

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in time for the long weekend I see that fuel prices are rising again so it's timely that I should present a petition to reduce fuel tax by 10 cents a litre. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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 this petition is signed by the residents of Gull Lake, Webb, Shaunavon, Tompkins, and Pennant.

I so present.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too present petitions signed by the good people from Saskatoon, from Watrous, from Rosthern, concerned with the price of fuel at the holiday time. And I read the petition:

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.

I so present.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise today to present petitions on behalf of citizens throughout the province concerned about the high fuel tax. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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 signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the city of Swift Current.

I so present.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too am pleased to present a petition to reduce fuel tax by 10 cents a litre. The prayer in the petition reads:

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.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures come from all across the province including Hague; Swift Current; Outlook, Saskatchewan; and Denare Beach. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to present this very timely petition.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition today requesting reduction of 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.

The people that have signed this petition are from Swift Current and Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of the citizens who are increasingly alarmed about the high price 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 all from my home community of Melfort.

I so present.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well to present a petition regarding the fuel tax and 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 as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, the petition I present is signed by the good people from Abbey, Swift Current, and Webb.

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, Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by people from Waldeck, Swift Current, and also one from Taber, Alberta.

I so present.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too stand today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens

concerned about 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 as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And this is signed by folks from Swift Current, Cabri, and Glenbain.

I so present. Thank you.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of people that are concerned about the high price of fuel in the province of Saskatchewan. 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 as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Wymark and the city of Swift Current.

I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of people of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the high price of fuel. And the petition reads:

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 this is signed by residents of McMahan, Swift Current, and Wymark.

I so present.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present today dealing with gasoline taxes. 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 taxes by 10 cents a litre, cost shared by both levels of government.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the Neville, Regina, and Swift Current areas of the province, all in favour of gas reduction.

I so present.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present regarding fuel tax.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I would ask members from both sides to kindly respect the members who are presenting petitions.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition on behalf of citizens upset over the fuel rate in this province. 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 as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition is signed by the good people in Denare Beach, Rush Lake, Moose Jaw, and Regina.

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to read a petition from citizens concerned about high fuel taxes.

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 is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good people from Swift Current.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too also have a petition 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, provincial governments to immediately reduce fuel taxes by 10 cents a litre, cost shared by both levels of government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Petitioners are . . . signatures are from Gull Lake; Craik; Martensville; Regina; Saskatoon; Moose Jaw; Vernon, BC (British Columbia); Calgary, Alberta.

I so present.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition of 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 taxes 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 the town of Govan.

I so present.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning, Mr. Speaker, I rise with a petition to call for the reduction of fuel taxes by 10 cents a litre. Mr. Speaker, 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 taxes by 10 cents a litre, cost shared by both levels of government.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good people from Birch Hills and Melfort.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present today on behalf of citizens concerned about the high tax on 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.

And the signatures to this petition come from the communities of Dysart and Cupar.

I do so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to reduce the fuel tax by 10 cents a litre. Mr. Speaker, the price of fuel keeps going up every day and that's just like the popularity of the Saskatchewan Party.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, please. I'd just remind the hon. member that entering into debate during presenting petitions is inappropriate.

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

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 petitioners are from the good people of Spiritwood, Glaslyn and Glenbush.

I so present.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition to reduce fuel costs by 10 cents a litre. 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition is signed by the good citizens of Melfort, Mr. Speaker.

I 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.

Petitions from citizens of the province on the following matters:

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

The provision of reliable cellular service in Prud'homme, Bruno, Vonda, Cudworth, Strasbourg, Duval, Govan, and Bulyea.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Prior to calling introduction of guests, hon. members, I ask your leave to introduce to you someone, a dignitary that has kindly come to visit our Assembly this afternoon. I'd like to introduce seated in the Speaker's gallery, Mrs. Rosemarie Myrdal, the Lieutenant Governor of North Dakota. And Mrs. Myrdal . . .

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — . . . accompanied by Mr. Clare Carlson who is the Agriculture Policy Advisor to North Dakota Governor Schafer, and Mr. Francis Schwindt, Chief, Environmental Health, North Dakota Department of Health.

The Lieutenant Governor is visiting Regina today, and while in this city will be meeting with the Minister of Energy and Mines, the Minister of Highways and Transportation, and the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs; officials from the Department of Agriculture and Food, the Department of Environment and Resource Management.

I had the honour of co-hosting a luncheon with the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs in her honour. I will also be meeting with Mrs. Myrdal later this morning and I would ask you all to please join me in welcoming the Lieutenant Governor of North Dakota and her delegation here this morning to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

I had the honour of co-hosting a luncheon with the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs in her honour. I will also be meeting with Mrs. Myrdal later this morning and I would ask you all to please join me in welcoming the Lieutenant Governor of North Dakota and her delegation here this morning to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure and an honour to introduce a friend and Member of Parliament from Blackstrap, Al Kerpan, who is joining us in the House today. Mr. Kerpan was first elected October 25, '93, and I just want to say welcome to the Assembly and we hope you enjoy question period and the operation of the House.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join with members in welcoming both the representatives from North Dakota — Rosemary Myrdal, Mr. Carlson and Mr. Schwindt — as well as my former colleague from the House of Commons, Allan Kerpan. Welcome to the Assembly and would you join with me in again welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through to you to all the members of the House, 28 students seated in your west gallery. These adult students are from SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), the 8th Avenue North campus, and these young students are presently studying Canadian government. And they are accompanied here today with their teachers, Faith Synk, Linda Holowaty, and Warren Gervais; and I ask all the members to give them a very warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Northeast in welcoming the students from SIAST that are here with us today. I hope they enjoy observing the proceedings, and I'm sure they'll find it very informative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce a class of students who are sitting in your gallery from SIAST, the 23rd Avenue campus. There are 12 students who are studying English as a Second Language, accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Ron Mang.

And also while I'm on my feet, I'd also like to make a special point of welcoming Lieutenant Governor Myrdal to Saskatchewan. It's too bad that she wasn't here yesterday to hear my speech in Norwegian celebrating Syttende Mai.

So let's welcome the students and the Lieutenant Governor.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Prince Albert Hosts Millennium Citizenship Court

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to rise this morning in our honoured Assembly to inform yourself and all members of an event that took place . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, please.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was honoured with the opportunity to attend Prince Charles School yesterday in Prince Albert as they hosted the first citizenship court of the new millennium in Prince Albert . . . that Prince Albert had the honour to host. Mr. Speaker, Canada . . . Canadian Immigration is attempting to hold 2,000 such proceedings throughout our fabulous country this year to honour the year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, as citizens of Canada and Saskatchewan, I am certainly proud and I am certain that all members of this Assembly are very proud that 38 people from all corners of our globe have chosen to make our province their home.

Mr. Speaker, to illustrate to the Assembly, I'm pleased to inform you of the countries that people have left to enjoy Canada, such as the United States of America, the Dominican Republic, South Africa, Pakistan, Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Somalia, the Philippines, Sweden, China, Switzerland, Ireland, and last but not least, Mr. Speaker, Poland.

Mr. Speaker, these new citizens will now have all the rights and responsibilities that we often glibly take for granted. I ask that all members of the Assembly join me in welcoming these 38 new citizens to Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Newly Created Nursing Position

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, well, well, well, well, well, well, wellness. I repeat — wellness. Good news from our Minister of Health.

I want to congratulate the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker. Not only for listening to all the bushwa from the opposition, although she deserves a medal for that. No, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health deserves our applause for continuing to improve what is already the best health care system in North America.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wartman: — It can be made better. It can be made better. She is a tireless worker for . . . in her efforts to make it better.

Just yesterday, as reported in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*, she met with the Saskatchewan registered nurses to announce the creation of a new position focused solely on nursing. The person appointed is Marlene Smadu, a nurse herself with a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) and great government experience

as assistant deputy minister of Health.

The nurses reacted to this news with a standing ovation, Mr. Speaker, and I'm pretty happy about it myself. As one nurse said, we feel Marlene represents us well. This is an exciting time. Everyone is upbeat, Mr. Minister. Nurses are being valued.

We are upbeat, except you know, those across the way. There was a time, we admit, when there was tension with nurses. But this is getting better. The government listens. Good news, a long weekend . . . to begin a long weekend with. Good news for Health.

Thank you.

Scholarship Winner from Spalding

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to congratulate a youth from our constituency who has received the Toronto Dominion Canada Trust scholarship for outstanding community leadership for \$50,000.

Dionne Pohler from Spalding received the award at the national awards ceremony on May 8. Out of a total of 2,600 applications, Dionne is one of 20 recipients across Canada and the only one from Saskatchewan.

Ms. Pohler is a wonderful example of the youth of our province. She is active in her school community and throughout the province.

She was instrumental in opening the Spalding chapter of SADD (Students Against Drinking and Driving) when she was in grade 8. She's the oldest of eight children growing up on a family farm. Dionne was president of the Students Against Drinking and Driving last year and is serving as past president this year.

She is president of the local chapter of SADD and a Saskatchewan young speaker for the organization. She's been speaking throughout the province and has spoken at the national level in Ottawa. Last year she met with the Prime Minister concerning the future plans of lowering the blood alcohol allowances.

She was part of the Encounters with Canada at the Terry Fox Centre in Ottawa; she was a member of the Carlton Trail youth for life. She is vice-president of the SRC (student representative council) at her school, she is editor of the yearbook, coaches a senior boys' volleyball team, and participates in volleyball, curling, badminton, track, drama, and piano. She is also active in the church as a reader, a server, and an organist.

