

The Assembly met at 10:00 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who would like to see improved cellular telephone coverage in their area. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in the districts of Prud'homme, Bruno, Vonda, and Cudworth.

And the signatures on these petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from Prud'homme, Cudworth, and Saskatoon.

I so present.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present as well today for cellular coverage in the Watson area.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to ensure reliable cellular service to Wadena and area by installing a cellular tower at Watson.

The people who have signed this petition are all from Watson.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of citizens concerned about the high cost of fuel. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the federal and provincial governments to immediately reduce fuel taxes by 10 cents a litre, cost shared by both levels of government.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Melfort, St. Benedict, and Pleasantdale.

I so present.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well to present petitions. And this petition is in regards to the fuel tax as well. Reading the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the federal and provincial governments to immediately reduce fuel taxes by 10 cents a litre, cost shared by both levels of government.

And, Mr. Speaker, the petition I present is signed by individuals from the communities of Saskatoon and Martensville.

I so present.

Mr. Peters: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition in regards to the high cost of fuel. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the federal and provincial governments to immediately reduce fuel taxes by 10 cents a litre, cost shared by both levels of government.

And the petition is signed by people from Govan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens concerned about cellular telephone coverage in the Prud'homme, Bruno, Vonda, and Cudworth areas. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in the districts of Prud'homme, Bruno, Vonda, and Cudworth.

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

And this is signed by citizens of Cudworth, Rosthern, and St. Benedict.

I so present. Thank you.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition from the citizens of Saskatchewan. This petition is to reduce fuel tax by 10 cents a litre:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the federal and provincial governments to immediately reduce fuel taxes by 10 cents a litre, cost shared by both levels of government.

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

Signatures are from Bengough, Regina, Chamberlain, Turtleford, Saskatoon, Davidson, Imperial, Bladworth. There's even one signature from New York, who thinks we pay too much tax here.

I so present.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition with citizens concerned about the high price of fuel. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the federal and provincial governments to immediately reduce fuel by 10 cents a litre, cost shared by both levels of government.

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

The petitioners are from Leroy and Lanigan.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens concerned with poor cellular telephone service. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in the districts of Strasbourg, Duval, Govan, and Bulyea.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And the signatures to this petition come from the communities of Bulyea and Siltou.

I do so present.

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.

These are petitions of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly on the following matters:

To cause the government to provide reliable cellular service in Strasbourg, Duval, Govan, and Bulyea;

To halt plans to proceed with the amalgamation of municipalities;

To ensure reliable cellular service to Watson;

To cause the federal and provincial governments to reduce fuel taxes;

To abandon plans to confiscate municipal reserve accounts; and

To provide reliable cellular service in Prud'homme, Bruno, Vonda, and Cudworth.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 45 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: please provide the names and salaries of all the chief executive officers, chief financial officers, directors of client services, director of human resources, directors of organizational development, directors of health promotion and prevention, and directors of communication in each health district in Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Hon. members, by your leave, I would like to take the opportunity to introduce to you in the Speaker's gallery, a long-time family friend who has travelled from Churchill, Manitoba, to visit with myself and my family and be here in the gallery this morning to watch our proceedings.

I would ask you to kindly welcome him to our Assembly, Mr. Lyle Turgeon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Violence Against Women

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to explain to the people of Saskatchewan why members on this side of the House are wearing the purple ribbon which symbolizes violence against women.

Mr. Speaker, next week is set aside to raise public awareness for violence against women. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has decided to wear purple ribbons today because we feel that violence against women should be denounced every day of the year, not just once a week . . . once a week a year.

Mr. Speaker, for the past couple of weeks the Saskatchewan Party has been questioning this government on what their priorities are and, Mr. Speaker, their priorities are to fund pornography.

Last night some of my colleagues and I from this side of the House went to the Queer City festival, and what we saw was: violence against women, violence against children, and, Mr. Speaker, violence against humanity.

Mr. Speaker, there are organizations in our province that are in desperate need of funding such as Sofia House and Souls Harbour Mission, which do not receive any government funding. Mr. Speaker, Sofia House is a safe house that is run predominantly for women and children who suffer abuse and Souls Harbour is to help those who are less fortunate in our society.

Mr. Speaker, one has to ask: what are the priorities of this government? Mr. Speaker, there is not one person in my constituency and possibly the whole province that I could probably say to, I spent your hard-earned tax dollars on the degrading material I viewed last night.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

New Jobs in Saskatchewan

Ms. Lorje: — Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we prefer to deal with issues of genuine concern to the people of Saskatchewan. We work to improve the health system that is already the best in North America. We make sure working people are given the protection of fair labour practices and safe workplace conditions.

We provide training and support for people to escape poverty, and we are keeping the economy humming and Saskatchewan jobs growing. This, Mr. Speaker, is hot politics — not hot button politics like the opposition wants to waste time on.

And here's a really hot issue. Later today the Minister of Economic Development will be at the official opening of the DirecTel call centre in Saskatoon. This new business brings with it 225 new jobs. This is a direct result of our hot business climate and our JobStart/Future Skills program. This is a business coming to Saskatoon, not leaving.

In addition my Regina colleagues want me to point out the headline in the business section of today's *Leader-Post*, quote, "Sears expands here, 250 more workers at call centre."

I repeat jobs coming, not leaving. Good things happen, Mr. Speaker, when you stick to the people's business and do hot politics, not hot button politics.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Film Festival Not A Celebration

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I and three other members of our caucus attended screenings of the Queer City Cinema. I didn't see any members opposite at the theatre last night, therefore I'm sure that none of them will be rising in the House today to speak to the contents of those movies.

I on the other hand will be. And I have three words for the members opposite. It was degrading, demoralizing, and dehumanizing. I was absolutely appalled by what I saw at this so-called festival. That the members opposite see fit to defend this is testimony to how little they actually know about the subject matter.

Three years ago I lost a very good friend to AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). He was kind and a gentle man and I miss him very much. And yes to the members opposite, he was homosexual.

The movies that are being shown at the Queer City cinema are an insult to the friend I lost. These movies did not celebrate his life, nor do they give a fair or just depiction of him or his lifestyle. This is not something I want his memory to be left with.

We all have a responsibility to the society that we live in. We must leave something behind that our children can be proud of it. As members of this House, we have a responsibility to the people that we represent. We must also leave something behind that our constituents can be proud of.

I say again, as I've said from the very beginning, this taxpayer-funded gay festival is horribly wrong and the members opposite should be ashamed for the defence of it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Headwaters Project

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, the positive spirit of co-operation is alive and well in the North.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate

The Headwaters Project from northern Saskatchewan for being chosen as one of Canada's 12 smart communities demonstration projects.

The Headwaters Project is managed by the Keewatin Career Development Corporation and includes the community of La Ronge. It is one of the 12 communities from across Canada that has been chosen to receive funding under the smart communities program.

The smart communities program is a federal program that assists communities in becoming world leaders in integrating information and communication technologies into community life. In order to be chosen, communities went through a rigorous selection process.

Mr. Speaker, The Headwaters Project is an example of the Saskatchewan spirit of community and co-operation at its finest.

Many partners and supporters have been involved in this project, including 26 municipal, First Nations, and Metis governments, 11 school divisions, post-secondary institutions and First Nations education authorities, two health districts, and the regional library system.

This project not only provides information and communication technology services to remote communities in northern Saskatchewan, but it moves the province another step closer in competing in the global, knowledge-based economy.

Please join me in congratulating The Headwaters Project in northern Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Milestone Prairie Players Receive Awards

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great pleasure to stand in the House today and tell you about a group of amateur performers in my constituency — the Milestone Prairie Players.

The Prairie Players are a theatrical group that have been hosting a dinner theatre in Milestone for the past 16 years. This group is no ordinary group, however. Their successes are many — too numerous to mention in the time that I have allotted today.

I do, however, want to touch on a few of the successes, one which was mentioned yesterday. They won the best play in the provincial Theatre Fest — not only the best play, but they won best actresses also.

In 1999, they also won the best play and best director — two years running. They've had many, many other accomplishments.

In 1991 and 1992, they cleaned up at the Theatre Fest competition and were chosen to compete in a competition in Ireland. When in Ireland, they didn't only just compete but they won a number of the competitions in that festival.

They are a world-class theatre group which receives no government funding. They are true artists in every sense of the

word. I'd like to congratulate the Milestone Prairie Players and continued great success. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Yorkton Short Film & Video Festival

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again Yorkton is the centre of the world's attention. The city of Yorkton and its citizens are playing host to the Yorkton Short Film & Video Festival.

The film and video festival runs from May 11 to 14 and is the end result of a lot of hard work by volunteers from Yorkton and the area.

It was established in 1947 as the Yorkton Film Council and the film festival was first held in 1950. Approximately 1,800 people attend this conference on an annual basis, and this, Mr. Speaker, is Canada's first and North America's longest running film and video festival.

The festival was the idea of James Lysyshyn, who is often referred to as the father of Yorkton's International Documentary Film Festival. Yorkton Short Film & Video Festival is recognized internationally by film producers as a showcase for the film and video industry.

This year's festival receives over three . . . will receive over 400 entries, including 38 of those international entries competing in over 30 different categories of film and video.

The film attracts people from not only the province but the continent . . . and this continent, but the world. The festival celebrates and rewards the best in short film and video productions.

Because Yorkton is surrounded by fields of wheat, and wheat is a major commodity in our province, it was suggested the award be named after the respected symbol of the prairies, the Golden Sheaf Award. Golden Sheaf Awards will be presented at the gala banquet on Saturday evening, May 13, 2000.

Once again I'd like to congratulate the conference organizers and invite people to attend the conference and congratulate those people in advance who'll be receiving the . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Recycling Centres Hold Open House

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday and Wednesday respectively this week, the Pipestone Kin-Ability Centre and Kipling Industries both hosted open houses. And the reason why I want to talk about these two open houses, Mr. Speaker, is because of the work that these two centres do to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to be productive and caring individuals in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, the open houses were held to just show what they

have both done and accomplished in the areas of recycling in the province of Saskatchewan, and certainly in our community with their SARCAN depots, recycling of cans and plastics and paper. As well the Pipestone Kin-Ability Centre has now begun a laundry service, providing the laundry services to the health care centres in the communities — surrounding communities.

Mr. Speaker, it's because of the work and efforts of the individuals of many volunteers, who have given of their time and devoted their time, and certainly the employees and the clients, that we have such productive centres; that we have centres that our communities can be proud of; and that as individuals we can be proud of the positive initiatives we have provided for members of our community with disabilities, giving them the opportunity to be productive citizens as well as the privilege of living closer to home.

