there so they sent her to the Yorkton hospital. They couldn't help her at the Yorkton hospital so they decided to send her to Regina, but they had to wait an hour for the ambulance to arrive.

Mr. Speaker, it then took four hours to reach Regina because of road construction delays. When she finally got to Regina, she was taken to the Plains. After they did some work on her at the Plains, they decided to send her to the General. At the General there was more confusion and they talked about sending her back to the Plains.

Mr. Minister, the accident occurred before 10 in the morning. They finally operated at 8 in the evening — Mr. Minister, 10 hours later. How can you say your health system is working when these kinds of breakdowns continue to take place?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the

member opposite, first and foremost I appreciate you raising this issue with me and wish you would have brought this to my office so that we could have had this discussion.

But I say to you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Privately, Mr. Member, so that we could in fact then dealt with it in a fashion that I think would be more compassionate to the individual.

But I say to the member opposite, you and I both know that in the regional centre of Yorkton they have a number of physicians, they have some of the best, best surgical people in the province, and they have access to some of the best equipment in the region. And so I say to the member opposite that if for some reason this individual needed to be transferred to Regina that was a decision that was made at the regional hospital in Yorkton.

Now to say to me that *en route* to Regina, *en route* to Regina, that the ambulance driver had three or four notations as he's making his way to Regina as to which hospital he would be going to, hardly in my opinion — hardly in my opinion — reflects the fact that the health care needs are not available. It reflects to me that there needs to be a better coordination of the services so that as the ambulance driver approaches Regina, they know which facility to go to rather than going to each of the three facilities.

So I say to you this is more of a management problem than it is a health care problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Minister, according to the Radbournes . . . Laurel's dad this morning said you have knowledge of this situation. You know what happened here, so you can't accuse me of saying you haven't been contacted.

Mr. Minister, this story does not have a happy ending. Two of Laurel's four fingers were finally reattached. But after all the delays there is little hope of her regaining use of her fingers.

In cases like this, time is of the essence. Laurel Radbourne was forced to wait 10 hours to have this serious injury dealt with — 10 hours, Mr. Minister. Because they couldn't help her in Yorkton, because she had to wait an hour for an ambulance, another four on the road to get to here, because she was shuffled around between hospitals in Regina, she waited 10 hours because your health care system is a disaster. And because of that she will spend the rest of her life without the use of her fingers on one hand.

Mr. Minister, Laurel Radbourne's family believes that her fingers could have been saved if not for the confusion and the delays in your . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. The hon. member has been extremely lengthy in his preamble and I'll ask him now to go directly to his question.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I guess, Mr. Minister, what we're saying is, what are you going to do to address this problem so it doesn't happen to someone else out in rural Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — I want to say to the member opposite that it is very, very unfortunate that this individual in fact has lost the use of some of her limb, an unfortunate situation.

But I say to the member opposite, to stand in your place and condemn the services of the East Central Health District or the province of Saskatchewan's health system is in my opinion, totally ludicrous for you to do.

Because this past weekend I attended a function which I believe you were invited to attend. A young woman by the name of Donna Roberts, whose heartbeat and pulse disappeared — in your constituency just outside of your town — the EMR team were there on call. The emergency ambulance brought this person to the Yorkton Regional Hospital and after seven hours revived this person from what they would say was her death.

And today you stand up in this Assembly and you condemn the services of the East Central Health District, the emergency service people who work there, the ambulance team, and the physicians. And I say to you, you need to talk about the positive things that are happening in the health care system and don't be hypocritical in what you state.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Minister, I'm not condemning the East Central Health District. I'm condemning you and your government for your health care system, for what you're doing to my people out in my constituency in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, I spoke with Laurel Radbourne's father, Glen, this morning. He realizes that nothing you can say now will help his daughter. She will almost certainly lose the use of her fingers and will have to deal with this for the rest of her life.

However, Glen Radbourne said that something has to be done so this never happens again. No one should get run around for 10 hours before having a serious injury treated. There is something seriously wrong here and Glen Radbourne says it's time you fix it, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, will you take the first step today in addressing the health care crisis by admitting your health care system is failing us? What specific steps are you taking to address this problem so no one ever has to wait 10 hours again to get a problem addressed?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said to the member opposite it's unfortunate that from time to time the health care system doesn't address the immediate needs that we serve. Occasionally that happens, Mr. Speaker, and it's unfortunate that that happens.

But I say to the member opposite that if you look at the number of people who are served on a daily basis in this province, 35,000 people are served every day by the health care system — every day. On an annual basis in this province, last year 72,000 trips, Mr. Speaker, 72,000 trips by road ambulance, and more than 800 trips by air ambulance in this province.

And the member asks what are we doing? More money for health care in the history of this province — 88 million brand new dollars this year, 1.72 billion — the largest expenditure, the largest expenditure in road ambulance and emergency services in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker, more additional funding for doctors in this province than we've ever seen and more money for front-line workers.

And putting all of this in on our own when you and the government that you now . . . The party you now support ran this province into a debt of \$15 billion and you have the audacity to stand up here as a member of that party asking where the money is. You're one of the people who were responsible for why we can't support the health care system . . . (inaudible) . . . we do.

Crop Insurance for Re-seeding

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Minister, farmers all over Saskatchewan are telling us your crop insurance program is failing them. Premiums are too high; coverage levels are too low. Right now thousands of farmers are being forced to re-seed because of poor germination, insect damage, and in recent days, severe frost in some areas of the province. The problem is crop insurance only pays \$17 an acre for re-seeding. That's nowhere near high enough, given the input costs of today.

Mr. Minister, what are you doing to help the farmers, the thousands of farmers across this province who have to re-seed their crops, and do you think \$17 is adequate to pay for those re-seeding costs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the member, the Government of Saskatchewan has reduced crop insurance premiums to farmers over the last two years by 33 per cent. That's a \$35 million saving for the province's farmers.

The \$17 re-seeding benefit that is put there is not intended, Mr. Speaker, to cover all the input costs. Because as a farmer, you put your input costs in your fertilizer and then your chemical and later on probably more chemical as a farm practice. The \$17 is to cover the expense of re-seeding, and I think that it is enough to cover that cost, yes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, 3,000 less farmers are carrying crop insurance than just a few years ago. I think that speaks volumes as to what they think of the changes you have made.

Your own Department of Agriculture officials say \$17 an acre is too low to re-seed. This morning I spoke with the soils and crop specialists in both Saskatoon and Regina. They told me that most of the crops being re-seeded will be canola and flax. They estimate the cost of re-seeding a canola or flax crop to be anywhere between 24 and \$30 an acre. And probably a lot more was spent on the original crop when it went into the ground.

Twenty-four to \$30 an acre, Mr. Minister — that's the estimate from your own department. And it's a lot more than the \$17 an acre coverage you're offering.

Mr. Minister, why is the re-seeding benefit for farmers so low in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, like I say the costs, input costs are there if a farmer has to re-seed . . . if you're looking at canola, for example, at \$2 a pound. So most people sow 5 or 6 pounds to the acre. That's 10 or \$12 an acre. Then there's the fuel and machinery maintenance on top of that.

When the crop insurance program pays out at the . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well I thought that member, being a farmer . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Now the Chair is having some difficulty . . . Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well I assumed the member over there, being a farmer, would understand that you only have to fertilize once. It's just the seeding process; it's just the seeding process that you have to put in.

And while he's listening to the answer, he says, he quoted me the number of reduced number of farmers participating in Crop Insurance. Well overall there are fewer farmers participating in agriculture. But if you look at the acres, Mr. Speaker, that are enrolled in Crop Insurance, they're actually up. So that time of misleading information — he should reconsider putting that forward.

And when Crop Insurance pays at the end of the day, you pay up to 70 per cent with spot-loss hail or 80 per cent without spot-loss hail. You don't pay 100 per cent of the coverage. So I believe, we believe that that dollar figure is quite reasonable for the process that we have to go through.

We don't like to see farmers having to re-seed. It's part of mother nature's way of letting us know who's the boss. And we're going to be continuing our program and maintaining a good Crop Insurance program as we have in the past.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Acute Care Beds in Regina

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberal opposition provided evidence that the bed crisis in Regina has claimed at least one life. We provided documentation which underlines how a patient waited days for a critical care bed to become available in Regina, but passed away before a bed became available.

Dr. Joseph Javier of Yorkton says:

In the end the patient suffered an extension of a heart

attack. That's an emergency situation. I don't know how much clearer it could be.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health, how much clearer could it be? What has your government, sir, learned from this tragedy?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that when I reviewed the letter from Dr. Javier, it said this:

On Saturday, October 4, the admitting department of the Plains Health Centre phoned my residence to tell me that they now had a bed for me. On being informed by my wife that this gentleman had expired on October 1, the individual calling me stated that there was no indication note saying this transfer was an emergency.

This is Dr. Javier's letter. Today I get a note in follow-up, as I said I would, from the East Central Health District and it says this:

Further to our telephone conversation, this is to inform that urgent cases from the ICU department do not wait longer than four days for transfer. On average, transfers take place two or three days. To reiterate, to the best of our knowledge, no patient has ever waited longer than four days for a transfer. But please note that emergency cases are always (always) given immediate transfer to the tertiary care centre.

This is what the Yorkton East Central Health District writes and this letter is in relationship to an emergency referral.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, the doctor himself says, I don't know how much clearer it could be that it was an emergency. Mr. Speaker, this victim was waiting for a critical care bed. His doctor says this was an emergency situation and suggests it couldn't be any clearer. Perhaps the Minister of Health should be prescribed a dose of reality.

Mr. Minister, you acknowledged you went too far by cutting front-line staff and 200 more nurses are being added to the system. But the fact remains; you went too far by slashing almost 400 acute care beds in Regina. I think everyone in this House would agree that one victim is one victim too many. The only thing worse is if this government does not take steps to ensure that this kind of tragedy does not ever happen again.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, are you going to take appropriate steps to ensure there isn't a repeat of this tragedy? Are you going to add more beds to the Regina system?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday — to the member opposite and to this House — I indicated that I would take a review of what's happened on this particular case. Already I informed the member on my first piece of information that the East Central Health District says to me that they did not make an emergency referral because it was not recognized as an

emergency. But I'm not going to stop there, Mr. Member. We're going to continue to examine the relationship between the two health districts to see what happened with this particular individual.

And we're going to continue to examine that further with likely a referral to the college of physicians and surgeons to have the college review that in some detail. Because when you, Mr. Member, say to me — of which the doctor says here to some degree — that in fact his practical or professional liability is at stake here, it concerns me dearly. And so it will be our opinion to refer this matter to the college of physicians and surgeons. The Department of Health has now spoken with them, and that process will be undertaken to ensure that in the future these kinds of issues do not occur.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the members on this side of the House are accused of saying that there's a fault with the medical practitioners. Now it seems that the tables are reversed and it's coming from the other side of the House.

Only a few weeks ago the Minister of Health maintained that 675 beds were enough for the Regina system because on an average day 620 people occupy beds in the Regina system. A recent letter to a constituent by the minister indicated 608 beds are occupied on a daily basis. And now he is circulating information stating that on an average day, 589 of the beds in Regina district are occupied by patients.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, if he continues to go unchecked, we'll be hearing that only 400 beds are needed in the system by the end of this session.

Instead of manipulating the figures, why don't you simply admit that there is a bed crisis? Admit you went too far. And will you make a commitment to this House today that more beds will be added — more desperately needed beds — will be added to our health system here in Regina?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I'm a bit surprised that the member from Melville would now be circulating information that doesn't have the kind of accuracy that the member from Wood River has been circulating on a regular basis. I'm surprised it's coming from you.

Because the information that I provided to this House, and you have at your disposal, where the district health board in Regina said that 625 beds are the number of beds . . . or 608 beds are the number of beds that they have on an average daily census. And that's the information that I've been providing you. And when asked, this is what I say in terms of their average daily census for 1997-98, or 1996 . . . 1997-98 . . . sorry, 1996-97.