Ms. Pohler is in grade 12 at Naicam School and plans to attend the U of R (University of Regina) to take administration and political science. I'd like to congratulate her and look forward to watching her political career.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Swift Current Business Excellence Awards

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Swift Current

business community honoured its own last night at the Swift Current Business Excellence awards night. And the winners are as follows:

Property appearance, 7th Heaven's Hair Design; community involvement, Stark and Marsh; heritage, Kurt's Take-Out and Catering; new business, Legault Manufacturing Ltd.; customer service, Pharmasave #406 and Scentiments Gifts and Crafts; and for business of the year, National Manufacturing of Canada Inc.

Mr. Speaker, it is really all of Swift Current and district and all of the province that benefits from the business community in Swift Current, for their enterprise and their contributions to the economy, the quality of life we enjoy, and the opportunities that we have for the future.

I commend the small business in Saskatchewan for creating most of the jobs in Saskatchewan's economy and playing their very important part in making Saskatchewan the best province in the best country in which to live.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in congratulating the Swift Current Business Excellence award winners. In fact all of the members of the Swift Current business community.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Bluenose Bed and Breakfast Wins Award

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great privilege and a pleasure to congratulate some constituents of mine. Ken and Jo Mader of the Bluenose Country Vacation Bed and Breakfast from Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan was awarded the Attractions Canada 2000 distinction award.

As provincial winners they're up against attractions such as the West Edmonton Mall, Confederation Centre of the Arts in Prince Edward Island, and came out the winner. The Attractions Canada contest is the only coast to coast competition organized to promote the quality, success, and innovation and diversity of Canada's attractions.

Ken and Jo Mader are hosts of over 7,000 visitors a year to their country vacation farm, and give tours on ag and on many Saskatchewan issues. Ken and Jo make excellent ambassadors as they present our province very well to the rest of the world.

On behalf of the people of Indian Head-Milestone constituency as well as myself and my wife, I would like to congratulate Ken and Jo Mader and the support staff of the Bluenose Country Vacation Bed and Breakfast. Not only for the award that they have won, but for the vision of Saskatchewan that they bring to the world.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Child Care Week

Ms. Jones: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to bring to the attention of this House that this is Child Care Week in Saskatchewan. Current research leaves little doubt that the blueprint for a child's life is largely laid out before he or she starts school. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, for thousands of children right here in this province, the quality and success of that blueprint is greatly affected by the care they receive from those their parents trust to care for them.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to quality child care. Since 1992 we have consulted extensively with stakeholders in this field. We have spent more than 4.5 million in responding to their suggestions and recommendations. We have further committed \$2 million over the next four years to the development of early childhood resources in licensed child care facilities.

Last year we released a discussion paper on early childhood development called "Building on Community Success: Creating a Long Term Plan for Saskatchewan's Youngest Children and Their Families." The response to this has been very positive and we remain committed to working with our provincial counterparts and the federal government to make early childhood development a priority all across the country.

I ask all members of this House to join me in expressing appreciation to all those caring individuals whose dedication and commitment to Saskatchewan children will determine not only the quality of their future, but the future of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Millennium Grove Project in Moose Jaw

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tuesday, Mr. Speaker, I had the very great pleasure of representing the government in Moose Jaw at a very historic event. The grade 2 students from Moose Jaw's Empire Elementary School made history, Mr. Speaker.

These students planted 2,000 seedlings for the province's very first Millennium Grove. These projects are a way of celebrating the new millennium, Saskatchewan's upcoming centennial, and enhancing our natural environment. The Millennium Groves are a centennial project sponsored by the Shand . . . SaskPower Shand Greenhouse and the TREEmendous Saskatchewan Foundation.

The Moose Jaw Millennium Grove was planted along Spring Creek. The seedlings planted on Tuesday will enhance the natural stand of willow along the creek bed, and green ash seedlings will provide shelter.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the grade 2 class from Empire Elementary for beginning this project, and I would also like to thank the students from grade 9 to 12 from A. E. Peacock Collegiate who helped the younger grade 2 students from Empire plant their seedlings.

I would also like to thank the grade 8 to 12 students from John Chisholm School who helped prepare the site for planting and

who will make the final planting of seedlings.

SaskPower Shand Greenhouse and the TREEmendous Foundation are to be commended for their sponsorship of this very worthwhile project.

The Millennium Groves will enhance the environment and our lives for years to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Gas Tax Reduction

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, well the first long weekend of summer is approaching. We hear that the weather is going to be turning nice, and our beautiful provincial parks open up today. So the only thing standing in the way of Saskatchewan families enjoying a great long weekend is this high-taxing, remnant band of NDP (New Democratic Party) and a Liberal Party caucus that can now conduct their meetings on a golf cart, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. His budget jacked up park fees by an average of 40 per cent, and now the price of gas is on the way up again in Saskatchewan. We hear that the price of gas will go up even higher.

We're proposing a 5 cent a litre tax cut in provincial gas tax, conditional, conditional on a matching cut from the federal government. That would mean a 10 cent a litre break for consumers at the pump.

Mr. Minister, when we first asked this question after the budget, you said you wouldn't rule out at least talking to the federal government. Have you even spoken to federal minister, Paul Martin about the opportunity for a federal-provincial gas tax cut?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I'd say to the members opposite they may want to read an editorial from the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*, which I think does a good job of characterizing their position:

There may be good reasons for the (province) to reduce . . . its 15-cent-a-litre (fuel) tax on (gasoline), but helping motorists cope with rising fuel prices isn't one of them . . .

That the Opposition would — with no regard for the consequences and having learned nothing from Grant Devine's gas tax mess — advocate . . .

And it goes on.

And what I say to the members opposite is what I said to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday — how does he plan to pay for his irresponsible tax cut promises? By taking money out of the people's savings account and by getting rid of what is unnecessary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, not long ago members of this Assembly and people in the agriculture industry in this province worked extremely hard, day and night, struggled to get even any assistance at all from the federal government.

Now we have a federal government offering potentially up to \$50 million of federal tax relief for Saskatchewan motorists, and we're asking the government only to contact the federal government and determine if this is a possibility for Saskatchewan motorists.

That's the question, Madam Minister. Why won't you at least call the federal minister and ask if this offer is on the table and provide some immediate tax relief to Saskatchewan motorists? Why won't you do at least that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I think the people of this province have to listen to where this line of question is going. And these aren't my words. These aren't my words; this is the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* saying this line of thinking takes us back to Grant Devine's gas tax mess.

Because I ask those members two questions — they're going to pay for their tax cuts out of the people's savings account, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, one-time money for an ongoing expense; Grant Devine's gas tax mess — and I ask the Leader of the Opposition to answer the question that I asked him yesterday.

He says he's paying for all of this by getting rid of unnecessary expenditures. What is he going to get rid of that's unnecessary? Is it health care? Is it education cuts? What kind of things that are unnecessary are you going to get rid of, sir?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is abundantly clear that this government and that minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Mr. Wall: — It's pretty clear, Mr. Speaker, that this government and that minister is completely obsessed with the past, Mr. Speaker. They are condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past. They'll suffer the same fate as the administration suffered that they constantly refer to, Mr. Speaker. And the polls proved it yesterday — they're headed for an electoral horsewhipping of biblical proportions, Mr. Speaker. That's the bottom line in all of this.

Madam Minister, the Minister of Finance, when we first asked this question last month, at least committed to the fact that he wouldn't rule out talking to the federal Minister of Finance about the opportunity for a gas tax cut for Saskatchewan motorists. He wouldn't rule it out.

Has he contacted the federal Finance minister to determine what may be on the table for Saskatchewan people? And if he hasn't, why not, Madam Minister? Why won't he call his federal counterpart to determine if there's a tax cut potential for Saskatchewan people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, this is not about the past; this is a Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* April 1 editorial which they say takes us to Grant Devine's tax mess.

And the members opposite have to be accountable. They say they'd have a huge income tax cut, they'd cut the gas tax — how are they going to pay for it? It's a simple question and it deserves a simple answer.

When our spending per capita is already \$500 less per person than the province of Alberta, I ask the Leader of the Opposition, when he says he's paying for his tax cut by getting rid of what is unnecessary, what is unnecessary?

The people of the province have a right to know what he thinks is unnecessary and what he would cut. We on this side believe in balanced budgets and money for progress.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Review of Personal Injury Protection Plan

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). Mr. Minister, you've blown nearly \$87,000 on your botched review of no-fault insurance. Eighty seven thousand dollars on a review that has no chairperson, no victims, no lawyers, and no public meetings.

Mr. Minister, how is that possible? You've spent \$87,000 on a review that has accomplished nothing to date. Where has all this money gone?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I think that it may be noted that the member from up in Canora may have gone off for a plumbing course, because he's now unblocked the question pipeline for the hon. member . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . from Rosthern.

I'm very pleased, very pleased to have a question today. Now we . . . and it's a question . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I'm not that far from the minister. I'm having a difficult time hearing him. Order.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the issue of dealing with the personal injury protection plan is something that was set out in the original legislation and it contemplates a review which includes a committee of people to do that review. It also includes others who will work with that committee and do background research. And they're working on all of that.

We are also working to make sure that we have a committee that will be in a position to include all of the people in Saskatchewan who are interested in contributing to this. And we are on that track and there will be further announcements about this very soon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, your

review of no-fault insurance system is a complete failure. So far it's cost the taxpayers \$87,000. However, fortunately there are public meetings taking place on no-fault, but no thanks to your government.

The Coalition Against No-Fault is holding its own public meetings. I was at one of those meetings last Saturday in Saskatoon along with approximately 300 other people — victims, medical professions, and organizations like Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

And they're coming forward to express concerns about your flawed no-fault system. Of course, you're not listening because these people have been shut out of your phony-baloney system.