So I commend both of these centres for the work they have done in our area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to introduce guests who may leave before question period ends.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the House a group of students, number, 63 students, grades 4 to 5 from the Langham Elementary School who are visiting us today, and they are sitting in the east gallery.

I'd like to introduce their teachers: Alvin Kolach, Jon Yellowless, Evelyn Kasahoff, and Cheryl Hardcastle, and Miriam Buswell.

Please join me in welcoming them here today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Government Funding for Film Festival

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, last night my colleagues and I attended the Queer City Film Festival which receives taxpayers' dollars from your government. I watched some of the most degrading, dehumanizing, and disgusting images I have ever seen. One scene after another of graphic sexual violence against young women; necrophilia, bondage, torture, rape. These films would normally be banned in Saskatchewan but they have been given a special exemption by the Film Classification Board.

Mr. Premier, why on earth would your government grant this exemption and why are you giving taxpayers' money for films depicting graphic violence against women?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, can I again correct the member on the fact of . . . on the way in which films are classified and exemptions are given in this province, and indeed, across the country. She knows fully well that it is not the government that grants this exemption but it is the arm's-length Film Classification Board which does that based upon the advice of the BC (British Columbia) Film Classification Board, which viewed most of the movies the member is talking about.

And I should, I think, remind the member that this is not about what she likes, what she will tolerate, what I will tolerate, what anyone of us will tolerate. It is about, Mr. Speaker, an assessment of community values, of community standards. It is about whether or not the community at large is of a mind to say that this is so reprehensible that it should never be shown.

And, Mr. Speaker, we do not believe in censorship on this side of the House. The member opposite plainly does. And the member should look at herself and say, can I not find an ounce of tolerance, an ounce of recognition that other people have different values than me and say, okay, then . . .

The Speaker: — Order, next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, to answer that member's question. Tolerance for violence? Never.

Mr. Speaker, one of the films was called *Hubcap*. It features scenes of necrophilia — graphic images of a police officer performing sexual acts on the bloody murdered bodies of two young women. Mr. Speaker, films depicting necrophilia are specifically prohibited under section 7 of the film classification regulations, yet your government gave this film a special exemption and you are using taxpayers' dollars to show this disgusting activity.

Mr. Premier, how can you justify using taxpayers' dollars to show necrophilia?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, let me say once again, it is not the government that is granting this exemption. It is the Film Classification Board. And that board, as the member knows fully well, proceeds through a series of criteria and, in the end, asks itself: is this something which violates community standards?

The board, Mr. Speaker, concluded that it did not. And indeed, Mr. Speaker, these movies have been shown across the country. Other boards in other provinces have made exactly the same assessment.

And I say again to the member, this is not about your views. This is not about anyone's individual views, Mr. Speaker. It is an assessment of what the community will tolerate. It is about recognizing other people's points of view. The member seems to avoid that altogether.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to that member, it is the government that has been given the responsibility to ultimately be responsible that regulations are followed.

Mr. Premier, the film *Lez B. Friends* consisted entirely of graphic images of sexual violence against young women. Young women were kidnapped, tied up, and tortured for sexual gratification. A young woman, no more than a teenager, was tied up and tortured, forced to live in a dog cage, and only let out to perform sexual acts on her captors. A young mother had her two-year-old boy stolen from her and sold while her captors forced her to become a prostitute.

Mr. Premier, I have spent the past five years fighting against those who would turn young girls and women into prostitutes only to see your government giving taxpayers' . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. The hon. member has been quite lengthy in the preamble. Kindly go directly to your question.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Premier, how, how can you justify using taxpayers' dollars to exploit this kind of violence against women?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, let's make one point clear. It is not a question of whether this is something that I find disturbing or not. I'm sure I'd find it just as disturbing as the member opposite.

It is about something other than this. It is about something other than this, Mr. Speaker. And this is not about what I like and what I don't like. It's not about what the member likes, what she doesn't like.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Classification Board has said that these movies and these videos should be shown under very strict conditions; that they should be shown to people over the age of 18. And I understand the member last night was even asked about whether she was 18 or under.

Mr. Speaker, also there is a large sign which explains what these movies are about. This is for an audience of mature Canadians, Mr. Speaker. It is not about what we like, what we don't like.

And the Classification Board is — once again let me say this — is arm's length from the government. It is not a government decision. It is a decision based upon the Film Classification Board's assessment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, yesterday your government issued a news release urging Saskatchewan people to wear a purple ribbon to show their opposition to violence against women. At the same time, you are using taxpayers' money to show pornographic movies depicting the most degrading forms of violence against women.

Mr. Premier, the members on this side of the House are wearing their purple ribbons because we oppose violence against

women, whether it's done by pimps, whether it's done by husbands, or whether it's done by a filmmaker who calls it art.

Mr. Premier, how on earth can you justify using taxpayers' dollars to screen movies depicting graphic sexual violence against women?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Minister responsible for the Status of Women, who has a part in helping to fund the purple ribbon campaign, and certainly would share the sentiments that there is too much violence generally in our films and whatnot, the fact of the matter is this is a debate that has been going on for a long time in Canada. In order to find a way to mediate that debate, there are classification systems, and certainly anybody who attends commercial films, I think would have these same concerns.

But we don't support violence. There is a system by which society mediates those debates, and in all of our programs in the Women's Secretariat and throughout government, we work on ending violence and opposing violence to women and children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, last night after I left the film festival, I went home and Global News ran a story about Sofia House, a transition house for battered women and their children here in Regina.

Mr. Premier, your government provides no money to Sofia House, yet you have \$5,500 to show pornographic movies featuring violence against women. This is just plain wrong.

Mr. Premier, this is your government. It's time for you to stand up. If you truly believe in using taxpayers' dollars to show degrading violence against women, then stand up and say so. And if you can't do that, then stand up and cancel the funding.

Mr. Premier, quit hiding behind the Arts Board, quit hiding behind your ministers. Do you support taxpayers' dollars being used to show violence against women?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — I want to say to the member opposite that in this province this government provides a great deal of revenue to many women's organizations to talk about violence against women. I want to say to the member opposite from Kelvington that in this province today we provide a great deal of funding to many, many organizations who respect and provide shelters for women who have been assaulted or have been violated. And so this government is doing that.

I want to also say to the member opposite, it was this government in the early '90s that brought legislation to this House and proceeded to pass legislation in this House that condemned violence against women and children.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, to this member opposite, if she makes accusation about this government not acting to protect women and children against violence, it's a false, false attachment. Because this government has gone a long way in funding and legislation to protect women and children in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

District Health Boards

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Madam Minister, across this province when municipal governments, school boards, and other publicly run boards introduce their budgets, they do so so that the public can have input and so that there can be debate. It's also actually how it works with the provincial government.

But you take another approach with health districts. You've muzzled them from making any comments on their plans for the coming year until you sign off and give your approval for them.

Well, Madam Minister, that's just simply not fair to the taxpayers, it's not fair to the district health boards, and it's not fair to the health care providers who are trying to cope under your administration.

You've said in this House that there's no gag order. Well if that's the case, then why can't district health boards talk about their preliminary plans?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member may know, in the province of Saskatchewan we have 32 health districts. As the member may know — and I made this very clear the day of and a few days after Paul Martin's budget — that we were expecting genuine increases to the Canada Health and Social Transfer. Mr. Speaker, we did not receive adequate funding from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, on budget day in this Assembly when the Finance minister delivered his budget, I indicated that day that 113 million new dollars was not enough to sustain the present system.

Mr. Speaker, we have given each district their preliminary financial number; we want to understand the implications of that number. They will provide their health plans to us by May 15. We will look at it in a provincial context. The plans will be approved, varied, or not approved, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 1993 the NDP (New Democratic Party) closed 28 hospitals and 23 integrated facilities in Saskatchewan. And just over a year ago they shut down the Plains Health Centre.

In 1993 the NDP Minister of Health said they needed to take this action in order to save the health care system. Health minister of the time Louise Simard said, and I quote:

The transition period will be difficult, but we have to keep our eye on the ball that we're going to have a much better system when we're finished.

Well, Madam Minister, you've lost sight of the ball, and you've

struck out. We've come full circle and once again the minister says tough decisions are needed. Madam Minister, people in this province remember 1993. Will you remove the gag order on the health districts and allow them to disclose their preliminary plans for the coming year?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once the health plans are approved, or varied, or not approved, our health districts will have an opportunity to discuss their health plans with their communities. Mr. Speaker, these are preliminary plans that are being given to the Department of Health. Once we've had an opportunity to look at those 32 individual plans within a provincial context, they will be returned to the communities to have discussions.

Mr. Speaker, we also have in this budget, even with the \$113 million increase, a \$150 million health transition fund that we think will be very helpful for districts as they deal with the financial realities that we have in the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a letter sent to the South East Health District signed by the deputy minister of Health. If there's no gag order, Madam Minister, how do you explain this? The letter says, and I quote:

Public and staff consultation of any proposed changes should not occur until the department has had the opportunity to review and approve any such changes.

How possibly can district health boards determine what changes might be made without staff input? Why should the public be shut out of the consultation process until after you've stamped your changes and made them mandatory?

Madam Minister, why don't health care professionals and Saskatchewan taxpayers have input into the direction the districts are going to be forced to take this year?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, once again, and I know I have to be careful here, but it's very important for the members of the opposition to present factual information to the House.

Mr. Speaker, that member has indicated, and he quotes a letter, that boards have been told that if this information leaks out they'll be removed from office and the government will appoint a public administrator. Well, Jill Johnson, the CEO (chief executive officer) of the Living Sky says that this is simply not true, Mr. Speaker. It's not true.

Mr. Speaker, the Regina Health District has spoken to its health providers; it's spoken to its doctors; it's spoken to the public.

In the case of Living Sky, they spoke to their public; they spoke to their mayors; they spoke to their municipalities. Mr. Speaker, this member is simply not presenting factual information to this House or the public, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to send a copy of the letter over for the minister to read because it's there in black and white.

Madam Minister, we've heard two health board members from two different districts this week say major changes are coming. They're calling the plans destructive. They are saying what's coming will be a bombshell. The changes will rival the closure of the Plains hospital.

Madam Minister, we are hearing from district boards that hospitals will be closed, long-term care homes may be closed. You can keep . . . try to keep it quiet, but the dirty little details are getting out.

Madam Minister, when you receive all of the district health board plans on Monday, will you come clean and release them to the public?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say again to this member, if you read the letter from Jill Johnson, the CEO of the Living Sky Health District, she indicates that they've invited physicians, leaders from their staff, community mayors, reeves, councillors, and union representatives to meet with them to discuss their health plan. So has the Regina Health District, and so have other health districts, Mr. Speaker.