Just recently now the district health board has provided an update of the information and they're saying that the average daily census for the Regina Health District today is 585 beds. Now that isn't my information; that's their information. So when you say, Mr. Member, that I'm circulating the information, I'm only giving it on the advice of the district

health board, and that's the basis on which you give it as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Metis War Veterans

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When Canada went to war, people from across this country and of every origin fought for this country. Most war veterans have been acknowledged for their contributions but one group that continues to go unnoticed are Metis war veterans.

Last November the Minister of Northern Affairs promised that he would do something to address the fact that this group has no funds with which to hold a provincial meeting to discuss their concerns.

Mr. Minister, why have you not lived up to your promise? Why do you choose to forget and ignore the Metis veterans?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, the Metis have been trying to deal with the issue for many, many years in regards to not being dealt with by the federal government. For many, many years they've been trying to petition the federal government to deal with the Metis issue.

In many cases when land was transferred to people in the South, you know, after the war, many of the Metis did not get the land that was due to them after the war. And in many cases in the far North many of the Metis were left out. As we looked at that, the Metis . . . (inaudible) . . . regards to the feds, and in many cases the federal government, where the issue of the veterans is dealt with . . . was not dealt with by the federal government.

The member from Athabasca should be petitioning the federal government and dealing with the federal government in dealing fairly with the Metis people in regards to having given their lives for this country and who came back and are now working in regards to development. And in that sense that's where he should be looking at, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Contamination of Drinking Water

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to a recent study done by the National Hydrological Research Centre in Saskatoon, there are herbicides present in every water supply in western Canada. Some dugouts used as a source of drinking water by 15,000 Saskatchewan families contain levels of pesticides as much as 1,000 times more detectable than European water supplies.

According to Mr. Allan Cessna, he has yet to analyse water from a dugout that didn't contain pesticide residue. And he's finding residue in ground water as well. This contamination of drinking water poses serious, long-term health hazards for Saskatchewan people, in particular rural people.

My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Is your department aware of this very serious problem and what are your plans to address it?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the question from the hon. member. This is a very important issue and we certainly are aware of the drinking water problems found in some rural areas, particularly as it applies to water taken from shallow wells or dugouts.

We are very pleased though to note that in our estimation and knowledge, all of the tests still do not exceed the Saskatchewan and Canadian drinking water standards but we are concerned about that. Really any amount of contaminant is too much but we are monitoring this and we will continue to work with people who are concerned about their drinking water.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Jim Dosman of the University of Saskatchewan Centre for Agricultural Medicine says, and I quote:

Scientists know little about the effects of pesticides on rural residents. Funding to do research is tight. We'd love to do the investigation. These are important questions for rural people.

Mr. Kristian Liber of the toxicology research centre at the University of Saskatchewan says, and I quote:

The reason there is so little known about the effects of pesticides on the rural population is because nobody has screamed loud enough at the government to get their attention. It is a matter of dollars and cents, and research money for these issues is in short supply.

To the Ministers of the Environment, Agriculture, and Health: Saskatchewan residents are facing a serious health and environmental hazard that cannot be ignored any longer. Will you and your government pledge to immediately provide the necessary research funding to deal with this problem before it is too late?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we are obviously doing some research on this issue in order to discover that there are problems in some of the drinking water areas. We are working with the Saskatchewan Research Council. We are also working with the federal government, which is responsible for the licensing of all herbicides and pesticides. And we do take this very seriously and we will continue to work with authorities, scientists, and all levels of government as well as people who are concerned about possible contaminants in their water.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the spraying season used to be a month or maybe two. It lasts seven months now and farmers are forced to use higher and higher rates to control weeds that are developing tolerance to herbicides. So more product is being used. Aerial spraying has been identified as a major culprit in the failure to control spray

drift.

Mr. Minister, what safeguards or regulations are there in place to minimize the toxic spray drift from all herbicide/pesticide applications, but in particular from aerial spraying?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Again there is very rigorous testing administered by the federal government before any pesticide/herbicide is licensed for aerial application. We're working very closely with the aerial application people who are actually doing the spraying and flying of the planes in developing tighter and better guidelines and controls.

This obviously is a concern and there certainly have been occasions when areas have been sprayed where they shouldn't have been; we want to avoid those. And again we are working with the industry and all levels of government — Research Council, Department of Agriculture and others — to get the best value for the dollar with the spreading of the applicants and also to ensure that environmental concerns are met.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 743 — The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 1998 (Capital Market Activities Restrictions)

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move first reading of Bill No. 743, The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 1998 (Capital Market Activities Restrictions).

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the interest of open and accountable government I am now tabling the answer to question no. 70.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The response to question 70 is tabled.

PRIVATE BILLS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 301 — The Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan Act

Clause 1

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to speak briefly to this Bill as its sponsor in the House this afternoon. I speak on behalf of the Conference of Mennonites in Saskatchewan and I would like to thank them for their work first of all in our province in and through the Mennonite Church. They really do wonderful work not only here in Saskatchewan, but across the world through the work of

the Mennonite Central Committee, which many members of the House and many members of the public will know full well.

Now speaking to the particulars of this Bill, I would just like to provide some brief background information. The Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan was originally formed pursuant to The Societies Act in September of 1960. When The Non-profit Corporations Act of Saskatchewan came into effect, the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan was continued as a non-profit corporation.

For many years the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan has had a parliamentary form of governance. That is delegates are sent to meetings of the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan from their constituent churches. And each delegate who attends such a meeting is entitled to a single vote, to introduce resolutions, and to participate in debate, as we would expect in the parliamentary system of governance.

Each constituent church is entitled to name one delegate from each 25 members of the church. In addition there is provision for the naming or providing of youth delegates. And the affairs of the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan have been governed in this fashion, between meetings of the Conference by an executive committee. Some of the individuals to that executive committee are elected to the Conference; other individuals have been nominated by virtue of their positions with affiliated organizations.

The occasion for this particular Bill before us now is that the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan has recently become aware that there is a conflict between the provisions of The Non-profit Corporations Act and the bylaws that have been in effect for many years. The Non-profit Corporations Act does not envision governance by a parliamentary system of governance. Therefore the organization has had to amend its bylaws to carry out its activities differently than it has done for the past 38 years.

(1430)

This does not fit with the traditions and the history of the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan. And accordingly, at a meeting recently held within the past year in Osler, the Conference unanimously determined that it should petition the legislature of Saskatchewan for continuance pursuant to a private members' Bill, which we have before us today.

The Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan can only govern itself in accordance with its history and traditions if this private members' Bill is passed. There will be no change to the nature of the activities the Conference undertakes by virtue of this continuance.

So in conclusion I would like to pay tribute to the work of the Conference of Mennonites in our province. And I want to pay particular tribute to Mr. Henry Harder, who is chairman of the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan. Mr. Harder is from Hanley. And also to Florence Driedger of Regina, who is on the national conference board of the Conference of Mennonites. And also Otto Driedger from Regina, who is the past Chair of the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan, who attended the Standing Committee on Private Members'

Bills meeting which was held on May 20 to consider this legislation.

I'd also like to acknowledge the work of Dr. Ernie Bergen of Saskatoon who has worked with me in presenting this Bill to the Assembly. And also finally, like to thank the Clerk's office for their assistance and also thank the Legislative Law Clerk for their assistance in preparing this legislation.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 15 inclusive agreed to.

Preamble agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Bill No. 302 — The Fondation Fransaskoise Act, 1998/
Loi de 1998 sur la Fondation Fransaskoise**

Clause 1

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's my pleasure to rise this afternoon and to take a couple of minutes of the committee's time to go over a little bit of the history of this Bill No. 302. And, Mr. Chairman, with the indulgence of fellow members, I would like to do in French for the most part.

And with that, M. le président, je voudrais prendre quelques minutes de raconter l'histoire de ce projet loi numéro 302.

M. le président, le projet de loi prévoit, au début, deux partenaires fondateurs. De plus on prévoit la possibilité de fusionner d'autres "fonds" dont les objets ne sont pas en conflit avec ceux de la Fondation fransaskoise. Telles fusions seront sujet à des conventions de fusion spécifiquement formulés entre les parties et ne doivent pas nuire à la Fondation fransaskoise.

La Fondation de la Radio Française en Saskatchewan fut incorporée par le projet de loi 04 l'année 1975-76 de l'assemblée législative de la Saskatchewan. Elle détient un fonds (couramment à peu près 630,000\$) qui découle de la vente de deux stations de radiodiffusion française à la société radio Canada. A partir de ce fonds de la Fondation de la radio française en Saskatchewan attribut annuellement des bourses et des octrois à des groupes et à des individus pour des études ou des projets susceptibles à bénéficier la communauté fransaskoise.

Le Comité permanent du fonds fransaskois de l'Association Culturelle Franco-Canadienne de la Saskatchewan n'est pas un organisme à statut légal couramment. Comme leur nom le suggère il est un comité de l'ACFC en Saskatchewan. Ce comité fut créé il y a à peu près cinq ans par ladite de l'ACFC pour prélever des fonds, les revenus desquels seraient utilisés pour supporter les programmes et les projets d'envergure provinciale ou locale qui promouvoient l'expansion et le

développement de la langue provinciale et de la culture française en Saskatchewan. Couramment, M. le président, son capital se chiffre à environ 185,000\$.

L'impact des coupures budgétaires de la part de Patrimoine Canada il y a quatre ans constitué la force majeure qui poussa l'ACFC et d'autres organismes fransaskois à entamer cette démarche pour assurer sa propre survie au service de la communauté fransaskoise. Ces coupures au niveau du gouvernement fédéral constituent un phénomène qui n'est pas uniquement particulier à la communauté fransaskoise.

Afin de maximiser l'utilisation de ressources précieuses il fut jugé bon d'étudier comment et par quels moyens ces deux groupes pourraient collaborer.

M. le président lors de sa prise de décision de participer à cette étude la Fondation de la radio française en Saskatchewan imposa deux conditions.

Premièrement, qu'il y ait aucun coût à absorber par ladite Fondation de la Radio; et deuxièmement, que l'ACFC entame les démarches nécessaires pour se dépouiller de son contrôle sur le Fonds fransaskois.

Ces deux conditions furent acceptées, acceptées et Patrimoine Canada s'est engagé à établir un fonds spécifiquement pour défrayer les coûts de l'étude et les mis en marche des démarches découlant de l'étude.

M. le président, la convention de fusion et le projet de loi 302 contiennent les mesures protectrices qui suivent:

Premièrement DANS LE PROJET DE LOI: Section 4 "Buts et objets". Préserve, virtuellement verbatim les objets de la Fondation de la radio française en Saskatchewan qui se trouvent dans le projet de loi (original, loi) 4 de 1975-77s.

Section 5(2), le capital de la Fondation fransaskoise ne peut jamais être réduit moins de 800,000\$. Couramment à peu près 815,000. en total.

Section 7 stipule que le premier Conseil d'administration sera composé de dix membres nommés à partir de la Fondation de la radio française en Saskatchewan et de cinq membres à partir de la communauté fransaskoise. De plus 7(3) stipule que, "La majorité du conseil doit toujours être élue par les membres à la main". Le "membership" est défini dans les règlements. Cette définition est, effectivement la même que celle de membre de la Fondation de la radio française en Saskatchewan.

M. le président, DANS LA CONVENTION DE FUSION, article 8(3) préserve les objets des organismes fondateurs.

Annexe "A" contient les noms des premiers administrateurs conformément au projet de loi 302.

Annexe "B", section 4, stipule qui peut devenir membre (Il n'y a jamais eu de cas de refus d'une demande d'adhésion dans l'histoire de la Fondation de la radio). L'annexe "B" continue et stipule les conditions d'expulsion ou de suspension et de réintégration.

Article 5 stipule la composition de Conseil d'administration (Notez que c'est presque identique à la structure de Conseil d'administration de la Fondation de la radio française en Saskatchewan.

