

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to present a petition requesting the government retain Lanigan and Watrous hospitals. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

I so present.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I too rise to present a petition on behalf of the people who are concerned about the health care in Saskatchewan. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

And this is signed by the good people from Lanigan and from Drake.

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

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

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the towns of Cudworth and Bruno.

I so present.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition today for health care.

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

The people that have signed this petition are from Lanigan, Leroy, Viscount, and Alberta.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present this afternoon.

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial

government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

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

And I'm pleased to present on their behalf. The good folks of Lanigan signed this petition, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of people concerned about the future of the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, not surprisingly, of the community of Lanigan.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens concerned about the future of the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

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

And this is signed by citizens of Saskatoon, Spiritwood, Martensville, and Lanigan.

I so present. Thank you.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of people in the Lanigan and Watrous areas who, like the people in Swift Current, are concerned about the future of their hospital. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by residents of Lanigan and Viscount.

I so present.

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Lanigan and Watrous who are concerned about the health care in their area. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the

Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

And this is presented on behalf of people from Lanigan.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present to do with the future of health care in rural Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

The petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by the good people from Nokomis, Lanigan, and Guernsey.

I so present.

**Mr. Weekes:** — I also have a petition to retain Lanigan and Watrous hospitals:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

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

Signed by the good people of Lanigan and Watrous.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition with citizens concerned about health care. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

The petitioners are from the Lanigan area.

I so present.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I have a petition to stop government funded pornography. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to discontinue the use of public monies for the funding of events that are pornographic in nature.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good people of Birch Hills.

I so present.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens concerned with potential hospital closures. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon.

Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

And the petition is signed by the good people of Lanigan.

I do so present.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition regarding the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals.

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

And the citizens that signed this petition are from Lanigan and Jansen.

I so present. Thank you.

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great responsibility that I rise to present a petition to retain Lanigan and Watrous hospitals. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition is signed by the good citizens of Lanigan and Guernsey, 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.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly:

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

To provide reliable cellular service in the districts of Strasbourg, Duval, Govan, and Bulyea.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Weekes:** — I have a written question. I give notice that I shall on day no. 53 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Labour: how many union certification applications to the Labour Relations Board in '99-2000 were approved and how many were rejected; and also how many union decertification applications to the Labour Relations Board were approved in '99-2000 and how many were rejected; and also for the previous for four years?

Thank you.

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 53 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Sask Water: which municipal drinking water supplies failed to meet with provincial standards in 1999-2000?

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, some special guests seated in your gallery. With my wife, Marlene, are her parents John and Johanna Vanderloos of North Battleford, and also with them are some special guests from the Netherlands, Arie and Truus Vanderloos from the Netherlands. I would ask all members to welcome them.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hillson:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, the Consul-General of Mexico to Vancouver, Mrs. Guadalupe Albert. Kindly stand, thank you.

Ms. Albert is on her first official visit to Saskatchewan. This morning she met with officials from the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development, president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, and was at luncheon with the deputy minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

This afternoon she'll be meeting with the mayor of Regina, officials of Saskatchewan Ag and Food, and myself. Tomorrow she is meeting with the Lieutenant Governor, the director of the Language Institute at the University of Regina, and with representatives of the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership.

In addition she will be opening the honorary consulate of Mexico in Saskatchewan. So it is a very, very full itinerary.

I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming her. She is of course accompanied by our own Irene Janz.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I hope I have the name right, but I too would like to join with the minister in welcoming our special guest from Mexico, Guadalupe Albert, if I heard correctly. Welcome to Saskatchewan. We're very pleased to have you here and hope that you would come back again.

Mr. Speaker, I also have the pleasure of introducing a school group from my riding of Rosetown-Biggar, the Swanson Christian School, grade 7 to grade 9 students are sitting in your gallery up here. They are accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Goossen. And I would ask all Assembly members to give them a warm welcome here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today I'll be moving second reading on The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Amendment Act, 2000. And some of the most affected stakeholders are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to introduce them to the Assembly if I could.

From APEGS — that's the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan — I'd like to introduce, first of all, the president; that is Peter Van Vliet. He's . . . There he is.

Also, I don't know if he's with us yet, but also Art Opseth is the vice-president of APEGS. There we are.

Myron Herasymuik, the Chair of APEGS legislation liaison committee. And Myron actually was formerly the head of operations with the Department of Highways and Transportation and has since retired from our department. Welcome, Myron.

Also Dennis Paddock, executive director and registrar of APEGS.

Now with us also from SASTT — that is the Saskatchewan association of science technologists and technicians — I believe we have James Hoffman, president of SASTT; Ron Smith, past president of SASTT; and Dan Crites, past president of SASTT as well.

So if you would join with me, members, in welcoming these gentlemen to the Assembly today please. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly, 22 grade 9 students from Weldon School in Bienfait. And they are accompanied by their teacher, Pat Fergusson, as well as chaperones Margaret Banulis and Lois Mann.

And I ask everyone to join me in welcoming them and I look forward to chatting with them a little bit later on this afternoon. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wakefield:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly, 22 grade 8 students from the Turtleford School.

They're sitting in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker. And I wish them . . . I'm going to be meeting with them later and so we'll be discussing some of the issues.

And I'd like to welcome their teacher, Carmela McNinch; their chaperones Cheryl Macnab, RoseLynn Gory, Dawn Simkins, Leonard Lundberg, and Doug Maddaford.

Welcome to the Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Trans Canada Trail Relay**

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 24, the Trans Canada Trail relay team travelled to Cypress Hills Provincial Park. Horseback riders, hikers, and two water carriers, Kody Francis and Gerald Bomersine from Maple Creek participated in this epic trek to bring water from the Pacific Ocean to Ottawa. And Maple Creek Boy Scouts and Cubs will be planting trees in the millennium grove at Cypress Park to commemorate this event as well.

On May 25, Joan Hodgins of Eastend and Dennis and Debbie Aadland of Shaunavon continued the relay towards Fort Walsh. First Nations, Northwest Mounted Police, RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), and cowboys escorted the trekkers on arrival in Battle Creek.

On May 26 and 27 respectively, I had the opportunity to participate at Trans Canada Trail ceremonies in the communities of Eastend and Shaunavon. Three water carriers were selected from Eastend. And I'd like to congratulate Robert Gebhardt, the Eastend VIP (very important person) who carried the water into Eastend, along with Heidi Scott and Thomas Bristow who participated in the relay from Eastend to Shaunavon.

Six water carriers were chosen from the community of Shaunavon. And I'd like to acknowledge Shannon Poppy, Bernadette and Rick Schneider, Mike Halstead, Mike Greenlay, and Lisa Nelson for their participation in this historic event.

The community of Shaunavon was pleased to host a performance by Saskatchewan Express as part of its relay ceremonies.

And I'd like to acknowledge that there have been several Three-Century Club members from Cypress Hills constituency who have been honoured with plaques to be placed at one of the pavilions in either Regina or Saskatoon.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Recognition of Unknown Soldier**

**Mr. Addley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the time of World War I, Canada had a population of approximately eight million people. During that war more than 61,000 Canadians were killed. By comparison, for the Second World War, our population was eleven and a half million, and 42,000 Canadians lost their lives.

If Canada came of age as a nation in the first war, as many have suggested and as I mentioned on the anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, then our adulthood was achieved at a terrible price — the price of those 61,000 lives lost before they had barely begun.

Our personal sorrow, our collective gratitude, our national debt to those young people can never be properly expressed — one of the many injustices of war. But yesterday in Ottawa, Canadians from all provinces and all walks of life made a

symbolic and significant gesture to them.

The remains of one lone Canadian soldier, brought from a grave in France, was laid to rest at the National War Memorial in Ottawa. His coffin was sprinkled with dust of each of our provinces in Canada, including our own.

This one Unknown Soldier is now the Canadian Unknown Soldier, representing all those lost men and women who died in devotion to their country and their families, and their belief in the value of our way of life.

As our Governor General said, he is every soldier in all our wars. He is one real Canadian soldier; he's a symbol of all Canadian soldiers. As such, his duty is finished. Ours is to ensure there be no more lost soldiers for him to represent.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Saskatchewan Indian Federated College Students Graduate**

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise before you and my colleagues in this Assembly today to share with everyone the accomplishments of three Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time in the 24-year history of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, three students have graduated from the fields of computer science and biology. Convocation ceremonies were held last Friday for Wilfred Bird, Alanah Woodland, and Stephanie Redman.

Mr. Speaker, Wilfred Bird is currently working on a term project for the federal government. Alanah Woodland is presently considering three job offers. And Stephanie Redman is working as an environmental consultant in the oil and gas industry.

Mr. Speaker, these are tremendous accomplishments and I would ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating these three students.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Maurice "Rocket" Richard**

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend the province of Quebec lost an icon, and all Canadians a national hero. Maurice "Rocket" Richard passed away at the age of 78.

Many knowledgeable fans all claim that, if he was not the greatest hockey player ever, he was in the top two or three. Gretzky might have more records, but the Rocket has more significant firsts. He was the first player to score 50 goals in 50 games, the first to score 500 in a career, and for years was a leading playoff scorer.

For years, Mr. Speaker, even for those of us who did not get to

see him play or listen to Foster Hewitt describe his play, he typified hockey and he symbolized our game when it was still identifiably a Canadian game. He is one of those handful of athletes who transcend their individual sport and inscribe themselves on the national psyche. He was that good at what he did.

So from 4,000 kilometres from his home in Montreal, we share with his people their loss and their memory of a legend.

M. le Président, je sais que je parle au nom de tous mes honorable collègues quand j'offre nos plus sincères condoléances à la famille de Maurice Richard, un grand Canadien de telle grande réputation et un Québécois fort respecté. Merci.

(Translation: Mr. Speaker, I know that I speak on behalf of all my hon. colleagues when I offer our most sincere condolences to the family of Maurice Richard, a great Canadian of such great reputation and a highly-respected Québécois. Thank you.)

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Graduates from Little Red River School

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, an incredible event took place on the evening of Friday, the 26, at the Little Red River Indian Reserve in my constituency. Five grade 12 students were recognized for being the first students ever to graduate from the new Little Red River kindergarten to grade 12 school that was built just four years ago.

Mr. Speaker, it is this memorable occasion that I rise this afternoon. Myself and Chief Perry Bellegarde from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations were pleased to have been a small part of this momentous occasion.

Mr. Speaker, there is a side note that elevates this event to historic status. For as recent as 10 years ago the percentage of students who achieved a grade 12 diploma was zero per cent — zero per cent, Mr. Speaker. Very unfortunate indeed. But through the efforts of many people at the Little Red River Indian Reserve, Mr. Speaker, this sad state of affairs has been successfully addressed. The community believe that, should they have their own school, educational successes will be achieved. And Friday their dream became a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating Verna Morin Ballantyne, Jolene Bird, Judy Halkett, Kate Halkett, and Jeff Badger on realizing their dreams and this first at Little Red River Indian Reserve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Reduction in Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Cutbacks

**Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy today to be able to announce a partial victory for Saskatchewan people who have asked for the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) and the federal government to reconsider their plan to make the national broadcasting company nothing more

than another Toronto downtown entity.

Our legislature was one of four which denounced their plans, and this morning Mr. Rabinovitch announced a compromise solution. He announced a 30-minute national broadcast which will be followed by a 30-minute local supper time broadcast out of here in Regina.

We get half of what we asked for. And I think all Canadians across the country who came to the defence of local public programming deserve some of the credit.

There are still many questions that need to be answered — local CBC staffers still do not know how many jobs will be lost here or nationally. At this point we know it's not the 674 predicted by the *National Post*, but obviously it'll be some.

Guy Michaud, who was speaking on behalf of the CBC employees, said that they are happy the news show was not scrapped, but they still need to know what the corporation is going to do this fall after the Olympic coverage is done.

Also we do not yet know what this announcement means for other local programming, although the CBC says it will improve children and youth programs.

So, at best, we still have local representation, though truncated; at worst, we have a temporary reprieve. As Mr. Michaud says, with any luck in a couple of weeks we'll know and we won't have to read about it in the *National Post* first. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Uranium Mines Open

**Hon. Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is entering a new era of uranium mining. After years of exploration, construction, and investments, uranium mining production has now officially started in two new Saskatchewan locations — McArthur River and McClean Lake.

These two new uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan will effectively secure Saskatchewan's position as a dominant uranium producer in the world for decades to come.

The new mines represent a very large, long-term investment in the future of uranium mining in this province.

The mines also mean jobs for Saskatchewan people and, in particular, northern residents. There are now over 1,000 proud workers from Cumberland House, Ile-a-la-Crosse, La Loche, Wollaston, Fond-du-Lac, and other northern communities.

Mr. Speaker, these are exciting times for industry and the province, with Saskatchewan as a global leader in potash and uranium production. This province is strong and our future is bright due in large part to the contribution of the mining industry.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

### Health Care Issues

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my question is for the Premier.

Mr. Premier, last week's western premiers' conference produced some mildly interesting political fiction but not much else. And in your chorus of NDP (New Democratic Party) health care rhetoric about how Alberta is destroying medicare, you somehow overlooked the fact that Saskatchewan has been violating the Canada Health Act for years. You, in fact, are breaking the law.

In case you hadn't noticed, Saskatchewan has the longest waiting lists in Canada, and those lists are getting longer, thanks to your NDP government.

Mr. Premier, isn't it time to admit your government is violating the requirement of accessibility to health care, one of the five pillars of the Canada Health Act, by forcing Saskatchewan people onto the longest hospital waiting lists in the country.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, it doesn't surprise anybody in this House or in the province of Saskatchewan that the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party, Leader of the Opposition, philosophically — as his members believe in privatized, two-tier health care system — they would want the province of Saskatchewan to adopt that which Alberta has adopted, namely Bill 11 which opens up the two tier.