So what I would say to the member, which I find extremely interesting, I have said for some time now that we can't guarantee that all hospitals will remain open. And in fact that member, on February 4, 2000, indicated — even though he was criticizing me — that the Saskatchewan Party itself would not necessarily oppose hospital closures, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister is clearly taking the opportunity to selectively ignore what her own deputy minister signed in a directive to these health boards.

Madam Minister, what we've said all along is that before any closures even are considered, that a full and complete review of the health care system needs to be done. Madam Minister, you've been saying all along that maybe the health system should be reviewed. Then you're saying maybe we shouldn't review it. Then maybe it should be done on a national level. Then maybe it isn't going to be done at all. Then maybe the Premier should do it.

Madam Minister, will you at the very least confirm to communities that until such a review is done, you will put a moratorium on any closures in this province until you figure out what you're doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I have this little document called *The Way Up* which was given to the public during the last provincial election. And what they want is the Provincial Auditor to go in

and look at the health system in terms of is the money being spent here, is it being spent there. We're not talking about a financial audit of the health system, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about a review of the health system, not only in this province but all across the country.

We need to understand, and the public needs to understand, the implications of the financial situation in this country and how we need more money from the federal government.

What these people would do is freeze — freeze — health spending in this province; they would freeze health spending, and in fact they're saying that the federal government shouldn't give the provinces any more money until our Provincial Auditor looks at the health system. Well that's ridiculous, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Reporting of Political Contributions

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Give up the names or give up the money — do you remember those words, Mr. Speaker? That is what the Liberal Party said . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I will remind hon. members that the Chair is not to be involved in any debates. I would ask you to rephrase your question . . . Order.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is what the Liberal Party said when it accused the other parties of breaking the law, for failing to disclose the names of political donors. As a result of that debate the law was changed, and who is the first party to break the law, Mr. Speaker? It's the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan.

My question is for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, the Liberals are refusing to identify all of their donors. This is a clear violation of section 240 of The Election Act, 1996. Mr. Minister, what action are you taking against the Liberal Party for breaking The Election Act, 1996?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in my capacity as Deputy . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. I will remind the hon. member from Rosthern that I need not any direction as to who's required to respond from the executive government side.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in my capacity as the Deputy House Leader for the government side, and I want to thank the member for the question. It's a very interesting question, Mr. Speaker, about the relationship of the federal Liberal Party and the provincial Liberal Party. We would expect there to be some relationship, Mr. Speaker.

What is not so clear, Mr. Speaker, is what is the relationship between the so-called Saskatchewan Party and the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Can that member confirm or will he deny that Rick Swenson, the former acting interim leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, a former cabinet minister under Grant Devine, and a PC (Progressive Conservative) cabinet minister, and now a Saskatchewan Party member, is in fact one of the trustees of the

PC metro fund, a fund that was set up to collect donations for the Progressive Conservative Party?

Can he confirm or deny that, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we're talking about anonymous political donations, Mr. Speaker. And if he wants a history lesson, I'll give him a quick one.

Here are the parties that have accepted anonymous political donations: the New Democratic Party have accepted them, the Liberal Party has accepted them, the PC Party has accepted them. Only the Saskatchewan Party has never accepted an anonymous political donation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, when The Election Act was changed back in 1996 largely due . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Mr. Wall: — The clear intention of this change was to eliminate the practice of hiding the names of donors by funnelling money through a third party — a corporation trust fund or a federal party. No one was more vocal in opposition to anonymous donations than the Liberal Party, but now that they're in government they seem to be above the law.

Mr. Minister, the Liberals are hiding the names of donors. They're accepting anonymous donations, and section 241 of the Act states that all anonymous donations must be handed over to the government.

Mr. Minister, what steps are you taking to recover these illegal donations?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, now the member who was asking the question, Mr. Speaker, also at one time worked for the Progressive Conservative administration in this province.

Now perhaps that member is in a position to let us know what has happened to the donations that were made to the PC Party and are part of the PC metro fund, whether any of those donations which were made to the PC Party have in fact been diverted to the Saskatchewan Party, or have been spent by the PC metro fund on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party. Can the member confirm or deny that, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are asking questions about the enforcement of The Election Act, 1996 in the province of Saskatchewan. We're asking them to the Justice minister of this province, Mr. Speaker. And we'd like some answers. Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Hon. members I recognize that

it's Friday and it's almost as if this is becoming a tradition. But I would ask all members to kindly allow the question to be heard.

Mr. Wall: — My question is to the Minister of Justice and the issue is anonymous political donations. And don't get us wrong, Mr. Speaker, we fully understand why people in the province would want to remain anonymous if they donated to the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — In fact, Mr. Speaker, they're hoping that there is a refund policy over there. But we might have to wait for three years for that to happen.

To the Minister of Justice. The question is very simple: why are you allowing the Liberals to hide anonymous donations? What actions are you taking against the Liberals for breaking The Election Act, 1996?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Speaker, sometimes silence tells us a lot. And that member refuses to confirm or deny that funds which were donated to the PC Party of Saskatchewan had been used or spent on behalf of the . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Kindly allow the minister to answer the question asked by the hon. member for Swift Current.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Now we know their interest in these matters because Conrad Black, the wannabe Lord Black, Mr. Speaker, who has donated very significantly to the Saskatchewan Party, that Lord Black, or wannabe Lord Black, has some concerns about the Liberal Party and would use every opportunity to attack the Liberal Party.

The fact of the matter is that any donations that were made federally are accounted for as per law, Mr. Speaker. There is no issue here. The real issue is were funds expended by the PC Party which were donated to the PC Party — were they extended on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party? Is there collusion there, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wakefield: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Speaker, I very quickly have to introduce the guests that are leaving from your gallery. I would like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the Assembly, 20 grade 11 and 12 students from Glaslyn High School.

And, Mr. Speaker, if we could, I would like to welcome them and mention that I'll be meeting with them. And on behalf of

my colleague, the member from Shellbrook-Spiritwood, thank you . . .

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I will just generally introduce representatives of the construction industry who are here today to witness first reading of The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act. And I ask you to join me in welcoming them to the House.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, I also seek leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to introduce to all members of the Assembly, through you, two persons seated in the west gallery. They are Lawrence Joseph, the Fourth Vice-Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and also Paul Laliberte, who is here today on behalf of the Aboriginal Walk For Justice.

I understand they have already walked 20 kilometres today, in what of course we all realize is something less than ideal spring weather.

Mr. Laliberte is the organizer of the Aboriginal Walk For Justice to draw attention to Aboriginal justice concerns.

I ask all members to join with me in welcoming them today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I would too like to welcome Mr. Lawrence Joseph and Paul Laliberte and wish them well and commend them on their walk for justice.

Congratulations and very good luck in the future. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorje: — With leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to welcome Vice-Chief Lawrence Joseph here to the Assembly. I have had occasion to speak with him in the last few months over several sad events that have occurred in Saskatoon.

And I have been extremely impressed with his tenacity and his desire to pursue economic and social justice for Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan. So I do welcome him here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 221 – The Crown Construction Tendering Agreement Nullification Act

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to move first reading of Bill No. 221, The Crown Construction Tendering Agreement Nullification Act.

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

Bill No. 48 — The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 48, The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 49 – The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act, 2000

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 49, The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act, 2000 be now introduced and read a first time.

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

Bill No. 50 — The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2000/ Loi de 2000 modifiant la Loi d'interprétation de 1995

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 50, The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2000 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 51 — The Interpretation Act Consequential Amendment Act, 2000

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 51, The Interpretation Act Consequential Amendment Act, 2000 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 52 — The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2000/ Loi de 2000 modifiant la Loi sur la faune

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 52, The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2000 be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 53 — The Wildlife Act Consequential Amendment Act, 2000

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 53, The Wildlife Act Consequential Amendment Act, 2000 be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 54 — The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2000 (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 54, The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2000 (No. 2) be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 59 — The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2000

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 59, The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2000 be now introduced and read a first time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 10:55 a.m. until 11:05 a.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 47

Trew	Van Mulligen	MacKinnon
Lingenfelter	Atkinson	Goulet
Lautermilch	Thomson	Lorje
Serby	Belanger	Nilson
Crofford	Hillson	Kowalsky
Sonntag	Hamilton	Prebble
Higgins	Yates	Harper
Axworthy	Junor	Kasperski
Wartman	Addley	Elhard
Heppner	Julé	Draude
Boyd	Gantefoer	Toth
Peters	Eagles	Wall
Bakken	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
McMorris	Weekes	Brkich
Harpauer	Wakefield	Hart
Stewart	Kwiatkowski	

Nays — nil

The Bill read a first time and ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, if I could by leave, move a motion dealing with referral of estimates to the Estimates Committee.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Selected Estimates Referred to Standing Committee on Estimates

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, I move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld:

That the Estimates of the Legislative Assembly (Vote 21); the Provincial Auditor (Vote 28), the Chief Electoral Officer (Vote 34); the Information and Privacy Commissioner (Vote 55); the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate (Vote 56); the Conflict of Interest Commissioner (Vote 57); as well as Supplementary Estimates for the Legislative Assembly (Vote 21) be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

House Adjournment

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, if I could, by leave of the Assembly, move a motion, seconded by the member from Cannington:

That notwithstanding rule 3(4) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* that when this Assembly adjourns on Thursday May 18, 2000, it stands adjourned until Wednesday, May 24 at 1:30 p.m.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — Hon. members, before orders of the day . . . Order. Order. Order, please. Hon. members, on Wednesday the Opposition House Leader raised three points of order. One I dealt with yesterday; the other two were reserved until I had the opportunity to consider the context of the remarks in question. The comments were made during a debate on a private member's motion that stated that government funds were being used to promote pornography.

I thank the member for raising these concerns. As members know from previous rulings the use of personally offensive language in debate is a matter of growing concern to me. It should be our mutual goal to achieve hard-hitting politically effective criticism of policies, positions, and actions without having to resort to rude, intemperate and simplistic attacks on the integrity and motives of others.

I recognize that achieving this goal is the most difficult when the matter under debate is an emotional one that involves passionately held personal beliefs and values as was the case on Tuesday. Parliamentary practice offers members some guidance

in this area, and I refer all hon. members to a summary in Marleau and Montpetit's *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* on page 525 as follows. This is quite a lengthy quote members:

The proceedings of the House are based on a long-standing tradition of respect for the integrity of all Members. Thus, the use of offensive, proactive or threatening language in the House is strictly forbidden. Personal attacks, insults and obscene language or words are not in order. A direct charge or accusation against a Member may be made only by way of a substantive motion for which notice is required.