Annexe "D" M. le président, contient plusieurs, autres mesures protectrices pour assurer que non seulement les objets de la Fondation de la radio soient préservés dans la nouvelle structure main que sa contribution financière demeurera reconnue, par un poste comptable au passif des états financiers du nouvel organismes et que tout bourse ou octroi consentis à partir de ces fonds seront aussi identifiés comme tel. De plus tout don fait au nouvelle organisme et destiné a faire partie des fonds de la Fondation de la radio après la fusion sera ajouter à ce poste comptable.

En conclusion, M. le président, it est donc claire qu'effectivement la Fondation fransaskoie est simplement la continuité de la Fondation de la Radio Francaise en Saskatchewan. Cette loi 302 leur permet d'y intégrer le Fonds fransaskois.

(Translation: There are, initially, two partners involved in the proposed merger. There are also provisions for possible future mergers with other "Funds" having objectives which are not dissimilar. (Currently at least three such funds exist in Saskatchewan). Future mergers will be governed by a separate agreement containing conditions agreed to by both parties but could not be detrimental to the current founders and, therefor need not be of concern here.

1. La Fondation de la Radio Française en Saskatchewan (F.R.F.S.) incorporated by Bill 04 of 1975-76 of the Saskatchewan Legislature. It controls funds (Currently about \$630,000.00) received from the sale of two french language radio stations to S.R.C. (C.B.C.) from which it grants bursaries and scholarships for study and research projects which are deemed beneficial to our community.

2. Le Comité permanent du fonds fransaskois de l'Association Culturelle Franco-Canadienne, is not incorporated and, as the name implies it is a committee of the A.C.F.C. (F.F.). The committee was formed about five years ago by the aforementioned A.C.F.C. to essentially raise capital funds the revenue from which would be used to fund the various programmes and projects undertaken provincially and locally which benefit the expansion and growth of the French language and culture in this province. (Currently capital about \$185,000.00). The initiating force was the gradual shrinkage of funds available from Heritage Canada (and its predecessor), a phenomenon which is not unique to the francophone community.

In an effort to maximize the use of resources it was deemed beneficial to study how and by what means these two organizations could work together.

The F.R.F.S. when considering the study agreed with two major conditions:

1. That there be no cost for this study born by F.R.F.S.
2. That A.C.F.C. undertake measures to divest itself of any vestige of control over F.F.

Both of these conditions were agreed to and a special fund was established and funded by Heritage Canada strictly for the purpose of carrying out this study and implementing any resulting recommendations.

The documentation provided you, including Bill 302 and a working translation of the merger agreement contain the following protective provisions:

IN THE BILL: Section 4 Purposes and Objects of the Corporation. Preserves, virtually verbatim the Objects of F.R.F.S. contained in Bill 04 1975-76.

Section 5(2) That the Capital of the corporation cannot be reduced below \$800,000.00 (Currently about \$815,000.00 combined).

Section 7 stipulates that the first board shall be made of TEN appointees from F.R.F.S. and FIVE from F.F. It goes on to state that, at all times a majority of the board shall be elected by and from the membership (emphasis added). The membership is defined in the bylaws (Appendix D of the Merger Agreement).

IN THE MERGER AGREEMENT: Article VIII (8.3) undertakes to preserve the objects of the founders.

Appendix "A" stipulates the names of the first Board of Directors in accordance with Bill 302.

Appendix "B" 4 Stipulates who can be a member (Throughout the history of F.R.F.S. There has never been a refusal of an application for membership). It goes on to detail how a member can be expelled, suspended and reinstated and the reasons therefor (These are the same reasons for which an initial application might be denied).

Article 5 stipulates the constitution of the Board of Directors (Note that it mirrors very closely the structure of F.R.F.S.)

Appendix "D" contains much additional "boiler plate" to ensure that not only the objects and powers of F.R.F.S are preserved in the new structure but that its financial contribution will continue to be recognized, by a specific line item in the Financial statement of the new organisation as will any bursary or grant emanating from that contribution. In addition any donation made specifically to F.R.F.S. after the merger will be added to and form part of that line item.

Respectfully submitted for
LA FONDATION DE LA RADIO FRANÇAISE EN
SASKATCHEWAN
Norbert Lepage, Secretary-Treasurer.)

Mr. Chairman, on behalf I would like to just say a couple of words in conclusion. I would like to thank members of the ACFC, the president of ACFC, Mme. Lorraine Archambault and Mr. Norbert Lepage from the Fondation de la Radio Française de Saskatchewan, who I introduced a little earlier, for approaching me on this. It's been my pleasure to work with them in guiding this Bill through, and I think there's some

congratulations are in order to the association for the work they have put into this. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 16 inclusive agreed to.

Preamble agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

(1445)

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 301 — The Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan Act

Mr. Koenker: — I move that Bill No. 301, The Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan Act 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. 302 — The Fondation Fransaskoise Act, 1998/ Loi de 1998 sur la Fondation Fransaskoise

Mr. Kasperski: — I move that Bill No. 302, The Fondation Fransaskoise Act, 1998/Loi de 1998 sur la Fondation Fransaskoise 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.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly I move that the House do now move to government orders.

Leave not granted.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 7 — Provincial Economy

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say at the end of my remarks that I would move the following motion:

That this Assembly recognize the efforts of all stakeholders of the provincial government and the stakeholders in the provincial economy for creating an environment in which Saskatchewan has become a consistent leader in job growths, business investment, and debt repayment.

Mr. Speaker, to begin this debate I would like to take a walk down memory lane for many reasons. Number one, I think that the history of Regina and their leadership in developing a Regina Economic Development Authority was something that occurred when I was on city council. And I think that it became a model or a prototype for REDAs (regional economic development authority) that developed later on, Mr. Speaker.

One of the reasons why, when we were on city council, we wanted to develop a Regina Economic Development Authority was to broaden the base of support within the community, to bring all sectors together to understand what were the best sectors of the economy, that we could strategically identify, that everyone put their emphasis and effort toward; and that perhaps we would convince the provincial government — at that time, the Tory government — that this is what we needed to do to further economic growth and that the initiatives should occur based on what communities saw for themselves as an area for economic growth.

I'll quickly conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — . . . that we all know what the results of that was — that we have REDAs developing throughout the province and that we're leading in so many ways in this economy. And with that in mind, I would like to now move the following motion:

That this Assembly recognize the efforts of all stakeholders in the provincial economy for creating an environment which has allowed Saskatchewan to consistently lead the nation, or be close to the top in growth, in business investment and in debt repayment; a successful cooperative effort has allowed us to improve and advance our innovative social programs for which Saskatchewan is known throughout Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Moved by myself and seconded by the member from Regina South, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest to the motion that was put forward and I think those of us that are working in this province and trying to run a business, we recognize that one of the biggest problems we have is the taxes, the very high level of taxation along with the high utility rates and all the other problems that are facing the people in this province.

We have a million people — the same number we had in the 1930s. One of the things that would probably solve the problem is another million people. And that'll only happen when we get a tax break.

So the economy, though it is in a near state of crisis at this moment, I can tell you that there is a health care crisis in this province, and therefore I am going to move this following motion, seconded by the member from Moosomin:

That this Assembly now do proceed to item no. 4 under private members' public Bills and orders, adjourned debates in orders of the day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 2:55 p.m. until 3:05 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 11

| | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------|
| Bjornerud | Toth | D'Autremont |
| Boyd | Draude | Gantefoer |
| Osika | Hillson | McPherson |
| McLane | Goohsen | |

Nays — 22

| | | |
|----------|--------------|-----------|
| Flavel | Van Mulligen | MacKinnon |
| Mitchell | Tchorzewski | Johnson |
| Whitmore | Upshall | Calvert |
| Koenker | Trew | Renaud |
| Lorje | Sonntag | Hamilton |
| Jess | Kasperski | Ward |
| Murray | Langford | Murrell |
| Thomson | | |

The Speaker: — The question now before the Assembly is the main motion moved by the member for Wascana Plains, seconded by the hon. member for Regina South. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the debate on this motion be now adjourned.

Debate adjourned.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move that the House do now move to government orders.

Leave granted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Renaud: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I would like everyone to please help me welcome, in your gallery, nine classmates and one teacher from the Pasqua Hills Christian School at Carrot River, Saskatchewan.

Now you know where Carrot River is, Mr. Speaker. It's in northern Saskatchewan. It's one of the most beautiful areas in the whole province, and it's certainly known for its alfalfa production and its leafcutter bees, Mr. Speaker.

And right now just down the road in Arborfield, of course, they're fighting for their CN (Canadian National) Rail and we're working hard for those.

There's a fair amount of rain in that district, Mr. Speaker, but frost has certainly affected the agricultural sector in Carrot River area, and hopefully we won't have to re-seed too much.

But I want everyone to welcome the students and the teachers, Roger Loewen, and the chaperons, Mr. and Mrs. Calvin James and Mr. and Mrs. Earl Reimer, to Regina. And have a good visit and a safe trip home. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 49 — The Saskatchewan Assistance
Amendment Act, 1998

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

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Today we'll be assisted in our discussions by Ms. Bonnie Durnford, who is the assistant deputy minister of the Department of Social Services, and Mr. Phil Walsh, who is the executive director of the income security division.

Clause 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome to the minister and his officials who have joined us this afternoon to discuss The Saskatchewan Assistance Act.

Mr. Minister, as I understand it, this legislation is coming before us today and before this Assembly this spring as a result of a number of changes that you've announced to assistance in the province of Saskatchewan. Changes that, as you've been suggesting, are . . . it's a visionary approach to helping people move from the area of welfare into employment opportunities and still recognizing the fact that some of those employment opportunities may not give the individuals even the same amount of coverage or employment income that they would have under social assistance.

And, Mr. Minister, as I understand the assistance that you're talking of and the changes, it's an area . . . in some cases an area that I've talked about and addressed for a number of years in this Assembly, about recognizing the fact that there are many people across this province who today happen to be on social assistance who have also found minimal opportunities.

And I think we will recognize that throughout the province there are not the full-time, fairly high level of paying jobs in each community. In some cases, there are just minimal jobs available; sometimes very low-houred — maybe 20 hours a week at a minimum wage — which for a person if they were to do that and to live on it completely or wholly, be wholly dependent on that employment would find themselves in a very unenviable economic position to the point that it becomes very difficult.

Then they sit back and say, well, why am I doing this? I can go to social assistance; at least social assistance covers my power and it covers my fuel/heat bills, and I've got something to cover the rent and provides food and clothing for my family.

So, Mr. Minister, just maybe for the sake of the Assembly, just clarifying a bit as where you hope to go through the piece of legislation and the changes in the assistance programs that you've recently announced.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, not to go on at length but to confirm some of the observations that the member has made this afternoon. We're intending, through these changes to the Act, to put the legislative framework in place that will allow us to move forward with the new programs as we've described

them.

They are essentially . . . the major programing are essentially three.

One, to partner with the federal government in the National Child Benefit by adding to that benefit a Saskatchewan Child Benefit so that we ensure that all children in our province have their basic needs met. Not just among children who are now children of families on welfare, but for children of low income parents across our province.

Second is, which the member just referred to, is what we're describing as the Saskatchewan employment supplement which will provide to low income working families supplement to their earned income, or supplement to maintenance income that may be due to, in most cases, a single mother with children.

The member is correct in saying that under the current system, particularly if you're on welfare and you are able to access some employment income or maintenance income, the current practice is that a small amount of that income is kept by the client of social assistance.

But once it reaches a relatively low level, then we begin to deduct from the welfare payment dollar for dollar. With every due dollar earned in income through employment, we then will deduct from the social assistance cheque. And so an individual can find themselves working more and at the end of the month have no more resources to provide to the family.

In fact, if a person is able to secure enough income to leave the welfare system, you're right. You might in fact find yourself in a minimum wage that pays less than what you would be receiving on welfare. And add to that the double burden, particularly if you have children, if you leave the welfare system, you then also will lose all of your family health benefits, the health benefits for your children. And so there is an incentive therefore built into the system to remain on assistance.