But the Leader of the Opposition talks about the Canada Health Act, an old accusation first labelled, according to my documentation, back on March 20. And here's a solution according to *Broadcast News*. I'm quoting from *Broadcast News*, Mr. Speaker, quote, "Hermanson (referring to the leader) says Ottawa should hold back on more cash."

That's the first thing he says. We disagree. Ottawa needs to pump in more cash for health care.

And then he goes on to say in the quotation, as I take my chair, quote, "until the provincial government completes an audit of the health care sector to see where savings could be made."

And they're saying, right on. Health care isn't an auditor's account, it is the quality of health care for all people.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It surprised me that the Premier doesn't want to be a good steward of health care dollars. Mr. Speaker, I have another question for the Premier. It's unfortunate that while Saskatchewan's health care system is reeling from nine years under his government, all we get from the Premier is a useless load of NDP health care rhetoric focused at Alberta.

It's a little sad that the NDP runs around Saskatchewan pretending to carry on the work of Tommy Douglas when your own government agencies — your own government agencies — are demonstrating a two-tier health care system that you have

created.

Why is it, Mr. Premier, that when Workers' Compensation Board need someone diagnosed quickly, they sidestep the NDP's long waiting list and they send them to Alberta?

Why is it that when SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) wants to reduce the cost of handling no-fault insurance victims' injuries, they jump the queue and send the victim to Alberta for a quick diagnosis or a treatment?

Mr. Premier, isn't that a two-tiered health care system? One system for the NDP government agencies and another one for the rest of us?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, what is a prescription for two-tier health care and the destruction of Canada's medicare system? Is the situation which is adopted by the leadership of the Alliance Party, the candidate Mr. Stockwell Day, whose position is this: Ottawa give the money to the provinces unconditionally. No standards nationally. None whatsoever. Do whatever you want to do province by province. Stockwell Day says in Alberta you can have a two-tier system as Bill 11 recommends.

That leadership of the Alliance Party is supported by the majority of the members of the Saskatchewan Party in Saskatchewan. The fastest way to destroy medicare in Canada is to plough the prescription of the leader of the Sask Party and the would-be leader of the Alliance Party. Not so long as I'm in this chair. Not so long as this coalition government is in defence of medicare in Canada.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier gets up in his chair and he points his finger and he raises his voice as though somehow that will prove that health care is all well and good in Saskatchewan when in fact it's not.

Mr. Speaker, you will have to forgive the people of Saskatchewan if they aren't buying the Premier's snake oil remedy any longer.

Mr. Premier, whether you admit it or not, whether you like it or not, accessibility is a pillar of the Canada Health Act, and Saskatchewan people do not have accessibility when it comes to health care because the NDP have given Saskatchewan the longest waiting lists in the country. So people are being forced to go to Alberta for services they can't get here at home.

Mr. Premier, what are you doing here at home in Saskatchewan to reduce waiting lists and address the two-tiered health care system that your government — your government — has created?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Saskatchewan Party full well knows that in this budget that my colleague, the Minister of Finance, brought down, the

overall percentage increase for health care is at about 6 per cent. And the year before that, if my memory serves me correctly, it was about 8 per cent, and the year before that about 11 per cent in the face of federal government cutbacks.

We need to do more not only for emergency waiting lists, but generally for health care. There's no doubt about that. But what we're committed to is the principle of publicly funded, single-payer, medicare . . . health care. That's what we are unequivocally, we are adamantly in support of that proposition.

What do those people opposite want? What they want to do is go to Bill 11 — two-tier, private for-profit health care. And I say never. It is not in the Canadian interests. It is not going to be sacrificed by this Legislative Assembly which gave birth to medicare in Canada.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our Premier will stand up in this House and defend a system that's failing until nobody's left in Saskatchewan to use the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, I've got another question for the Premier. No amount of NDP rhetoric will change the facts. And the fact is that your government has given Saskatchewan the longest waiting lists in the country. The fact is, thousands of Saskatchewan people are going to Alberta or going to the United States for medical services.

Mr. Premier, your own government agencies have concluded that waiting lists are too long. SGI and Workers' Compensation Board agencies are sending people . . . having them jump the queue and leaving the province for service because they've determined that your waiting lists are far too long. And it's not acceptable.

Mr. Premier, how many people have either fled Saskatchewan's health system to seek treatment outside the province last year, or were sent outside the province for treatment by SGI or the Workers' Compensation Board?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker. I think all members of this Assembly and the public of Saskatchewan will note with considerable interest, although I might say not with . . . with not much surprise, the tone of the questions in question period as contrasted by what the Saskatchewan Party campaigned on in the last provincial election.

Now the tone of the questions would have us believe that they're concerned about waiting lists . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, please.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The tone of their questions would have us believe that somehow they're genuinely worried about waiting lists, emergency room problems — those we have to deal with.

But what does their platform say? Their platform says that if they had won this election on September 16, 1999, they would

have frozen health care for five years. They would have had the increases to health care tied to the rate of inflation, which means no growth — five years. And he would have us believe that under that platform they'd be able to deal with health care waiting lists and emergency rooms.

That's nonsense, Mr. Speaker. That's a prescription for two-tier, American-style, Alabama-South health care. That's their position; it's not ours.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, health care in this province is in a crisis. Let me give you an example. Mr. Speaker, Annie Lavalley went to her doctor last fall experiencing lower abdominal pain. An ultrasound turned up spots on her liver so she underwent testing procedures in Estevan.

She was put on medication for a virus and an ulcer. The pain continued until finally after another short hospital stay in March and efforts of another doctor, Ms. Lavalley was seen by a specialist in Regina on April 12. That was the day that Ms. Lavalley was told she had a cancerous tumour growing on her bowel, which had spread to her liver.

Mr. Speaker, we've raised cases like this before. People are dying because of long waiting lists to see specialists and undergoing tests.

Madam Minister, when are you going to react and begin the process of repairing our health care system?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the specific case identified, clearly I don't have the details of that. And every one of us knows that this is a very serious situation and our hearts have to go out in support of this person.

But let's leave the name out of the picture for the moment. Let's talk about the alternative solutions. And the member who gets up to ask this question, in the *Weyburn Review* of October 20, 1999, this is her solution. Quote:

One option Bakken put forward during the course of her campaign was the privatization of health services. "I think it should be an option. Why should we continue down the path when people are being driven out of the province to look for health care. Why are we not looking at having privatized care in Saskatchewan?"

That is what she said.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, since we're debating policy here, contrast their position which is to privatize it like the Americans and like the Albertans do, versus our policy and that is to strengthen it and to build it and make it the best medicare system that it can possibly be in Canada.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, the policy of the NDP is long

waiting lists; the policy of the Saskatchewan Party is to find a solution so people in this province actually get care.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll give you a little more detail about Ms. Lavalley's case because it is . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, order, please.

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ms. Lavalley's case is very troubling. She was diagnosed with cancer on April 12. But this time it was too late to perform surgery.

Her family has gone back to the doctor in Estevan, who performed the original tests last fall, to see why the tumour was not detected. He has indicated that the only scope for use in Estevan is not long enough to thoroughly examine adult patients. So not only is this a case of a woman who had to wait too long for proper testing, but she is the victim of a hospital not having the proper equipment to perform that test.

Madam Minister, how can people have confidence that they will receive adequate and timely treatment?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the minister will talk about the details of the individual case, if that's required. I don't think it's proper for the legislature to do that but that's fair enough.

We're talking about policy here, and the Saskatchewan Party and the member who asked the question, Saskatchewan Party — I read you the quote — talks about privatization of health care services. That is . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — She's talking about privatization. That is her approach. That is the approach of the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party. Privatization . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, these are her words, not my words, Mr. Speaker.

And the argument is that Ms. Lavalley's case is going to be somehow helped if we turn the clock all the way back to 1961, '62 when we had privatized health care — the very option that they're advocating.

And when we had privatized health care the situations advocated and described by the member were legion. That's the reason why Saskatchewan invented publicly funded, single-tier medicare. And that's why we're going to defend it, notwithstanding their attempts to privatize it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, and to the Minister of Health. What the people of this province want is health care — timely, adequate health care — not to hang on to a system that is failing them and not working.

Mr. Speaker, this story that I'm talking about gets even worse. Ms. Lavalley's daughter Gail was so distraught over her mother's treatment in the health care system that she wrote me a letter which I forwarded to the Minister of Health.

The minister replied, but her staff sent that letter to a Regina woman completely unrelated to this issue. When I finally received the letter, Mr. Speaker, the minister wrote that she was sorry to hear of Ms. Lavalley's passing.

Mr. Speaker, this is unbelievable. This lady is very ill, but she is very much alive.

Madam Minister, how carefully was her health concern reviewed in your office? Mr. Speaker, the minister's only advice to the daughter is that she contact the college of physicians and surgeons and the health district with her concerns.

This response shows a complete lack of respect for people caught in an unresponsive health care system.

Madam Minister, your answer is always to pass the buck. But what are you going to do to help people who need help today?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, the Associate Minister of Health will do all that she can under the powers of the Department of Health that is reasonable and proper, lawful to do, to take a look at the case that the member from Weyburn raises.

I've already talked about the quotations — her words, not mine — about privatization. There's a clear, black and white delineation of where we stand here.

But even the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* in reviewing the platforms leading up to the election September of 1999, in answer to this example of the kind of medicare, says this about their position, about their position. It says, quote:

For instance, (referring to the Sask Party) it has no plans to address concerns in health care. There is no prescription to cure the bed closures, surgical waiting lists, nursing shortages. All they will do is hire an ombudsman to whom people can complain.

To which now the Leader of the Sask Party has added, the Texas style or Alabama North, Alabama South style audit of the savings in the health care system.

Well that may be their approach, but it won't help Ms. Lavalley's or those kinds of cases. Publicly funded medicare is . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, we've heard several times now that the government intends to undertake a review of the health care system in this province. This is long overdue.

But in the meantime, people all across this province are waiting



for medical tests. Tests which may mean the difference between life and death. While you are doing this review of the health care system, the system will continue to deteriorate. The waiting lists will continue to grow.

There has to be action now — alternatives for people who cannot afford to wait and who cannot afford to travel out of province for testing. We are talking about people who might not get a second chance.

Madam Minister, what are you going to do to provide adequate, accessible health care today?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, it is stunning, stunning, how they can overlook their words.

I have given to you on March 20, 2000 a . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Hon. members, the question was heard without . . . with little or no interruption. Kindly allow the answer to be heard similarly.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I was saying that it is breathtakingly stunning to me, it's absolutely incomprehensible that as early as March 20, 2000, according to *Broadcast News* — not my report but *Broadcast News* — here's what the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party said. I repeat again, quote: "Hermanson says Ottawa should hold back . . . (money)." Hold back money.

Now this member gets up and says, what are you going to do? Not to hold back money, but to add more money. What does her leader say? Her leader says to Ottawa, which has already cut back to 13 cents, cut back even more, don't give them money. And she would have us believe that she cares for the sick and the elderly and those who are ill.

Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely wrong and it's shameful. Their stated position is to tell Ottawa to penalize Saskatchewan and all the provinces further. No way. We need Ottawa to get to the plate, start funding and start defending medicare. And that's what the NDP is doing right now in Saskatchewan and Canada.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Accreditation of Pathology Program at University of Saskatchewan**

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education.

Mr. Speaker, two years ago the general pathology program at the College of Medicine at the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) came close to losing its accreditation. The Royal College of Physicians began looking into the program and it was hoped with their approval that the program would retain its accreditation.

A decision from the Royal College was expected this month. But now we hear this decision has been put off until October.

Mr. Minister, were you aware of this? And if so, why is this review taking so long?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question has to do with the response from the University of Saskatchewan. And I'm sure that the members of the appropriate bodies of the University of Saskatchewan are doing everything that they can to respond, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, they will . . . it will be responded to in due course.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Speaker, we know that the crisis in health . . . that we have a crisis in health care in Saskatchewan. And maintaining top-quality education programs to train doctors, nurses, and specialists in this province is vital to the future of health care. Last week we heard about the shortage of radiologists and the trouble we have recruiting people in this area of expertise. And now the uncertainty continues with the pathology program.

The government . . . this government should be doing everything it can to ensure the basics for training health care professionals to work in the health care system are in place. And that means ensuring excellent standards for post-secondary education in the College of Medicine.

Mr. Minister, why is the pathology program at the College of Medicine in question?

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, the real question here is what is the integrity of that question coming from that body over there. Mr. Speaker, in the last election let us remind ourselves the position of that group over there about both . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that when you want to start talking about their record and their position that their response is volume without substance, Mr. Speaker.

We know that in the last election when they talked about health care, what do they talk about doing for health care? Nothing, Mr. Speaker. When they talked post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker, they sat on their tongues. What do they have to say about post-secondary education? Nothing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is one side of this House that is committed to both health care and improving the training for health care; I refer specifically to the NEPS (Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan) program, Mr. Speaker, and others. It is committed to health care and post-secondary education on this side, Mr. Speaker, but over there it is in volume nothing.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Youth Crime**

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The official opposition does hope that there are some political pathologists around because in a few years we're going to need them to study the

remains of this government, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, Statistics Canada is reporting today that Saskatchewan has the second-highest youth court case rate in Canada. In fact Saskatchewan's rate is almost twice the national average.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan communities have been complaining for many years about high rates of youth crime, and when young offenders are apprehended, both police and residents complain that the courts do not handle youth crime and violence appropriately.

To the Minister, Mr. Speaker, people expect their government to act. Why is it that Saskatchewan continues to struggle with high rates of youth crime and the second highest youth court case rates in Canada?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite had read the full report, he would have learned that in fact youth crime in Saskatchewan is reduced by 11 per cent over this period, which is, Mr. Speaker, three times, three times, Mr. Speaker, the national average. And, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said, youth crime in Saskatchewan is reduced by 11 per cent over this period, three times the national average, Mr. Speaker, and that applies also to Regina and Saskatoon.