Mr. Minister, will you admit that your botched review has been a costly failure? Will you start over with a new review that includes no-fault victims?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we have set up a committee of fair-minded people from Saskatchewan who are going to look at this issue. I have received the information from the first of the coalition's hearings and that's been forwarded to the committee. I look forward to receiving information from the meeting that the hon. member attended last week and that will also be forwarded to the commission.

But there is information from many places that needs to come as we analyse this personal injury protection plan so that we can improve it and make sure that our system continues to remain a very good system for all of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only hearings that are taking place are taking place outside of your concept. How can you say your process is working? You've spent \$87,000 to date. Victims' groups are boycotting. Lawyers are boycotting. You had no public meetings.

Of course you did have a few of those timed but you had to cancel them because your chairman quit. So to date you've accomplished absolutely nothing, but you have spent \$87,000 doing nothing.

Mr. Minister, when are you going to admit your new process is an absolute failure? When are you going to scrap the whole thing and start over?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with the process that has been outlined using the committee people that we have. We will take the information that comes from the coalition and from all of the other interested people in Saskatchewan and we'll make sure that it goes to this process so that we can get a report that will help us look at how we define policy in this area for the coming decades. What is very important is we do this in a way that listens to all the people of Saskatchewan so that we can build the best system that we know how here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So far this government has listened to absolutely no one because they've shut everyone out of their process.

Mr. Speaker, last election, the Minister of Education got up in a rally in Saskatoon and said he was going to scrap no-fault insurance. He was on a radio show the other day where he was asked what had happened to that promise.

And here's what he said, "When you say scrap, I don't mean scrap." I'm going to repeat that because it doesn't make much sense to us either. "When you say scrap, I don't mean scrap." So the minister said he was going to scrap no-fault. He just didn't mean he was going to scrap no-fault. I'm shocked, Mr. Speaker, that they're even at 7 per cent.

My question is for whichever minister is covering for the Minister of Education today. Can you explain, whoever wishes to, what the Minister of Education is talking about?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to even go to that particular question. What I'm going to explain is that we in this government are working to provide the best policy options for all of the citizens of Saskatchewan as it relates to our personal injury protection plan.

What we want to do is take the advice that we get from our Saskatchewan people, make comparisons with other jurisdictions to develop and continue to develop the best system that we can.

That's what this legislation was all about in 1995, that's what it's all about in the year 2000, and that's what we're going to do in the years to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Tuition Fee Increases for Post-Secondary Education

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education. Mr. Speaker, this is the time of the year when post-secondary education students are planning their fall courses and determining what . . . which institution they might attend. But some students are wary of attending the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) because they don't know what their tuition costs are going to be.

The University of Saskatchewan is considering raising tuition fees anywhere from 6 to 14 per cent because the 4 per cent increase in operating grant from the provincial government only covers the costs of inflation. The U of S says the government has told them there may be more money coming to help keep tuition costs down but they don't know when and they don't know how much that might be.

Mr. Minister, the U of S and post-secondary students need to know now what tuition fees will be this year. What are your government's plans to help the U of S keep tuition fees affordable?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting question put by the hon. member and I simply point out to the hon. member that the decision about tuition fees is in the mandate of the universities, of course, and it's a work in progress. And they will have the information by next month, Mr. Speaker, in order to make that important decision.

But let me remind the hon. member about commitments to universities as well as other post-secondary educations . . . institutions in this budget. Mr. Speaker, budget increase for institutions in order to keep tuitions down by 4 per cent — double the rate of inflation — for all of our institutions. A commitment by this government, Mr. Speaker, with two partners on this side in the last provincial election that said they supported post-secondary education, while those members sat on their tongues.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget, the commitment that post-secondary education increase by 4 per cent on this side. What would it have been on that side? Nothing.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, an increase of technology-enhanced learning by over a million dollars on this side. What would we have seen by . . . over on that side, Mr. Speaker? Nothing.

Mr. Speaker, an increase in funding . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the reason the U of S is considering a hike in tuition fees is not only because the 4 per cent increase in the operating grant is not enough but you've also told them that they had to use 2 per cent of it to implement the DesRosiers report.

You put conditions on their funding at a time when they need to recruit new faculty, increase programming, and improve their facilities. Because of all that needs to be done they have no choice but to look at increasing tuition fees.

Last year you took \$9.8 million from students' millennium scholarship money and gave it to the universities with the promise that this would help keep tuition costs down.

Mr. Minister, you put conditions on the U of S operating grants, you've confiscated students' scholarship money. What are you going to do to ensure students won't face a major increase in tuition fees at the U of S?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member will want to be a little careful with the extremity of the language that he chooses to use. Because he knows that he sits with a party, Mr. Speaker, in the last provincial election, which sat on its tongue when it came to talking about commitment to post-secondary education and skills training.

And, Mr. Speaker, the DesRosiers report is being worked on. Mr. DesRosiers has been in the province and this will be resolved in due course, Mr. Speaker, and the decisions will be made in the best interests of the post-secondary sector of Saskatchewan.

Let me remind again, Mr. Speaker, the hon. members about the commitments on this side to post-secondary compared to theirs. I already said 4 per cent increase were introduced from this side. What would be from there? Nothing.

Technology and enhanced learning — 1.4 million from this side. What would it be over there? Nothing.

Mr. Speaker, an increase of 25 per cent funding for people with disabilities from this side. What would be over there? Nothing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the introduction of a graduate tax credit to provide incentive and to meet the financial needs of students who were graduating and making their careers on this side . . . from this side, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Transition Fund

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

Madam Minister, in the budget address delivered not even two months ago, the Finance minister introduced 150 million health transition fund. He said that this would provide one-time support for change to the health system. He said that changes were needed, and I quote, "to ease the transition to the health system of tomorrow."

He said this fund would help make the changes while ensuring people continue to have access to quality services.

Well now we hear that the Minister of Health had \$26 million of this transition fund used to paydown operating deficits of the Saskatoon and Regina Health Districts. You're using this fund to pay for the underfunding of health districts in the past.

Madam Minister, is this the real story? Will the NDP health transition fund be used to balance health district budgets?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well, well, well, well, well. Obviously the member did not listen on the day of the budget.

An Hon. Member: — Again.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Again. In interviews on Lindy Thorsen dated March 29, 2000, I clearly indicated it was possible for the money from the health transition fund to go toward district deficits. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned it in my budget speech on April 4 on *Hansard*, page 510. And, Mr. Speaker, it was mentioned in *The Leader-Post* on April 11.

Where has that member been, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a

question to the minister.

Madam Minister, if it is going to be a deficit-reduction transition fund, why don't you call it that?

In an interview you're quoted as saying that the name itself may give the wrong impression to people about what this transition fund is for. The obvious reason why you are using this to shore up past underfunding is because you don't have a plan. You have no direction where you're going. You don't know where health care is going so there's nothing to make the transition to.

Madam Minister, if you were really going to use this money to prop up underfunding, why didn't you just say so?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, obviously the members opposite need to ask Conrad Black to send them *The Leader-Post* and not the \$75,000 for their party. Mr. Speaker, if they would pay attention to that secret document, *The Leader-Post*, they may have more information, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it would be pretty inconsistent if the Finance minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Hon. member for Melfort-Tisdale, you may begin your question, please.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of Health. I wish you would explain the inconsistency of the message that's delivered on budget day by the Finance minister and then some obscure quotes that you're giving in *The Leader-Post*.

The record in this House is the record that that government should stand by, not the kind of backtracking apologies that you have to make when you realize that what is going on is wrong.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Madam Minister, Madam Minister, you are also saying in the budget that there was going to develop a health care system that was going to provide a vision and it was going to be done in consultation with the public. And then you end up putting a gag order on health districts.

Dr. Barrie Davidson, with the Pipestone Health District Board, told the *World Spectator* newspaper that he believes there should be open discussion about the operating plans. But he says he will not violate the gag order because, and I quote: "I don't know what kind of . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member's been quite lengthy in his preamble. Kindly go directly to your question.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, clearly board members are feeling that they're under your gag order. Will you lift it and disclose what's in these health care budgets?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well you know, Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, and as I've been saying sometime, the members opposite use very interesting language. They use language like forced amalgamation. They use language like confiscation. They use language like gag order. And then, Mr. Speaker, they say there's some sort of secret thing going on over here when they can't even read the newspapers, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. I am so pleased that Conrad Black released his poll showing that they're ahead, because, Mr. Speaker, it's going to galvanize the public opinion in this province and three years from now, we're going to defeat the Saskatchewan Party and thank goodness.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, clearly health districts across this province are very, very much intimidated by the gag threat that you've put on them. They don't understand what . . . what penalty they may pay if they speak out in public.

So, Madam Minister, the responsibility falls on you. The responsibility to disclose these budgets clearly falls on you. Or clearly you've got to allow health district boards to discuss these budgets with the communities they serve, with the health care professionals that they serve, before you do anything further, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, will you lift the gag order on these district health boards, or will you table these budgets forthwith in this legislature?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — You know, Mr. Speaker, there's no gag order, there's nothing to lift. That member attended a public meeting, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, and let me say this as well, let me say this as well. If there is any intimidation that's going on in the legislature, Mr. Speaker — and I've listened very carefully since the end of March — it is practically impossible to answer a question on this side of the House because those people spend their time hooting and hollering, and they're not interested in the answers, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's time, it's time, Mr. Speaker — listen to them, listen to them — it's time, Mr. Speaker, that they quit bulldozing the people at this Legislative Assembly and the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Madam Minister, the reason that this health transition fund isn't being used appropriately, the reason why district health boards . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, please. I'll ask the hon. member from Rosthern to kindly not engage in debate with members on

the opposite side while a question is being asked.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, the reason that health boards are feeling under siege, the reason that you're using the transition fund to shore up deficits instead of transiting to new vision is because you simply don't have one, Madam Minister.