With the employment supplement and with the addition of family health benefits to low income families across our province, we're trying to turn that on its head. So that if you are able to secure some income, some earned income or some maintenance income, our employment program — our employment supplement program — will build on that income as income to your family therefore providing an incentive and a step up out of the welfare dependency cycle.

I just want to report, Mr. Chair, that as of yesterday, June 1, our call centre now established at the Department of Social Services to accept applications for the employment supplement program which begins in July, over the month of July, the application process was made available yesterday at the Department of Social Services in the call centre because all applications will be made by telephone. And I want to report, Mr. Chair, to the House today, it can only be described as a resounding success. The phone line opened at 7 p.m. yesterday morning. At 7:02 we had our first application. By the end of the day, I'm told, they had received 900, Mr. Chair, 900 calls with 575 applications made; the others for further information.

I simply want to take this opportunity to congratulate all the

people down in the department who have worked so hard for many, many weeks and were working with much enthusiasm yesterday as we received these hundreds of calls coming into the department to make application for the employment supplement. This tells me, Mr. Speaker, there are families across our province who want to improve the lot for their family, who want to do it without becoming dependent, and who are moving forward as a result of this new program.

And so just to respond and . . . (inaudible) . . . to the member, the changes that we're making to the Act in these changes are those legislative changes necessary to make these programs legal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, just this afternoon actually our office received a call from an individual who happens to come from, I believe, the Redberry Lake area and she's concerned that the low-income supplement may leave a number of people out. I'm not sure if your department is aware of this. I guess the area that comes into focus is for small businesses and the agricultural community, and there seems to be some discrepancies there.

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you can . . . if you're aware of this and if you can give us an explanation of what your department is doing to address this concern.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, if the member has an individual who has a particular concern or a specific situation, I'd welcome his passing over the name and we could follow up further.

But I do want to emphasize to the member and members of the legislature that we were very cognizant of the fact that there will be farm families and small-business people with families in our province who should benefit from these programs, that they should not be simply available to those who will be earning a defined wage or receiving maintenance income.

Now we wrestled long and hard with how to find the appropriate cut-offs and parameters for describing farm and small-business income. Where we have resolved it to is, that in terms of a test for income — and here of course the programs are available and we want them only to be available for low-income family circumstances — we will be basing farm and small-business income on 40 per cent of gross, 40 per cent of gross. But we have decided not to use an asset test, so that an asset test will not be applied.

In other programing that governments over the years have provided to farm and small-business people, assets were considered part of a family's resources. We know that in a farm circumstance one may be very asset rich, but cash poor and income poor for the family. And so we are not using an asset test; we are using 40 per cent of gross as the cut-off line for income.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, I'm not exactly sure where you got the 40 per cent number. I think there are some cases where agriculture producers may even find their return at the end of the day is a lot less than 40 per cent with the high

input costs and the fluctuations in . . . certainly whether it's livestock or grain, whatever you happen to be producing, those costs can certainly fluctuate a great deal. And there are periods of time where individual producers or even business . . . individuals in business find that their bottom line decreases significantly. And so I think that 40 per cent may be a little high; I'm not sure, I'd have to do some checking on that. Maybe you need to talk to the Finance officials.

And I guess the question I should ask is how does the federal government arrive at this. I believe on these income supplement programs . . . the federal government they take your income tax statement and arrive at a figure and determine whether or not you would qualify. Is that indeed what the federal government does? Is that something that your department could have considered?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I want to be clear with the member that the child benefit — the Saskatchewan and National Child Benefit — will operate on the federal rules. That's the Revenue Canada rules. So income is described by Revenue Canada. At a certain level you're eligible for the income.

The employment supplement, being totally a provincial program, we've had to design some of our own parameters. Now with the employment supplement . . . something unique about this approach . . . that it is in many ways a test with a unique approach. In fact in the parameters of up until when you would not be eligible for the supplement because of reaching an income ceiling — in fact the higher your income the more the supplement — to encourage people to advance their own efforts in creating wealth for themselves in employment or through small business or so on.

And so it is a curve so that your benefits will start here but as your income rises, so will the benefits, providing greater incentive to independence until we feel that the benefits earned plus the benefits through the supplement will be enough to provide a living and adequate . . . or at least a living income for the family.

And so we have set this parameter — no asset test for farm or small business, and 40 per cent — recognizing that if we use Revenue Canada's figures, in fact income might be zero. It might be zero. Then with the employment supplement there would be no supplement. If you're not creating some income for yourself, of course there's no supplement. And so we want to be sure that . . . we're trying to be as fair and as reasonable as we can, not to make the program available to those who in fact have sufficient income.

We don't want to create a circumstance where people who are not deserving or who do not require or need the assistance — that they're getting it. But on the other hand we do not want to cut out some farms and small businesses, which if you just use Revenue Canada's description of income would say zero, therefore no benefit.

So what we've done is to take the farm income — by taking the gross farm income reported to Revenue Canada on your tax return — and then minus 60 per cent for farm expenses, allowing them that 40 per cent to be seen as your income from

the farming enterprise.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, thank you, Mr. Minister. I guess one thing . . . The question I would have, Mr. Minister; it almost sounds a little backward if I understand you correctly. You're talking of if you have a higher level of income; your supplement is higher. I thought the idea of the supplement was to be if you happened to be lower, that the supplement would kick in. The higher level of income you're able to finally bring into the home, this supplement would decrease. But the supplement was there as a means whereby you're meeting a need in the home rather than, the greater the amount of income, the income supplement then increasing as well.

It would seem to me that there would be an imbalance there, Mr. Minister. I'm not sure if I totally understand how you're arriving at that decision.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we'll provide for the member these figures because it's clearest when you can actually look at the actual benefits that people will be paid. But here's the principle. It's a curve, as I say. As the program begins . . . well let me just give an example.

Here's a parent. This will be a single parent or a family unit with one child. It doesn't matter, single or married parents. Their income is zero from employment or farming or business, the supplement is zero. If their income in a month or they are able to earn through their own efforts \$250, the subsidy then, the supplement, is another \$31. If they're able to earn 500, the supplement grows to \$94. If they're able to earn 750, the supplement grows to 156. If they're able to earn 825, the supplement will go to 175, and that's where it peaks.

And so the incentive is, we hope, to provide to people, the more that you're able to secure for yourself, the more the supplement will be until you reach that ceiling, and then it begins to curve off. And it will fall to zero as soon as that family has income of something over \$1,500 a month. Then the supplement disappears.

And so it's a curve. It begins, it grows, and then it disappears. Our hope is with that curve we're encouraging people to access more work opportunities as much as they possibly can, or through small business or their own effort.

I'll have a copy of this made and we'll send it to the member.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, from the numbers you're giving me it almost sounds like the income supplement program you're talking of, basically you may find yourselves with more people still looking at social assistance versus going to work. At \$26 . . . I forget the number now. It was less than 500 if that was your employment income and around \$26 in a supplement. I think most clients would receive more than that on social assistance. Is that not true?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — That will not be true, Mr. Chair. In fact this is one part of the benefit package. The other that we've spoken of is of course the Child Benefit.

And so that family with one child or that single parent with one child would receive the Child Benefit, would today be receiving

that Child Benefit as a welfare payment for their child, and then receiving the rest of the social assistance payment to provide for themselves, the rent, and so on.

Now in this mix, if that's what you're getting today, your welfare payment that covers the child and your own needs, in that mix may come some outside income. Now as that outside income comes in with this program, you would gain this supplement. You would also have access to the Child Benefit, but you would not necessarily lose all your welfare benefits.

You may lose a portion of them to keep the income level up above that cut-off line, because we don't want to repeat the circumstance we've had for the last 30 years where you can find yourself better off on the welfare than in employment. And so this is but one of a combination of programs.

Now we hope eventually to see that same family would be accessing enough income in the workplace that, combined with the Child Benefit combined with the National Child Benefit and then with the supplement, they're essentially independent of Social Services with the help of that supplement. And hopefully that too can grow to a circumstance where even the supplement would disappear.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, as well, if a family qualifies for family income supplement — you mentioned that there's a child supplement that's available — what about housing and power and those other costs that are carried by social assistance recipients? Is there some assistance in that area? Is that taken into consideration when you look at the overall dollars that may be going into that household?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now this does not dismantle the current social assistance program, which is a program based on need. And so if a family has need, we define what we believe are the basic needs — lots of debate whether that's high enough or low enough or where it should be but we define basic needs for the household — and then through social assistance we will continue to meet those needs.

These programs then are being made available in addition to Social Services. The one component that will significantly change is that all of the child's benefits will not be provided by welfare but will come through the Child Benefit, national and Saskatchewan. But children's needs will be met through that other program, not through social assistance. But the family's needs, overall, will continue to be supported by Social Services — power, housing, and food.

In that mix then, is the opportunity then to get out and perhaps earn some of your own income or supplement it through a maintenance income and so on. It's that income that we'll begin to supplement with the employment supplement program and hopefully grow that family right out of social assistance.

(1530)

But I want to re-emphasize that this program and the Child Benefit programs are not just available to those on welfare. In fact we predict that the majority of families, in fact the significant majority of families who will benefit, are today not receiving welfare.

And so these supplement programs and the Child Benefit programs and the family health benefits will be available to lots of families who are able to meet their basic needs now but would be in what we might commonly call the working poor. They're working hard but they're just not in a situation where it's providing income enough to lift them anywhere near the poverty line.

And so these programs will reach a significant number of people who are not getting welfare, adding new resources to them and to their children.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, currently how many people in Saskatchewan are collecting social assistance and of that number, do you see a significant drop-off to some form of income as well as continuing to rely on some amount . . . how many people do you see at the end of the day. Will the full assistance under social assistance be reduced somewhat as a result of changes to the program?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, our case-load — these are the most recent figures that we have are April 1998. And the case-load at the end of April 1998 was 35,960 — 35,960 cases. That means family units or individuals. That will represent 71,891 people — adults and children — 35,960 cases. That, Mr. Chair, while it's a high number, it's a significant, significant decline from where we were just a few years ago.

I can recall standing in this House reporting case-loads of over 40,000. And so we've fallen to thirty-five, nine. It's actually down from thirty-nine, three four in April of '97. So we're seeing a trend down. It's related I believe to the growing economy.

With the introduction of the new programs we expect that we will see an immediate, an immediate, drop of a thousand cases. A thousand households will move from welfare because the income will be better through the other programs. So a thousand cases.

Now what we're hoping is that over a longer term that the mentality around the social assistance program will change and people will begin, as we hope they will, to see independence as the preferred route. If we can provide the tools to have folks do that, we see a steady — we hope a steady — decline in the case-load numbers which, in combination with education programs, with the economy, and so on, we hope we'll see.

Now I'm of the view that we will continue to require in our province for the conceivable future a form of social assistance to meet the short-term needs on a short-term basis for families or individuals who will find themselves in difficulty. I believe that to be the case. There will always be a certain welfare case-load.

Now in this mix too are those people whom we're providing the basic needs for who are disabled, whose disability may prevent them in fact in many ways from accessing employment. These too are represented in this case-load of 35,000, and we'll want to be . . . I think working with the disabled community and looking at programs that might better meet their needs through some other alternative than just social welfare. Very specific to your question, we expect an immediate drop of a thousand cases

and then an ongoing decline.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, under the current system, what is the cost associated with administering the current social assistance program in regards to the number of individuals being on the program and what amounts of funds will now be required to administer the new income supplement program you're talking about?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, I'm going to beg the indulgence of the member. We anticipate moving to the Committee of Finance and our folks that have all of the financial figures are right out here in the hallway. If we could hold that question until the Committee of Finance when the officials are here we'll be glad to give them the exact numbers.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in regards to the fact that yes we're going to be dealing with Social Services in committee, we can certainly address some of the more in-depth questions in regards to the changes that are taking place at that time and I appreciate the minister's comments.