And, Mr. Speaker, let me just compare what this government has done with what that party would have done if they had the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, over there, over there, Mr. Speaker, nothing for crime in the last election platform, Mr. Speaker. We have a quarter of a million dollars, Mr. Speaker, in community organizations for crime prevention. We have SHOCAP (serious and habitual youth offender comprehensive action program) money, Mr. Speaker. We have 25 more police officers, Mr. Speaker, to deal with crime. That's compared, Mr. Speaker, to nothing on that side.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, only this NDP-Liberal coalition government could claim victory in being second to dead last in the entire country, Mr. Speaker, because that's where we rate in terms of youth court cases.

Mr. Minister, Statistics Canada information shows that what we are doing in Saskatchewan with regard to youth crime is not working. And after nine years in government it's also clear that the NDP doesn't have any of the answers.

Later today the Saskatchewan Party will be introducing The

Justice System Review Act. This legislation was a result and a complete review of Saskatchewan's justice system to identify problems in the system and recommend solutions. The legislation would also require that complete reviews of the Justice system in our province take place every five years.

Mr. Minister, will the NDP government support our legislation to review and fix the problems plaguing Saskatchewan's justice system? Will you do that, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me just remind the member opposite what this government has done to deal with crime in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite there say that this government has done nothing. They should look at themselves, Mr. Speaker, because it is they who said they would do nothing.

We had, Mr. Speaker, \$4.75 million for example, just in policing alone in this last year. We have, Mr. Speaker, continued crackdowns in the SHOCAP program which Saskatchewan people by three to one say is a great program. Mr. Speaker, we have serious crime units in Regina and Saskatoon. We have \$350,000 for Aboriginal organizations to stop the cycle of family violence, Mr. Speaker.

And the list goes on and on and on. But, Mr. Speaker, what would they have done. They would have done absolutely nothing, as their program shows.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 216 — The Justice System Review Act

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 216, The Justice System Review Act.

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

### Bill No. 74 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2000

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 74, The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2000, be now introduced and read the first time.

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

### Bill No. 75 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2000 (No. 2)/Loi n° 2 de 2000 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 75, The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2000 (No. 2), be now introduced and read the first time.

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

## STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

## Ruling on a Point of Order

**The Speaker:** — Hon. members, before orders of the day. Last Thursday the member for Prince Albert Carlton raised a point of order regarding certain comments made by the member for Saskatchewan Rivers during the second reading debate of Bill No. 1, The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 1999.

At the time the member for Saskatchewan Rivers was invited to clarify his comments. However, after reviewing the record, I wish to reiterate the tenor of my earlier statements.

On several occasions during this debate, the allegation was made that Bill No. 1 would permit the government to seize farm property, revoke loan guarantees, and take other punitive action against individuals and organizations who might withdraw their support for the government or cancel their membership in the New Democratic Party.

It is not the role of the Speaker to research the accuracy of what is spoken in debate. Rather it is up to the individual members to challenge the opinions of their colleagues through interventions of their own.

Once again I remind you that members are responsible for the words that they choose to use. Their words may be enthusiastic, as the member for Saskatchewan Rivers noted last week. But that enthusiasm must be tempered by honest beliefs and an absence of insinuations and aspersions levelled against colleagues.

Since the start of this legislature I've made several rulings in which I have reminded members of the practice of this Assembly and the rules governing debates. I call upon members, all hon. members, to put forward their views forcefully, but to do so in a manner in which the character and motives of their colleagues are not called into question.

During the course of his comments, the member for Saskatchewan Rivers alleged, on page 1347 of *Hansard*, that the government was using its budget to, I quote, "...steal back that money" that belonged to various farming groups.

Then on page 1349, the allegation was made that students were being bribed to remain in Saskatchewan. These comments, hon. members, are unparliamentary and similar to those which I addressed in my statement on May 12.

Even though they may have been directed at the government generally, individual members on the government side found them personally offensive.

I would therefore ask the member for Saskatchewan Rivers to withdraw these comments and apologize to the House.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Mr. Speaker, I unequivocally withdraw the remarks that this government has stolen money from farmers, and that they have bribed the students. I'm sorry.

**The Speaker:** — And withdraw those remarks and apologize.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I thank the hon. member.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being an open and accountable government, we will table the questions ... response to question 146. And with leave, 147 and 148 as well.

**The Speaker:** — Answers to questions 146, 147, and 148 are tabled.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 61 — The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Amendment Act, 2000**

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of an Act to amend The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act. This Act, Mr. Speaker, contains the first set of substantive amendments to The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act that was passed in this Assembly in 1996. Members may recall that the then minister of Highways and Transportation indicated that the 1996 legislation was phase 1 in the process to update engineering legislation in this province.

In 1996, the law was changed to update professions dealing with representation on the professional association's governing council, discipline, and fine levels. In 1996, the minister indicated we had not updated the scope of practice that is the statutory provision describing the activity to be performed by members of a self-governing profession.

We did not provide a new scope of practice in the 1996 Bill as we received many representations from groups concerned that any new scope of practice might unduly interfere in their ability to carry out their jobs.

Since 1996 the government has overseen what we have referred to as phase 2 of the update to the legislation respecting professional engineers and the professional geoscientists in the province. The most affected group, The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists, APEGS, has worked tirelessly with other stakeholders in trying to build a consensus on a new scope of practice.

APEGS has conducted serious negotiations with representatives of the natural scientists, architects, land surveyors, technologists, computer scientists, and others. I am advised the discussions, from the most part, were very well ... went very well, I should say, with these other groups. APEGS, the Saskatchewan association of science technologists and technicians, the Saskatchewan Association of Architects, and the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association are in general support of the legislation.

Since 1996, the phase 2 discussions were affected by the

Assembly's passage in 1997 of The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act. That Act included a consequential amendment to The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act. As a result of the representation from APEGS and architects and the land surveyors, the government deferred proclamation of the consequential amendment.

The government wanted phase 2 discussions to continue. However the government must decide on the status of the consequential amendment. In the Bill before the House, members will note that there is a change in the section of the Act that outlines who is exempt from the legislation.

We will retain the present exemptions for the architects, land surveyors, prospectors, community planners, agrologists, persons working on their own residence, and work on projects valued at less than \$30,000. As well we will retain the general exemption for persons practising their profession, trade, or calling.

(1430)

To treat everyone consistently, we will be proclaiming the 1997 consequential amendment respecting technologists who are governed by The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act.

I ask other professions to understand that the exemption is limited. Only technologists who are under The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act are exempted from The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act. All other technologists in Saskatchewan will continue to be prohibited from doing anything that can be considered to be the practice of professional engineering.

The amendment to section 28 of the EGPA (The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act) clarifies that the exemptions continue to apply to all people as long as they don't practise professional or professional geoscience.

This amendment reflects the hard work of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan. And in June 1999, department officials received an indication of general consensus with affected groups. The consensus was to use, as a new scope of practice, a provision first passed in Manitoba in 1998. This new provision reflects an understanding resulting from discussions at the national level between engineers, natural scientists, and other affected stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, the present Bill incorporates a definition of practice of professional engineering that is much more in keeping with the modern world of work than the existing definition. The new definition removes what had been a lengthy list of works or processes.

I am confident that as users of the new definition become accustomed to using it, there will be a wide degree of acceptance. The present Bill will also make one other relatively minor amendment to the Act.

To comply with provisions in the agreement on internal trade, the Bill provides APEGS with the authority to register as full members, people who are members of comparable associations

in other provinces. And as usual, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly be pleased to answer any questions during the committee stage.

I therefore move second reading of The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Amendment Act, 2000. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise to enter the debate on the second reading of the Bill introduced by the minister this afternoon, on The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Amendment Act, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister outlined in his comments, this Bill is a continuation of work that was initiated by a review of the legislation leading up to proposed amendments in 1996 that was indicated as phase 1. And certainly we on the official opposition side very much support the concept of making periodic reviews of professional associations' enabling legislation so that the associations and all the professions remain in a current position in regard to an ever changing world of regulation and competition and adaptation in the marketplace and in the world.

And certainly a group of people as important to the building, literally, of this province as this association, it's very important to have their legislation reviewed from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, as well we have been encouraged over the last few years by the fact that the department has indeed conducted itself in a way of negotiation and dialogue with the affected agencies and groups within the professional engineers and geoscience professions, because it's important that it tries very much to bring all of them under the scope of practice and the professional conduct that's required to operate a professional association in an appropriate way.

Mr. Speaker, as well, as is our practice, our opposition caucus makes an attempt once legislation is being introduced in the House, to consult as widely as we can with the affected people that we can identify to see if indeed this legislation has been the result of negotiation, the result of discussion, and is being supported by the people that it's going to have a major impact on.

And as you can appreciate in this instance, because there are a number of groups, as the minister indicated, some of which are being exempted and others of which are coming under current regulations compatible with other jurisdictions in the country, we certainly require some time for these individuals to communicate with us their responses and their concerns, if there are any, about the proposed legislation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, in order to let that work continue, I would like to adjourn debate at this time.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 43 — The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2000**

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Summary Offences

Procedure Amendment Act, 2000.

The summary offences legislation prescribes the procedure for administering the charging of offences created by provincial legislation. It also prescribes the court's powers and duties respecting provincial offences and the enforcement of fines resulting from conviction.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to this legislation approximately 130,000 tickets are issued each year for contravention of provincial regulatory statutes. Most of these tickets are for offences relating to driving. However, a broad range of activities are regulated and can lead to offences. Some examples are the sale and use of alcohol, fishing and hunting, the use of provincial parks facilities, corporate behaviour regulated by The Securities Act, 1988, and the safety of the environment.

The legislation is used on a daily basis by peace officers, court staff, judges, and municipalities. It's changed periodically to respond to requests for additional clarity or to deal with new issues that have arisen.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important proposed amendments will specifically authorize non-renewal of driver's licences of people who have outstanding fines for Criminal Code driving offences. This amendment will provide a significant incentive for people to pay their Criminal Code driving fines.

Another amendment will provide that summary offence tickets are not court records for the purposes of The Archives Act. That Act requires that court records not be transferred or destroyed for 25 years. And during the past 25 years the average number of tickets issued has been as high as 200,000 in some years, and as a result, storage of tickets has become a problem at court houses as space is limited.

Court staff around the province spend days every year packing boxes of tickets to be sent off to off-site storage. And SGI, Mr. Speaker, have retained conviction information on traffic offences for five years. Ticket information has also been maintained by microfiche, and since 1975, electronically. And, Mr. Speaker, this information will continue to be kept.

Mr. Speaker, another important amendment will facilitate the use of red light cameras to obtain evidence of the offence of a failure to stop at a red light. As all members will know, many unnecessary and sometimes tragic motor vehicle accidents occur at intersections because motorists fail to stop at red lights.

A pilot project by the Regina Police Service has provided ample evidence of the frequency of this dangerous offence. Currently all tickets must be personally served. In all but exceptional cases, on-the-spot service occurs. If red light cameras are to be used, the photo obtained will show the vehicle's licence plate and the vehicle owner is charged with the offence. In these circumstances the requirement to find and personally serve the owner discourages the police from using this method of enforcing life-saving traffic rules.

Mr. Speaker, the new provision will allow regulations to be made providing for service by mail of tickets resulting from red light camera information.

Another amendment to the Act will adopt the appropriate Criminal Code search and seizure provisions. Many Saskatchewan statutes have special search and seizure provisions. However, there are some statutes with offence provisions that do not authorize searches such as The Passenger and Freight Elevator Act. As well, some statutes have insufficient search and seizure provisions. An amendment will fill the gaps that currently exist in this area.

The common law permits a search and seizure in these cases. However, Mr. Speaker, clear legislative authority is preferable to having to make this argument in court to allow evidence of an offence to be accepted by the court. Manitoba is the only other province that doesn't include provision for search and seizure in its provincial offences procedural legislation, and that province is currently considering this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990 and to make a consequential amendment.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise and enter in the debate about the second reading about the legislation that was introduced by the minister, The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister outlined, there are quite a comprehensive number of issues that are being dealt with in terms of an update of this provincial legislation. And certainly I am pleased to . . . it's interesting to hear that the weight load of provincial tickets is something in the magnitude of 130,000 per year and can be as high, I believe the minister said, as 200,000 a year. And so it makes a very onerous task of accumulating and storing up to potentially 800 to some thousand records in the court system.

And I'm pleased to inform the Assembly that I've contributed very little to that bulk of ticket weight that is weighing down the system. I am reminded by some of my colleagues that they say they wish they could say the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, it seems as if, from the minister's comments, that most of these issues are very commonsensical issues that simply make sense.

In terms of the issue of forcing compliance about outstanding tickets and things of that nature, as I understand it from the minister's comments, that the potential of having your licence, your driver's license suspended is going to be linked in some way to outstanding tickets.

I would imagine that there is some discretion or some reasonable safety factor built into that, that if some person is delinquent in some short period of time on a ticket, that surely that would not be enough reason to have a major suspension of a driver's license.

And of course for many people the issue of a driver's license is not a luxury — it's a very important necessity. And I would hope that the legislation does have some provisions for discretion in that regard.

As well the minister indicated that the legislation also makes it possible to expedite the serving of tickets that would be a result of red light violations that are caught by means of cameras. Instead of having the system requiring a personal serving of a notice or a ticket, that that ticket could be served in the mail.

And I certainly want to share the minister's concern about the issue of people running red lights, amber lights, and red lights in the city and right across this province. It seems that there is almost on a monthly basis a headline in the newspapers that show that there is a very serious collision on an intersection because people indeed are running red lights. And so I think that if this whole process is a reasonable step in order to minimize those violations, I think it has important benefits that are worthy of consideration.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the minister indicated that there were some changes to the search and seizure provisions of the legislation in order to make this more feasible and more compliant with the realities of law enforcement in today's world, and that Saskatchewan is certainly one of the provinces considering it, as well as Manitoba who is considering it as well, and one of the last, as I understood the minister to say, to update the search and seizure provisions.