The problem that this government has is you're going from one crisis to the next. You deal with the nurses in an inappropriate way; you undercut their ability to set educational requirements. It's no wonder when you finally do something right that they're very happy about it.

Madam Minister, but you don't have a plan. And you can't keep going from one crisis to the other and think that's going to be a solution.

Madam Minister, when are you going to do a proper review of the system in this province so that everyone in the health care profession can finally see you're doing something right, as we suggest?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, there will be a review in the province of Saskatchewan. Either it will be done on a national level or it will be done here in the province. I can assure the members of that.

But, Mr. Speaker, each day we hear the members opposite raise some particular issue and as the professor from Yale said, antidote is the kind of thing that the right wing tries to do in order to undermine a publicly funded and publicly administered health system.

I hear, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite yesterday were suggesting that we should privatize firefighting services in the province of Saskatchewan, privatize firefighting. In fact I understand it came from second-in-command, Mr. Speaker.

Well let me say this: the people of this province have a history of public administration and public funding when it comes to our public services, Mr. Speaker, and that's the difference . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Saskatchewan Labour's Ready for Work Initiatives

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now a year ago you may remember I announced Saskatchewan Labour's Ready for Work initiative aimed at helping young people make the transition to the workforce. And I just announced some new initiatives the department is undertaking to further its work in this regard. And it's particularly significant that we're making this statement partway through the North American Occupational Safety and Health Week.

First experiences often shape a person's attitude and behaviour for the balance of their lives, and this is as true in the workplace as elsewhere. Yet young or new workers experience the highest workplace injury rates and have more workplace problems than older, more experienced workers.

The Ready for Work initiatives are directed towards helping

140,000 Saskatchewan young people between 15 and 24 of age to make the positive transition from school to work. And the theme is: You need more than a job to be ready for work. You need to know your rights and your responsibilities.

The key elements of the initiative are: wallet-sized information cards distributed to more than 300 high schools, 3,800 occupational health and committees, and 40 employment centres around the province, a poster with a fine looking bunch of young people directing them to a new web site for information, and the new web site itself located at www.readyforwork.sk.ca. and a \$27,000 grant to the Saskatchewan professional development unit of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation for workshops to have high school teachers adapt their ready-to-work materials for their local youths.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we're facing the challenge of changing demographics. In less than two years, a quarter of all new workers in Saskatchewan will be Aboriginal. It's therefore critical that we develop strategies inclusive of Aboriginal people and encourage them to participate in the workforce, help them find jobs, and ensure they're prepared for the workplace.

At the same time we must ensure that workplaces are hospitable, inclusive, and open to new perspectives. So to that end, Saskatchewan Labour has hired educational consultants of Aboriginal ancestry to help build working relationships with First Nations and Metis organizations to develop services that support a more representative workforce.

As a first step we're working with 17 First Nation high schools across the province to get advice on health and safety resources as part of a school-to-work transition project, and many excellent suggestions have come out of those discussions with the high schools.

Mr. Speaker, we know that proper preparation can help ensure workers for positive first-time work experiences. We're committed to a comprehensive prevention approach that includes awareness, education and training, as well as legislation and enforcement. And I'm confident that the initiatives I have mentioned will help us achieve those goals.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for her statement concerning the ready-for-work initiative, as we all in society, as individuals and families and the government, should be very concerned with helping our youth in all aspects of our society, and giving them the experience to go into the workforce was one of those areas that we must take some initiative.

And it is very true that the first experiences often shape a person's attitude and behaviour. And it's important that we provide the transition from school to work to be a very productive one.

I'd also like to comment on . . . it's very important that we also

include the Aboriginals as well as all youth in Saskatchewan in our policies in the future, considering a quarter of all new workers in Saskatchewan will be Aboriginal in the future.

It is very important that the workplace provides a safe and work-fair environment and the people in that environment know the responsibilities and rights. But I'd like to point out an area where the government has been given failing marks for many years, and that's in the area of readying our youth and giving our youth the knowledge in running a small business, being an entrepreneur, given that small business is the engine of growth in this province and in our economy, and also the main producer of jobs.

I'd like to ask the minister to also include in this initiative giving our youth some . . . the training and skills in order to do a business plan, marketing skills, and the knowledge of going to a bank and getting loans in order to start a small business. And I'd like the minister to consider that as well. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to present the answers to question 140 and, by leave of the Assembly, 141 and 142 at the same time.

The Speaker: — Answers to questions 140, 141, and 142 are tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 40 — The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Act

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, before beginning second reading debate on Bill 40, The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Act, I would request leave of the House to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before beginning debate, I would like to introduce some guests who are in our gallery who take a very strong interest in the piece of legislation before the House at this moment. And I'd like to introduce them to the members of the House.

In the gallery today joining us — first of all, I'd like to introduce first vice-chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Vice-Chief Morley Watson. And joining him is the president of the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Joan Greyeyes. Along with them is vice-president of academics of SIIT (Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies), Roger Schindelka. And finally to introduce the director of the

Saskatoon campus of the SIIT, Darlene Arcand.

I'd ask all honoured members to welcome these guests to our Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, to introduce and welcome guests.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to take the opportunity on behalf of the official opposition to welcome the members in the gallery from the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) as well as from the institutes. And we look forward to the great work that's going to happen in the future in regards to education and training.

So I welcome you today, and I ask all members of the Assembly to once again welcome our guests.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 40 — The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Act (continued)

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce the proposed new Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Act, 2000.

This proposed legislation will recognize the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, or SIIT, as a technical institute governed by First Nations people that issues recognized certificates and diplomas and serves the post-secondary education and skills training needs of First Nations people.

The Bill supports the priority of helping First Nations people to access quality training and education that prepares them for employment. Access to education and training is essential for a good quality of life in Saskatchewan for all people.

The Bill also supports the need to address the pending tightening of the labour market by assisting more First Nations people to participate in the Saskatchewan workforce. Our First Nations population is under-represented in our workforce, and this growing, young population represents a great untapped potential and natural advantage for Saskatchewan. We must make the most of this advantage, Mr. Speaker.

Access to education and training for First Nations people is one of the keys to a successful, bright future in Saskatchewan. And we all share a responsibility in providing the training to meet the needs of individuals and communities. Full participation of all our citizens is necessary for the social and economic well-being of the province. This is a win-win situation for every citizen of Saskatchewan.

Individually, community and provincial success depends on our ability to respond to these changing needs in the future. And, Mr. Speaker, higher education is very much about building the

future.

This proposed legislation is linked to several provincial initiatives including the post-secondary education sector plan; the economic strategy, Partnership for Prosperity; the social assistance redesign strategy, “building independence”; and the northern development strategy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training is bringing forth this proposed legislation at the request of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. The FSIN wants SIIT to be recognized as a technical institution governed by First Nations with legitimate credit-granting authority in the province.

And this legislation comes as a result of years of collaboration and consultations among FSIN, SIIT, and our department. It is a sign of good things to come through collaboration and partnership in the post-secondary sector.

The collaborative nature of the proposed legislation and its drafting process are precedent setting for the dynamic evolving relationship between the province and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. We expect, Mr. Speaker, to be sharing many more successes together.

SIIT currently falls under The Regional Colleges Act and has outgrown this legislation. SIIT needs the ability and the authority to develop the strategies needed to address First Nation’s changing and emerging technical education needs. With the proposed new Act, SIIT will be removed from The Regional Colleges Act. We are recognizing current practices at SIIT.

SIIT, Mr. Speaker, is a mature institution that has been providing high quality training for 25 years in Saskatchewan. It has credibility and a reputation as an excellent training provider for First Nation students in the province — and employers across the province hire SIIT grads.

SIIT’s accomplishments include some leading-edge partnerships with industry, Mr. Speaker, including the travel and hospitality industry, SaskTel, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), and the gaming industry. And with this legislation we are also acknowledging the effective accountability relationship with FSIN that SIIT desires and needs.

Currently, FSIN nominates the board of SIIT but the provincial government appoints them. The proposed SIIT Act ensures a direct relationship between FSIN and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear that this Act does not affect the mandate or roles of SIAST or the regional colleges. Their powers are maintained as outlined in their respective Acts. SIAST will continue to be the primary source of technical and applied science education and training in the province, funded by the province.

SIIT will continue to be a non-university, post-secondary technical education institute for First Nations people funded by the federal government and First Nations.

No single institution can be expected to address all needs. SIIT is one of many institutions that must focus on meeting the needs of our First Nations students. And, Mr. Speaker, I’m confident they will be a story of success.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I would like to outline some of the main clauses of the draft Bill for the hon. members, Mr. Speaker.

Clause 5 ensures that everyone is clearly aware that SIIT is independent of the province in terms of its operations and activities. To ensure continued connection with the provincial system, the Bill also contains the requirement that SIIT is to provide information about its plans, activities, and students to the provincial government.

The legislation establishes SIIT as an independent technical institute. It does not result in any new obligations for the province.

Clause 6 identifies that SIIT is primarily to serve the non-university, post-secondary education and training needs of First Nations people. This will be the major focus of SIIT’s continued activities. The programs are open to people who are not of first ancestry as well of course, Mr. Speaker.

Clause 7 outlines SIIT’s general powers that enable the institution to fulfil its objectives and purposes. This section allows SIIT to hire staff and provide for their conditions and terms of employment, to acquire and dispose of property, and to enter into agreements with organizations or agencies in order to achieve its goals.

Clause 8 elaborates on the education training- and employment-related activities that SIIT may undertake. This includes developing courses, determining criteria related to student conduct, issuing credentials for its programs, providing financial support to students, and entering into agreements with other organizations including post-secondary institutions.