A couple of further questions — you talk about a Youth Futures program working along, in conjunction, with the new Saskatchewan assistance program. If I understand it correctly you're talking about educational skills training programs you're going to become involved in. How do you anticipate those programs working and the delivery of that educational component that you're looking at? And I believe what we're seeing is the need to upgrade or help people upgrade their educational skills to actually enter the workplace to find full employment. Is that true?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Yes, that and more, Mr. Chair. The Youth Futures program seeks to meet the needs of a specific group of individuals in our province, 18- to about 21-year-olds.

When I was provided the privilege of serving as Minister of Social Services, one of the most alarming statistics that I found was the growth of 18- to 21-year-olds coming into the welfare system. While our total case-load was beginning to decline, the growth of 18- to 21-year-olds coming out of the system was growing like this.

Now that is a prescription for a lifelong and long-term dependency, in my view. So we ask ourselves, why are these young people coming onto social assistance? In many cases it's because they are unable to access employment opportunities.

We ask the question then, why are they unable to work, find work, and so on, when we know that work is available in many of our communities. And it is as the member points out, it's very often a lack of educational skills or tools or experience. It may be other lifestyle, life-skill issues. It may be simply they haven't had a chance to gain any experience. It may be because of dysfunctional family background. There are many reasons why we found those people on social assistance.

And so what we have done is created in the community of Prince Albert, as a pilot project from which we're learning a great deal, what we describe as Youth Futures. Now the program is being handled by Post-Secondary Education because it is primarily an educational opportunity to equip people for

work.

But it provides for those young people their basic needs, not through welfare. They are no longer eligible to apply or to receive welfare except in very special circumstance. They receive their basic needs through the Youth Futures program. They are counselled on an individual basis, utilizing a community, a broad community base of resources who have come together to support this project. And almost on an individual basis, these young people are getting case-managed plans for themselves.

Now for some of them it will mean back to doing some traditional education. For others it may mean non-traditional education. For others it may mean community service or it might mean job experience. All of which is to tool these young people, to give them the experience and life skills to enter that growing economy that's all around us.

To date Youth Futures is proving to be a very successful program. I judge its success in that we have a significant waiting-list of young people who want to become part of it. If the pilot proves, as we see it happening, to be a good program then we're looking forward to expansion of that program to other communities.

But just by the way, Mr. Chair, the Youth Futures program, there is nothing in the Act, the amendments, that affect Youth Futures or that Youth Futures affects the Act.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, and Mr. Minister, in regards to the income supplement, and we talk about other benefits such as health benefits and what have you, is any of that addressed in this Act? Are those extended to people who would qualify for the income supplement?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The family health benefits program will be available to all of those families who have children where their income and family income and number of children qualify them for the national and provincial Child Benefit.

If by Revenue Canada's description in your income tax form, your income shows your eligibility for the Child Benefit, then we will, with signed permission of course of the family, enrol the children in the family health benefits program.

And so all of the same health benefits that are provided today to children on welfare will be provided to children . . . all of those children who are not on welfare but all the children who will qualify for the benefit, and that will be a significant number of children across our province.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, the legislation calls for the Government of Canada to administer the payment of program benefits. Now I guess the question I have, are we talking of all the elements of the change in social assistance? We've got the income supplement; we've got the child benefit. I forget what the others were right offhand. But are we talking of every level of additional care?

You mentioned about the fact that the federal government, some of the programs were run in conjunction. I believe you mentioned, if I'm not mistaken, the income supplement actually

is a provincial plan. What do you mean when . . . what programs are you talking of here when you're talking of the federal government administering programs on behalf of the minister?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, it will just be the Saskatchewan Child Benefit that will be administered by the federal government. We've done that because of our work at the federal-provincial table in establishing a National Child Benefit that's being provided to Canadian children. For administrative savings and for ease of administration for families, it seems to us only sensible that there be essentially one cheque provided to the family. That cheque will be cut by the federal government. It will show both involvement of the province and the federal government and it will be based on Revenue Canada. So it's the Child Benefit that's being administered by the federal government.

The family health benefit is administered by the province; Youth Futures by the province; the employment supplement by the province.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, as well I note that you give the federal government the ability as well to recover overpayments. So I would take that that's in the Child Benefit. What about in the area of the income supplement and the health benefits. What provisions does the department, the provincial department have should there be an overpayment down the road in regard to any one of these programs?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Essentially, Mr. Chair, the same as we do now with the traditional social assistance. If there is an overpayment then we would collect.

It would be . . . in terms of the health benefit, that's a little more difficult. If a prescription medicine has been paid for for the child, that would be a little different. But in terms of any income going to that household, and if it was an overpayment, someone had failed to report income or something that would cause an overpayment, it would be recollected the same way we do now.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, in your opening comments this afternoon, you mentioned that — I believe it was this morning — that you've actually opened up the phone lines and gave individuals the opportunity to begin calling to seek some information. And also I believe you have applications now that people can request, as I understand it.

When this Act is passed in this Assembly, is it intended to come into force immediately, or retroactively to a certain date or down the road to come into force? When do you intend to have the Act officially come into force?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the Act and the programs will come into force on July 1. What we're doing now is simply taking the applications. And just while I have the opportunity, if anyone is interested in information or making application, the toll-free number is 1 888 488 6385 — 1 888 488 6385.

(1545)

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I

have read this Act with a great deal of enthusiasm because I'm very hopeful that it will succeed at what you are attempting to accomplish.

I'm wondering though if you've done a little research in order to supplement this in the future in case this doesn't all work. And my thoughts today go to two areas that need to be resolved if we are to achieve the goals that you've set out for yourself. We have to provide jobs for people, and of course we want to provide higher incomes for people. Those two combinations of course, put together, take people off welfare probably quicker than anything else.

I see some problems in this Act, but obviously it's going to be the law so we may as well learn that we're going to accept it as being the new law and the system we're going to try.

So my question, Minister, is related to British Columbia and Alberta. In British Columbia of course they've gone the direction of using a higher minimum wage in order to increase people's net income or income potentials in the lower income groups, of course.

And in Alberta of course they have lower minimum wage but they have a lot more jobs. An example, of course, of that is the fact that there will be something like 500 people employed at the gas plant constructions over at Burstall in the next couple of years. So why that's happened is immaterial.

What I need to know is what studies have you done to find out whether or not going the direction of British Columbia and Alberta would supplement your plan which seems to be to try to bribe people with a carrot at the end of a stick rather than to force them to work?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the experience in other provinces we've carefully considered.

In terms of opportunities for Saskatchewan people, the member will know that we now enjoy the first or second lowest rate of unemployment anywhere in Canada. And then when it comes to youth employment, the youth employment, a number of studies, particularly one that was recently done by an Alberta firm, tells you that if you're a young person looking for work, the best place in all of Canada to be is in Saskatchewan.

So there are opportunities in our economy and many of our people are taking advantage of those opportunities. And we see that reflected in our declining welfare case-loads, which the decline has been significant.

We recognize that the programs we're putting into place with this legislation are but one piece of a puzzle, and that this puzzle of providing employment and decent living income for families is not going to be accomplished through any particular programs alone. We don't pretend that these programs alone can provide a decent living income for families; that they must be in combination.

They must be in combination with an economy that's active and buoyant and providing employment opportunities. They've got to be in a market-place that provides a decent return for labour. And so we have minimum wages in Saskatchewan.

We have a Minimum Wage Board who works diligently both on the business side of the equation and on the worker side of the equation to try and find accommodation. We've seen moderate increases in the minimum wage here; not dramatic, but we believe increases that are appropriate to the Saskatchewan economy.

That's a piece of it. Because many people, when they do get into that economy, their first job is a minimum wage position. And as I say, I think we've gone some real distance in creating employment opportunities in this province for people. So it's a combination.

What these programs are trying to do is change that traditional welfare system so that it is advantageous for families to access that economy, to access the employment opportunities, to access the education opportunities, to get out there and secure some of those minimum wage positions even as a start to independence.

We've had a system where I believe the system itself has almost forced dependence or kept people behind what we sometimes call the welfare wall. And so what we're trying to do here is really to change the notion from simply a hand-out to a hand up, a hand up to dependence for families and individuals.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Minister, I certainly support the idea of giving people a hand up rather than a hand-out because those people that receive hand-outs rarely are given an incentive to ever do anything for themselves. And that seems to be one of our problems in Saskatchewan. While you have the second lowest unemployment or thereabouts of the country, as you've just alluded to, you still have 78,000 people on welfare.

A few years ago we had 51,000, and of course your government made the argument that you added 10,000 of that because aboriginals were dropped from the federal lists onto the provincial, so that's still 61,000 as compared to 78,000. So you're still a long ways off the mark at 17,000 more people on welfare than you used to have. And while you have achieved some measure of success in Saskatchewan for employing people — and that's good and I compliment people for that — but the credit really has to go to the private sector because they are the people who have employed folks.

And the reality is that the solutions you've had for welfare haven't worked for welfare recipients because you haven't tackled some of the very basic fundamental issues in welfare. And in Saskatchewan one of those fundamental issues that we have clearly had identified for us is the lack of a work ethic that is coupled with third- and fourth-generation homes and families who are on the welfare system.

And when you have people that have had their grandmother, their great-grandmother, their mother, and everybody in the family has for generations been on welfare, you have to have some program that teaches these children what a work ethic even is because they don't understand what work is all about. They don't understand the need to go to work. They don't even understand the concept of arriving any place on time once of course they are through the school system, and that's the only place where they ever have any requirement thrown at them that

they should be some place on time in life. And we need to work on that.

And I fail to see, Minister, where the efforts that you're making here, although I've conceded to you that they're a start, and the reality being though that you have to if you're going to get that 78,000 number down, you're going to have to start to address those fundamental reasons why people stay on welfare even when you have provided them with a job opportunity as you say we have. We are the second lowest in unemployment so obviously we are supplying people with the opportunities for jobs, yet they're not taking those opportunities.

So we have got some more work to do. And I think my question is very simply this. In view of the fact that you have not been successful at bringing welfare numbers down very quickly, not nearly as quickly as places like Alberta, the reality of course is then that we have to do something else. And what studies have you done that will complement and supplement this approach that you're taking now?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I believe I'm going to find myself somewhat in disagreement with the member's assessment. He, I think, generalizes too much.

I will first of all be in disagreement with his figures. I want him to be absolutely accurate in terms of the numbers of people today receiving social assistance in Saskatchewan has fallen to 71,000, not 78 — 71,000 which is a 10,000 almost, 9,000 drop, 9,000-person drop from only April 1997. And so we are seeing a significant decline.

I want to remind the member again that of those 71,000 people on social assistance, a goodly number of them, a goodly number of them — in fact the number being accurately 30,791 — 30,791 of that number are children. So I'm sure the member's not suggesting that those children should all be getting up in the morning and going to work.

Of that number, Mr. Chair, again a significant number of people will be those who are afflicted by some significant disability that will in many cases prevent them from going to work. So I want you to not suggest that the 78,000 people who are receiving social assistance in our province today are all folks who don't have a work ethic.

Now of those who have the ability to work and who are on welfare, in my experience, Mr. Chair, the vast majority of them wish they were not on welfare. They wish they were not on welfare. They wish they did have employment.

I will concede, as the member will concede on certain points, that there are those in our communities who do lack a work ethic. But I would suggest to the member and all members that that by far is the minority in our province. And in fact I think our province is known nationwide as having one of the best work ethics anywhere in North America. I'm sure folks in private industry and private enterprise will tell you that. We have some who lack a work ethic, I admit that. And we need to assist them as best we can and provide them the options.

I admit as well that we have a number of families who have fallen into the welfare dependency cycle where it has become

intergenerational, hence the kind of changes that we're making, to tear down the walls that in fact keep people in this system to give them the opportunity, the hand up.