Mr. Speaker, again I must say that on first blush this legislation seems to indeed make very logical common sense. We certainly are in the process of communicating with people in the legal profession and law enforcement about their perception on this legislation. We look forward to their reply and will then be in a position to be more specific and more detailed in terms of our comments on this legislation.

So at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

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

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act.

Mr. Speaker, in December of 1997, the steering committee on the abuse of adults in vulnerable circumstances, a group made up of representatives of community agencies and provincial government departments, presented its report and recommendations to the ministers of Justice, Health, Social Services, Labour, and Municipal Government. The recommendations of the committee followed extensive community consultations respecting the abuse of adults in vulnerable circumstances.

(1445)

In response to that report, this government introduced amendments to The Saskatchewan Evidence Act in 1998, aimed at facilitating the participation of vulnerable adults in the justice system.

The steering committee also made a number of

recommendations respecting adult guardianship. And in response to these recommendations, a legislation working committee was formed in May of 1998. The mandate of this committee is to produce draft legislation in the area of vulnerable adults and guardianship. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the legislation working committee has completed stage one of its work.

I'd like to extend my gratitude to the many hard-working community agencies represented on this committee. We appreciate their helpful comments and suggestions on ways to further protect vulnerable adults.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the legislation working committee has recommended that The Dependent Adults Act be replaced by The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act. This Act includes provisions for the appointment of a personal or property co-decision-maker for an adult who requires assistance in decision making but does not need full guardianship services.

In situations where a guardian is needed, the Act continues to provide for the appointment of a personal or property guardian. The Act respects the autonomy of adults by recognizing their rights to receive the least restrictive intervention possible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Act also includes provision for the appointment of temporary personal or property guardians in emergency situations. These persons will protect the adult or his or her assets until a guardianship application could be made under the Act. To protect against financial abuse, the Act requires that co-decision-makers and guardians provide annual accountings to the public trustees.

The Act also includes procedural protections for vulnerable adults who may be the subject of applications under the Act. For example, the Act ensures that all interested persons are served with an application for the appointment of a decision-maker or guardian. And it provides that a statement of objection may be filed by interested persons who disagree with the application. It provides that the public trustee review all applications for orders under the Act.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I'd like to thank the legislation working committee and congratulate them for a job well done.

I'm pleased to move second reading of An Act respecting Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making and making consequential amendments to other Acts.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's with pleasure that I rise to respond to the minister's initiation of second reading debate on The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Act is really at the essence of what we as legislators and as a society should be all about.

Someone has said that a mark of true leadership and true legislative process is given by how much and how well we do legislation that looks after the most vulnerable and the weakest people in our society. And I think that by reviewing legislation in regard to vulnerable adults, that this is a very noble and

worthwhile effort that is being made.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that a review has been appropriate and there has been some changes. As our society and any society begins to understand more and more about the needs of vulnerable adults, we need to understand that not all vulnerable adults require the same level of support — where either they're totally able to operate independent, as independent adults completely responsible for all decisions; or completely under the jurisdiction of a guardianship process; that indeed as the minister outlined that there are cases where there is some level of co-decision-making that a vulnerable adult may need.

And that this legislation foresees the possibility of providing that in an appropriate way, and we think that there is certainly merit in that regard. Mr. Speaker, as well I think that there has to be a review and appropriate legislation to make sure that where it is appropriate that the provincial jurisdiction — the state itself — has an appropriate relationship with vulnerable adults that are in need of support in a way that's in their best interest. And we always have to keep that in mind.

It's an important issue. It's a very sensitive issue. And we certainly have further work to do in terms of communicating with people who have worked very hard, as the minister indicated, in bringing these recommendations together. And we certainly look forward to finalizing some of the information communications that we've been having. And in order to let that happen I would move that we now adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

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

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After my comments, I'll be moving the second reading of The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2000.

Saskatchewan contains some of the most diverse and unique ecosystems in the world. Our lush prairie grasslands, productive wetlands, productive . . . (inaudible) . . . park lands, and wilderness forests and lakes in the North are renowned for their beauty and abundance of wildlife.

Like most parts of the world, human impact has resulted in significant changes to our natural landscape. Consequently many species of mammals, birds, plants, and insects have declined in numbers. The presence of animals and plants in their natural habitat add to our appreciation and enjoyment of this great province.

How well we sustain native species indicates how well we are managing the province's ecosystems. Soil, air and water quality, habitat biological diversity, and human activities are all interrelated. When species decline or are at risk, it likely means that the rest of the ecosystem, including ourselves, are also at risk.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's wildlife resource is shared by the people of Saskatchewan. In order that citizens of this province may obtain maximum benefit from, and at the same time protect this valuable resource, we have legislation and regulations

under The Wildlife Act.

This Act provides provincial authority and control over the province's wildlife resources. In 1997 Saskatchewan proclaimed new endangered species legislation to protect species at risk provincially. And last year, we passed regulations to protect an initial 15 species.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I will highlight the major features of this amendment to The Wildlife Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Act will align legislation to protect species at risk with the requirements of the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk in Canada. Saskatchewan is committed to the principles of the accord which was signed with the federal government in 1996. And this shows that the Government of Saskatchewan is committed to meeting its responsibilities in endangered species protection.

The proposed amendments will remove vulnerable species from the designated species category. This will allow for the continued comprehensive protection of threatened, endangered, and extirpated species.

At the same time the amendments will allow SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) to establish management plans for some species that are sensitive to human activities but don't require the protection levels established for threatened, endangered, and extirpated species.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment being debated in the legislature today also deals with two new enforcement provisions under the Act which will improve wildlife offence enforcement provisions in wildlife, trafficking, and vehicle seizure areas.

This amendment will enable the department to prosecute for possession of wildlife for the purpose of trafficking without having to wait until the trafficking offence has actually occurred. This is similar to drug enforcement legislation as well as wildlife legislation in other jurisdictions.

This amendment allows for the forfeiture of designated wildlife species upon conviction of offences under the Act. This provision also clarifies that boats are included within the existing provision which accommodates forfeiture of vehicles in certain named offences.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendment deals with administrative housekeeping. This amendment removes all references to big game damage fund licence and to the fund itself. The fund was discontinued in 1998 when the federal and provincial governments provided full funding of the big game damage compensation program.

The proposed wildlife Act amendments better reflect the value the province places on its wildlife and all the resources in the forest.

Mr. Speaker, conservation is a high priority with Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, and we are amending this legislation to recognize the value of our natural resources and to enable adequate protection of these resources — our wildlife resources. They are one of the greatest natural assets of

this province and we need to work together to ensure that they are managed in a sustainable fashion.

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to protection and responsible management of wildlife population and public access to wildlife resources. The Act recognizes the importance of a strong partnership between provincial and local governments, First Nations, and stakeholders in working together to manage our wildlife resource.

The Act will ensure Saskatchewan's unique and valuable wildlife resource will be managed and protected for the people of Saskatchewan today and tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I now move the second reading of The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2000.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker it's with pleasure that I would make comment on the Bill introduced by the minister in second reading, The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2000.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this time of year when everything in nature seems to be budding forth, it's a time for all of us in this province to I think appreciate the beauty of our ecosystems and all of the diverse wildlife and the many things that are going on in our province.

If you take a stroll around these grounds you watch the Canada geese doing their nesting procedures and it's always an amazement to me every spring. When you look at daycare, I think the Canada geese outside of the legislature have indeed brought that to a new science in terms of daycare; because you see three or four of the adult geese and they've got 50 or so of the little guys — all different sizes — and seem to be doing a good job while everybody else is sort of out there visiting and complaining about the sorry state of affairs in this province like everyone else is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was interesting to listen to the minister talk about the importance of sustaining native species in this province. And I think that it goes without saying that that is really important.

However, I think that there also is a caution because many times we hear across the province where the Department of Environment and Resource Management, when they get too much authority and control, tend to exercise it in a little bit of a heavy-handed method. And I certainly would like to serve notice that we do have those concerns; that balance always has to be maintained between the need of having the appropriate legislative authority in order to do the job that everyone agrees is important and becoming an entity onto itself where you make arbitrary decisions that have no basis in reality or, more importantly, in common sense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is very little argument ever when there is clearly identified species that are at risk in terms of the environment, or in terms of maintaining those populations into

the future; that it is important that all of us do our part in order to mitigate the damage that is created about some of these species.

However, I think we also have to recognize that there are practical limitations that have to happen, and it also is a dangerous process when you start meddling with the natural cycles of life. And too often many well-intentioned interventions have resulted not only in the defence of a certain species, but in the creation of an imbalance that has actually resulted in a great deal of damage being done to other species, even though initially it was the intent of the people to do the right thing. And so it's always important in these issues to make sure that common sense and balance is arrived at in terms of deciding appropriate actions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well I think it is important to note that this legislation also provides for a more appropriate vehicle to dealing with people in regard to trafficking of wildlife species. And I think the minister does make a valid point about saying that there has to be updated enforcement tools so that people who are seriously violating not only the spirit but the intent of any legislation, and are actually doing a great disservice to the wildlife by trafficking in endangered species for whatever personal gain they may arrive at, I think it's important that the department has the appropriate tools in order to deal with those issues.

And finally, the minister mentions that there are some administrative matters that are to be cleaned up as a result of the big game damage fund being taken over and it's no longer appropriate to have this type of thing in current legislation. And certainly we have no objection to that.

At this time of year . . . (inaudible) . . . it seems that a great many people want to comment about issues surrounding . . . the whole issue surrounding the environment and wildlife and we certainly welcome those comments and look forward to hearing more of them.

And so in the meantime, Mr. Minister, or Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to allow this to happen, I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1500)

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

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After my comments I will be moving the second reading of The Wildlife Act Consequential Amendment Act, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, amendments to the bilingual wildlife Act 1998 are being made by a bilingual amendment Bill — The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2000 — and these amendments include further amendments to the unilingual fisheries Act, 1994.

Because The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2000 proposes amendments mainly to the wild species at risk provisions, consequential amendments are required to the existing sections



which afford wild fish species at risk the protection of designated species.

In 1997 Saskatchewan proclaimed new endangered species legislation to protect species at risk provincially. Mr. Speaker, this Act is a consequential change to The Fisheries Act, (Saskatchewan) 1994. Mr. Speaker, conservation is a high priority with Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management and our wildlife resources are one of the greatest natural assets of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of The Wildlife Act Consequential Amendment Act, 2000. Thank you.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this legislation Bill No. 53, The Wildlife Act Consequential Amendment Act, 2000 is very much similar to the previous legislation in terms of its general intent and scope of bringing the wildlife legislation into a more current position with the view of conserving particularly fishery species, as the minister outlined, arising out of amendments to the 1994 legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the comments that I made on the previous legislation in principle apply to this one as well. We certainly look forward to comments from people, stakeholders, and people affected. So at this time I would move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 60 — The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2000**

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again after my comments, I'll be moving the second reading of The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2000. The Forest Resources Management Act now just one year old has fulfilled its purpose to bring our forest legislation into the 21st century by providing an administrative framework to support a new way of managing our forest ecosystem.

The Act ensures that our forest resources are managed in a way that is in the best interests for the people of Saskatchewan. The amendments being debated in the legislature today improve the ability of the government to act to protect the province's interests in two specific situations.

Number one is an important role for government in the management of our forests in its ability to determine who has authorization to harvest forest products and how much by granting licences to various types. Right now, the Act gives the government the authority to decide to whom licences are issued and to review the potential impacts when these licences are transferred directly.

The proposed amendment strengthens this ability by ensuring that the province continues to have a say in who owns and controls forest licences no matter how a change is brought about, whether resulting from corporate mergers, amalgamations, or the purchase of controlling interest in licence-holding companies. The amendments ensure that the minister has the final consent on changes which may affect the citizens of Saskatchewan.

In reference to the second amendment in wild rice, there are about 200 active wild rice producers in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has become the dominant region in Canada for wild rice production and accounts for an average of 63 per cent of Canada's production. In 1999, Saskatchewan grew 5.8 million pounds of wild rice worth \$4 million going directly to producers.

From an economic development perspective, the wild rice industry has been a great success for northern Saskatchewan. Permit and licence fees were set low to encourage maximum participation by northern residents. In spite of the low fees there are wild rice producers who are harvesting wild rice while they are in arrears on their fee payment and who do not hold a permit or licence to harvest.

The current legislation does not provide government with the authority to manage and dispose of wild rice crops in these circumstances. This is extremely unfair to wild rice producers who pay their fees.

The Wild Rice Council has urged the government to address this inequity, and the proposed amendments to The Forest Resources Management Act seeks to do just that. The amendment will allow Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management to better enforce wild rice licences and would ensure that all growers are treated fairly.

Mr. Speaker, the two amendments that I talked about today will enhance the ability of the government to protect and manage the province's important forest resources for the benefit of all of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I now move the second reading of The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2000. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure that I join in the debate for the moving of the second reading of The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2000.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the whole initiative that the government seems to announce and reannounce in regard to the forestry initiatives is certainly something that is very important to many people in this province. And at the very heart of many of the discussions and debates that occur, is the issue of the forest licences and transfer of those licences.

Mr. Speaker, I know in my constituency, which certainly borders the forest area, I have a good number of people who come to my constituency on occasion and raise concerns about how the licences are held, are people actually exercising those licences, and are there opportunities for new people in the industry to acquire some licence in order to get some timber in order to maintain industries and businesses that they have established.

Mr. Speaker, while it's important to look after the major players and the major industry components in the forestry sector, I think people have to understand that there are very many small operators who operate small saw mills, who have planing mills,

and who actually have taken it a step further in terms of providing value-added construction within those areas.