Two specific items I would like to highlight, Mr. Speaker. SIIT will be able to continue providing basic education programs to its students through an arrangement with the province in order to ensure comparable standards are met.

As members are aware, for many adults, basic education is the fundamental building block for post-secondary education or training, or for entering the workforce.

The second area I wish to highlight is credit transfer. The Act will ensure, Mr. Speaker, that credentials from SIIT are recognized by both employers and other post-secondary education institutions. And making transfer of credits easier will improve the employability of SIIT grads. It will also reinforce our desire and our wishes, and the wishes of the FSIN, that SIIT remains strongly linked with our provincial post-secondary education system.

Clauses 9, 10, and 11 provide for a board of directors for SIIT. The board will manage the institution and make relevant policies for its operation. The first members of the SIIT board will be those members currently appointed by order in council.

Subsequent board members will be appointed through a process established by the SFIN.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier that there are some reporting and accountability requirements placed on SIIT, and members will note that clause 14 requires the appointment of a qualified outside auditor. Clause 15 requires SIIT to provide government information pertaining to its head office and its board members.

Clause 15(3) requires SIIT to provide to government information concerning its plans for the future and the annual report, including audited financial statements and outcomes of its activities in terms of its graduates. This will assist in the coordination of provincial and SIIT initiatives.

I would like the Assembly to note that although the SIIT is not provincially funded, SIIT wanted to report its plan, finances, and outcomes to the provincial government and to the people of Saskatchewan. This desire and the information in clause 15 demonstrates that SIIT is committed to being accountable, not just to First Nations and its students but to the whole province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in summary the proposed Bill will mean changes at SIIT that include these: establishing a board appointed by the SFIN to manage the institution; the ability to issue recognized certificates and diplomas; clarification that SIIT is not an agent of the Crown; and support for the expansion and refinement of skilled First Nations expertise.

And in closing, Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say that this government is committed to First Nations people. We're committed to ensuring the post-secondary education and skills training that is available to best meet their needs.

We are committed to building the future for all our people through higher education. When individuals and communities succeed, Mr. Speaker, we all succeed.

We welcome the SFIN's interest and commitment to training as demonstrated by a desire to support a First Nations technical institute. We also appreciate SIIT's commitment to strengthen its linkages and partnerships with our provincial post-secondary education system. They are among our most important partners in the future business and that is the business of post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker.

First Nations people need to have the opportunity to participate fully in our society. We want and need their participation in the post-secondary sector, in economic and business ventures, in government — not only in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, but in the municipal, education, and health sectors as well.

We look to First Nations people to be leaders and guides to our future well-being as a province. And, Mr. Speaker, through this unique legislation we want First Nations people to participate fully in the economic and social life of the province, Mr. Speaker. Just as we wish . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Just as we wish to share and learn from the unique wisdom, experience, and culture in providing the best post-secondary education and training opportunities anywhere, Mr. Speaker.

And today I call upon all Members of Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to support this Bill and to demonstrate our commitment to all people to building our futures together.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to move second reading of Bill No. 40, The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Act, 2000. I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments in regard to the Bill before us, Bill No. 40, The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Act before moving of adjournment of debate to review the Bill further, but as well to recognize the involvement of a number of individuals who have joined us from the FSIN, most notably, Mr. Morley Watson, the first vice-chief.

Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the Assembly are not opposed whatsoever to our First Nations people having more of an opportunity to develop the skills and the training that is needed to give them the ability to pursue work opportunities within the province of Saskatchewan.

(1115)

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, last Friday I had the privilege of attending again the adult basic education graduation in Moosomin. And for the past number of years this program, sponsored by the regional college system in the province, has certainly given many individuals, including First Nations people in our community, the ability to pursue and enhance the educational opportunities, giving them the tools to indeed add to their educational knowledge so that they can, as I've discussed with a number of the grads through the years, gain the experience and the education necessary to pursue further life skills, and opening up the doors for their entry into the workforce in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned a little bit of whatsoever though as we look to the future of this province and look to the future of our country. And I find in discussing and talking to First Nations people that many of them have the same concerns.

And the concerns surround the fact that many people would like to see us beginning to work together more. And as I've listened to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education, he talks about working together to build those educational opportunities through the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. And that's much the same program or the same services as provided through the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied arts and sciences . . . or the Science and Technologies that we have.

And the concern I have and the concern I raise is the fact that we should be . . . and in talking to a lot of First Nations what I hear, and for example visiting with the community of Building a Nation, one of the things they were talking about is working together as individuals regardless of our race or regardless of

our colour, and starting to develop as a community rather than two separate communities.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is going to be one of the most important requirements as we look to building our province and building our future. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I find is many First Nations people feel that they would like to have the ability to enter the workforce, and not just enter at just beginning or low-income jobs.

They're looking forward to entering in at higher levels, and that's why FSIN and many of our . . . even our . . . the reserves across the province are getting involved in, as we have in front of us today, a piece of legislation that will work together with them to provide the tools necessary and the training that will give them, give our First Nations people the ability to certainly pursue higher levels of education and higher levels of work skills and indeed enter into more meaningful types of employment. That's what I'm hearing from First Nations people.

But coming back to what I was saying originally, I think it's necessary as well, rather than building if you will separate institutions, that we begin to amalgamate and we begin to create opportunities where we're working and we're training together so that we can create that liaison that builds and breaks down the walls and breaks down the barriers that have hindered many of our First Nations people from really advancing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe many businesses and many corporations in the province of Saskatchewan have lent a hand and are lending a hand and are looking forward to lending even a greater hand in helping design and helping with input in regards to the type of programming, the type of courses, and the type of training that is needed that would allow First Nations as well as the White community the access to the type of training that is needed, that they as a business are looking for when they begin to offer job opportunities.

And I think . . . I firmly believe for one, that we need to include the business community. We need to include corporations and involve them in designing the programs and get their input so that regardless of whether you're of First Nations ancestry or whatever other ancestry we might have, people have the opportunity to enhance the life skills that are needed to build for the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, while we're talking of a Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology institution to — wrong word — training facility to enhance the skills of our First Nations people, I think, Mr. Speaker, this is certainly a good start. And certainly the First Nations community has worked diligently over the past number of years to offer their members the skills and the training that is needed.

And I believe what the Bill before us is doing, it's just expanding on what's been done to build to the future. And, Mr. Speaker, certainly my caucus, our caucus, is looking forward as well to working with our First Nations community to help build upon the life skills that they are . . . that they want to enhance with their community so that we begin to work as brothers and sisters, if you will, rather than as separate individuals building our own community.

And I think that's the point that I'm trying to stress because that's what I hear from so many, so many people as well. People are getting tired of the fact that we have educational facilities sitting over here on reserves and we've got educational facilities off reserve as well.

In fact in my area, I envision some day that we may end up where we've got a transfer of students back and forth because of the fact of the numbers and the population, and beginning to work together in that regard so that we're beginning to understand each and every one of us as individuals and the differences in the community.

So, Mr. Speaker, having said that and having just informed the Assembly that we are pleased to see that they're initiatives being taken that really will expand upon what is already there and build to the future so that we all, we all begin to work together as partners. And giving our young people the opportunity to develop and expand their educational needs so they can build for their futures.

Mr. Speaker, I think it would appropriate as well however for us as an opposition to sit down and review the legislation. And I know many of my colleagues want to take the time as well to discuss with the stakeholders the different aspects of this piece of legislation before we would just move it further along. In fact it will move along in due process.

And having said that, Mr. Speaker, I now move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 39 — The Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2000

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to outline the key provisions of the new proposed Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2000 to all of the members of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training was created to reflect the increasing importance of post-secondary education and skills training in our province. Since its creation in April, 1996, the department has changed and evolved.

One important change, for example, is the signing of a Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Agreement in 1998. This resulted in a shift from federally-delivered to provincially-delivered labour market services, and we now have 20 Canada-Saskatchewan career and employment services centres throughout Saskatchewan.

The department's former responsibilities were mainly for post-secondary institutions and student financial assistance. The Saskatchewan training strategy has broadened our array of services to include skills training, work-based programs, and career and employment services relevant to Saskatchewan people and our labour market.

We are linking training directly to employment. To ensure the programs and services we deliver are more relevant to regional

needs, we have developed a much greater range of partners. In addition to post-secondary institutions, we've included employers, community-based organizations, First Nations and Metis employment and training boards, and industry-sector partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, the department is a critical component of the government's vision to help Saskatchewan people adapt, compete, and succeed in our knowledge-based economy.

As observed in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, post-secondary education and skills training are critical components of the government's new economic strategy, Partnership for Prosperity. The provincial budget supports the important priority we have placed on higher education and the department. And the department's work is also key to the success of building independence, the strategy to increase the self-reliance of those now on social assistance.

And as a pilot department in implementing government's new accountability framework, our department is developing a new strategic plan in consultation with our sector partners. The plan articulates our vision. It also identifies broad goals, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to identify the top four.

Number one, the province has a sustainable, high quality post-secondary education training and employment services sector. This will involve effective leadership by the department. Secondly, the sector meets the needs of individuals and communities. Thirdly, the sector meets the needs of employers and industry and contributes to economic growth. And fourthly, the sector promotes discovery, integration, application, and transfer of knowledge.

This new Act further clarifies for our partners, especially our newest partners, employers, and community-based organizations, the responsibilities and powers of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. This sets the stage for clearer accountability.

And, Mr. Speaker, the federal government in other provinces also recognize the high priority of post-secondary education, student financial assistance, and career services. These key public services have become part of the national agenda through the work of a council of ministers of Education Canada, the CMEC (Canadian Ministers of Education Council). And I have the honour to chair the CMEC for two years and to represent Saskatchewan's interest in this national forum.