If language used in debate is questionable, the Speaker will intervene. Nonetheless, any Member who feels aggrieved by a remark or allegation may also bring the matter to the immediate attention of the Speaker on a point of order.

In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking; the person to whom the words were directed; the degree of provocation; and, most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber . . . Although an expression may be found to be acceptable, the Speaker has cautioned that any language which leads to disorder in the House should not be used. Expressions which are considered unparliamentary when applied to an individual Member have not always been considered so when applied "in a generic sense" or to a party.

The member raising the point of order claimed that the member for Saskatoon Southeast, on page 1105 of the debates, using the guise of a literary device, in essence described four members of the opposition as homophobic. After reviewing the verbatim, I find the member's point of order well-taken. However disguised, the effect of the words were personal, offensive and unparliamentary.

The second point of order concerned the words of the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley on pages 1107 and 1108 where he made statements that connected current members of the opposition with criminal convictions and cast doubt on their moral standing. The member for Regina Qu'Appelle spoke generally of people on the opposite side of the House, but individual members found it offensive as a personal attack. Again I find that point of order well taken.

(1115)

The parliamentary authority quoted above refers to provocation. In moving the motion, the member for Kelvington-Wadena no fewer than 14 times accused the government and government members of promoting pornography or supporting the pornographic industry. The nature of the debate that followed demonstrates that the mover's speech was inflammatory and provocative to other members who participated in the debate.

On a positive note, I would like to point out that the speech of the seconder of the motion, the member for Humboldt, demonstrates that the issue could be addressed passionately without calling into question the morals and motives of

members on the other side of the Assembly and inciting disorder.

Despite the provocation, the accusations made by the members for Saskatoon Southeast and Regina Qu'Appelle Valley have exceeded the bounds of fair debate and I therefore call upon those members to rise, withdraw the offensive comments, and apologize to the Assembly.

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw the remarks and I apologize to the House.

The Speaker: — Thank you, hon. member.

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw the remarks and I apologize to this House.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Kowalsky: — Here it is, Mr. Speaker, the answer to question 139, and I'm pleased to submit it.

The Speaker: — Question 139 is tabled . . . the answer to question 139 is tabled.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order, please.

The Speaker: — Kindly state briefly your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday you asked the Minister of Health to withdraw her remarks and apologize on page 1155. The minister apologized but did not withdraw the remarks in *Hansard*.

The Speaker: — In reviewing the verbatim, there was an apology but not a withdrawal of the remarks. Hon. minister?

Although it was only recorded as an apology, will the minister just wish to comment on that point of order?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I thought I did, Mr. Speaker. But just to bring order to the House, which is so important, I withdraw and apologize for the remarks.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I thank the hon. minister, and I am told that, yes, it was recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings* not in *Hansard*. I again thank the hon. minister.

Ms. Lorje: — I now would also like to rise on a point of order.

The Speaker: — State briefly your point of order.

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, as you have pointed out in your very lengthy and wise and well-researched ruling, there have been comments traded on both sides of the House that members have found offensive.

And I would like to state that I personally have found it deeply offensive that both directly and indirectly, as noted in your ruling by a count of 14 times, the member for Kelvington-Wadena has accused members on this side of the House of promoting pornography. And I would ask that the member withdraw those remarks and apologize to the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Hon. members, I do appreciate . . . and this is what it leads to and I would hope that all hon. members . . . Do you wish to speak to that point of order?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the evidence is clear that this government has provided funding to an avenue that has indeed promoted pornography. That pornography was broadcast last night for public viewing for those that attended that theatre.

However, Mr. Speaker, if the comments that were made by the member from Kelvington do offend the member from Saskatoon Southeast, the member from Kelvington has indicated she is prepared to apologize.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw the remarks and I apologize to the members.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I sincerely thank all hon. members for recognizing what perhaps unintentional comments may . . . how they may affect individuals. We're all hon. members in this Assembly and I applaud you for what you have recognized, and I appreciate what has just happened here. And I'm sure all hon. members will continue to be respected by one another and by the people that we serve.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 35 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2000 (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2000.

The Automobile Accident Insurance Act describes Saskatchewan's universal, mandatory automobile insurance plan administered by SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), also known as the auto fund. The auto fund provides basic insurance coverage for all Saskatchewan drivers at affordable rates.

The proposed amendments to the Act will ensure that rates stay affordable while making coverage as fair as possible for all Saskatchewan motorists.

The first amendment deals with high-speed chases. We all know how dangerous it can be when a driver evades the police

at high speed — not only for the driver and police involved, but also for the public. It is important that those who engage law enforcement in high-speed chases face serious penalties such as being denied insurance coverage in the event of an accident.

The wording of the Act currently excludes coverage for individuals involved in a race or speed test. Unfortunately SGI has been unsuccessful in using this provision to deny coverage to those who engage in high-speed chases with law enforcement. The proposed amendment will expand the wording to include, quote, “use of a vehicle with intent to evade a police officer” as a reason to deny insurance coverage.

This will ensure that drivers who lead police on high-speed chases are held accountable for their actions.

The second amendment will give SGI the authority to ensure that all people in possession of stolen property face serious consequences. Often police apprehend more than one individual when they stop stolen vehicles, and police are unable to determine which person stole the vehicle. In these cases, all the occupants found in the stolen vehicle are charged with possession of stolen property.

Currently SGI does not have the right of recovery under this charge. The proposed amendment will allow SGI to initiate a recovery action against anyone found in possession of stolen property. In addition, SGI will be able to recover any insurance money paid out for vehicle damage, as well as suspend drivers’ licences in these cases.

The proposed amendment will ensure those in possession of a stolen vehicle will not be able to act with impunity.

Another amendment deals with the rights of recovery and the suspension of drivers’ licences. The changes will speed up the process while ensuring that honest Saskatchewan motorists do not have to pay for the actions of the few who drive while uninsured or while in breach of their insurance.

At present, if SGI is obligated to pay out money as a result of an uninsured motorist’s collision, SGI may suspend the driver’s licence of the uninsured motorist who is at fault. However, the current legislation is unclear. It states that SGI may suspend the licence of an uninsured motorist forthwith. This loose definition occasionally results in a failure to suspend in a timely fashion. The proposed amendment would enable SGI to suspend an uninsured driver’s licence at any time.

The next proposed amendment tightens up the legislation with respect to consequences for motorists who operate in breach of their insurance. Currently SGI can recover against and suspend the driver’s licence of a driver operating in breach of insurance once a judgment is obtained against the individual. However, there is currently no provision to recover against and suspend the licence of a driver operating in breach of their insurance if that driver is involved in a single vehicle accident where they do not own that vehicle. In these cases SGI may be obligated to provide insurance coverage.

The proposed amendment will allow SGI to recover losses from damage to a vehicle the driver does not own, and suspend the licence of a motorist who is operating in breach of his or her

insurance at any time.

I will now discuss three amendments to the Act that deal with changing the coverage available to Saskatchewan motorists. In some cases coverage is expanded; in other cases it is limited. The goal of these changes is to ensure fairness and to keep . . . to continue to keep rates affordable for all Saskatchewan motorists.

The first amendment deals with after-market electronic equipment, which includes stereo and communications equipment. The proposed amendment would provide a coverage limit for after-market electronic equipment, particularly high-end stereo equipment, and exclude coverage for radar detectors.

Presently there is no coverage limit for after-market electronic equipment. This equipment is prone to theft and SGI continues to experience excessive claims in this area. By SGI capping insurance coverage on these items to a maximum payout of \$1,500, it will ensure rates stay affordable.

Private insurance can fill in any coverage gap by providing additional insurance coverage on those high value and high risk stereos. SGI will continue to provide full coverage through the auto fund for all manufacturer installed sound and communications equipment.

This proposed amendment will also address anomalies with respect to radar detectors and cellular phones. Currently coverage is provided for radar detectors but excluded for cellular phones. The proposed amendment will reverse that. Coverage will now be provided for cellular phones. This would be in line with the current legislation in Manitoba.

Insurance coverage would also be expanded in some specific cases. At present, basic plate insurance does not provide coverage for a passenger or other person who causes bodily injury or property damage to a third party. An example would be a passenger who opens the door of a vehicle and scratches the car opposite the vehicle he or she is exiting.

SGI CANADA’s auto pack and commercial pack does provide coverage in these cases to the passenger or other person who “operates any part of the insured vehicle.” The proposed amendment would extend basic plate coverage to these cases, bringing the auto fund in line with SGI CANADA.

This will ensure continuity of policies between the auto fund and SGI CANADA and be less confusing for the customer.

The next amendment deals specifically with better meeting the needs of individual SGI customers by expanding coverage in certain circumstances.

SGI and the provincial government understand that there are instances where a strict application of the legislation creates hardship for Saskatchewan residents. SGI has encountered situations where concerns for customer service or about undue hardship to individuals have required SGI to act contrary to legislation.

For example SGI will occasionally issue a farm plate to an

individual who does not meet the criteria but can be considered to be legitimately farming. On occasion SGI will review an individual case before denying coverage where a policy has expired, and in some special cases, new arrangements are made.

The amendment will permit SGI to exempt an individual from meeting the strict requirements of the legislation if it is determined that it would create an undue hardship and would not be contrary to public interest to allow the exemption.

(1130)

I'll now turn to the topic of commercial trailers. SGI is proposing that coverage be changed with respect to commercial trailers to better meet the needs of Saskatchewan trucking companies. Information from the private insurance sector and the commercial trucking industry indicates support for SGI's proposal to change the current system of registering and insuring trailers.

Trailers are susceptible to different risks than motor vehicles. The majority of trailer claims are for physical damage, losses from collision and weather conditions, while virtually none are liability claims or claims for injury benefits. Therefore SGI concurs with private industry that they are better able to underwrite this risk and respond to market conditions.

The amendment would allow SGI to eliminate coverage for certain commercial trailers and instead provide multi-year plates or perpetual plates which many other jurisdictions already provide. At present the renewal sticker process creates problems for those Saskatchewan companies operating interprovincially. The new multi-year or perpetual plates would help Saskatchewan trucking companies compete with other jurisdictions by eliminating an administrative burden.

The final proposed amendment involves accident surcharge appeals. Currently motorists who want to dispute a surcharge on their driver's licence may appeal to either the Rates Appeal Board or to a judge of the Provincial Court. A driver may dispute the surcharge if he or she believes the circumstances of the accident do not warrant the imposition of a surcharge on their driver's licence.