And I can think of companies that do things as major contracts for freight pallet construction, for specified mouldings and things of that nature, and finish work of carpenters and finger joint work, and those kinds of things. And many of those people require — all of them in fact require an adequate supply of raw material in order to carry on their businesses. And I think the whole issue of the forest licence issue speaks to that in a very important way.

And I trust that the amendments that the minister is proposing will address some of those issues in light of the fact we recognize that major players are important to the development of proper harvesting of our forest. But there also has to be a place for the small, independent operators to have an adequate resource or access to the resource so they also can grow their family businesses in many instances.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, I think it is important that there has to be proper balance put into the whole forestry management process so that we are not exercising in an irresponsible way so that we are depleting our forest resource without an appropriate level of reforestation. Because I think everyone recognizes in principle that it's important to replenish the harvesting that goes on. And sometimes I get a little nervous about the numbers — that we aren't doing an adequate job of that in order to safeguard our industry into the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it also is important, I think, to look at another industry which I frankly was quite surprised to see under The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2000, and that's the industry of the development of the wild rice industry in this province.

And certainly, you know, I think Saskatchewan is recognized not only in this country but around the world for the quality of the wild rice that is supplied. And as the eating habits and the sophistication of people's eating habits are changing over the years, I think that there is a tremendous opportunity for growth potential in this important area.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, both of these issues are very important issues wrapped under the proposed legislation of The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2000. And we certainly look forward to our discussions ongoing with stakeholders and industry people. And in order to facilitate those discussions I would move that we now adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 6

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 6 — The Mentally Disordered Persons Amendment Act, 1999** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon to rise to speak about Bill No. 6, An Act to amend the Mentally Disordered Persons Act.

And just a quick comment, Mr. Speaker. It is not because that I have any desire for brutal punishment, but I enjoy speaking in the House. And I certainly am going to enjoy speaking about this Act.

Mr. Speaker, it certainly is important that we take care of those who cannot take care of themselves. After all we're talking about some of society's most vulnerable people. At the same time we must recognize and respect the rights of individuals, Mr. Speaker, no matter who that person is.

It is interesting to note that if someone has been declared incompetent by either a psychiatrist or a judge, or on the other side of the coin, Mr. Deputy Speaker, someone who has been declared competent by either a psychiatrist or judge under the proposed amendments, that decision is not considered binding.

And why not, Mr. Deputy Speaker? How high up the judicial ladder do we have to go? We see no need to keep pressing the issue. Somewhere along the line we've got to allow our judges, Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to make a decision without having to worry all the time about whether their decision is going to be upheld or whether they're going to be overturned.

After all, in many court cases, the decision of a judge is considered binding, Mr. Speaker. And so why not in the case of those who are judged to be mentally disordered and need protection of someone or have been declared to be competent again, why can the process not be stopped there?

Under this proposed legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to amend this Act, the decision that is rendered can be appealed to the Court of Queen's Bench either by a psychiatrist, a family member, or another individual who may be involved.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this must be very worrisome for someone who has gone through the process, the court process, has been declared incompetent and required a trustee, and then declared competent and then knowing that the decision is not binding . . . is binding and all of a sudden has to spend the next few days and months worrying about who is going to appeal the decision. And especially, Mr. Speaker, it should be considered very worrisome that any individual who is involved can appeal this decision. In fact, it seems that anyone can appeal any decision just because he or she doesn't agree with it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, now somewhere along the line we're going to have to allow judges the opportunity to make a decision and all of us having to accept that. And for any individual to just step forward and say, oh no, I don't agree with that, Mr. Speaker, is very worrisome indeed.

(1515)

In fact, Mr. Speaker, what we need to worry about in this case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if financial fraud is being committed, then that person has the opportunity to actually prolong the case.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we're worrying about the rights of

individuals, here we have an Act being brought forth that is actually going to restrict the rights of those who have been first declared incompetent . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order, order. Order.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Simply by appealing the case, this throws things to the next level where a medical or a psychiatric exam, or both, can be ordered. The . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. I invite members that wish to engage in a private conversation to do so outside of the Chambers. For the moment, the hon. member for Saskatchewan Rivers has the floor.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He or she really does not have a choice in the matter. Again, are their rights being recognized or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are they even being respected? After all, if someone has been declared competent, then are we still recognizing that, are they incompetent yet? Well somewhere along the line, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going to have to accept that a judge has made a decision, and where people in society, and certainly those whose rights are in question, need to be recognized that they are competent.

But unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it doesn't end there. Based upon the decision of a Court of Queen's Bench, competency or incompetency can or will be declared, and if someone doesn't agree with that decision it can be appealed to the Court of Appeal. Mr. Deputy Speaker, how far can these cases carry on? And who really loses and who really wins in these situations?

We can tell you: the loser is the individual, the family who is trying to have someone declared competent, and society who is paying the bills for someone who's been declared incompetent. The winner is someone who is trying to tie up the court system and may be, Mr. Speaker, in a worrisome case, may be under investigation for fraud in these cases.

What happens during this time when all the appeals and exams are going on? Who's taking care of things? And really, if financial fraud is being committed, then does this give the perpetrators extra time to basically continue what they've been doing?

This is very worrisome, Mr. Deputy Speaker. After all, we need to be worried as society and as members of this House about those people that we represent and those people that we also represent have been declared competent by . . . we want to be very careful.

Be sure of this, Mr. Speaker, they have been declared competent by a very competent judge and, all of a sudden, the appeal case starts and it starts to be dragged out and dragged out and dragged out. While we acknowledge that there may be cases of financial abuse going on, we're wondering about the true extent of this type of abuse. How widespread is it?

Now, Mr. Speaker, is there real abuse or is there just some abuse cases? Now we know that the odd abuse case does take place. But in these cases where, when we're going into one

appeal after another just so that we can protect the rights of those who may be — and I use the term judiciously — may be perpetuating the abuse, then is that serving the rights of the individual and the rights of society to any great extent?

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to know how much evidence there is that this is prevalent in this province. It seems that expediency is a major concern with everything these days, but with the amendments set forth in this Bill, the ability to continue appealing a decision on an individual's competency will drag these cases on for months, perhaps even years, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again, is this necessary? Does it respect the rights of the individual? And more importantly, if financial abuse is taking place, won't it just continue?

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have no way of finding out because as long as someone who had been declared competent by the courts at one level, and the decision is being appealed at another level, we have no real avenue to find out. And it doesn't really stop the abuse until we stop the appellate decision making.

Are there are contingencies in place that would address financial abuse if there were multiple appeals. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't see that in this Bill. Who should have the authority to run someone's financial affairs if there is suspected financial abuse?

And these issues need to be addressed in this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Certainly it should not be the person suspected of doing the financial abuse. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when someone is declared competent by a judge at the original level, then if there is an appeal, maybe what this government should be looking at having in Bills such as this amendment Act, is the right for a judge to be able to appoint a trustee to replace in that situation.

And given the current state of our health care system, how easy will it be to get medical or a psychiatric exam. We know, Mr. Speaker, we've heard it several times in this House, and it was addressed at length again today in question period, about the long waiting lists — sometimes as much as 18 months in certain situations. Well if we're going to have a medical or a psychiatric exam, or sometimes both, then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it going to be that someone who has first been declared competent, have that decision appealed, and then having to go through the degrading continuance of a medical or psychiatric exam, or both, then how long is this going to drag on? Will someone have to wait for the exam weeks, months or years, even, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And what if the individual, and his or her family, has to travel for all these court appeals, medical examinations, psychiatric examinations? They'll have to stay somewhere; they have to eat in restaurants. Who's going to cover these expenses, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Well unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're often covered by the family or by the individual in question. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that will put great financial hardships upon the family and the individual.

And of course, we're talking about the appeals. We've talked about repeated . . . we have to talk about repeated court appearances. This means the cost of handling one particular case that could be quite large, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This is in itself a government-imposed form of financial abuse because now we're dealing with taxpayer dollars. The taxpayer, financially strapped already in this province to the point of no return over the past decade, wants the government to be prudent in its financial affairs. Should these cases drag on for months, there's a very good chance that we would see large amounts of money being spent to cover off appeal hearings and court costs. These cases also add to an already overburdened court system.

Now we already realize, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government wanted to look at closing some court houses in this province, and when they examined the issue for the first time, after they made the decision to close the court houses, they realized that the burden on the court system in this province would not be able to handle the closure of those court houses. So instead we're bringing a Bill forward, that we're debating again today, that looks at burdening our court system even further.

So how is this government going to be able to talk about closing court houses in the future and then bring even more burdensome court cases forward to be looked at by the court system?

We have no reason to believe that these appeals will be treated any differently; therefore we can only assume that it would take a considerable amount of time before a person's competency hearing could be heard before a court.

Consulted in this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were a chief psychiatrist, official representatives, and Chairs of the review panels from all eight mental health regions. Regional directors for mental health were also consulted. This group basically covers off the psychiatric and the liability and immunity clause of the Bill, but we're wondering about the legal aspects of this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Was the law society consulted? And we'll need to find that out when we get into committee eventually, Mr. Deputy Speaker. How much of their input was actually sought?

There's no doubt that the law society would be able to provide much input and would be able to offer suggestions as to how efficient this Bill will really be. They are the ones who know the court system inside and out. They would know how best to handle these types of cases and would be able to speak, at length, of the time these cases would potentially take.

More importantly, this group would be able to speak at length about the cost to the individuals, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and their families. They would also be able to speak on the toll a court case takes on everyone's mental, physical, and financial health.

We also wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if people who have gone through this type of situation were consulted. Who was talked to. Somehow we don't think that those people who have been through the system, have been declared competent, have been ever talked to as to about how it would react to them when such

a Bill would be brought forth that their judgments could be appealed and dragged on even further so that they would remain inside a system that is already overburdened.

It's as if, with so many of these similar situations, it is a policy of this government to push ahead with things without really considering who will be most affected and what the implications will be.

We doubt that the families of the individuals who have gone through . . . who are asked for their input — this group would have some interesting points of reference I'm sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Their suggestions and ideas should have been welcomed. After all it is the people that these Bills will be affecting the most, and it is the people that we represent that we should be talking to.

This Bill does not recognize or respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the rights of the individual, nor does it ensure that the judicial system will recognize or respect those rights. With this Bill we see two things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One is that a group of people have made sure that they will be protected from liability and immunity — a typical NDP cover-up amendment. We've seen this done many times before.

The second thing that we see with this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, gives someone the opportunity to drag another person through court for who knows how long — a person who already has enough problems of their own. If there is a financial abuse occurring, then this will simply prolong it and in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will even encourage it.

This Bill does not recognize what all legislation of this nature would do, and that's protect and ultimately respect the rights of the individual. And given that, we're going to have a great deal of trouble trying to support this Bill. And I'd ask at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### Bill No. 7

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hagel that **Bill No. 7 — The Student Assistance and Student Aid Fund Amendment Act, 1999** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Wakefield:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to add a few comments if I could regarding this particular . . . the amendment to this Act.

One of the things that I was . . . I noticed in here was in fact that there was some housekeeping items, some cleaning up in terms of the vocabulary and an explanation and trying to get it in line with what is acceptable for both the students that are involved in this and also the institutions that will be using this legislation for finances. And I have to commend the minister for trying to make those amendments fit in with the reality of the world as we know it this year.

Now I think the ability to support students and put student-aid funding in place is very critical. I'm very concerned that the students that we have in this province have the opportunity to

continue to remain in this province after they've had their training and have gone through both the university and post-secondary training, whatever their choice may be.

I think it's not only critical for this province, it's critical for our economy. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the critic for Economic Development I see education as a very integral part of economic development in this province; one of the tools that we should be using, encouraging, and making sure that the opportunities are there for these people as they conclude their training, both post-secondary, university, or job training.

(1530)

I guess the concern that I have though, I think, is to make sure that in order to retain these people that we've spent a great deal of time and money in educating, that we give them the opportunity to remain here. And I guess that's where I have some concern with not only the amendments that were put forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but also the intent behind some of the education philosophy that I've witnessed over this last little while.

I noticed that, when it comes to financing of education generally and our post-secondary education specifically, I noticed that even though there was a great commitment from this particular government that programs in fact have been cancelled, for summer employment for instance, to allow these students to repay some of the loans that they have incurred during this time of their training.

I think that's very unfortunate, not only for the students because those programs are important not only to the students but also to the employers. It gives the employers an opportunity to, with a little assistance, be able to offer . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Why is the hon. member for Last Mountain-Touchwood on his feet?

**Mr. Hart:** — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to thank the member from Lloydminster for allowing . . . granting leave.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the other members of the Assembly, a group of Cubs that come from my hometown of Cupar. They are seated in the east gallery. They're the First Cupar Cub Pack, led by their leader, Ms. Betty Smith, more commonly known as Akela.

She's been doing that . . . doing this type of job for many, many years. I don't think it's a job; I think it's a labour of love. And she has today with her a number of chaperones helping with the young Cubs. They are her husband John L. Smith, Sandra Meyers, Sharon Flaman, Albert Micklik, and Suzzane Chernick, and Helen Kovach. And I'd ask the members to welcome them. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 7 — The Student Assistance and Student Aid Fund Amendment Act, 1999 (continued)

**Mr. Wakefield:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wanted to continue discussing the problem of the cancelled summer employment program because I think, as I was mentioning, it's very critical. Both the students that have acquired a great deal of debt during their training, to be able to find employment readily . . . ready employment and also employment for the summer that pertains particularly to their work study. And the program that was in place offered a great deal of assistance in allowing these students to do that.

And it gave the employer an opportunity as well, to be able to offer guidance and mentorship, and also to be able to evaluate the potential of these students in their work experience.

And so I feel it's quite unfortunate that that particular program was cancelled because I think it was, as I mentioned, of great value.