And, Mr. Speaker, the new Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2000 will consolidate existing legislation which currently provides the department's authorities into one single departmental Act. It combines sections from The Education Act, 1995, The Government Organization Act, and The Human Resources, Labour and Employment Act.

I would like to highlight some of the aspects of the new Act for you today. Many sections are clearly housekeeping changes involving the transfer from other legislation to this new legislation. The transfers from The Education Act and The Human Resources, Labour and Employment Act, simplify and clarify ministerial responsibility.

In addition to the sections transferred from the other Acts, Mr. Speaker, there are a few sections being addressed, or being added I should say, to address our renewed services and to improve the accountability of government.

One, section 13, gives the minister the authority to require or establish an audit process. Secondly, section 14 pertains to the standard requirement to submit an annual report for the department. We propose to change the reporting period from the school year, July 1 to June 30, to the fiscal year, April 1 to March 31.

This complements how funding is provided to and disbursed by the department, and this will also make a reporting year the same as other government departments.

Thirdly, section 16 creates explicit legislative authority for the Canada-Saskatchewan career and employment services I mentioned earlier. This section also allows the province to co-locate offices with others involved in post-secondary education, training, career and employment services. And fourthly, Mr. Speaker, section 19 includes a provision to ensure our clients have a mechanism for appeals.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear that this Act does not affect the mandate or roles of the two universities, SIAST, the regional colleges, or the Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission. Their powers are maintained as outlined in their respective Acts.

This department Act simply brings into one piece of legislation the powers of the minister now outlined in various Acts of the legislature respecting department delivered programs and services.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me simply summarize by saying that this new Act is more focused than our existing legislation, particularly as it relates to the regional delivery of programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, this government is listening to the people of Saskatchewan and this Act brings clarity to the role of the department for the sector. This Act also signals the importance of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training to the operation of government, but even more importantly, Mr. Speaker, in the lives of Saskatchewan people.

And this legislation will put in place a fundamental building block for a brighter future for our young people. Simply put, Mr. Speaker, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training is in the future business, together with many partners in Saskatchewan.

I'm proud to move second reading of Bill No. 39, The Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2000. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1130)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And in response to the Bill that we have before us, The Department of

Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, 2000, I'd like to make a few comments before I move adjournment of the debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's no question that just having the grade 12 education is going to meet all the needs of future requirements for job opportunities, not only in our province but across this land and across the world. We are quite well aware of the fact that there's even a greater need to upgrade and to add to your knowledge as you prepare for the future.

And the piece of legislation that we have before us, the minister acknowledged that fact and is indicating that the Bill is hoping to address that by creating some opportunities for people as they . . . and for our young people . . . and not only just our young people, even individuals who have probably been in the workforce for a while as they look to possibly job changes and just expanding some of the education and some of the knowledge they have so that they can prepare themselves for possible job opportunity and further job training.

The thing that I'm pleased to see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that we're looking at partnerships — building partnerships with companies, with businesses, with employers — to develop the training skills and the necessary tools that will be needed as we look forward to the future.

Certainly we have seen, just over the past few years, the changes in technology and the skills that are needed. And yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker — I'm not exactly sure or aware of how many individuals may have caught the news — I believe IBM was looking for something like 500 programmers in their current level, the need within their company. And I just forget the number of applications that they had submitted.

So certainly when you're looking at starting in, for the jobs that they were looking for . . . I believe they were talking anywhere from 75 to \$150,000 for those job opportunities, starting wage. Granted, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they were not people just coming out of college. They already had some, they had some enhanced skills. And they needed people to fill certain roles.

But what that says to us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that, that the market trend is changing and therefore, people are going to have to enhance the knowledge that they have in the area of post-secondary education to prepare themselves, to equip themselves for the jobs that will be available in the future.

It's . . . I'm also pleased as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to hear the minister talk about this Act is going to combine a number of current Acts to simplify the process. And I think that's important. I think it's important for us as legislators as well to not have to deal with a number of different Acts that deal with specific areas in addressing needs in post-secondary education.

And it's certainly important, I believe, to simplify the process and to cut down on the red tape so that people themselves when they enter the educational field are not always having to deal with going through different Acts to fall in line with the different requirements that are necessary.

Mr. Speaker, the minister made comment about many individuals who currently are on social assistance and giving

them opportunities to enhance their life skills. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this Assembly over the past number of weeks we've both discussed with the Minister responsible for Post-Secondary Education and the Minister responsible for Social Services, the possibility of maybe sitting down together at some time in estimates with the two departments to address some of the overlapping areas of responsibility in providing the job opportunities and the job training for people currently on social assistance, who would really like to have the tools and to enhance their educational skills so they can move off of that area of assistance, that I don't believe many people really enjoy being on.

But the reason they're stuck on it — because they do not have the abilities nor the skills to really enter a higher level of job opportunity.

So, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to debating this question and getting a greater understanding of what is implied by the Bill in regards to those opportunities. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, it seems that there's a number of areas in this Bill that we're going to have to look at very carefully, to review very carefully, so we're prepared to address the concerns of our constituents. And therefore at this time I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 41 — The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2000

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2000. The Act reflects our continuing commitment to the Saskatchewan public to ensure an adequate supply of physicians in our province, and to ensure that the profession is responsive to the public interest.

I'm pleased to say that the new Act contains some positive changes for both the profession and for the people it serves. Over the past year we've consulted with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Medical Association on these changes to the Act. And one of the key changes is to allow physicians to professionally incorporate.

This amendment, Mr. Speaker, fulfils a commitment made to the Saskatchewan Medical Association arising out of their last collective agreement that was signed in 1998. Professional incorporation is a mechanism by which some physicians can benefit in terms of savings. With most other provinces in our country offering such benefits to their physicians, Saskatchewan was at a disadvantage.

This change will ensure our province can continue to compete with other provinces in attracting new physicians and retaining our existing practitioners.

The college and the SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association), Mr. Speaker, currently collaborate in a peer review process aimed at enhancing the practice of physicians. Physicians were concerned though that in the process of improving their practice, the peer review findings could be used against them in a civil proceedings.

Protection will be provided similar to that permitted for hospital quality assurance findings. This change will encourage physicians to be open and to participate in the physician enhancement program.

Another key change in this Act is the requirement that the college make bylaws requiring all practising physicians to hold adequate liability protection. And while it would seem unusual for a physician to hold liability . . . or not hold liability protection, it can happen and, Mr. Speaker, it did happen.

We recognize that almost all physicians hold liability protection. But almost all is not adequate. This provision will make sure every physician in our province holds liability protection — liability protection that protects the public.

The college of physicians and surgeons is currently working with the Saskatchewan Medical Association to develop the necessary bylaws as soon as possible for the government's consideration and implementation.

Mr. Speaker, the college takes its responsibility seriously to protect the public and act in the public's interest. To further ensure the college is responsive to the public, the number of public representatives on the college's council will be increased from three to five. These representatives are appointed by government and are expected to bring forward the general public's perspective on matters affecting health services.

Mr. Speaker, there are some very positive changes for the public and for the profession of physician services.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2000.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're pleased to see today that the government has certainly recognized the need of the medical professions in regards to the incorporation provision of this specific Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the past number of years, that's an issue that's been brought to the attention of our caucus. It's an issue that we have indicated that we're more than . . . we would be more than prepared to move on.

But I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's important that it's moved on sooner rather than later. And we'll give credit where credit is due.

I believe that's something that is indeed a positive move, especially when we look at health care in the province of Saskatchewan or indeed across this nation, in fact around the world. And the need for physicians to feel that they have that privilege as well to be the professionals they need to be, as well as giving them the opportunity to have the protection and to protect the public.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk of incorporation this just allows physicians the abilities to work together with other

physicians in preparing and building their practices so that they can continue to enhance their skills within their community or within the area that they are serving.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe . . . and as I've heard, many physicians many times feel bogged down with the needs of managing their offices and certainly a business. And it takes away from their ability to really provide the medical services that they so strongly feel committed to the patients that they're dealing with.

Talking about liability, that's another question that certainly a lot of people are very concerned about. And physicians are no exception. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are areas where physicians have refused to provide services because of the inability to really have the liability or trying to carry the type of liability that is needed that may protect them should something happen.

And the unfortunate part for doctors and physicians across this province, sometimes a mistake could be a fatal one. And that's something that they're all aware of and certainly that they have, indeed through the past, have tried to really protect themselves from. And when we have so many physicians moving in and out of the province and coming to this province, it's certainly important that we also take the time to make sure that the citizens of this province are protected as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I notice we have a group that has come into this Assembly. I'm not sure how long that they'll be available to be introduced. And having said those few words, I will move to adjourn debate and allow for the introduction of guests.

Debate adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the hon. member for Indian Head-Milestone on his feet?

Mr. McMorris: — To introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gives me great privilege to introduce a number of guests from the Montmartre School, 20 in number, with their teachers, Leah McDonald and Angie Eberle.

They made the trip in from Montmartre today after coming off of a victory in the division track meet yesterday. Montmartre was the winner of the track meet yesterday and they're just in to observe the proceedings.

Unfortunately, they missed question period — because it was such a good question period. But we had a visit for about a half an hour and they'll be heading back I guess in a short while.

So I'd ask all the members in the Assembly to welcome the guests from Montmartre.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 47 — The Power Corporation Superannuation Amendment Act, 2000

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Power Corporation Superannuation Amendment Act, 2000.

The amendment I'm introducing today will increase the size of the Power Corporation Superannuation Board from five to seven persons and designate one of the positions for a representative of the superannuates.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment makes it possible for superannuates who now form the majority of plan members to have a representative on the board. The increase in board size will allow for the appointment of a nominee from the Power Pioneers Association, a volunteer association that represents the majority of SaskPower superannuates. The additional position would be allotted to a nominee of SaskEnergy management.