Just imagine this, Mr. Speaker, if you're a single parent receiving social assistance right now, and there are many. We have many single mothers receiving social assistance, responsible for their children; they take that responsibility seriously. If they're able to get a minimum wage job now, even a job that provides them enough to meet the basic needs of their own — their adult needs and their child needs — and they leave welfare, they're going to lose all their health benefits.

Now many single parents say, I don't want to risk that for my child, and so I'll stay on social assistance. It doesn't mean they don't have a work ethic. They're trying to do what's best for their child.

So what we want is a circumstance where that single mom, in doing the best for herself and her child, can leave welfare, confident that she's not going to lose all the health protection for her child until they are well-established in work and in their own income.

That's the kind of change we want to make to encourage people and build on what I think is a deeply held work ethic in our province.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Minister, we can throw figures back and forth and you can get technical about wanting to use exact figures, and that's all right. But the reality is that you've got 30,791 children on welfare and they should be in school. And most certainly they should be learning in school not only that you have to show up at 9 o'clock in the morning, but that you have to spend the whole day there, and that you should learn in that process, and the only opportunity available to them the work ethic that we're talking about.

And you need of course then to follow up with apprenticeship programs so that these people can in fact have a goal in life that is presented to them. Because oftentimes people who are the victims of growing up in welfare homes, in welfare atmospheres, don't have any goals that they can see for themselves because they never have the opportunity to see anything except the poorer lifestyle that they are caught up in.

And so they need to have someone guide them and direct them through apprenticeship programs that actually shows them that there is a job and here's how you can work to get to it. And I would suggest to you that that is part of the solution that you should be examining, and I of course would ask if you are taking further steps in that direction. As well of course you allude to the fact that you're doing pretty well because you've reduced the number of people on welfare by 9,000.

Well that's the same philosophy your government has used when they fired 500 nurses and then hired back 200 and said, you should all be happy. And it's a little bit convoluted when you think about it. Because again here's what you're saying, is that we had 51,000 people on welfare in 1991, but the fact that it went up to 70 or 80,000 and we've cut off a third of those, now you should be happy.

It's the same philosophy that you used in the nurses' argument. Now that you've got back a third of the nurses that you had fired, you should all be happy. And now that you've got a third of the people off welfare that you have determined through your numbers, then we should all be happy about that. I don't think that goal, Minister, is good enough. I know that it's a start, and I will concede to you that I'm glad that you are getting the numbers to come down, but let's not try to conclude that we've solved the problem with the numbers that you're using.

We've got a long ways to go here is what I'm saying, and I think I should let you respond to that.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well I certainly agree, Mr. Chair, we have a distance to go. That's for sure. None of us can be content when we have this number of families and children, children particularly, living in low income or poverty circumstances in our province. Well that is intolerable. We see it as intolerable, and hence we're making what I think is taking some Canadian leadership on trying to change social assistance programing.

I want to assure the member that the children who receive welfare benefits today in Saskatchewan are in school, if they're old enough to be in school.

And while it's not particular to this department or this piece of legislation under debate, there are a host of new training programs available to Saskatchewan young people and Saskatchewan families which build on some of the very ideas I think the member's talked about. Apprenticeship, mentorship, just a broad base now of Job Start, Future Skills programs that endeavour to do just that — equip people with the tools they'll need to take advantage of this growing economy.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Mr. Minister, I think you're going to be surprised to hear that I wish you well. I hope your program works. I truly do.

But I do think you're going to have to do some more work. I hope you will put your officials to work thinking about follow-up programs so that we can in fact succeed.

There is nothing more tragic than to see young people in our society without hope, without direction, and without any plan for a future. We need to teach them in our province that there are goals they can set, that realistically can be reached by themselves, so that they can hold up their heads and have the dignity to go on in life.

And while I sympathize with older people as well, I am particularly concerned about the young people that are caught up in this kind of a lifestyle. Because they do get pushed back, they do find themselves treated badly by their peers in schools and through the system, and I think your program has a chance to start to relieve that.

So I wish you well and I compliment you for giving it your best effort.

(1600)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the minister, I would like to say thank you and I appreciate the responses to the questions. And also thank you to your officials who have joined you this afternoon to address the questions in regards to significant changes to the social assistance program.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Just before our officials depart, I too would want to join with the member from Moosomin in thanking the officials for the work in advising us this afternoon, but for particularly the work they've done over the many, many months in building these programs. And I want to thank the members for their appropriate good questions.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 49 — The Saskatchewan Assistance Amendment Act, 1998

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

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Social Services Vote 36

The Deputy Chair: — I'll remind committee members that this department was last here on April 29. I invite the minister to reintroduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. With us this afternoon, Glenda Yeates at my side, who is deputy minister of the Department of Social Services. Just behind Glenda, Bonnie Durnford, assistant deputy minister. To Glenda's right, Phil Walsh, executive director of income support. Just behind Phil, Richard Hazel, executive director, family and youth services. And just behind myself is Bob Wihlidal, who is our executive director of financial management.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you, Minister.

Subvote (SS01)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, welcome to you and to your officials to the discussion around Social Services.

Mr. Minister, while we were discussing it a bit earlier, I think I'll go directly into those questions. In regards to the social assistance Act that we just moved through Assembly earlier this afternoon, a couple of questions that I had asked at that time and in regards to the cost.

Number one, the cost currently associated with administering the program for the number of individuals. I believe you

mentioned somewhere in the neighbourhood of 71, almost 72,000 people on social assistance right now, roughly close to 36,000 cases. What is that cost to the department?

And secondly, Mr. Minister, what will the cost be associated to the new income supplement program in administering and implementing the low income program?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I want to say to the member, when we discuss administrative costs in the Department of Social Services, it's not a simple breakdown. We deliver our programs on a regional basis — I'm talking now about the current structure and system of programs — and so our programs are delivered through regional offices and for the most part they are delivered by social workers with clerical assistants.

And so there will be those monetary benefits that are paid through the welfare system to people, but they also are encountering the work of social workers. So we can provide for the member . . . it's difficult for us therefore to break down. If we talk about all of our workers and clericals as part of administration, while it is administration, but it's also service delivery. We can provide for the member sort of the breakdown of monies that are provided as cash transfer payments to individuals through welfare and then show on a regional basis, the cost of the workers, the social workers.

But that one worker may be delivering child family services to a family, another worker may be delivering social welfare interviews and programs. The person that's the clerical or the receptionist will be not billed to any one division of the department but serves to answer them all.

So in our case it's difficult to sort of separate out what's administration and what is service provided. With our new programs, the actual ongoing cost of administering the programs, as we've been able to sort them out, will be about two and a half million dollars for administration. Now that represents 2.5 per cent of the program dollars.

Now this will provide for the total, also the ongoing totally new systems development. So that, as I described earlier, we have now the call centre here at the Department of Social Services and the people from all over the province can access the employment supplement not by having to go down to an office, not by having to in some cases have the indignity of having to work through a worker, but you can do very privately from your own home. All of this is included in that administrative cost.

We believe this is an entirely reasonable cost, given that these programs are going to extend to a broad, broad range of Saskatchewan people whom we do not now serve in any programing way.

The employment supplement, the family health benefits are going to go out to a broad range of families and we believe this is an appropriate investment to serve that many people. In terms of our Child Benefit as we discussed earlier, we're trying to get the administrative costs down by working with Revenue Canada in Ottawa.

So we can provide for the member the breakdown of . . . well

some of it's displayed in the book, in the *Estimates* book. So you'll see the cost for regional services, you'll see the cost for salaries in the book, and so on. But again, as I say, this is our department's administration, is at the same time the service that we're providing to people.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Deputy Chair, to the minister. Mr. Minister, we in our discussion earlier as well in regarding the social assistance and income supplement program, question at that time was how many people on assistance and how many people did you envision moving from direct assistance that would qualify or possibly take advantage of the income supplement program. I believe at that time you indicated you're anticipating at least right initially, roughly a thousand people, or cases.

Mr. Minister, as well, the fact that this is now open to the general public and it may give a lot of very low income families who have struggled to survive at minimum wage, how many cases do you anticipate may be added to, or become a part, or take advantage of — I shouldn't use the word take advantage of — but look to the income supplement program as a means of meeting their financial needs?

(1615)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We are anticipating, Mr. Chair, that 19,000 — 19,000 Saskatchewan households, families, will benefit from the Saskatchewan employment supplement program, from the employment supplement program. Of that 19,000 families, we anticipate 4 to 5,000 of those families today are receiving welfare benefits under social assistance. So it will represent another 15,000 or thereabout, families who will be receiving benefits under the Saskatchewan employment supplement.

Under the Child Benefit and family health benefit, we expect up to 40,000 families, up to 80,000 people, will be getting benefits under those programs. But the employment supplement itself we expect will involve about 19,000 families, about 15,000 of whom are not on welfare.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Minister, have you an idea of what you anticipate may be an average cost per household under the income supplement plan, and what do you anticipate may be the total. When I'm talking costs, I'm talking the actual dollars that may go into the hands of individuals to help meet the needs that they're facing as a result of the program being available to them.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we anticipate on an annual basis — now this year we're starting later in the year so it won't represent this figures — but annualized we expect the employment supplement program to be in the neighbourhood of \$24 million. Our more exact projection right now is 23.7 — but in the neighbourhood of \$24 million. If we anticipate 19,000, that will give us the average.

Now it's hard to work averages here because it's based on earned income or maintenance income by the families. So some families will receive more because of their number of children and the income they're able to earn. So it would be probably difficult to say there'd be an average per household. But to

create an average one could say \$24 million on an annual basis, hopefully reaching 19,000 families.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Minister, so I take it from that response then that under income support programs here in the *Estimates* for the year '97-98, we see for Saskatchewan employment supplement, zero, but anticipated 13.5. That 13.5, I believe you're basing that on the fact we're starting the program July 1.

I also note a Saskatchewan Child Benefit program of forty-nine million seven, roughly the same. I would take it that's based on the same thing. And maybe you could just indicate what specifically the Child Benefit program is going to do when we're looking at almost \$50 million going into that program.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — What it will do, Mr. Chair, is to provide in combination with the National Child Benefit . . . The federal government has created a National Child Benefit that will provide resources to families. With the investment that the federal government's now put into the National Child Benefit, that's not enough at this time to provide for the basic needs of a child in our province.

And so what our provincial Child Benefit will do will ensure that in combination with the National Child Benefit, we provide enough to meet the basic needs of children of low income families in our province. That means that all the children now receiving welfare will get their support through the Child Benefit combination, Saskatchewan and federal.

Other provinces are not doing this. We're taking all of our children off welfare to provide for all those children who today are on welfare, their needs through the Child Benefit. But then we're expanding that, you see, taking that same benefit package and providing it to children in other low income circumstances, and hence the very significant investment of dollars.

This is a large investment of dollars that it is to provide for the basic benefit, the basic needs of children in low income circumstances, all the kids on welfare, and then children that are in families not on welfare today. And that's why the large investment of dollars.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Chair, and Mr. Minister, as we'll note and I thank you for those comments and just trying, clarifying a little more what the Child Benefit Program will be doing, and those costs, as those costs are now entered in that weren't there previous to.

I noticed under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan we've got roughly a \$45 million reduction. Is that reduction for this year versus last year of 292 million down to 248 coming as a result of the transfer of some of the programs to these other areas of support versus the current system of social assistance?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — It's a combination, Mr. Chair. It will represent what we believe is the declining case-load. That's factored in. We've seen the case-load fall, as we talked about earlier, significantly. And then it's the redirected money.

And so the money is now being provided to children through the Child Benefit. Part of that money is redirected monies from

social assistance because we're not covering the children under welfare in future. And with the employment supplement program, we've collapsed the Family Income Plan, the old Family Income Plan, into that. And so that also comes out of that figure.

And so it's two things. It's redirected monies; it's case-load drop. The redirected monies is then being supplemented with new money to create the new programs.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Chair, and Mr. Minister, you mentioned about combining the Family Income Plan. I noticed that there's a reduction in the Family Income Plan of about \$6 million. There's still 2.6 million involved in the plan.