We need a lot of incentives to retain these people. They have accomplished a great deal and also there has been a great deal of investment into these people by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. And these people, these students, I feel need some kind of an assistance, some kind of an incentive to remain here in this province. After all, it is a very good province. It has a lot of potential. And we need those kind of people to remain here to be able to do that. And retaining those students and post-secondary trained people are very, very important.

And if the intent of the amendments are for that, I certainly would applaud that. But there are these concerns that I have difficulty trying to square with the intent as outlined by the hon. minister in his amendments but also the action of this government in cancelling programs such as this.

To have these students stay in Saskatchewan, as I mentioned, would be very important. And one of the things that, I think, would be much more beneficial than offering free tuition in the first year of post-secondary training, which was offered by this government in their election campaign which I think was not very well thought through. I think ultimately we should be trying to encourage these students to stay after their graduation, after they've made the commitment to be able to handle the course, to get the education, to satisfy their own objectives and their own training, and to give them an incentive, probably through a tax incentive of some kind, whether it's a recognition in the first year or two of some of their student loan obligations against their taxable, there are several ways that we could do that. But the incentive is after they have proved that they can be there.

To allow them to remain in school is certainly the responsibility of all of us as taxpayers. And such things as the millennium scholarship fund that was offered in conjunction with the federal government, I feel was a . . . maybe a step in the right

direction. However, it would seem that this scholarship fund, in my view, seems to be misdirected again.

The millennium scholarship fund was taken and applied to tuitions on a global basis with the incentive of trying to remove all of the . . . to reduce at least the tuitions that students find themselves confronted with, rather than focusing particularly on the students that have already achieved a significant debt load through student funding, which my understanding was the real reason for the millennium scholarship fund. So those things are the problems that I have with these particular amendments.

And I would like to refer to some interesting material that I was just reading about. In fact I've been . . . I was at a luncheon just today where the speaker was talking about some of the incentives that we have to put in place here in this province. He agreed that education is a very vital part of the future of this province. Without proper education, and education tailored to the exact needs of what is here, we are doomed to be less competitive than anybody . . . any of our neighbours.

We've often referred to Alberta. He referred mainly to some of the competitiveness in the United States with what goes on here in Canada and particular in this province. Because, after all, there's a great number of our graduates leaving this province, not only to other provinces but into the United States as well.

Now the problem that we found here in this province, and it was highlighted in this particular discussion today, was that the taxation problems in this . . . not only in this province but in Canada generally, makes it non-competitive with the United States, which draws a great number of our students.

The disposable income gap per capita, and that's based on material right up to 1998, shows that the disposable income per capita gap is certainly increasing. Certainly a disincentive when students are leaving the post-secondary training, looking for employment, and finding that there is more in terms of disposable income to offer them in other jurisdictions, whether it's in Canada or in the United States. I think that's a real problem.

Another problem that I noticed when we were looking through the amendments was the cancellation of the interest-free portion of the student loan repayment program as highlighted in the latest budget. I think it's just another indication that that is a disincentive that students will look at and say, why would I want to be part of that when there's other opportunities elsewhere?

This interest-free status was allowed for students I believe on a six-month grace period in order to find gainful employment once they left university. That has been taken away, and now that is another incentive to have our students probably look for professional opportunity elsewhere than here at home.

One of the positive things that the budget did talk about, however, was a small dollar tax credit for graduating students. And I think any move in that direction is a very positive move. However, I noticed that the dollar was rather insignificant. I think it was \$350 or so in tax credits. And from the comments that I have heard from students graduating, they find that is not nearly enough of an incentive to sway them in their decision as

to where they want to apply for work.

Those are the parts of the amendments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I had trouble with. I want to spend a little bit more time and I want to confer with some other students in this particular area, so at this time I would move adjournment on this debate.

Debate adjourned.

### Bill No. 10

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Atkinson that **Bill No. 10 — The Department of Health Amendment Act, 1999** be now read a second time.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure today to stand to speak to Bill No. 10, An Act to amend The Department of Health Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, currently The Department of Health Act has an agreement that provides for people from other provinces to come to Saskatchewan and to receive medical care here if it's required and not provided for in their own province of course. And if someone . . . conversely, if someone from Saskatchewan requires treatment in another province, they will receive it there, and then compensation for those services is later paid to that province or territory.

The measures of reimbursement are currently outlined in two Acts — The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act and The Saskatchewan Hospitalization Act. And so the purpose of the Department of Health Bill, with the existing Bill, is to consolidate recovery methods for financial compensation into one Act, The Department of Health Act.

It appears that what is proposed in the amendment to The Department of Health Act is that where payments are received from other provinces those payments be reported as a refund to the health budget rather than being reported as new revenue. And it appears also that what is proposed is that the process also applies when insurance companies repay health costs as part of a liability claim. And so this is all really that we can see and possibly those two items are the point of this amendment.

However, we have to note as we have studied both of these Acts and . . . or rather the current Act and the amendment that's proposed, that a reciprocity agreement is already in place. And to our knowledge, there have been very few problems with that current agreement as to payments received from other provinces. And we're wondering, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the proposed amendment is all about.

If there's no significant change, what could the real purpose of this Bill be. And we do have some suspicions, always, because when a Bill is brought to the Table such as this, and we have so many very important matters outstanding in the province regarding health and the reception of services by our citizens as well as others throughout Canada, we really question why the minister would bring this kind of a Bill to the Table.

(1545)

The principle of accessibility as outlined in the Canada Health Act is one of the principles being addressed in this Bill. And the Sask Party maintains, and has always maintained, that accessibility to quality health care is paramount for all residents of the province. And we've somewhat come to expect that we will be able to access medical treatment wherever we might be.

Those expectations have been dimmed in the last few years under the NDP administration. But as a part of their reciprocity agreement that exists between provinces, if someone currently visiting from another province needs treatment here in Saskatchewan, that treatment will be provided. And that is what has been expected also in the past.

In Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, nearly \$2,000 is spent annually on an individual, or any individual under the medicare coverage. That's the cost for one person for seeing doctors and specialists in this province, receiving treatments or enduring hospital stays, and doing whatever else may be necessary to ensure their health.

Accessibility in the province for Saskatchewan people and people from other provinces over the last decade has become a very real concern. Our leader, Saskatchewan Party leader, has mentioned that today, certainly in question period, and made some very fine points about recognizing and helping the government of the day recognize that we in fact do not have accessibility to any measure as compared to what we did have before. That is becoming a real concern.

Increasingly there are large numbers of residents that are very frustrated with the extremely long waiting lists and the lack of front-line services. And many of these people have on their own decided to seek treatment elsewhere in other provinces or in the US (United States). But of course, they pay all of their own expenses from their own pocket. There are no refunds for them on travel or food or lodging and so on.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, given our currently overloaded health care system, there is also an increasingly large number of residents who have to be transferred or referred to other provinces to receive medical treatment, and they are referred to other provinces and other jurisdictions by their doctors.

The fact is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these treatments should be available in our own province of Saskatchewan. That is what we want when we talk about accessibility. That is what we have come to believe we should have. And that is why the taxpayers are paying such exorbitant taxes here. If they could get the services they require, I think they would reconsider the fact that taxes are overwhelming. But at least they would like to have those services accessible to them when they need them.

So we have to ask where is the accessibility for the residents of Saskatchewan? We don't have it. Saskatchewan people should not be forced into spending unnecessary time away from their homes and work, just to receive medical care that by all accounts should be accessible right here with a minimal amount of expense and inconvenience.

Waiting lists for standard medical procedures have progressed to the point that we wonder about the medical validity of them any more. So much time has elapsed from the time they first

needed the treatment until they're finally able to get it, that one wonders whether or not the requirement is still valid.

We have heard from many concerned residents who are on extremely long waiting lists for really crucial diagnostic assessments such as MRIs (magnetic resonance imaging) and CT (computerized axial tomography) scans. In fact, even when we have the equipment here in the province, we may not necessarily have the staff — such is the state of health.

Recently bone densimeter equipment was shut down in Saskatoon because there was no technicians available to run it. The waiting time for this is at least one year. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, accessibility is an issue and this demonstrates it. There is no equipment or very, very little that we are in need of — certainly insufficient equipment — we have a lack of staff, no money. People in this province are being forced to wait endlessly to access basic health care services.

In this age of technology, Mr. Deputy Speaker, medical advancements, and access to information, it is very difficult for anyone to fully comprehend why Saskatchewan has the health care problems that it has.

Now the dictionary's definition of reciprocity is mutual action, a principle of practice of give and take. Yet when we look at some of the government's own ideas of reciprocity here in this province, we are deeply concerned with the direction the government is taking with health care in the province.

Seven years ago the NDP introduced us to the wellness model. Local health districts were set up to administer and maintain local health services. The health districts were to be responsive to the needs of their communities and responsible to the public they represented. Ultimately we were supposed to have better health care.

But, seven years later, nearly two-thirds of the 32 health districts in the province are in deficit situations. Without sufficient funding, and lack of commitment from this NDP government, how could health districts be expected to survive? By their own admissions they have had . . . they've had to make some very, very tough decisions in recent years — decisions that have ultimately affected the very people that health districts were set up to serve.

Health care for residents across the province is in deplorable condition — front-line services are suffering; waiting lists are growing; doctors and nurses are leaving the province in droves; beds, operating rooms, and surgical units have closed. And the president of the Saskatchewan Medical Association says that access to care is a big problem to the point where it is compromising the ability of a doctor to provide quality patient care; professional integrity is threatened. And so this is a great concern to the doctors of the province.

Surgery waiting lists in the two main access centres of Regina and Saskatoon continue to grow despite the NDP spending \$12 million last year to address the backlog.

What has been more difficult for rural residents is that the closure of hospitals across the province, many of them — 63 in total since 1993 and that number continues to grow — one of

those hospitals, the Plains hospital, went \$50 million over budget, Mr. Speaker.

Rural residents are gravely concerned these days. They are wondering what is going to be happening even to the existing services they have. On one hand they hear that their hospitals are arbitrarily going to be closed, and the next moment they are hearing that they don't have adequate response systems for emergency service providers to even respond to emergency situations between communities. And so many of the people in rural Saskatchewan are really wondering what the state of the health system is going to end up like for them.

Many of these rural residents, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have seen their hospitals being converted into health facilities. Often the only services that are available to them any more are between the hours of 8 in the morning to 5 p.m. in the evening on weekdays. There is no acute care and there is no extended stay for treatment there.

In fact rural areas have been treated very, very shabbily by this government in many respects. Rural residents now have to travel many miles just to see a doctor; hundreds of miles to see a specialist or receive treatment.

More recently, we heard that health districts were told to submit their upcoming fiscal operating plans to the Minister of Health, and they were told that no public consultation was to take place. And if it did, health board members would have to risk being replaced by publicly appointed administrators. The minister said that she would approve, reject, or modify these operating plans.

Given the current lack of funding and commitment to the viability of our health districts, how could board members be expected to work under this government-imposed gag order? What they have come to realize is, why should they? Because heavy-handed and constrictive tactics by the NDP minister toward board members has really restricted them in the freedom that they know they should have to do their jobs in an accountable fashion.

They were elected or appointed to represent the public, and if there are to be services cut, they feel . . . or staff laid off or a hospital closed, they feel the communities that they are serving and that are affected by this should have a right to know, and they are asking that this government allow them to be open, honest, and upfront. They don't believe that this is too much to ask.

However, they have been issued a gag order and they feel that they are simply not being trusted and they do not have the autonomy to represent their people properly. They resent this kind of control by the Minister of Health and they resent that they cannot be open and accountable. These people must feel terribly when they are under these kind of restrictions.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other issues that has come into play recently is the accessibility to different drugs that would help many people in the province with their health problems. Saskatchewan has one of the highest rates of Alzheimer patients in Canada. Aricept is a drug that has been proven to reduce the debilitating effects of the disease. The makers of this drug have

a 12-week trial program in place at no cost to the province.

But even given those facts, and following recent reports attesting to the effectiveness of Aricept, and Aricept is . . . remains inaccessible for Alzheimer's patients and their families here in Saskatchewan. One has to question, why is this government refusing to help people in such a common sense fashion?

Mr. Speaker, Exelon is another drug that has been approved for use in treating Alzheimer's. Again there is trial program in place at no cost to the province. Again the Formulary Committee seems to be dragging its heels on making a decision. What will it take for Alzheimer's patients and their families to access some much needed and proven treatment?

There can be no doubt that we are all paying the price, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the NDP's version of so-called health care. Where's our reciprocity? What do we get out of this give and take principle?

When the NDP closed the Plains hospital, they laid off 600 nurses. They were told — they were told — a number of years ago that a nursing shortage was imminent. But they either chose to ignore this or they thought the matter would probably resolve itself.

Last spring's nurses' strike saw the province's contingent of exhausted nurses protest working conditions here in this province. And what was the NDP's version of reciprocity for our nurses? The NDP legislated them back to work, and to add insult to injury, declared the strike illegal and forced them to pay a fine.

Nursing recruitment and retention issues have now reached a critical point, and even with the recent announcement by the government that will allow nurses to retrain and re-enter the workforce, we have on this side of the House some doubt that this will have the effect the government thinks it will.

The nursing profession's governing bodies will tell you that recruitment and retention are two very important issues, and that immediate action must be taken. And while we acknowledge that there might be a large pool of educationally qualified nurses in the province that might take up the government's offer — at least the government thinks they will — there is no guarantee that these nurses will come back to work in a system that devalues them and the importance of their work.

Nurses are burnt-out. They are burnt-out from much of the imposition of mandatory overtime, no vacations, lack of recognition. Those are just a few of the many issues facing nurses right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And one has to question, why would a nurse that's left the profession want to come back to more of the same?