(1145)

Representation on the existing board of directors, which is appointed by order in council, includes nominees from both unions at SaskPower — CEP (Communications, Energy and Paperworkers) and IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) — and SaskPower management.

Mr. Speaker, the demographics of the old plan, given the aging workforce and the fact that the cut-off for entry into the old plan was 1997, has led to a situation where at September 30, 1999 there were 718 active plan members, 22 deferred members, and 1,685 retired members.

The Power Pioneers have sought a voice at the pension board, given that they comprise the largest group involved in the plan. SaskPower management made a commitment in 1998 to consider adding a nominee from the Power Pioneers and have, since April 1999, extended observer status to a representative of the Power Pioneers.

Prior to the corporate split of Sask Energy from SaskPower, a large number of employees were active members in the Power Corporation superannuation plan. Under The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act, SaskEnergy as an institution is required to continue to match employee contributions into the plan.

To date SaskEnergy has not had an active voice at the board table. Observer status was extended to SaskEnergy as an interim step in April 1999.

In short, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the amendment of The Power Corporation Superannuation Act would permit effective representation from additional stakeholder groups affected by the Power Corporation superannuation plan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Power Corporation Superannuation Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A few

comments regarding the Bill before us, Bill No. 47. Mr. Speaker, one at first glance would have to ask why we would be expanding the board from five to seven. But as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we've listened to the minister, the addition of a superannuate to the board I think is certainly something that is positive.

I know, I believe many of my colleagues have had a number of calls from a number of superannuates in regards to some complications they have been facing in the past in regards to their pension plan.

And having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we would like to take the time, while this Bill seems to be very minute and doesn't really have a lot to it other than the expansion of the board and the addition of a superannuate as a representative on the board, I think there's a few things we'd like to have clarified before we would allow the Bill to move further. And certainly we would like to take the time to discuss this piece of legislation with parties that may be affected or certainly will be affected by the legislation before us.

Having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will keep my remarks short at this time and move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**General Revenue Fund
Women's Secretariat
Vote 41**

The Chair: — Before I call subvote 1, I will invited the minister to reintroduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again today I have with me Faye Rafter, the executive coordinator of the Women's Secretariat; and Joan Pederson, the assistant executive coordinator of the Women's Secretariat.

Subvote (WS01)

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, and again to Faye and Joan, welcome.

When we left on May 15, I'd asked for a couple of answers from questions, the first one being a breakdown of the \$380,000 that was above the money spent on personnel. I was wondering if you had that information. And also the information for the total money spent on the WOOL (women's organization on line program) project.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I'll just . . . (inaudible) . . . salary costs, 731,000; the operational costs — now that's office equipment, telephone, communications, distribution, contractual services — 82,000; communications costs, 121,000; travel, 23,000; office supplies, stationery, and books, 15,000; furniture, computer equipment, 23,000; partnership grants, 106,000; the minister's office expenses, 14,000; and accommodation and central services, 78,000; for a total of 1.193 million.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Minister. And also the information on the total amount of money spent on the WOOL project since it was initiated, I believe it was in 1997.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The total amount since the inception of the program is 826,755.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I believe I'm correct in saying that when it was actually initiated in 1997, it was supposed to be 750,000. So I believe that means there's about \$76,000 that must have come directly out of the Women's Secretariat budget.

And as we were saying last week, that there was so many different initiatives that the secretariat is involved in. That means that we've spent more money beyond what the government has allocated as a special project for this initiative. I was wondering how you decide that money should be going again to this project rather than to the many initiatives that I'm sure the women of Saskatchewan are wanting to be involved in.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Chair, depending on what the particular nature of the technology project is, in some cases there was some additional funding out of the partnerships project, and the other was partly out of communications. So that was where the additional money was pulled into this program from.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, has all the monies been spent on this project that is going to be spent? Is this going to be an ongoing project every year where we see more money being spent from your department?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Deputy Chair, I would be very pleased if we were able to get more money for this program because when we did the program evaluation, I'm just going to read three quotes from participants that reflected very much the quotes of the women.

One WOOL participant said:

Taking the training showed me I could learn and gave me the courage and incentive to return to school.

Another group told us:

We find that being able to access information right away is great for our clients as they used to wait a week or two for the mail to come.

And one woman said:

The Internet supports connecting to remote areas for information, keeping in touch, and connecting with sister organizations across Canada.

And I would have to say that of all the programs we've had, which I believe they're all very valuable, this one has hands down been the most widely supported by women.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, last time we also spoke about the booklet that was written on the *Profile of Aboriginal Women in Saskatchewan*. At that time we discussed the cost of

what amounted to \$55,000, yet the information that I received through you under advertising and communications has a total of \$38,000.

Can you tell me what that difference is?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I can, Mr. Deputy Chair. That money has been spent over two years. So the figure that I think that you're referring to would be a one-year figure, and the other part would have been expended in the other year.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Chair, Madam Minister, so this is just the actual publication costs. Is there . . . do you keep track of who actually gathered the information, how it was received, and how it was compiled, the cost of the personnel involved to do this book?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We could try to break down the per cent of staff time that went into preparation, but also there would be expenses like purchasing StatsCanada runs on specific areas, that kind of thing.

And certainly if the member wishes, Mr. Deputy Chair, to have that information we could certainly break it down.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Chair, Madam Minister, is it part of your policy in the secretariat to have a workload or a description each day of what your personnel do? Or is it just comes in in the morning and do whatever the phone calls ask you to do?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I guess it would be a little like this job, Mr. Chair. You look at your priorities. You allocate your staff time according to your priorities. And you work hard to get the job done and are accountable for completing the work that you've undertaken to complete in that given year.

I think that it would be a very inefficient use of time to spend the time micromanaging in the way the member is suggesting.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Chair, Madam Minister, then that means that you have no . . . there's really no deadlines or guidelines for the employees. And we have a certain number of staff — the staff complement hasn't changed in the last number of years.

So depending if there's more people coming in or calls needing more help, do they . . . are they just put on those duties and then the books listing the profiles and the reports that are written, they just get put off longer? Well how do you actually run this department?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Chair, I would have to say that it's not like any business you would run or any other type of work you would do. You re-priorize. If you get an order that's larger, you would re-priorize your work in order to do what was most important to get done.

But I would say that I have not had any difficulties with this group of people completing the assignments that they're given by executive government, nor have they had any difficulty in accounting for their actions — either to the deputy, to the Premier, or to the Treasury Board process so I do not interfere in their internal management. But every employee would have assignments that they're working on and would have expected

deadlines that they should complete them by.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Chair, Madam Minister, I don't believe it was a stupid question. I believe it is a question that the women of this province are asking. How are we actually making the best use of these dollars for a department that is supposed to deal with the issues that involve women in every aspect of this government and of the province?

I'm asking: do you have a list of priorities? Do you have goals? You said Executive Council . . . executive government says they should do this is a list of documents or brochures that they want to put out. I'm also imagining you must get a lot of phone calls everyday from women calling in saying are you doing this? Is this on your list of priorities?

Madam Minister, I guess I'm asking you what kind of priority list does your government give the secretariat?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well, to a degree, Mr. Chair, we have our own long-term objectives within government, including participation on all the interdepartmental committees where women's policy issues are discussed. But as well there are requests from groups to meet with them, to provide services to them. We had requests for example from farm women to talk about the way that the government is involved in supporting farm women and their organizations.

So to a degree you have control over your time, and to a degree you're responding to requests from the community as they emerge. So I would say probably you have control of about two-thirds of your time in terms of your ongoing work with departments and projects that are in progress. And probably 25 per cent of the time would be responding to direct requests from the community for services that they want from the department.

(1200)

Without listing a very long list of meetings attended, events that we were involved in, reports, research done, I think it's difficult to be any more specific than that about the member's question. Every employee in government is subject to an evaluation process. I mean there are standard systems by which this kind of management takes place and this is no different.

But certainly we keep track of it all, and on a case-by-case basis certainly the detail can be provided of all the meetings, events, etc., that are attended.

For a few years as a MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) I provided those lists to my constituents of the pages and pages of meetings and whatnot attended. But part of the measure of what an organization does is the effectiveness of the results within the organization, not merely the busyness of the activity.

So while it's important to look at specific activities that are undertaken, it's also specific to look at the impact that they have on the organization and the society.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Minister, and Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, there is personnel reports that were requested under the global questions, indicates that they were reported by

Saskatchewan Labour — by your Department of Labour — not by the Women's Secretariat. So I guess I'm just clarifying that indeed the employees of the Women's Secretariat are paid by the department of . . . by the Women's Secretariat and not by the Department of Labour?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Deputy Chair, this is a shared services arrangement with the Department of Labour so that there's not duplicate staff within the two departments. So they're actually sharing the services of some of the administrative staff.

Ms. Draude: — So then this \$713,000 that is paid for by the Women's Secretariat, some of it possibly could be done by the Department of Labour or perhaps Department of Labour is paying for some of the secretariat's personnel. Is that correct?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — This is not unlike the Department of Post-Secondary and the Department of Education where, instead of having two communications units and two administrative units, they have it all folded into a co-operative arrangement. So what this is, is an efficiency measure.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, I'm just wondering if there was any money given to the farm stress line this year by your department?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Not in this year.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, I'm wondering, the rent, you'd indicated there was about \$78,000 rent you said paid. Could you clarify that? And is this . . . it's about the same . . . is this a normal amount for the space that you have for your department?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — SPMC, the Sask Property Management Corporation, assesses departmental needs and tries to find the most competitive market accommodation either within owned government space or within the private sector in the case that we don't have sufficient space. But they certainly do an analysis of the space and an analysis of the best rate that they can get that space for. And that's done for us by the Sask Property Management Corporation.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, I'm aware that the minister feels that a number of the questions that I've asked are stupid questions. I think maybe rather than — as indicated directly from the minister — then maybe what I'll do rather than ask them individually is give you a list of them and perhaps then you'd like to give me a written reply from them, and then maybe take less of your time, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, I understand . . . we know that May 14 to 20 was Purple Ribbon Awareness Week. We're wondering what kind of special programs or services your department supported to raise the awareness of this important issue?