The surcharge hearing is an assessment of risk rather than an assessment of fault. However, the current legislation does not make this clear. The current wording describes the hearing in terms of a driver's liability to pay the surcharge. This is confusing to Saskatchewan motorists. The proposed amendment clarifies the purpose of the surcharge review by removing any reference in the Act to liability.

That concludes the outline of proposed amendments found in this legislation. These amendments work to make our insurance system fairer, more efficient, and more socially responsible. These changes will keep auto insurance rates affordable and ensure fairness for all Saskatchewan motorists.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Automobile Accident Insurance Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, after listening to the minister's comments, he's certainly making a large number of changes to the automobile insurance Act.

A number of these changes, I think, are certainly worthwhile. A number of them need to be further examined to determine exactly what they mean and what kind of impact they're going to have.

The minister started out talking about the case of insurance dealing with high-speed chases. We believe that we need to do everything we can in this province to eliminate high-speed chases; that they do indeed endanger the general public and the police that are involved in them. But we also must do what we can to make sure that those individuals involved in high-speed chases do not profit by them and are, indeed, met with the full severity of the law when they are apprehended for such.

If that means that they get their licences revoked, I think that would be a positive step forward, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, though, I have to wonder just how much of an impact that would actually have on an individual that is prepared to steal an automobile. To simply have their licence removed is not much of an impediment since they've already shown that they're not prepared to obey the law.

In dealing with stolen property, Mr. Speaker, again the law needs to have the ability to deal with those that are to be charged with an offence. Obviously the courts make the determination as to guilt. But when it comes to charging, the law needs to be able to charge the appropriate individual to proceed with a prosecution and either a guilty or not guilty verdict. If this Bill does indeed aid in that, then we will certainly be supporting that.

SGI though needs to be able to pay out to the individual whose vehicle has been stolen, whose vehicle has been damaged in some way, shape, or form, the proper insurance. If that means going back and recovering some of those funds that they have expended on behalf of the individual who owned the vehicle from the person who was found guilty of the theft, well and good. And we support that, Mr. Speaker. But again, we are going to have take a very serious look at exactly how all of this is going to impact on this particular legislation.

Mr. Speaker, when the minister talks though about putting a cap on the amount of money that might be available for after-market additions to vehicles, he is talking about electronics. But there are a number of other after-market additions that are also added on to vehicles such as special wheels, special tires, spoilers, special paint jobs, various modifications to motors, transmissions, etc., etc. I'm wondering if the minister is also including those things in modifications when it comes to a \$1,500 cap, or is it going to be strictly limited to electronics such as stereos?

And some of these stereos, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, are extremely expensive and need to have insurance available to them. If that insurance is to be made available through SGI CANADA and other private carriers such as The Co-operators or Wawanesa, whoever, Mr. Speaker, then we need to know about that and need to know the viability of providing that kind

of insurance through package policies.

Does that mean, Mr. Speaker, when these caps are limited — because obviously at the present time, according to the minister, they are not limited — does that mean that there will be a reduction in the insurance premium because they're not covering as much as they did before?

Now that individual who owns this equipment is going to have to buy additional insurance to provide themselves with that protection. Does that mean that SGI will be reducing their rates correspondingly because they're not covering as much as they were previously?

Cellular phones I think, Mr. Speaker, virtually we're reaching a point where almost every vehicle now has a cellular phone in it. The fact is vehicles are coming out now with cellular phones built right into them. And so I think the coverage of cellular phones is extremely important as they are becoming, indeed, an integral part of motor vehicle use.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, these changes are many. Certainly some of them have some value. Some of them need to be given some consideration to determine exactly where the minister is heading with these particular items.

He talks about commercial trailers and providing perpetual licences for them as happens in other jurisdictions. The trucking industry, I believe, should have some input into this, and hopefully the minister has been in consultation with them and they have had the opportunity to have some input.

How is this going to work? What kind of fees are going to be charged for these? Are they going to be a fee that they submit every year even though the plate doesn't change? How is all of this going to work, Mr. Speaker, I think are some of the important issues that we need to be able to deal with.

The minister at the end talked about the rates appeal, the surcharges that are applied to licences. This is extremely important, Mr. Speaker, because SGI, even though there may not have been a charge, there may not have been a conviction that the court decided person A was responsible for the accident over person B, SGI in a lot of cases makes that determination internally and assigns a fault to a driver. That driver's insurance is then correspondingly increased.

The minister is talking about changing the appeal. It sounded to me that it wasn't an appeal as to who was liable, who was at fault for the accident, but rather the appeal process dealt with the ability of the individual to pay the additional surcharge. I think really an appeal process needs to be in place, Mr. Speaker, that deals with the assessment of fault, of liability, by SGI outside of the court system. Internally is the way they do it, Mr. Speaker.

The driver, who is affected by this, needs to have the opportunity to appeal that decision to SGI and have that appeal . . . have that decision overturned by the appeal process if it's proven that the driver was not the person at fault, that SGI was improperly placing the blame upon them.

With all of these points in mind, Mr. Speaker, I believe we need

the opportunity to review this. The stakeholders across Saskatchewan need the opportunity to see exactly what the minister is proposing to do with this particular piece of legislation. Therefore I move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 36 — The Motor Carrier Amendment Act, 2000

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Motor Carrier Amendment Act, 2000.

The Motor Carrier Act is the provincial legislation that licenses commercial truck and bus companies, monitors their safety performance, and sets the insurance requirements they must meet. These amendments will improve the safety of the commercial trucking industry.

All jurisdictions in Canada have agreed to eliminate the economic regulation of the trucking industry that has been in place since the 1930s. As a result, operating authority certificates are no longer required to operate a commercial truck in Saskatchewan. This means that government no longer sets trucking routes or the rates that can be charged.

To ensure that trucking companies operate safely, however, the provincial and federal government, in co-operation with the industry, developed the new carrier safety program based on the National Safety Code.

Under this safety program, a carrier's safety performance is monitored based on the National Safety Code safety certificate provided to each trucking company. If a carrier is found to be operating in an unsafe manner, the Highway Traffic Board can impose safety requirements to protect the public.

Amendments to this Act require carriers to obtain a National Safety Code certificate. The amendments also ensure that the insurance requirements and the bills of lading requirements, established by the Highway Traffic Board, apply to those carriers operating under the new safety certificates.

In the past, commercial carriers have been obligated to meet these requirements as a condition of holding an operating authority certificate. The amendments address the existing gap in legislation resulting from the deregulation of the trucking industry and the change to a more safety oriented program.

Finally, the amendments will make the changes to the cargo insurance requirements for commercial truckers. Currently trucking companies must carry a specified level of cargo insurance irrespective of the value of the commodity they are hauling. As a result, water and gravel haulers, among others, must carry up to \$32,500 in cargo insurance, far exceeding the value of their load.

The proposed amendments will allow the Highway Traffic Board to exempt haulers of certain low value commodities from the requirement to hold cargo insurance.

Liability insurance requirements for commercial truckers will remain unchanged.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Motor Carrier Act.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the minister brings forward another Bill that looks like it certainly has some value and will have some benefit for the people of Saskatchewan. You might even call it privatization of the trucking industry because it removes that the government will be setting routes and rates. It will allow the trucking industry to make its own determinations. And we believe that, Mr. Speaker, is a move to the positive.

We do have some questions and concerns though, Mr. Speaker, as to the national safety standards, exactly what is involved there and what kind of new requirements the trucking industry in Saskatchewan may face.

Those areas, Mr. Speaker, I think the trucking industry needs to be discussed, become aware of exactly what's happening, what the minister is proposing again. As in the previous Bill, hopefully the minister has had some discussion with the trucking industry in this province to determine whether or not these new changes will be appropriate for Saskatchewan.

The issuance of removal of cargo insurance for low value loads though, does have some concern for me, Mr. Speaker, since as a farmer I do hire commercial truckers to transport my commodities to market.

And it might be applicable that my grain would be classified as a low value commodity because certainly the prices are extremely low, Mr. Speaker, for those commodities. And I would hope that the trucker that I hire would have insurance in place protecting my commodity before it reaches market such that if there is a loss of that commodity; that I am protected by that.

(1145)

So I think it will be important to ask the minister exactly what kind of financial value is being placed on the cargo that it be classified as a low value cargo and therefore exempt from the requirement to carry insurance.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other industries in this province that might also benefit if the minister was to take a look exactly at doing for them as is happening for the commercial trucking industry. And I think of the busing industry, the public transport system in this province. Perhaps that is another area that the minister should be taking a look at when it comes to determination of routes and rates that are applied in this province.

Mr. Speaker, because this deals with an important industry in this province when it comes to dealing with the commercial trucking of this province, they need an opportunity to be able to see and discuss exactly what the minister is proposing. We need the chance to have those discussions with them.

Therefore I would move that we adjourn debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 37 — The Public Libraries Amendment Act, 2000

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Bill No. 37 is an Act respecting public libraries and introduces a number of amendments which will improve provisions of public library services in Saskatchewan.

This Bill proposes to address four major issues that have been identified by the discussions with the public library community. At the proposal stage the amendments were circulated to stakeholder groups which include the regional, municipal, and northern systems of public library boards, Saskatchewan Library Association, Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, and the cities of Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, and Yorkton, and their local library boards.

The changes in this Bill will illustrate our commitment to enhance the effectiveness of the public library system and its ability to provide public library services to the residents of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our first proposal responds to programs with the existing process for revising regional library boundaries. The existing process has proven to be cumbersome, lengthy, and costly. The Bill proposes that the process of revising library boundaries be modified to be similar to the process of revising municipal boundaries.

The participating municipalities are familiar with the process. This process provides citizens the opportunity to be consulted about proposed boundary changes that may affect their quality of life. The process could also be . . . could also reduce the cost of municipalities if the boundary changes request is disputed.

Mr. Speaker, our second proposal relates to the issues arising from the public library system but tend to have difficulty getting resolved. Often the issues arise due to conflict priorities and interests between and among municipalities and public libraries. The municipalities and public library boards are interested in a process that will help to resolve these issues within the library system.

Therefore the Bill proposes a new three-stage process for addressing issues and investigations. Under the three-stage process, the responsibility of resolving disputes will be assigned in this way: first, to the library board system; secondly, to the provincial public library system; and finally, if required, to an appointed independent commission.

The independent commission will have the powers of commissioners pursuant to The Public Inquiries Act. The order of decisions and the independent . . . of an independent commission can be filed with and enforced by the Court of Queen's Bench. The independent commission is the final stage of the process.

This new dispute resolution is comparable and compatible to the process established under The Urban Municipalities Act of 1984 and promotes local decision making, accountability, and conflict resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the third proposal reduces the . . .