I guess the question I would have is why would you need to continue to run the Family Income Plan if we have these new changes to the plan, changes to assistance and these new plans coming in? Wouldn't the new plans basically pick up all the service or the services that were available under the Family Income Plan?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — They will, Mr. Chair. It again relates to the July and month of July start. So we kept the Family Income Plan going for the first quarter of the year and then when it phases out . . . so it's shown in this year's for the month it's continued.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Deputy Chair, to the minister, under the seniors' income plan, senior citizens benefits, I notice a reduction of almost \$3 million. Can you explain why the reduction . . . is that fewer cases you're dealing with or cutting back in the level of services that are available to seniors?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — It represents no change in the benefit levels but a drop in the demand, a drop in the case-load.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Chair, to the minister. Mr. Minister, I raised an issue last year. I just sent you a letter most recently, and I believe you're quite familiar with the case we're talking about. I want to raise a couple of questions here in regards to Mr. Lance Connell who was an employee of the department.

And I raise it, Mr. Minister, I raised a couple of questions last year. The concern I had was, number one, the way your department handled the case when allegations were raised against Mr. Connell and the fact that under our judicial system I believe most people perceive that we live in a judicial system that says you're innocent until proven guilty. But I think we're beginning to see more people beginning to wonder whether or not that's the case and whether we're not facing a situation that if you face an accusation, that it's then your responsibility to prove your innocence.

And the concern that the way your department handled the case at the time, and the fact that it was almost appearing that your department was basically laying guilt by laying . . . basically releasing Mr. Connell from his obligations, and I think I suggested then, asked at that time, wouldn't it have been possible to find other employment that would not have put Mr. Connell in an area of conflict where he could have maintained employment without creating such a problem for his family.

The question I have this year, Mr. Minister, is in regards to the fact that just most recently the courts have actually withdrawn all charges against Mr. Connell. And that was the reason I had written a letter bringing up the fact that after a good, long period of time of discomfort and struggle and turmoil in the Connell family, they've gone through the court process; they've had to deal with that in the court to withdraw all the charges.

However your department finds itself in a position of saying, we're going to continue an investigation. It would seem to me that it would have been a fairly intensive investigation prior to any charges, and the fact that they were withdrawn is a strong indication that the department or the prosecutor's office obviously felt that they really didn't have information to go to court to even . . . and probably would have found themselves with a not guilty of all the charges that were laid against him.

The question I have, Mr. Minister, is twofold. Mr. Minister, I believe in your letter you indicated or . . . no, in a letter that was sent by the department to Mr. Connell it says that his status has been changed to suspended with pay. I guess the question I have, has Mr. Connell's pay been . . . is Mr. Connell now on pay while he's still on suspension . . . brought up received payment. Has he received payment back to the day he was released and his employment was ceased?

And, Mr. Minister, I guess the other question is why would the department feel it now has to continue its own investigation when we've had more than a period, almost more than a period of a year where the Department of Justice would have been looking into the accusations that were laid at the time?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, for the information of the member, as of March 18 of this year, March 18, 1998, Mr. Connell was provided a letter from the department advising him that his employment status with the department has been changed to being suspended with pay, and that he should be receiving those benefits now. And as the member indicates, there is an employer's investigation following, which is I think near conclusion, will be concluded by the end of this month.

When the member asks why an employer's investigation, part of that investigation actually is to look at the question of retroactive pay. And part of it is, while the courts have one view, I think the employers may have some other issues they want to work through. They want to be as fair as they possibly can to Mr. Connell. We want this investigation to be as timely as possible and for its results to be known at the latest, at the end of this month.

But I'm informed by my officials that in fact his employment status has been changed to suspended with pay, and that should be happening now.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, so as I understand it . . . and certainly I do have a copy; Mr. Connell has passed that copy on. What you're saying though is, the current status would be that Mr. Connell should be receiving the pay that he would have had when he was suspended, but anything retroactive that is still under discussion, there will not be a decision made on that until the report is brought to the department and a decision is made upon further employment with the department. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — That is correct, Mr. Chair.

(1630)

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, I guess the one further question — and I haven't unfortunately had the opportunity just to double check immediately, but the last I checked Mr. Connell was still waiting for a cheque. And I'm not exactly sure if that's . . . if your department's aware whether or not indeed salary is now being extended to Mr. Connell, as to the letter that he's been sent in regards to the review. I don't know if you can confirm that.

And secondly, as the one letter indicated, I believe the letter you had sent back to me as well, you talked about a report being filed with the deputy minister by the end of May and a commitment to Mr. Connell to having his employment status conference . . . or at least a call to him to let him know where he stands.

Mr. Minister, is that June 15 deadline . . . Are you aware or is your department aware — are you going to be able to achieve that?

Because I think, Mr. Minister, as you can appreciate, the Connell family have certainly gone through a lot. It's created a lot of turmoil even within their own family members, it seems. Situations like this I don't think are easy for any family, Mr. Minister, and I think you can appreciate that. So I think it's very important that this be looked at, be addressed quickly and, as you say, carefully. But certainly that we indeed recognize what the Connells have gone through.

And I know other members of the department I think it doesn't matter what . . . when you're dealing with individuals, I'm sure all members or all workers working for social assistance at some point or other maybe ask themselves are they in the right place. Because under our current system you never know what you may find thrown against you, and I think most people would expect the union and their employer to look fairly appreciably about how they've conducted their work over the years. It's a difficult situation.

So, Mr. Minister, can you confirm that indeed salary has been indeed . . . that it's now going to the Connells and that indeed this will be finalized by the date you've indicated in your letter?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we will immediately check in terms of whether the benefits have been paid to Mr. Connell from the March date; we'll check that right away. And my officials advise me that we expect to meet the June 15 opportunity, thereabouts. But it is the expectation of the department that we'll meet that mid-June target.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, another question. Mr. Minister, when it comes to — and this question actually rises a bit from a human resources and development fund for educational courses. Now I believe that's a federal program, but I guess the question to your office . . . and we talked about that a moment ago when we talked about futures programming. What does your office do in assisting or trying to help clients find, or not necessarily maybe always find employment, but help them obtain the skills that are needed to find real and true

employment?

Is there an avenue in your department whereby you are always looking at ways in which you can help clients upgrade their skills if necessary, and also build up a rapport or help them to really be able to go through an employment opportunity by applying for and presenting themselves to receive employment? What does your department do to address that and what amount of finances do you put into this level of programming?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, if we're here speaking of folks who are receiving welfare, social assistance, each and every person who receives social assistance is provided a case plan. We try and work with each individual in a case plan. If that individual indicates or it's demonstrated that they could use some training opportunities, then the worker will point them in those directions.

Now we've tended over the last number of years to move responsibility for the delivery of the programs out of social assistance to Post-Secondary Education, when we're talking about adults, with I think some thought behind that move. Again it's my sort of thought that if we can move people from sort of being on welfare as their source of sustenance and income into other opportunities, the better. And so some folks now have moved from receiving their basic needs through welfare to receiving their basic needs through a training program being delivered by Post-Secondary.

So we're moving away from some of the actual program delivery in terms of training. But each and everyone of our workers working with each and every client on social assistance tries to build a case plan for them and push or encourage or pull folks into those training programs. We've let the delivery now move more to Post-Secondary.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Minister, I think it's important that the department certainly be available and work with . . . because for a lot of the clients I'm sure it's . . . many of them may not be in a position on their own to really be able to achieve or to find the avenues or to look through the avenues that may be available for . . . whether it's education or upgrading and specific skills.

And when we look at people on social assistance, we look at the numbers of people going to the food bank, it's obvious, Mr. Minister, that we need to utilize all our resources. We just can't depend on the Departments of Education or Post-Secondary Education because some of these individuals may not even qualify for that Post-Secondary without some upgrading.

So I would encourage your department to continue to do whatever it can to assist people in finding meaningful employment.

Mr. Minister, the other day I believe — a couple of questions here — I think if I'm not mistaken I did ask you for the global questions, whether your department had received them, whether you pretty well have them wrapped up or together, whether you can even give them to us today. I wonder if those are here. And . . . Well maybe I'll wait for a response to that.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I'd hoped we have them or

they would be delivered by today. They will be I'm sure very soon. The work is near completion.

Mr. Toth: — Well we look forward to receiving those, Mr. Minister. It's unfortunate that, yes, we don't have them. There may be some questions that arise, and I could stand here and say, well maybe that's why we don't have them yet because we're . . . as we wind down but we look forward to receiving the questions. Certainly, Mr. Minister, if there are any questions that arise, we will be in contact with your office and your department to raise some of those concerns.

The other day as well, I submitted a written question regarding the new Child Benefit and employment system computer program and I asked what the total cost to the government for planning, developing, and implementing this computer program was. You answered \$4,957,437.

My second question was whether the program . . . work on this program was tendered. Your answer was yes. My question today, Mr. Minister, is whether this work was openly tendered.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the information I have is this. There were tenders issued for the program planning work. There were two tenders. The first of those failed to attract any available or suitable resources. Three local companies were awarded the second tender. Social Services then asked IBM to propose additional expertise and project management service, and IBM was then selected.

We have worked with IBM in past, and it's on this basis that IBM was really selected — familiarity with the department's business and processes through previous work — and they provided to us immediate access to some hard-to-find resources. And given the time lines, knowing that we needed these programs in place and running by June 1 to accept applications and be running in July 1, it was concluded by the department that IBM's proposal provided the good value for money.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, as I understand what you've said, you did have a tender go out initially. There were no responses to it, so then you followed up with a second tender where you approached some of the firms that you felt might have the ability. Is that correct? And out of those — I believe you mentioned three — out of the three you found a firm that would be able to meet some of the time lines. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I want to be clear, Mr. Chair, that this in some ways was two-phased and the early parts were tendered as I described. And then when we moved into the actual bigger phase, it was not. It was awarded to IBM. It's IBM that's doing the work. Yes, it was awarded to IBM.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Minister, it was awarded to IBM because after the first phase, it appeared it had the . . . it was the firm or the company that was best able to and provided the job skills and the programing that would meet the requirements that your department was looking for.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — That's absolutely correct, Mr. Chair — and because they've worked with the department in the past, I'm told, and because they had the skills and ability to put this

in place in a relatively short period of time.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Minister, a question here regarding foster-parenting. And maybe I can discuss this a little bit and some of the issues surrounding the level in procedures for confidentiality when it relates to placing youth in foster care.

I'd just like to give an example. Let's say it was 3 o'clock in the morning and a foster-parent gets a phone call and is asked to take a child into their home. And please remember these people likely have children of their own or other foster-children in their home already to protect. So they're asked to take a child in who has run away or been forced out of their previous foster-home. And let's assume the reason for leaving the previous home was because he or she had pulled a knife on their foster-parent. Would the foster-parent receiving the phone call at 3 in the morning be told why the violent child was forced out of the last home?

And I would like to ask the minister in a very general way a question, because I don't want to certainly get into the Helen Montgomery case, but the general question is in regards to what is the level of disclosure to individuals who run open care custody facilities in their homes for young offenders?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the member describes two quite different scenarios. One is a foster placement, an emergency foster placement. In that circumstance, because it is an emergency, the worker involved would provide or should provide to the receiving foster parent as much information as that worker knows, given at that moment.

Now they may not have a complete or a full picture because it's an emergency situation. Any other information that comes along would then be provided from the worker to the new foster parents.

In the other circumstance of the community home represented by Mrs. Montgomery's home in North Battleford, there's never such a thing as an emergency placement there. These are much more considered and studied, and the community home operators, they're provided a full dossier on the individual young offender and they're given the option, after having reviewed all the information, to say, no, I don't want that particular young offender in my home, or yes I do.