Madam Minister, the YWCA Women of Distinction Awards were held here in Regina. I'm wondering if there was an attendance from your department . . . given by your department's mandate. If so I'm wondering how many of your employees attended, and how much that cost was?

Madam Minister, I'm wondering about the Battered Women Awareness Week that is held the first week in December, and the purpose of this week is to build safer communities and to reduce violence against women. We also have a Purple Ribbon Awareness Week, which we're in this week, and the purpose of this week is to promote the elimination of violence against women.

I certainly don't want to negate the important messages and the significant impact these awareness weeks have, but I'm wondering if you can explain to me why we have two different weeks that are held essentially to promote the same thing?

Madam Minister, we also have concerns that the Women's Secretariat places a great deal of importance on the area of pay equity. Obviously this is an important element in the enhancement of women's social and economic well-being.

Would you please provide this caucus — who does care what's happened to women and I don't think any of these things are trivial that we're talking about today — provide me with details that pay equity and initiatives that your department has undertaken and the result of these initiatives. And what pay equity programs have you planned for the coming fiscal year?

Also, Madam Minister, regarding unpaid work, I note there is a significant number of women who are considered unpaid workers. Obviously in this supposed age of progress there needs to be some attention given to this. What role does the Women's Secretariat play in addressing these issues? And what programs and services do you feel we should be putting forward to make sure that this . . . that we can go . . . that this work will go as a recognized part of the labour force?

And, Madam Minister, we have a very high number of single-parent families in this province. On an average I note that one out of ten single-parent families has a woman as head of these. What measures is your secretariat taking to place . . . help address this very crucial issue for women in this province?

Madam Minister, we are also worried about the issue of violence against women, and I'd like to speak on this matter specifically as it pertains to Aboriginal women.

Records recently indicate that over half of the women who use shelters are Aboriginal. And I believe that is correct. And also, within the Aboriginal community, it's estimated that 60 to 70 per cent of family violence and sexual assault is going unreported. Is your department working on that issue, Madam Minister?

And I'd also like to talk about Aboriginal women who face sexual and economic barriers to both race and gender. I see there is a significantly high number of Aboriginal women who are unable to find employment in this great province of Saskatchewan. What is the women's department, what is your secretariat doing about that, Madam Minister?

Madam Minister, we have an increasingly large number of senior women in our province — women whose needs will be specific to their age group. And they will be concerned about things like adequate health care, affordable housing, access to essential services. Does the Women's Secretariat have any

long-range plans in mind for the women in this province?

Madam Minister, I also note that in a recent annual report that an evaluation was to be done on the women's on-line program. I'd like to see some of that information made available to the women of this province.

Is the Women's Secretariat still involved with the RESOLVE (Research and Education for Solution to Violence and Abuse) committee, a regional research network involving the three prairie provinces that does research and education on ending violence and abuse? How closely are we working with Alberta and Manitoba? Is this more of a research resource centre? And would anyone be able to access information through this or are there just those involved directly in the community?

Madam Minister, if we're going to look at out-of-scope employees making greater than \$50,000 a year, what proportion of those employees would be men and what proportion would be women in your government?

Madam Minister, the list of questions that I have for your department can go on and on. And although many people look at this as a department and a secretariat that isn't worthwhile, you and I both know, Madam Minister, it is very worthwhile. And I don't think there's any point in anybody becoming . . . saying that this is a touchy issue or a silly issue or something that we shouldn't be looking at, Madam Minister.

If we're going to make women important in this province, it cannot be delegated to one little secretariat that gets \$1.1 million and that we bring up women's issues in one little department, then we forget about them the rest of the time. Women's issues are something that's seen right across the whole government.

So, Madam Minister, I think rather than listening to these . . . waiting for you to respond to them all, perhaps you'd like to give me a written answer to most of them, and I'll send over some more if you would take them. And perhaps if there's questions or answers you'd like to see given to everyone in this province, we can bring it up again at another day.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. The questions that I was taking exception to was suggesting that the department doesn't do work on a daily basis. Other than that, we are more than happy to address all of your questions, because that's what we are here for. But I am not prepared to say that any women, particularly the women in that department, don't do their work everyday.

Now, I'm going to answer many of these questions briefly because they all have answers. And I'll just mention that the Women's Secretariat is on 25 interdepartmental committees within government that bring women's perspectives into the policy making. So they have a significant effect on all levels — whether it's Economic Development, whether it's Social Services, whether it's a child action plan, whether it's Health policy — the people from the Women's Secretariat have a substantial affect on every department in government.

In terms of family violence. The Victims of Domestic Violence Act, the Saskatchewan partnership to ending violence, which is

a community partnership that has wide representation, the alternatives to violence programs through the Department of Health, the funding of shelters, the charging policies through the Department of Justice that allows charges to be laid by police, the farm stress line — these are all things that the Women's Secretariat is involved in offering support and assistance to.

In the area of pay equity, we have almost completed our pay equity exercise in executive government and in the Crown Corporations, and we will now need to look at where that will go next.

When you talk about single parents, you voted against the budget, and the fact of the matter is many of the tax changes that existed in this budget are going to be hugely beneficial to single parents. Fifty-five thousand low income people will be removed from the tax rolls. Many of those will be low-income Aboriginal women and single parents and seniors.

And I'll also mention that a basic credit of \$8,000, as well as a spousal equivalent of \$8,000, a child credit of 2,500 per child, and a supplemental senior credit of 1,000 were all parts of the budget that the Women's Secretariat were involved in in order to benefit the economic condition of women and of single parents and of senior women and Aboriginal women.

Particularly regarding Aboriginal women, I think I mentioned the last time we spoke, Mr. Chair, that we've done considerable work with Aboriginal women's organizations, so they have a stronger voice within the Aboriginal governments, who also allocate resources to various things within their community. And these women are certainly interested in having the kind of issues that the member is raising being more on the forefront of their agenda within their organizations.

And if you would like to know the figures for employment within the government, I would suggest that that question is most appropriately addressed to the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission, although certainly we can undertake to let her know that you are intending to ask that question.

And I think at that, Mr. Chair, I would certainly make a commitment to the member to answer all of her substantive questions about the Women's Secretariat because there is substantive answers for all of them, and we certainly agree with the importance of women's programs, services, and policy development in the province. As well as our long-term goal of the Secretariat, just to reaffirm it in people's mind, is to ensure progress in the social and economic equality of women.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, I really appreciated you saying that there was 23 different interdepartmental agencies that the department had to work with; I also understand that there's really only 13 staff members, and you say that two-thirds of their time is spent with things that have to be dealt with on the department level and the other third is spent on phone calls that just come into the office.

So obviously this is a very, very, busy department, and obviously there isn't enough time to deal with women's issues. The Saskatchewan Party and I feel like women's issues is in

every department — it's just not regulated to one little department.

Madam Minister, you talk about \$120,000 for communication. Will you break that down further?

(1215)

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I'll just clarify with the members, the question for 1999-2000?

Ms. Draude: — That's correct, Madam Minister.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Okay. Well I will read it into the record for the member. The annual report printing, 1,571; *Impact* Summer '99, which is an update newsletter, \$774.44; *Impact* Fall '99, \$188.60.

Profile of Aboriginal Women in Saskatchewan, the design, \$7,339.64; printing, \$28,577. The publication on rural women, *Thirteen Women . . . Thirteen Different Stories*, design, \$2,968 and printing, 8,670. *Control Your Financial Future*, 3,946; *Money Smarts Learning Resource*, printing design, 2,884 — oh, the design part was 587. The pay equity policy framework document, \$1,889.21.

The *Moms on the Move* brochure, 1,779.81, printing \$920; *Moms on the Move* poster, \$1,248.52, printing \$900. *Flexible Work Arrangements*, \$998; *2000 Saskatchewan Women's Directory*, \$13,548.52; an information kit folder, \$1,285. *The Wage Gap* publication, \$1,660.30; *Employment Equity for Women*, \$492; *Funding Opportunities for Saskatchewan Women and Families*, \$4,048; and *Sources of Support for Saskatchewan Women in Business*, \$3,300. For a total of \$89,575.04.

Ms. Draude: — Which is different than the 120,000 that you mentioned at the beginning when you talked about communications being \$120,000.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The balance of money is things like duplicating, advertising, and inter-departmental initiatives. It's not specific to a project. It's more the general expenditures on those things.

Ms. Draude: — Just general advertising. Who are you advertising with, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — These would be things like . . . (inaudible) . . . major landmark days or major events involving women.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, who does your advertising? Who does your advertising, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We advertise in *The Leader-Post* and the dailies and the agent for our communications is Quest Communications.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister. I have a large number of the questions that I asked you before, most of them are written and I'm going to send them over. And I would appreciate a response to them. And I have no further questions, and I'd like to thank

your officials.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I would like to thank the member for her questions, Mr. Chair, and to assure her that we will do everything we can to give the most complete information over.

Subvote (WS01) agreed to.

Subvote (WS02) agreed to.

Vote 41 agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Speaker, I move this House do now adjourn and also that we have a great weekend.

The Speaker: — Before I adjourn the House, hon. members, I want to wish you a safe, happy, holiday weekend with your loved ones and in your constituencies. And please come back safely when this House reconvenes at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday next.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:27 p.m.