An Hon. Member: — Ambiguity.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — . . . ambiguity — thank you very much, Mr. Member — the ambiguity and paperwork associated with regional library agreements. Since all municipalities participate in the library system, the purpose of a regional library agreement has become unclear.

As a result, we are recommending eliminating of the requirements for the council of every municipality participating in a regional library . . . to enter into a regional library agreement. Rather we are recommending that the use of a regional library agreement be voluntary. This proposal simplifies the legislation and provides flexibility to the parties who wish to enter into the agreement to deliver local library programs.

Mr. Speaker, the final proposal involves the governing bodies of the regional libraries. As we know, the governance structure of any organization is an underpinning of good decision making. A good governance structure balances the diverse interests and expectations of the various members.

The amendment will require the composition of the executive committee of regional library boards to be comprised of a balanced representation on the basis of population of rural and urban members. This change will help to balance the needs and interests of urban and rural communities and will enhance a democratic provincial public library system.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial public library system has traditionally been built on a foundation of co-operation, participation, and support. Saskatchewan public libraries strive to provide equitable access to information and library material for all of Saskatchewan residents. This Bill will reinforce Saskatchewan's library foundation and will help to balance the interests and needs of residents, municipalities, and local and regional library boards. This Bill promotes a higher local responsibility, autonomy, and democracy within the public library system.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of the Bill No. 37, an Act respecting public libraries.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think we all recognize the importance of libraries. And fact is, Mr. Speaker, when I was somewhat younger — ages five, six, seven, eight, in that area — we used to receive books from the public library in Regina on a regular basis, every two weeks or so. And those were very much valued in our home and gave us access to a much larger number of books than we had at that time.

Mr. Speaker, public libraries continue to perform a very, very important role in our communities. Not only do they provide the citizens with access to books and publications, but also to activities that are related to literacy and learning, which are extremely important, Mr. Speaker. Today many public libraries offer access to Internet and to computers to learn what is not only happening within their own communities but around the world.

Unfortunately though, Mr. Speaker, we have seen over the last number of years a reduction of library services in some communities. Particularly with the loss in some communities of the mobile libraries. My own home community of Alida has lost the services of mobile library. And that is indeed a great loss because that mobile library stopped not only . . . was not only available to the citizenry of the communities but also stopped at the schools and provided them with a greater access to books than is currently available.

It's one thing, Mr. Speaker, as you know, to simply look at a title and say, yes, I want to order that book. It's another matter altogether to actually pick up that book and hold it in your hand and then make the determination as to whether or not I would like to read this.

They say you should not judge a book by its cover. But, Mr. Speaker, lots of times the covers will indeed tell you somewhat of what it's about, that book is about, and it's important to actually get your hands on that particular book.

Mr. Speaker, any changes to the library Act do need very, very serious consultation with the stakeholders. And the stakeholders in this particular case, Mr. Speaker, is every library across this province and every person who wishes to or may wish to access the library system.

I mention the Internet, Mr. Speaker, that is in many libraries today. That is a cost that many libraries find difficult to deal with and to access. The telephone costs related both to telephone services within the library and with the Internet cost was one of those measures, Mr. Speaker, that we received many contacts on this side of the House — and I'm sure the members opposite received many contacts over the fall and winter — with a great deal of concern as to what was going to happen to their library systems as SaskTel changed its rating structure.

One of the fears that the public libraries had is that they would no longer be able to offer Internet services because of the prohibitive costs that SaskTel might place on them.

I am concerned though, Mr. Speaker, when the minister talked about amalgamations of public libraries and doing it in a similar manner to that which was happening in the municipal district. Is the minister saying that he is proposing to do forced amalgamations — as he was attempting to do in the municipal areas — of public libraries? I certainly hope not, Mr. Speaker.

Voluntary — if people wish to join their libraries together in two different communities, to work together to provide similar services and to have access to a greater number of books, yes, Mr. Speaker, that would be a good thing. But if the minister is saying that he is going to treat public libraries in a similar manner to which he is treating municipalities, then I think we have a great deal of difficulty, Mr. Speaker, and certainly need a very, very significant clarification on exactly what the minister is talking about when he uses the terms that he is going to treat public libraries in a manner for amalgamation similar to municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, in light of that, we need to take a serious amount of time in discussing with the public library system across this province exactly the implications and the impact that this

particular piece of legislation will have on our public libraries and the access that people will continue to have to that very important item . . . institution in our province — the public library.

Therefore, I move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 38 — The Electronic Information and Documents Act, 2000

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Electronic Information and Documents Act, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, members will recall that this government introduced similar legislation in December last year in the form of Bill 11, An Act respecting Electronic Information and Documents. When Bill 11 was introduced in the House, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan became the first province in Canada to introduce legislation to provide a basic, legal framework for electronic-based commercial relationships.

The members will recall that when Bill 11 was introduced, I indicated it was the government's intention to broaden public awareness and seek comment and input into its further development. I'm pleased to report that these consultations have resulted in a number of comments and suggestions that are now incorporated in the Bill before us today.

Mr. Speaker, we're all familiar with the speed at which new methods of communication are being developed, and how quickly they become an integral part of how we communicate.

It's also becoming increasingly evident that these developments are having a significant and growing impact on business and on our economy. Saskatchewan consumers and businesses are conducting business on the Internet and will continue to do so in increasing numbers. New forms of communications such as the Internet and e-mail are evolving quickly and are fast replacing traditional paper-based communications.

The advent of new communication media, however, threatens to outpace the legal roles that have traditionally supported commercial relationships. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the law supporting legal relationships and associated communications was developed with a paper-based system in mind. To address many of these uncertainties the United Nations General Assembly adopted a model on electronic commerce in November of 1996.

The UN model law then formed the basis for the Uniform Law Conference of Canada's work in this area. The conference approved a uniform Act in August of 1999 entitled the Uniform Electronic Commerce Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before the legislature today is a further refinement on the work of the Uniform Law Conference of Canada. It is an important Bill, Mr. Speaker, as it will apply to commercial relationships and all other legal relationships requiring documentation.

It adopts an approach whereby the rules of capacity, can I do this, are transformed into rules of proof — have I met the standard? It doesn't mandate the use of electronic communications, rather the Bill allows for its use provided the parties consent.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that this Bill is media-neutral applying to paper-based and electronic communications, and technologically neutral in that particular technologies or software are not favoured over others.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill is divided into two major parts. Part one contains many of the provisions found in Bill 11, and changes made in response to the comments received from stakeholders during consultation on the Bill.

(1200)

The Bill provides for the following. Basic rules to ensure equivalent treatment of electronic and paper-based documents and information; general principles that will apply to electronic communications; and thirdly, rules for particular electronic transactions including the formulation and operation of contracts, the use of automated transactions, corrections of errors, and presumed time and place of the receipt of messages.

Part II of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, contains substantially the same provisions found in The Electronic Filing of Information Act which was passed by this legislature in 1998. That Act currently provides legal framework to support initiatives for the electronic filing of information with government.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, including The Electronic Filing of Information Act in this Bill will bring the legislation closer in substance to the Uniform Law Conference of Canada model legislation.

To summarize, Mr. Speaker, the Bill before this legislature replaces Bill 11, and includes — and my colleagues will be interested to know this — provisions formerly found in Bill 11, changes to Bill 11 based on comments received, and provisions formerly found in The Electronic Filing of Information Act, an Act dealing with filing information with the government.

I'd like to conclude, Mr. Speaker, with just a few comments from a *National Post* article of yesterday in which the legislation is discussed. Mr. Speaker, Mr. David Akin, the reporter, says that Saskatchewan has updated a groundbreaking piece of electronic commerce legislation, the first of its kind in Canada. He says, Mr. Speaker:

We're at the cutting edge of electronic commerce in so far as the recognition of electronic documents.

He says:

No other province has matched Saskatchewan's initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude by thanking all those who took the time to consider and comment on this important legislation. I'm proud that Saskatchewan is the first province in Canada to advance legislation that will provide a basic legal framework for electronic-based commercial relationships.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of The Electronic Information and Documents Act, 2000.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again the electronic use of commerce in this province is very much of a growing entity. It's certainly becoming very important, even though it would seem that some of the members on the other side find it difficult to understand the electronic commerce in this province.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, there can be though a great deal of difficulty in some of the electronic commerce and the electronic activities, particularly over the Internet. We've all heard of some of the attacks that have been made against the electronic commerce industry over the last number of weeks and months. And the fact is one of those major attacks is supposed to have taken place out of Eastern Canada.

Therefore we do have some concerns as to the security and the protection that is afforded to commerce that is carried out over the Internet. And, Mr. Speaker, hopefully this particular piece of legislation will provide for some of that kind of protection that is needed.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking here about legal and commercial activities, relationships, that take place every day in this province, every day in this country. And people, when they place an order or make an agreement over the Internet, need to know that both parties are bound by the same agreement.

They need to know, Mr. Speaker, that someone cannot transact a transaction, a commercial transaction, and indicate that person A is responsible for that transaction when they indeed did have no knowledge of that or were not a participant in that transaction, and therefore incur a liability on behalf of a person who is unaware that that is taking place.

Hopefully this piece of legislation will provide those kind of protections. Security is very, very important.

Canada, on a percentage basis, on a per capita basis, is the most wired country in the world. We have more Internet connections on a per capita basis than anyone else has. In large part, Mr. Speaker, that is because of the huge distances that we have to deal with in this country.

We are a very thin ribbon of population along our southern borders, Mr. Speaker, yet we are very, very broad. Our commerce is carried along that very thin ribbon. And part of that ribbon, Mr. Speaker, is the Internet highway.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan also we are a very spread out population, a small population covering a very large geographic area, and the Internet plays a very large part in our commerce and in our communications with each other. Therefore security of that commerce and those communications are extremely important.

Legislation is needed to protect that but this kind of legislation needs to be scrutinized to ensure that those protections are in place; that those protections are in place not only from attacks

from outside of the system, but from within the system as well, Mr. Speaker.

There are a large number of people who will be affected by this particular piece of legislation. They need to be assured. They need to understand exactly what this legislation will do to their commercial interests, to their private interests.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Labour Vote 20

Subvote (LA01)

The Deputy Chair: — I'd like to recognize the Minister of Labour and invite her to introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Today I have with me Sandra Morgan, the deputy minister of the Department of Labour; Cheryl Hanson, assistant deputy minister; Dawn McKibben, director of human resources and administration; John Boyd, director of policy and planning; Jeff Parr, executive director of occupational health and safety; Graham Mitchell, executive director, labour services division; Doug Forseth, senior labour relations officer, labour relations and mediation division; and Peter Federko, chief executive officer of the Workers' Compensation Board.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair, is it? I'd like to welcome the Minister of Labour and her officials here today. I hope it will be a productive experience. There's a number of issues that I want to discuss in estimates and in committee, mainly around the rules and conditions of unionization.