In this budget we learned that there was a hundred and fifty million dollars being allocated in the newly formed Health Transition Fund. What are the government's plans for this money? Well, we have come to know that part of it will be used to cover off some of the outstanding deficits faced by some of the health districts as recently indicated by the \$26 million that



was quietly dispersed to the Regina and Saskatoon health districts.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with all the problems that the government is facing in health care, we were hoping that this government would have had a vision, a plan, or some idea about how this money could be best spent. Presently the only indication that we have is that it will be undoubtedly be going towards paying off deficits and paying down debts. There is not a great deal of vision with just that simple use of our money.

Mr. Speaker, everyday we learn of people's experiences within our crumbling health care system. Everyday members on this side of the House are presented with more stories, more frustrations from people throughout our constituencies and throughout the province. People that will not go to their NDP MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for help simply because they are not getting a response from them. We hear of this everyday. People are more than concerned; they are frustrated and they are angry.

(1600)

There have been reports and reviews that we've had. We have had investigations and we've had numerous recommendations. Serious issues with serious implications, but it necessitates serious action — not more reviews . . . or investigations rather. Yet with all the report and the recent investigations into health care, nothing seems to have changed. Things remain the same.

So, Mr. Speaker, where is the reciprocity for people who have paid the price for the current state of health care in Saskatchewan?

The Saskatchewan Party has been calling for an independent, complete, and comprehensive review, independent review, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of health care for nearly two years. To simply keep throwing money at health care, which has been the NDP's answer, remains to be a non-answer. It is not an answer. We need to have a comprehensive, independent review. That is what the people of the province are calling for and that is the only way we are going to find out just exactly what is going wrong and how to rectify the situation.

In fact, the government now has finally admitted that a review of health care is needed, that health care in this province has hit the wall and is on the ropes. So we give them credit for finally admitting that, albeit it seems very late in admission and we wish that they would have done this a while back and taken our lead on this matter.

Now after months of waiting we hear that their plans are underway to establish a review commission and that its mandate and terms will be released very shortly. We can only hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this will be a truly, truly independent review — one that operates at arm's-length from the government.

We acknowledge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that accessibility in its truest form allows residents in Saskatchewan to access medical care outside of the province and that residents from other provinces can access medical treatment here in Saskatchewan. But there are still many issues that need to be addressed

regarding accessibility for Saskatchewan residents. Obviously it is still a problem and this Bill, this amendment that we have on the Table, does nothing to address the many other problems.

In all honesty, when it comes to reciprocity agreements and payment between provinces, we are not aware of any major concerns. It would seem that the current agreement that is in place is working quite nicely. Given that, why the need for amending this current legislation? We continue to ask that.

We believe that the government should be more concerned with taking care of other more pressing issues first. If they were to address these very critical issues, then wouldn't reciprocity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, take care of itself?

We can't help but wonder that the government, by amending legislation, isn't preparing for the reality that more and more residents will have to be treated in other provinces — even the United States — simply because the health care system here in this province cannot accommodate the large numbers of people waiting for health services.

The Minister of Health has referred to this as a housekeeping duty. If that is so, then why isn't she taking care of the other items first, other items that should be on her list first. Addressing the issue of lack of front-line services, for example, would seem to be to me more urgent than amending an Act that by all accounts still works and will not speed up or change our residents of the province access to health care.

Once again, it's the government making sure that they're getting paid for services rendered which is fine, but they're forgetting about the people who need those services most. And that is what the Saskatchewan Party opposition is mostly concerned about.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate for further consideration.

Debate adjourned.

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### General Revenue Fund

#### Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs

#### Vote 30

**The Deputy Chair:** — I'd like to invite the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs to introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And it's my pleasure to introduce to the Assembly: deputy minister Brent Cotter, communications director Gord Sisson, Al Hilton, Paul Osborne, and Ernie Lawton, and Glen Benedict, and Michael Jackson from protocol in the back. Thank you.

#### Subvote (IA01)

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I too would like to thank the minister's officials for being with us here today, and certainly thank the minister for being here today. I didn't get an opportunity the last time the minister was sitting in estimates

for Indian and Metis affairs to . . . I didn't have the opportunity to speak with him at that time so I'm especially happy today to be able to address some issues that I have to the minister.

Mr. Chair, to the minister, today was a very historic day for First Nations people in our province. It was reported in today's paper that the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) along with both of the federal and provincial governments, have signed a framework agreement that will eventually lead to a province-wide self-government for the First Nations people, and I think this is a really good news announcement.

Mr. Minister, it's my understanding that the province of Saskatchewan has been greatly involved in these negotiations. The time frame that has been established is 2002, and so I'm just wondering if it's by the year 2002 at that time that all that you are expecting, that all of the terms will have been worked out and completed? Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Hillson:** — Yes, thank you. And may I say at the outset, at the risk of digressing, that I want to express my thanks to the member for Humboldt for the support she gave our department and myself personally at the time of the debate over the Aboriginal employment development contracts with Dr. Jim Pankiw, the Member of Parliament.

And I thought it was indeed very progressive that she on behalf of her party, expressed the same views as the views that we hold on this side of the House that it is essential that we do more to end the marginalization of our Aboriginal people and bring them into full participation into the economy of Saskatchewan.

And in view of the fact that we were under great pressure and criticism from the Member of Parliament on that, I very much appreciated the expression of the member for Humboldt that we were on the right track.

With that though, I would advise the hon. member that the current round of negotiations on self-government relate to education and child and family services.

We have committed to an 18-month time frame, and the negotiating position of the province is, first, voluntary jurisdiction for off-reserve which means basically that a First Nations person living off-reserve would have the option of his case, his or her case, being dealt with according to First Nations government or according to the provincial department. So it would be an option. And secondly, the paramountcy of provincial law in the event of conflict.

Other items may be added to the agenda, but for now the two items which are being specifically negotiated are education and child and family service. The reason we have committed to 18 months is that we all are anxious that we not get involved in never-ending discussions that simply don't lead anywhere.

And as the hon. member will be aware, there has been concern expressed from time to time that on Aboriginal issues we're getting involved in negotiations and discussions that don't actually lead to something. And we're committed to these discussions actually leading to conclusions.

And in that regard, as the member made note, this past weekend we actually completed the specific tax loss compensation issue. So we're actually bringing the negotiation to a successful conclusion; we're not just sitting around talking about things that never happen.

So in terms of your question, will we finish it all within 18 months, we believe that's a realistic time frame. But perhaps more to the point, we think it's important to set these deadlines to give the message that we're not just sitting around a table to talk and talk and talk; we actually are committed to positive results. We think we can.

If we turn out to have made good progress but we haven't quite wrapped everything up in 18 months, I wouldn't view that as the end of the world. But nonetheless it is important to say that we indicate that these negotiations are not just wandering around and going nowhere. They're actually supposed to and will produce results. Thank you.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, in the past, I as well as you know and realize that there have been some . . . the First Nations people have taken responsibility and jurisdiction for education and social services certainly on-reserve. And there have been many, for instance, child care cases where they have been taking care of that on-reserve and the bands have been somewhat responsible for on-reserve.

So the difference now in the negotiations that are taking place for the next 18 months then, from what you're saying, you're telling me that there . . . I hear you saying, at least I think I hear you saying that there is going to be an option for people, whether they will receive services from the provincial government if they should be off-reserve, or if they want to receive services from on-reserve, they will be able to have that option. Could you just comment please, Mr. Minister, and let me know if I'm hearing this correctly.

**Hon. Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member basically sees it correctly. I think it has to be said that when I gave the position, that is the opening negotiating position of the province, I can't obviously speak to where exactly we will end up.

But I think it is important to note that as a result of the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision in Corbiere, that stressed that a band member who lives off-reserve is still nonetheless a band member, and has a right to a voice in his or her home band government. And it also stresses the portability of band membership and First Nations status.

(1615)

So that is part of the mix that we have to consider, what is the appropriate delivery service both from a constitutional legal standpoint, but also from a practical standpoint. And we believe that a good starting point would be to say that if, say, there is a custody dispute, that the parties would have the right to say they wished this to be determined under the structures of their band, as opposed to under our court and Department of Social Services.

I'd also like to say that key in these negotiations will be the

principle of financial accountability, accountability back to First Nations citizens. And I say that also connects with the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision that band members have a right to a say and to accountability even if they live off-reserve.

And secondly, again because the Corbiere decision, it is our position that the federal government remains financially responsible for services even for those members who are living off-reserve. The situation that we have been evolving into the past number of years is that while the federal government accepts that under the constitution they have full financial responsibility on-reserve, they have been increasingly diminishing the responsibility they take for off-reserve programs.

We believe that first of all, under the constitution, Indians and Eskimos of course fall under the federal jurisdiction. Secondly, that that has been reinforced by the Corbiere decision, that this Aboriginal status continues for off-reserve citizens. And therefore as we look to the development of new and innovative programs in education, child and family services, and other areas — health — that the federal government should be asked to continue with its responsibility on behalf of Aboriginal persons.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I want to refer you back to your statement that for instance if there was a custody situation where there was some determination having to be made by the parties in question about whether or not they were going to access services to deal with this custody issue, off-reserve or on-reserve, how practical does that seem to you?

For instance if off-reserve parents were living in Saskatoon and they determine that they wanted to have an on-reserve justice system take care of their situation, like the proximity, the availability to get back and forth for one thing, the ability to know in fact who is going to be facilitating this whole process for them, I just . . . I'm having difficulty understanding what benefit that would be.

It seems to me that it would be more advantageous to people that are living off-reserve to know that they are able to access courts and to have people of their own ethnic background helping them to deal with the situation and deliberating with them, than to say to them well, if you don't want to have this kind of service provided for you off-reserve, you can go back to reserve. I mean it just doesn't seem very practical to me, because oftentimes people don't have transportation or the resources to be running back and forth for a court case like that to be taken care of.

So you know, I can understand it if there is more accountability asked for of the federal government to ensure that funding for services for off-reserve Indians is provided to them in a more expedient fashion.

And I can also see that if the province of Saskatchewan was really concerned, as I believe you are, about the services provided to off-reserve Indians, that you would knock on the Prime Minister's door and simply mention to him that maybe he should cut some of his bureaucracy and have payments more directed to the Aboriginal people themselves who provide these services.

So if you could just give me a little bit more of a clarification, I guess, Mr. Minister, on what the advantages or how you see the work that you're undertaking here, or even how the FSIN see that this is going to work out very practically, I would appreciate some comment on that. Because I can't, I can't understand what changes are taking place according to what you've said that would be of benefit to First Nations people.

**Hon. Mr. Hillson:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think that while the issue of efficiency is certainly something that will be of paramount concern here, I would like to point out though that this is not something dramatic or novel, as the member might think. This is the way present things presently work in the Yukon; they work in Alaska, in a number of US states, and increasingly, where we are evolving in Canada.

So the issue would be, for instance, in the case of a child apprehension that occurs in the city, who should intervene and who can best provide the services necessary for the child and for the family? And that would be determined, I think, in large measure as to whether a strong and real connection exists between the home reserve or otherwise. And that is why I spoke of an optional jurisdiction.

It would also be a question of agreements entered into by the provincial government, the Department of Social Services, and the home reserves. Those actually are already in place now in Saskatchewan so that when a First Nations child comes into care, there will be contact with the home reserve to see what is the best option here to work with the family or to find an alternate home for the child.

The point that we have already left behind, mercifully, the situation where the Department of Social Services simply moves in and takes an Aboriginal child and puts that child into a white foster home with no contact with the home reserve, this will formalize it.

It's a little . . . I'm not trying to duck the question but it's a little bit difficult for me to be too specific for the simple reason that we're moving into negotiations and what will be the end result of those negotiations is not of course totally obvious. But nonetheless it's an area that we're already in. It's an area that other states and provinces and territories are in. And I'm convinced that there are efficiencies to be gained by this.

But what is more important, what is most important of all, is that we find solutions that will work for families and work for children because it will be appropriate for those children. And we're very much aware that in times past the adoption and foster services . . . services of our provinces oftentimes did not work very well for First Nations children. And we believe that by working co-operatively with the FSIN, with band governments, that we can find solutions that work for people.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. As I travel throughout the province and hear from all people in this province, and even as I've spoken to FSIN people, members of their council, there seems to be some question I guess about what the term self-government really means to many people. And it has been an outstanding question that I'm not sure that anyone has defined in a very clear way.

And in coming to this common table agreement now and, you know, reaching this milestone, I'm wondering whether or not during all of your talks and discussions, whether you have for us today in the Assembly and for the people of Saskatchewan a definition of self-government as has been discussed by the First Nations people, as well as the provincial and federal governments, so that all people in this country can be clear of what it is that they're to expect.

**Hon. Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that's a very important question. And again I'm certainly not trying to duck it. But I have to at the outset say that we are embarked on a voyage that we don't know entirely where it will lead us. But one never does.

But having said that, I want to say that First Nations people were self-governing before European contact, and they managed. And with the European contact and the imposition of the new society, we took over control of their lives to an extent that frankly we as non-Aboriginals would find intolerable. The question of where will our children go to school was not a parental decision but one made by the government and the churches.

In my lifetime, in the North Battleford area, rations as opposed . . . were given out, and you didn't even do your own grocery shopping. The government would decide what groceries you would have. So we have to get away from that.

The provincial government has recognized the inherent right of self-governing, and we defined the inherent right of self-government as the authority over aspects of First Nations people's lives most significant to First Nations identity. It is self-reliance; it is self-government. It is inherent right in those areas which are integral to the identity of First Nations peoples.

And I think that is something that all of us can see the value and importance of. It is an attempt to undo some of the historic mistakes of the past. However if I may anticipate some of what you may have been implying, does this mean that the laws of Canada will not apply?

In that regard you may have heard Bob Mitchell on radio this morning, now as the FSIN negotiator — of course a former minister of Justice of this province — who made it quite clear that in self-government that the Criminal Code of Canada would apply, that there is still one law.