So it's quite different. There wouldn't be a situation where you'd have an emergency placement in a community home.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, how many foster homes or families do we have in the province of Saskatchewan today?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — As of March this year, Mr. Chair, the total number was 829 and we're involved in another 315 foster home studies that are under way.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Minister, another issue that I'd like some clarification on is regarding emergency shelters for women. About a month ago my colleague, the member from Kelvington, raised the issue of emergency homes for women. And she raised the issue of the Prince Albert

Emergency Shelter for Women and the announcement made by the Community Service Centre board that they would not continue governing this shelter because they simply could not continue operating the shelter given the current funding commitment.

When she raised the issue, Mr. Minister, you stood up in this Assembly and said that indeed the shelter would not be closing and that you'd gone to Prince Albert and taken care of the situation.

Mr. Minister, some of the information we've just received — and I wanted to share a moment — information from the shelter and from the Community Service Centre board, and I share this information with you because although the shelter has not closed, it is in real danger of closing in the future because you've not fixed the real problem, that is the funding source.

The annual budget for the shelter I believe is around 313,000. The only increase their budget has received in the last five years is a 2 per cent increase. Mr. Minister, I think you would say you would acknowledge that, 2 per cent in five years is very insignificant. According to the shelter they need an additional 24,000 to simply meet the current levels of service.

Last year, Mr. Minister, as I understand it there were 149 women and 221 children using the services of the shelter and for every person the shelter took in, they turned two away.

Mr. Minister, I'm wondering if you could inform this Assembly as to what the current status of the shelter is, whether funding levels will be increased to handle the heavier case-load that the shelter is facing, or whether or not the shelter will be forced to close its doors in the near future?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I want to repeat, we are committed to ensuring that the shelter in Prince Albert continues; that the shelter will not close its doors. And I am very cognizant of the fact of some of the very special needs of the Prince Albert situation.

But I want to assure the member that in fact base funding over the past four years has increased 31 per cent to the P.A. shelter. I believe it is the — it is the most generously funded shelter in the province when compared to other shelters.

However that does . . . and I admit it needs to be in the context of its location and the geographic draw that it serves, this shelter tends to serve the North. And there are few other opportunities in the North, and we may have more opportunities in the south. That's a special consideration.

My understanding is that an interim board has been formed. That the interim board is looking at every option and all the options and working closely with our department in Prince Albert to ensure absolutely that the Prince Albert shelter will continue. And as part of that ongoing assessment, we're simply going to have to review the funding levels.

But new resources, significant new resources actually over the last number of years, have been provided to the shelter. There

still are some problems but we want that shelter to continue.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Minister, since the date when we raised these questions, Mr. Minister, what have you done? Have you personally contacted or have been contacted by anyone in the shelter to address some of the concerns that have been brought forward?

I think you'd indicated at that time that you would be contacting the shelter, and I'm wondering exactly what have you done personally to address some of the questions and the concerns that have arisen as a result of the funding shortfall that the shelter is facing.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I have not . . . I'm confused a little about the dates. I do not believe I have physically been back in Prince Albert since we had that discussion in the House. I know that my office has been in conversation, not myself personally, but members of my staff have been in conversation with individuals from Prince Albert, also with the provincial association of transition houses and representatives there. I am apprised almost on a weekly basis of discussions that are happening in the community between our officials and the interim board as we move towards this. And both members of the legislature from Prince Albert are continually providing me with updates on the situation around the P.A. women's shelter. Together we are resolved to find solutions to the situation in Prince Albert.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, I wonder do you have any numbers . . . as to the number of women and children who have been turned away from shelters in 1997? I'm talking of all shelters, not just Prince Albert.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we do not have that number. It's not something that we request of our transition houses or our women's shelters. I am aware, Mr. Chair, of the circumstance in Prince Albert which I believe represents the most difficult in the province in terms of the numbers of women or family units that are approaching that shelter and having . . . not being able to be served immediately.

I think in our other circumstances as I have travelled the province and met with service providers in the transition houses, there will be pressures on occasion, but it's more dramatic, I think, in the Prince Albert circumstances. Again I believe it's because of the geography — they're serving a good chunk of the North there.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I guess a further question. Have we seen a significant increase in the demand for the services of emergency shelters in the last few years? If we have, what would you attribute the increases to? Would there be . . . some of the reasons we're seeing this is people are discouraged and alcoholism being a factor or gambling problems being a factor. What are some of the factors that cause people to seek the services of emergency shelters?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We've not seen any dramatic increase but I think we're all agreed that the existing demand for those protections and services is too high. We haven't seen any dramatic increase and the member has pointed out a number of

the factors I think that are in play here.

We've been trying . . . Well in addition to maintaining the more traditional women's shelters and transition houses — and we have over the last number of years been able to put in some new resources particularly to support workers and benefits and wages for workers and so on in those circumstances. We've also been working at outreach programs; I think some of them very successful in rural Saskatchewan.

We've been working at trying to build in protections through . . . for instance our pioneering legislation, The Victims of Domestic Violence Act. So we're trying to broaden our, broaden our approach to meeting these circumstances and these needs but we haven't seen a dramatic increase in demand.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, when it comes to the individuals, and I believe most of the cases we have would be in fact . . . I'd be surprised if we have any men but I would guess that most if not all of the cases are women and children seeking shelter. Has your department had, or have any of the shelters had, men coming to seek some shelter at any time?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We're not aware of any requests, Mr. Chair, that have come from men but I suspect there are some males in our province who are victims of abuse. Now in terms of domestic violence and domestic abuse, the vast majority of course will be women and children.

Mr. Toth: — And, Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Minister, I think certainly when we talk about abusive situations I think most, like you say by and large, most of the situations tend to be women and children. However, we have had some calls and suggestions that, as a result of the majority, sometimes there are situations where the men face that and basically are overlooked because they aren't perceived as being in that type of situation.

Mr. Minister, just a couple of quick questions in regards to some of the things that are done in emergency shelters. What do you have available as far as addressing some of the counselling needs children may face? And are there programs available for anger management for women of abuse or who would maybe abuse them . . . as be abusive themselves?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, in many of the . . . in many or several of the transition houses or women's shelters that I have been able to visit, including that in my own community, there are children's counsellors who are part of the staff who work particularly with the children and in many cases will be working with anger management issues — will be also working with the women. And the shelters and the transition houses and so on will access many of the community-based counselling resources as well. There is a significant effort put into counselling and meeting the needs of the children and the women as they come through the programs in the homes.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Minister, as we've been addressing a number of the questions regarding social services, I note, Mr. Minister . . . And while I've agreed with you in what you're trying to do under the new Saskatchewan assistance program — your income supplement, and your child benefits, your health benefits — I think those are certainly things that can be a benefit. But an unfortunate reality;

we still have a number of people in this province looking to social assistance. The fact that we have almost on an ongoing basis we have individuals going to food banks and cries from food banks about shortages of food, and I find that somewhat appalling.

I think our economy has been moving along not too badly, although certain economic situations that the province is facing may create even more of a problem for the province in the near future. When we look at agriculture and some of the dramatic changes we've seen just in the last few days in agriculture. We see the price of oil is fluctuating. Right now it's below the level that the Minister of Finance is striving for. I note your budget is looking at almost a \$30 million increase to try and provide the services that you've been listing out, Mr. Minister.

I think at the end of the day when it comes right down to it, it doesn't matter how much money we put into programs, what we need is to be there to meet and try to meet the needs of individuals who through no fault of their own find themselves in a desperate situation. I think at the end of the day, Mr. Minister, governments of all shapes — and certainly while we have had a motion this afternoon by the member from Wascana Plains — I believe suggesting that things are looking so rosy in this province . . . I run into so many people who find themselves saying it's not as bright out there as it may appear.

And when it comes to job opportunities, if people on assistance are going to find real job opportunities, I think, Mr. Minister, we have to look very seriously at addressing some of the questions that arise — the taxation levels when it comes to business and certainly a more positive business environment in this province. Because then and only then are we going to be able to address in a wholehearted manner some of the major problems we have as far as welfare and creating avenues whereby people can feel good about themselves.

Because I would suggest, Mr. Minister, if we have healthy home environments, if we have a good economic . . . the economy is doing well, people have good quality jobs, we would have less abusive situations; certainly more healthy environments create an opportunity for less abusive situations.

So it's a situation that we need to all work with but I would certainly strongly suggest, Mr. Minister, and ask that your government take a closer look at how it approaches business. And I believe we need to look at a more positive environment . . . for opportunity for businesses to create real job employment in the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I share, for certain, the premise that the member bases his comments on and that is the best social program is always a job. And the more that we can have an economy in our province that produces good, decent employment for people, the better.

We'll probably have differences of opinion on how we achieve those goals. I'd like to believe that we've come a significant distance in the last number of years in providing employment for Saskatchewan people. We will not stop in that regard. We see that challenge, as the major challenge for our government.

Subvote (SS01) agreed to.

Subvotes (SS03), (SS04), (SS05), (SS06), (SS07) agreed to.

The Deputy Chair: — Why is the Government House Leader on her feet?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — With leave, for a brief recess.

The Deputy Chair: — I think I'm merely a servant of the committee. I simply will report to the committee, if I have agreement, I will not call this subvote for a couple of minutes or whatever it takes.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Yes, with leave, Mr. Chairman, to revert to subvote (1).

Leave granted.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — It now being 5 o'clock, I move that we recess until 7 this evening.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| D'Autremont | 1517 |
| Toth | 1517 |
| Bjornerud | 1517 |
| Gantefoer | 1517 |
| Draude | 1517 |
| Boyd | 1517 |
| Osika | 1517 |
| Hillson | 1517 |
| McPherson | 1517 |
| Belanger | 1518 |
| McLane | 1518 |
| Haverstock | 1518 |
| Julé | 1518 |
| Goohsen | 1518 |

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Clerk | 1518 |
|--------------------|------|

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Haverstock | 1518 |
|-------------------------|------|

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Van Mulligen | 1518 |
| Julé | 1518 |
| Serby | 1519 |
| Osika | 1519 |
| Atkinson | 1519 |
| Kasperski | 1519 |
| Renaud | 1530 |

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Murray | 1519 |
| Toth | 1519 |

Regina Habitat for Humanity Program

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Lingenfelter | 1520 |
|---------------------------|------|

Level of Health Care in Saskatchewan

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| McLane | 1520 |
|---------------------|------|

Wilfred Hunt School — A Green School

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| Hamilton | 1520 |
|-----------------------|------|

Expression of Sympathy

| | |
|-------------------|------|
| Julé | 1521 |
|-------------------|------|

Annual Royal Canadian Air Cadet Ceremony

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Lorje | 1521 |
|--------------------|------|

Girl Guides of Canada, Canada Cord Ceremony

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| Gantefoer | 1521 |
|------------------------|------|

ORAL QUESTIONS

Adequacy of Health Care Resources

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| Bjornerud | 1521 |
| Serby | 1521 |

Crop Insurance for Re-seeding

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Boyd | 1523 |
| Upshall | 1523 |

Acute Care Beds in Regina

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Osika | 1523 |
| Serby | 1524 |

Metis War Veterans

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| Belanger | 1525 |
| Goulet | 1525 |

Contamination of Drinking Water

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Julé | 1525 |
| Scott | 1525 |

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 743 — The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 1998 (Capital Market Activities Restrictions)

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Hillson | 1526 |
|----------------------|------|

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hamilton1526

PRIVATE BILLS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 301 — The Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan Act

Koenker1526

Bill No. 302 — The Fondation Fransaskoise Act, 1998/Loi de 1998 sur la Fondation Fransaskoise

Kasperski1527

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 301 — The Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan Act

Koenker1529

Bill No. 302 — The Fondation Fransaskoise Act, 1998/Loi de 1998 sur la Fondation Fransaskoise

Kasperski1529

Bill No. 49 — The Saskatchewan Assistance Amendment Act, 1998

Calvert1538

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 7 — Provincial Economy

Hamilton1529

Draude1529

Recorded division1530

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 49 — The Saskatchewan Assistance Amendment Act, 1998

Calvert1530

Toth1530

Goohsen1535

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund

Social Services — Vote 36

Calvert1538

Toth1538