But today we have seen the amendments of The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act, and unfortunately it's a sad day for the Saskatchewan people and the economy of Saskatchewan. Normally we have hits from the . . . this province takes terrible hits from the weather-related problems and from our unfair trading practices around the world, but today we have . . . the Saskatchewan economy has taken a hit from the provincial government.

And I'd like to start off by getting into some of the comments the minister has made concerning the amendments of The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act in previous days, and she's restated some of them today.

Recently, Madam Minister, when you were talking about your discussions with the construction industry over the upcoming forced unionization Bill, you told reporters that your predecessor had met with the construction association hundreds of times. And you stated the other day and again you stated this morning in the interview, and hundreds of times to discuss getting rid of the CCTA (Crown Construction Tendering Agreement) and your withdrawal of the grandfather clause when it comes to double-breasted companies.

And again this hundreds of times keeps coming up. Can you supply to us today the dates of these hundreds of meetings, and the minutes from these hundreds of meetings, and who attended these hundreds of meetings?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, we can actually. I don't have it with me today, but we will get it to you, and you will have that list of the dates when the meetings were held.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you. I'd appreciate seeing that information. You've said recently that the construction industry was simply unwilling to make any compromises. Can you tell us how compromising the union leadership, which you are so closely . . . you are so close to, were on the issues of the CCTA and the double-breasting?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I would say that to a point we had movement on both sides of the discussion, and at the end of the day it just was not possible to bring it to full conclusion. But in fact I would say that both parties moved a bit, but not quite enough to get to a final conclusion.

Mr. Weekes: — Could you, Madam Minister, outline some of the areas where the two sides did see eye to eye? And the movements that you refer to — what were they?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The areas where agreement occurred tended to be on more minor issues. And certainly, when it came to some of the things that caused the final breakdown, it would probably be fair to say that it was on the kinds of issues that were discussed in the press conference today.

There were a number of details that people were able to agree on, but at the end of the day it's very hard for them to come to agreement on what is a fair way to divide up the work that exists within the industry.

Mr. Weekes: — Madam Minister, you've gone out of your way to connect the CCTA with your upcoming forced unionization Bill as if one naturally followed the other. In reality though, these two issues aren't really connected other than through policies. In reality, you could repeal your unfair tendering policy without bringing in this Bill, which the construction industry calls repugnant.

Isn't it correct that you are simply connecting the two in the minds of the media and the public in order to confuse the issue and take some of the spotlight off your upcoming forced unionization Bill?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I'm sympathetic with the difficulty of the member opposite in understanding this issue, but I'll try to explain it in such a way that I also came to understand it over time.

The fact of the matter is, is when you bid on a contract and one company is locked into bidding union and another company doesn't have to follow those rules, then they can underbid a company that has to meet certain standards that they've agreed to in a collective agreement. Now what problem that created is that a company that was duly certified had those obligations but escaped them through spinning off. So they were doing something that was really not acceptable in the world of labour

practice where you're either a union company or not a union company.

To solve the problem that companies that did have contracts with their employees and were unionized could not compete for projects. The Construction Tendering Agreement was constructed to ensure that they at least got a percentage of work in the province. And in actual fact, even though the unionized sector is 20 per cent of the industry, they only got 16 per cent of the contracts, even with that agreement.

And that's why if we had gone back to the table to negotiate the CCTA, they would have wanted a higher standard so that that remaining 4 per cent could have been addressed. And I think on careful reflection you will understand how these two things are linked.

(1215)

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'm sure you're aware of the Queen's Bench Court ruling concerning the matter between PCL industry and Lockerbie and Hole versus the CLR (Construction Labour Relations Organization). Given that the trial judge determined that the CLR exists as a result of the CILRA (Construction Industry Labour Relations Act) and it's therefore an arm of your government, are you aware of the complete make up of this organization, its directors and members?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, obviously I'm aware of the organization. And one of the things we've done in this Bill, which as far as I'm concerned should be satisfactory to the currently non-union sector of the industry, is that they now have to submit their bylaws and whatnot to the Labour Relations Board; whereas before they had an independent authority over their bylaws. And I think the changes that we've made would satisfy the requirements of the court decision that recently occurred.

The Deputy Chair: — Members, just a reminder to direct your remarks through the Chair. Thanks so much.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm sure, Madam Minister, you're also aware that the trial judge in the Court of Appeal determined that the CLR, an arm of your government, has breached the Charter of Rights of both PCL industry and Lockerbie by denying membership to the CLR.

As an arm of the government and CLR, they're required to submit its annual records including annual financial statements to the department which leads us . . . Could you please clear up the charge under the CCTA of the twenty-one and a half cents an hour per worker that the Crowns pay under the terms of the CCTA to CLR, and what is this twenty-one and a half cents used for? How much has been collected under this charge?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Now I'll just clarify that in every province where there's a unionized sector, a fee is collected; and the fee is always in two parts. Part of it is a designated fee to have a representative employer organization. The other parts of the fee come out of the collective bargaining process. So understand that there's two parts to that fee.

Now these are the three parts: 10 cents go to the representative bargaining organization, the REO (representative employer organization); 6 cents go to the Construction Opportunities Development Council; and 5 cents to the building trades, also because of their involvement in the bargaining process.

The CLR portion of the fees provides funding for the CLR to fulfil its role as employer. The CODC (Construction Opportunities Development Council) portion is for training and development. And the trades council uses its portion to fulfil its role as the bargaining agent. And the Provincial Auditor has rejected any concerns about these fees.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a charge implemented as a result of the CCTA, and will you table this information to the House, the financial records of the funds so we can ensure all the money is going to where it's supposed to be going.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — That is not . . . this is information of the organization, it's not our information and we don't have it.

Mr. Weekes: — I'm just referring back to the court decision . . . that you should have this information and we'd like you to make this information public.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — That information, as for other non-profit corporations, is filed with the non-profits corporations branch.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Chair, in your opinion, if an individual owns a unionized mechanical company that works exclusively on industrial projects and invests as a partner in a commercial general contracting work that works exclusively open shop in commercial projects, would that individual be in conflict with the provisions of the CILA.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Chair, perhaps I'm a little unclear about the intent of the question. This Bill only applies to those businesses which are certified as a unionized employer. And if an independent business is working on a project that's not certified, I'm just not sure exactly what you're trying to get at. If you could be a little more clear, Mr. Chair, that would be helpful if I had more clarity on the question.

Mr. Weekes: — Well just to repeat it, if an individual owns a unionized mechanical company that works on industrial projects, and invests as a partner in a commercial general contracting company that works on open shop commercial projects, would that individual be in conflict with the provisions?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The investment isn't the determining criteria. It has more to do with common control of a same board of directors. It has to do with how payroll is issued. It has to do with other control and direction issues not just investment.

Mr. Weekes: — You're saying an individual could own shares in both companies doing . . . one doing unionized work and one doing non-unionized work?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Shares aren't the issue, I don't think, in any corporation that determines anything to do with

unionization. It has to do with who actually controls the business.

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Chair, that's what I'm getting at — is in your provisions you're making a connection between ownership of one company versus the other. And does that mean that the, that the . . . there's going to be a conflict with the non-unionized company? Not a conflict, but so much be under the provisions?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well let me put it this way, Mr. Chair. If the investment is part of a whole package of other criteria that have to be met, it would be possible — but not necessarily so.

Mr. Weekes: — Well could you outline all the criteria that's involved and what level of ownership is allowed?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well in fact I can't because that's part of case law, and the Labour Relations Board would have a body of case law as to how related employer has been determined in the past. And they would have to ask a series of questions that they ask typically in this kind of a hearing. And I wouldn't be equipped to speak to the details of that any more than I would of how a court comes to its determinations.

But it has to be a series of criteria. And I know that some of them would be things like a common board of directors, a common payroll system that's directed from the parent company; it would be a common supervision. Those kinds of things. It would not be an independent company that has its own board of directors and operations and whatnot.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could you make . . . could you ask the Labour Relations Board for that criteria and make those criteria public?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We can undertake to look at the case law and get some clarification for you. I do not consider the Labour Relations Board to be staff to myself, but our department can undertake that, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Weekes: — It's a very, Mr. Chair, I think it's a very important question because companies are out there wondering where they stand. And they need to know what the rules are.

As Labour minister, do you feel it is appropriate to accept large donations from trade unions when you are contemplating these major changes to The Trade Union Act? Changes that, as far as I can see, no one wants except the union leaders.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well first of all, I would say that I have been approached by young non-unionized workers who work in the non-union sector, so to suggest that somehow this is just some people who are far removed from reality would not be fair.

And also if the member opposite, Mr. Chair, had any understanding of the trades — these are blue-collar people; these are not people who live in some lofty world. These are the people who do the plumbing work, do the carpentry work, do the labouring work, and probably more so than some of the people that you seem to be defending in this in terms of getting your hands dirty.

Although I have to say that I do understand, I do understand that most contractors in the province came up through the industry themselves. I do understand that, and I have a great deal of respect for these gentlemen.

What was his question?

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Chair, well that's the whole point of the question. The NDP has received \$300,000 last year from unions — \$32,000 from the construction unions. And I wasn't referring to the individual unionized worker being in agreement with this. I was making reference to the union leaders.

And you are stating categorically that these large donations have nothing to do with your decision to bring enforced unionization Bill for the construction industry that works and are asking for . . . that employers aren't asking for.

The only ones who seem to be asking for it is the union leadership who have failed to convince these workers to organize. These are the same union leaders who sign these large donations over to you and your party. And you say it has no impact on the decision making?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Again, Mr. Chair, I did indicate that workers have approached me on this same subject — about the arbitrariness of the rules that they work under.

But the other comment I would make is there were many contractors that approached in support of this Bill. This Bill was not just supported by the workers; it was supported by contractors as well.

And the other comment I would make about the donations. As you know, the history of our party is one that we're affiliated with the labour movement. They're an affiliate of ours. They are not some strange person who sits off on the side and donates to us. We're actually affiliated. So it would be not surprising that your affiliate donates to you. What's more surprising is that Conrad Black donates to you.

I mean I . . . you're not affiliated, are you? As far as I know. And I would find that to be much more unusual. And I do recall saying, Mr. Chair, to the member opposite, that a wide range of people — including business people, including lawyers, including people who work in community organizations — all donate to me.

And I don't know about you, but I believe my role as a legislator is to bring my best objective decision making in the common good to this forum, and I don't feel I owe my allegiance to anyone. And I think that's particularly why I favour the process we have within the legislature because it's a good democratic forum for legislators to be able to exercise their independent judgment.