So I think I can put the hon. member's mind at rest on that score of what he was talking about, was that service delivery can be accommodated and can be done in ways that is respectful of cultural differences and respectful of community differences. And this is where we are moving. But I want to tell you that the provincial government has endorsed the inherent right of self-government. We have endorsed the right of First Nations people to have authority over those aspects of their lives which are inherent and integral to their identity.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well, Mr. Minister, I enjoyed your short commentary on the history that's behind us but that impacted very greatly on the lives of Aboriginal people, particularly Indian and Metis people in this province. And I am of the belief that many of those people underwent the

equivalence of apartheid. And I think that what you're saying is that. And I think that all people of Saskatchewan have to recognize that.

But what the Indian people are asking for right now is, yes, they're asking for authority to determine their own kind of services from and for their own people. They're also asking that they're able to own and manage their own operations without interference from provincial government, but with the consideration of provincial government.

(1630)

And so they want responsibility. They're willing to take responsibility. And there are many aspects of this responsibility that have been brought to my attention, that I've been told that the government is not willing to look at and that the federal government isn't very accountable for.

I have heard statements such as, you know by the time, for instance, even the funding that comes from the federal government gets down to the actual people, to the bands, it's a minuscule amount of the amount that has been allotted by the federal government. And so there's obviously a problem of perpetuating a large bureaucracy that seems to be more . . . benefiting more from this system than the actual First Nations people are.

And so I would hope that some of the responsibility, speaking of responsibility, that the federal government and the provincial would take, is to maybe breakdown some of those bureaucratic barriers that stunt the kind of money that comes down, that would be there and available for First Nations people to use. Because truly there is a little bit of prejudice and injustice going on in this province as far as people's conception or understanding of how much money First Nations people are getting from the federal government. And the very fact is it sounds like a great big sum, but by the time it siphons down, there isn't all that terribly much.

Mr. Minister, we've also heard, and there certainly could be some validity to this, that there has been, I guess, misuse of some of the funds that have come down and that it hasn't been appropriated out to the grassroots people very well. And I know that that kind of accountability is being brought into question and it is of great concern to people throughout the province.

So I feel that there again is where someone such as yourself, as the minister responsible for this, could make sure that we have effective and efficient and accountable governance in place in respect to how monies are being allocated and how funds are being used, and to make sure that there is integrity and justice in the judicial use of the funding.

Mr. Minister, there are hundreds of thousands of acres of land and already millions of dollars that have been disbursed to make up for the lost tax revenues to municipalities and school divisions because of land claim settlements. So I'm just wondering if there will . . . In view of the fact that there are going to be, I presume, about 300,000 acres of land to be put into reserve status now to deal with the department's responsibility to end up having reimbursement to municipalities and school divisions for lost revenue due to this land claim

situation, I was wondering whether or not, Mr. Minister, that there is going to be more cheques being cut now in order to deal with this or is it pretty well finished?

I'd like to know what direction you could give me in answering to those questions that many of my constituents have.

**Hon. Mr. Hillson:** — I think I may be working backwards on the hon. member's questions.

But first of all in order to understand this area, it's important to appreciate that there's a difference between what we call treaty land entitlement and what we call specific claims.

Treaty land entitlement, as I understand it, refers to the formula at the time of the treaties whereby land will be set aside on a per capita basis for the band members and was never set aside. So now here approximately 130 years later that's being done. So that's the entitlement we call it.

And under treaty land entitlement, some 712,000 acres have been transferred, and those 712,000 acres have also resulted in approximately \$32 million being given to local government. And that \$32 million is, as the member has correctly said, is for tax loss compensation — the fact that that land will no longer be subject to municipal and school division taxes.

And that money is to be put in a trust fund so that it will be self-generating in terms of providing the municipality and the school divisions with permanent income for the lands that they used to have available for taxation but will no longer have available.

So that's treaty land entitlement, and it refers to land, according to the formula on the treaties, that was supposed to have been given but was not.

Specific claims is a smaller concept and somewhat different. Specific claims refers to that land which was in reserve status and in the early days of the last century was sold or transferred — usually improperly, usually with the collusion of dishonest Indian agents. And now that is being reversed. And in that case we are talking about approximately 300,000 acres. So that is land that was in reserve status a hundred years ago. It left reserve status through improper means. It's now being returned to reserve status.

And that has resulted . . . that has triggered a payment to local governments of \$4.1 million. And that is what I was doing in Government House on Saturday — this preceding Saturday. It was \$4.1 million that was turned over to the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, and Saskatchewan Conservation and Development Association as their compensation for specific claims.

Now for the rest of the member's question on accountability. I can only say that the member is absolutely right that if this is going to be successful, accountability has to be built into it.

First of all though, it is important for us to note that direct payments to First Nations governments are federal. I was pleased last Saturday that FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde spoke

about the possibility of a First Nations ombudsman. And we believe that it is key — although this is basically federal money — it is key that if these new self-government negotiations are going to be successful, part and parcel has to be the environment and the mechanisms for fiscal accountability.

But I would say that because of self-government and because of the mistakes and the failures of the past, we again recognize that the accountability that is going to succeed is for the accountability to be to First Nations people themselves, so that they have a right to a say and to be satisfied that the funds are expended in the most effective manner possible.

And the savings that could come about for us as a province, I would suggest, would be very sizeable if we are successful as a province in ending the marginalization of our Aboriginal people so that they participate in the economy, they are able to participate in the economy in the same percentages as other residents of the province; and that they do not require access to services on any greater percentage than other residents of the province.

The current savings to Saskatchewan are estimated to be something in excess of \$1 billion per year. And of course, that's out of a total budget of the province of a bit over 5 billion. So you can see it is indeed a very significant figure.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. You make so many points. I'm not quite sure where do we start. But the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood has got a couple of questions pertaining to the allotment of land — I guess it's land claims — and the funding that goes along with it, as well as the amount of money that will be issued to the municipalities in compensation. So I would just turn the questioning over to the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. To the minister. Dealing with . . . I listened with interest as the minister was explaining payments that have been made under the treaty land entitlement Act, or program, and the specific land claims settlement.

I noticed that . . . I believe the minister mentioned that under treaty land entitlement there was 712,000 acres either have been transferred or will be transferred, and compensation paid to local government totalled . . . or \$32 million.

Yet under specific land claims, there's approximately 300,000 acres that will be involved in this particular agreement and yet the funding is only \$4.1 million — quite a difference in level of funding.

And I wonder if the minister could explain the difference in level of funding between those two agreements, and the make-up of the payments in each program as to who . . . which . . . where the money came from?

**Hon. Mr. Hillson:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, to the hon. member. The formula for treaty land entitlement — and that is land that was never in reserve status but under the formula of the treaties is now going into reserve status — it was agreed through negotiation with the federal government that the compensation would be paid at the rate of 22.5 of prevailing local government

taxes. And that is the 32 million that is now going to trust funds for local government.

Now in the case of specific claims — that is land that was in reserve status, was fraudulently taken out of reserve status — the federal government refused to compensate at that rate of 22.5. And I guess the first point I have to make is this is all federal government money — none of it is provincial. So the tax loss compensation on both files is totally funded by the federal government, both the 32 million for treaty land entitlement and the 4.1 million for specific claims.

(1645)

The point, I think, that the federal government adopted here was that frankly under specific claims we're talking about land that should have never, ever have been part of the municipal tax base because it was fraudulently removed from reserve status. So the federal government took the position that it was on a different formula, different position, because we're talking in the case of specific claims to land that should never, ever have been part of an RM (rural municipality).

And that is why the federal government came up with a different formula. That formula has been accepted by SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), by SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), and Saskatchewan Conservation Development Association. As you're aware, they were at Government House on Saturday to receive their cheques and to indicate their satisfaction with the conclusion of this agreement.

Another reason why we think that this tax loss compensation will be very important, is that it paves the road to good relations between the new reserve lands and their neighbours in the adjoining municipalities.

And by closing the book on the tax loss compensation matter we have also, I say, created the proper environment for good relations between band governments and local governments. And that was certainly underlined and underscored at Government House on Saturday when SARM and SSTA indicated their satisfaction with the negotiations and with the money they received.

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, the minister indicated that local government SARM and SSTA were at the signing and that they supposedly were happy with the deal. I wonder whether they are totally happy with the agreement that has been signed.

The federal government puts forth the argument that specific land claims deal with land that was originally a part of a reserve and should have never been part of a municipality. But the fact is, when the settlements are arrived at, quite often land that was lost by an Indian band, the Indian band is funded and then they go and purchase land in another municipality, and the land that the band originally lost still remains part of a second municipality.

So the funding, if the federal government and the provincial government by signing the agreement accepts the premise that you can fund specific land claims at a lower rate than you can fund treaty land entitlement claims, I think there is some error

in that thinking.

Because as I had indicated, quite often the land that is replaced is in another municipality and so the RM in which the land is purchased is suffering a loss . . . or will suffer, I believe, a loss in taxes later on down the road.

Now I wonder if the minister could indicate at 15 times the previous year's taxes, at that level of funding, how long will local governments be able to recover taxes comparable to the time prior to which the land was purchased by an Indian band?

**Hon. Mr. Hillson:** — First of all by way of background, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities has commenced a lawsuit for tax loss compensation. They've settled it, they signed, and they expressed publicly their satisfaction.

So if I may say to the hon. member opposite, we think that this has set the proper environment for good relations between the municipality and the adjoining new reserves. And please, please, please, don't try to ruin that.

We have some difficulties to work through in this province. This is one difficulty we did work through. We achieved a result to the satisfaction of all citizens of this province. SARM signed on the dotted line. SSTA signed on the dotted line. The lawsuit was concluded. The statements made by the heads of those associations were positive.

So please, please, please, don't try to turn this into a negative story that will set a negative environment between the new reserves and their adjoining municipalities because that wasn't the atmosphere on Saturday. That's not the atmosphere I want. I hope it's not the atmosphere you want.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I listened with interest to the minister's statement. I don't think we want to upset the apple cart on this side of the House.

But what we are concerned is we have individual RMs that are coming to us and saying that with this compensation package of 15 times the previous year's taxes, that within a number of years there will be some significant tax losses to the RMs, and they're very concerned about it. And they've expressed that to the executive of SARM. And I believe . . . and SARM is very aware of that.

But I believe that SARM was bargaining from a position of weakness because the previous offer was five times the assessment. SARM had no ability to negotiate with the federal government. They left that in the hands of the province. And so therefore certainly they signed the agreement because 15 times is a whole lot better than five times.

But it's still not 22.5 times, which was the figure under the treaty land entitlement agreement that was determined that would sustain income from . . . to local government at 80 per cent of their previous tax income, and which everyone was quite satisfied with.

So I guess my question to the minister is: if the provincial government negotiated this deal on behalf of local government,

are they prepared to supplement the monies paid to local government so that they don't in the future suffer a reduction in . . . a significant reduction in taxes?

**Hon. Mr. Hillson:** — I don't know if I should turn up my hearing aid, Mr. Chairman — I don't think I believe what I just heard.

This money is federal money — \$4.1 million. SARM has been wanting a settlement for 13 years. The province of Saskatchewan was only a participant to the extent that we tried to facilitate negotiation and we were very anxious that there be a resolution, an agreement which everyone could sign on to and be content with. That's what happened on Saturday — \$4.1 million, solely from the federal government. SARM signed; SARM expressed satisfaction; SARM ended its lawsuit. And the money was all federal. So everybody signed and expressed satisfaction.

Now the hon. member is saying what is Saskatchewan going to pony up. And behind that appears to be — and I hope I'm wrong — but appears to be the veiled threat that if millions of dollars aren't ponied up here, which were never asked for and never contemplated or offered, nor were we ever part of negotiations, we were a facilitator, but there seems to be there — and I hope I'm wrong — there seems to be the veiled threat that they will be out trying to stir up feelings of the rural municipalities that they have not been fairly treated notwithstanding the fact the rural municipalities say they were fairly treated. They'll be out there trying to convince the rural municipalities that they were not fairly treated and they should not have good relations with their new neighbours on the reserves.

And I just say, don't go there. That is wrong. That is wrong, that is bad social policy; but it is also contrary to SARM. I mean SARM told us they wanted this settled for 13 years. We got a settlement they say they're happy with. They say that they are satisfied, that the land going into specific claims, which is land that should never have been alienated from the reserves in the first place . . . This is a good news story. This is a good news story.

We are closing the book on an historic irritant, from both sides. From the First Nations side, land is being returned to reserve status that was fraudulently removed from reserve status.

From the local government side, they are being compensated for tax loss for land they at one time had taxation access to, but frankly, never should have. Because it was never suppose to be in municipalities to begin with.

Now you raise the question of well what if land was fraudulently taken out of the reserve and given to one municipality but now the compensation comes from a totally different municipality? Well that's an important point. And in that regard, it has to be said there will be no confiscation of lands; that all lands that go into reserve status will be on the basis of willing seller/willing buyer. So there is no thought of expropriation or confiscation going on here.

The reserve will select land they want and try and arrive at a completely consensual, voluntary sale agreement. So it's

willing buyer/willing seller throughout — no confiscation, no expropriation.

It is the municipality which will have land go into reserve status which then has the right to access this trust monies — say a total of \$4.1 million. So only those municipalities which actually lose land will be able to access the trust funds.

How long will it last? Well obviously that depends on the prudence of the investments made and a number of other factors. But the idea is that SARM will invest the money and the proceeds therefrom will generate the income to self-sustain the tax loss. But in any event, it is SARM that will control and SSTA that will control that trust fund. There are three trust funds. So those trust funds will be controlled by the local government authorities themselves.

And I just want to conclude with this: the spirit in Government House on Saturday was so positive. There were smiles on the faces of the vice-president of SSTA; there were smiles on the face of Sinclair Harrison. And they said yes, we like this. Don't try and turn this into another way to corrode the social environment of this province for cheap politics.

**The Deputy Chair:** — Order, order.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Chair, I move the committee report progress.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.