So your vote might be for sale but mine isn't.

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Chair, that's the whole point of my question. You are affiliated with unions. Unions, by all accounts, are writing labour laws which you are passing or trying to pass. You've admitted to being affiliated with unions. When they give you \$300,000, I think that, that . . . I don't

who's . . . I think someone else is being bought here.

I don't think you can make that accusation over here. The only affiliation we have over here is to the Saskatchewan people and to a thriving economy. And what you are admitting to is that you're allowing the union leaders to dictate to your coalition government what the rules and regulations are, and I believe that's very unfair to the people of Saskatchewan.

Now I've heard, Madam Minister, I've heard you argue that these changes in the upcoming forced unionization Bill are necessary to ensure labour harmony in the construction industry. As a matter of interest, when was the last time we saw a major strike in the construction industry in Saskatchewan?

The Deputy Chair: — Order, members. Order. Just before I recognize the Minister of Labour, I just want to caution . . . Order, order. Order, please. I just want to caution members on both sides of the House to be careful and temperate with their language, and be careful of insinuations. And I want to just make specific reference to the insinuations that have been made on both sides about buying and selling. I'll say no more about that.

I just want to urge members — I know there are strong feelings on both sides of the House with respect to this issue — but let's be temperate in our remarks about one another.

Mr. Weekes: — I will repeat the question. As you've argued, Madam Minister, that these changes in your upcoming forced unionization Bill are necessary to ensure labour harmony in construction industry, as a matter of interest, when was the last time we saw a major strike in the construction industry in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, that would be about 18 years ago. But I have to say this is a trend right across Canada; this is not specific to Saskatchewan. This would be the same in every other province.

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Chair, in fact we have not seen a protracted strike since the late 1970s or early 1980s when they were regular occurrences. So would you mind telling us the real reason why you feel this upcoming forced unionization Bill is necessary?

(1230)

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — You know, I have to take exception, Mr. Chair, to the speaker's constant reference to a forced unionization Bill, because this Bill is the same as exists in the labour law of every other province. So I guess if you want to accuse Alberta of forced unionization and Ontario of forced unionization, I guess we can do that.

But I am trying to respectably answer whatever small amount of factual questions the member opposite is asking. And I'm quite prepared to go to the wall factually, fact by fact. But I would ask a little respect, in return, for referring to the Act under its proper name, The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act.

And the presence or absence of strikes has nada to do with the fundamental right of democratic right to unionize.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Chair, well you're the one that's saying that there's tensions in the construction industry and that's one of the reasons why you're bringing in these amendments. I'm just stating the fact that there hasn't been any tensions, there hasn't been any labour disruptions since the late 1970s or 1980s.

And as far as other provinces, I'd just like to state that in Alberta, there is unionized construction industry and there's non-unionized commercial construction industry. So that's not quite true what you said there about other provinces.

Up to this point, has there been anything to stop union organizations from trying to organize the workers who are employed at these non-union shops? And we have heard that there's only 20 per cent of the construction industry that is unionized. That means 80 per cent are not and don't want to be unionized.

Why doesn't the union get out there and do the work and unionize these shops? Or are you going to do the work for them?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I guess there's two answers, Mr. Chair, to that question. You know there's a young man that met with me lately who said that he had been presented in his non-union workplace with a petition his employer wanted him to sign to oppose his right to unionize. I don't think I need to explain that further.

When the person who pays your pay cheque, in an environment where you have no rights, gives you a petition to sign to oppose their right to have rights, I think that's a pretty questionable practice. And that's part of what this is all about.

The second thing I would say is that the whole point to this is not to unionize anybody. The point of it is to prevent employers from avoiding their collective bargaining obligations. And where employers created spinoffs specifically for the purpose — that's the way the Act states it, specifically for the purpose of avoiding collective bargaining obligations — those are the only companies that are going to be affected. These are people who have been proven to have created spinoffs to avoid their obligations.

Mr. Weekes: — Well I feel that, that in doing a unionization effort that the worker is being . . . has a potential of being coerced from the labour unions as well as the employer. And I believe it should be fair and equal treatment from both sides.

And the individual worker, if the individual worker has come to you and spoken to you about the issue, they have the full force of the law behind them. And I don't see why the government has to come in and bring in rules and regulations to do the union's work. If people voluntarily want to join a union, they can do that now.

Why would you get involved in forcing people to join a union against their wishes?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many times that we've experienced this kind of hearing problem, but it's a question of the only time an employer would be affected

is if it was proven that they were trying to avoid their collective bargaining obligations.

Now this, Mr. Speaker, is no different than when someone has to pay alimony; and when they don't pay up, then there are remedies. That is no different. This is only in the instance of an employer who has been attempting to avoid their collective bargaining obligations.

And I ask you, in terms of the power of the employer and the power of the union, who has more power over you — the person who pays your cheque or the person who doesn't?

Mr. Weekes: — I'd like to move on to another issue. Do you foresee the current organization, the CLR, Construction Labour Relations Organization, the power to negotiate collective bargaining agreements continued in that role for sometime to come, and will you continue to give the industry that right to decide for themselves who will bargain on their behalf?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The way that this is organized in the present Act is that organization has the right to self-determination. As soon as the Act is proclaimed, they will have to meet the conditions of the new Act, and I presume they will have a meeting and they will conduct whatever business they have to conduct in order to properly submit their bylaws and to have their elections, etc.

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Chair, so that basically says . . . The question is: do you have the intention of enshrining the current bargaining organization in this new legislation and thus take away the industry's right to choose for themselves who works on the agreement?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Chair, the name is enshrined but not what the people choose to do with it. So it's no different than this is called the Government of Saskatchewan, but what people choose to do with it varies from time to time.

And so in the same way, that organization with the name would exist, but how the members of that organization construct their bylaws, conduct their elections, that's a matter for their organization.

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Chairman, it seems that they're going to have to change their bylaws to suit what regulations and amendments that the government brings in.

How many companies, Madam Minister, to Saskatchewan do you contend will be affected by the scrapping of the grandfathering clause in your forced unionization legislation?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We have no way of knowing. One of the difficulties with the situation that currently exists is there is no way to tell how many companies are related, and there is no way to know this. And we have asked the construction industry for those figures and they apparently can't give it to us either. So we don't know and they don't know, and I guess this process will find out.

Mr. Weekes: — Are you stating that there will be no significant effect on the other non-unionized construction companies?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I'll go through this carefully one more time. The only people impacted by this Bill are people who have been trying to avoid their collective bargaining obligations. If a company is determined to fall within that definition by virtue of having spun off, then they would be affected. And I'm sure, Mr. Chair, that these companies know who they are because if you intentionally did something to avoid something you would know it.

Mr. Weekes: — It kind of begs the question why you're bringing in these amendments if you don't know the result of your actions and who it's affecting and why and when and how. But when this grandfathering clause is removed in your forced unionization legislation, the general effect would be that the non-union arms of double-breasted companies would ultimately become unionized and therefore be subject to province-wide collective bargaining agreements. Is that generally correct?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Only if they are declared directly related would that happen. And that would only happen if the spin off company was not a true separate, and independent company. A true mom and pop will not be affected.

The committee reported progress.

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

Mr. Kasperski: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to make a statement on Mother's Day.

Leave granted.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Mother's Day

Mr. Kasperski: — Mr. Speaker, and thank you colleagues on this side and colleagues on the other side of the House. As we all know or at least we better not forget, Mr. Speaker, that Sunday, May 14 is Mother's Day — the day in which we buy a card and if possible take our moms out for dinner and have a good visit.

This one-day effort, Mr. Speaker, in return for the gift of life, for a childhood of love and nurturing, for the training by precept and example which prepared us to move out into the big world with both a sense of direction and moral standards encompass us. Not exactly a fair trade, Mr. Speaker, but mothers are sometimes used to this.

Dads help. Friends play a role. School and society have their own influence. But still when we think of the forces that have shaped us, our mothers are likely to be those at the head of the line. Mr. Speaker, even politicians have mothers who love them despite their sometimes ill-chosen profession. No strings attached, no provisions attached except that we be of the best behaviour we can.

Those of us who are fortunate to have their mothers still with us and have them close by will, I know, make a special effort to see them on their official day. Those of us who do not have our mothers and who are not close to them, I know, will take a private moment to share these memories.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, as well to ask leave to respond to the Mother's Day address.

Leave granted.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly it's an honour to stand in this Assembly this afternoon and say a few words on behalf of mothers in the province and on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party in joining with the member from Regina in regards to his comments.

Mr. Speaker, there isn't any one of us in this Assembly this afternoon who will not take the time, I don't believe, to extend their warm wishes and their love to their mothers today. Except for the members who unfortunately, as myself, had their mother leave them a few years ago. But, Mr. Speaker, that still doesn't remove the memories of what a mother has, and her role has been in my life, and certainly, I'm sure, in the lives of many members here.

Mr. Speaker, I think we can all be grateful for the love and the care and the nourishment of our mothers. Mothers certainly do extend a lot. They do give a lot. In fact, I think there was a little poem written one time about this child leaving a note on the table for his mother that she owed him for the time that he had mowed the grass and that she owed him for the time that he had done the dishes and that she owed him for a number of other issues he had done.

And the mother sat down and she responded to it saying, I just wanted you to know how much I appreciated being able to carry you for nine months; being able to give you birth; being able to cradle you when you were sick; and being able to haul you to the ball games or the hockey games — you know, mothers do so much for us. And so many times we forget to really show our gratitude and our thanks and our appreciation.

So on behalf of our caucus, we certainly want to extend not only to the mothers that we represent, but to mothers all across this province, by saying thank you for the devotion you have shown to your family, and not only to your family but to the friends around you. And we wish each and everyone of you a Happy Mother's Day.

MOTIONS

House Adjournment

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, if I could by leave before we adjourn, when we were moving a motion earlier to have an extra day around the May long weekend, I neglected to change or suggest that we change the hours of sitting for Friday. And therefore I would move, by leave of the Assembly, and seconded by the member from . . .

An Hon. Member: — Thursday, Thursday.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Oh, Thursday, pardon me.
Seconded by the member from Moosomin:

That by leave of the Assembly notwithstanding Rule 3(1) on Thursday, May 18, 2000 this Assembly shall meet at 10 a.m., and the Assembly shall adjourn at 1 p.m. subject to provisions of Rule 3(2) and Rule 3(3) so far as applicable.

And I would so move.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — Hon. members, I wish you and your loved ones, your families, a very, very fine, happy weekend.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:46 p.m.