

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Carrot River Valley concerned about certain inadequacies in the provincial tobacco legislation. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately amend tobacco legislation that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of any tobacco products; and furthermore, anyone found guilty of such an offence would be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

I so present.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition from citizens of Saskatchewan who would like to see the urgent issue of helping children who are currently being abused and exploited through the sex trade addressed immediately. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately implement all 49 recommendations of the final report as submitted by the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Lumsden, Yellow Grass, and Emerald Park.

I so present.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens concerned about the tobacco legislation. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately amend tobacco legislation that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of any tobacco products; and furthermore, anyone found guilty of such an offence would be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

Signatures on this petition today, Mr. Speaker, are all from the community of Tisdale.

I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today to do with the overfishing in Lake of the Prairies. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to work with the federal government, First Nations representatives, and with other provincial governments to bring about a resolution in the Lake of the Prairies situation and to ensure that our natural resources as a whole are used in a responsible manner by all people in the future.

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Churchbridge, Langenburg, Tantallon, Atwater, Stockholm, and Gerald, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the deplorable condition of Highway 339. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 339 in order to facilitate economic development initiatives.

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

This petition is signed by individuals, Mr. Speaker, from the community of Avonlea, Truax, Drinkwater, Hearne, and Sherwood Park, Alberta.

I so present.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens of the province regarding the shape of our highways. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to make the necessary repairs to Highway 35 in the Indian Head-Milestone constituency in order to prevent injury and loss of life and to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in the area.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Saskatoon, Regina, Tyvan, Weyburn, Francis, and Lang.

I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens who are concerned about the tobacco legislation. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately amend tobacco legislation that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of any tobacco product; and furthermore, anyone found guilty

of such an offence would be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

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

And it's signed by citizens of Weyburn and Parry.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to halt crop insurance premium hikes and coverage reductions.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to halt its plan to take money out of the crop insurance program and hike farmers' crop insurance premiums rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson and Bladworth.

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to read from citizens concerned about the highway from Junction No. 2 near Simpson to Highway No. 15. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to use a portion of its highway budget to address the concerns of the serious conditions of Highway 15 for Saskatchewan residents.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Watrous, Esther, Alberta, Mayerthorpe, Alberta, Weyburn, Lucky Lake, Saskatoon, and also from Williams Lake, BC (British Columbia).

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been received as addendums to sessional papers no. 7, 11, 17, 18, and 24.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 23 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Highways and Transportation: how much money has been collected in permits from the Riverhurst Agricultural Products Ltd. since a deal with that company was signed under the transportation partnership agreement?

Ms. Bakken: — . . . Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 23 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation: how many new employees has SPMC hired since January 1, 2002; and, further to that, how many consultants has SPMC hired since January 1, 2002 and what is their job description?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to introduce to you and through you and ask all members of the Assembly to welcome too, a gentleman seated in your gallery, Mr. Louis Kenny, who is the chairman of the SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) board of directors, Mr. Speaker, and also an active member of the ethanol committee with Treaty Four. I want everybody to please join me in welcoming Mr. Kenny here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party official opposition I too would like to welcome Mr. Kenny to the Assembly today. We do hope you enjoy the proceedings and enjoy your time here. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Credit Union Central Reception

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to talk about a very special occasion that occurred in the city of Regina last evening. The delegates of Credit Union Central of Saskatchewan held a reception at the Hotel Saskatchewan and myself, along with many of my colleagues on this side of the House, had the great pleasure of attending this fine social event.

It was also a great opportunity to meet with the many credit union representatives in attendance and to talk about the many issues of the day facing our province. Mr. Speaker, one of those issues that was the talk of the room last night was that of the NDP (New Democratic Party) government's decision to buy into an Alberta insurance company.

Mr. Speaker, that money is being used to compete against insurance companies in Saskatchewan. Many credit union people last night were disappointed with the NDP decision to use government money to compete against them. And they wished that there was at least some NDP . . .

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Some of the comments, Mr. Speaker, is that the representatives wish that there was at least some NDP members there that so they could tell them directly of their dissatisfaction.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I, along with my fellow colleagues on this side of the House, would like to extend our most sincere thanks to Credit Union for a successful evening of networking and socializing. It's just too bad that members on the other side

of the House chose not to attend. They missed a great evening.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Building Through the Roof

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday with the other world and provincial events, one headline on the front page of the *StarPhoenix* was neglected. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rectify that today.

The headline read, "Building through the roof." Construction in Saskatoon is soaring in the first two months of 2002, jumping by 85.6 per cent. The value of building permits grew to over 72 million from 39 million. That means that Saskatoon's growth is third among Canada's 28 major cities.

Dale Botting, CEO of the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority, said 2002 is promising to be a very strong (very strong) for commercial construction, which rose 62.5 per cent to \$18.4 million in the first two months (of 2002) . . .

"Commercial numbers are out of sight, and we're going to see a record year in commercial this year," said Botting . . .

He said commercial construction will be led by big box stores going up near the University of Saskatchewan . . . on Eighth Street (occupying former car dealership property) as well as some activity on the west side (of the city).

Mr. Speaker, industrial permits were up 97 per cent over 2000, making 2001 a record year with bigger growth than any other city.

Dale Botting went on to elaborate on his point, stating that:

That's how you build an economy. If you build a strong industrial base, commercial follows and after commercial . . . you build residential permit value and of course jobs all the way through.

Building fever has also infected the university campus due to projects under construction, where \$29.3 million was committed at the start of the year. A big year on campus, said Botting.

Residential permits also grew 80 per cent to 23.5 million. Further growth is in condominiums and homes. Certainly this is good news for Saskatchewan . . . for Saskatoon and good news for Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Boston Marathon

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize the outstanding achievements of two Regina residents, one of whom happens to work for the Saskatchewan Party caucus office.

On Monday Saskatchewan Party communications director Iain Harry will fulfill a lifelong goal of his by running in the 106th

Boston Marathon. Both Iain and his girlfriend Denise Ackerman qualified for the Boston Marathon at last year's Edmonton Marathon. They will be leaving for Boston tomorrow to take part in this year's race.

Mr. Speaker, most of us as we get older — I don't know who wrote this — tend to shy away from activities involving a great deal of physical endurance. Iain's athletic career has taken the opposite direction. He has gone from being a bullfighter, a sport that takes 8 seconds . . .

An Hon. Member: — Bull rider.

Mr. McMorris: — Bull rider. Maybe a fighter too — to being a marathon runner and a triathlete, sports which take several hours to complete and many thousands of hours of training, Mr. Speaker.

On Monday he will reach another important milestone by taking part in his first Boston Marathon. Mr. Speaker, on Monday we will be following Iain's progress closely. He will be issued a computer chip that will enable us here in Saskatchewan to get real-time updates on how he is proceeding in the race.

Some of us that know Iain well have often thought that he should be subject to some sort of electronic monitoring, Mr. Speaker, so we're really getting our wish.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members of the House to join with me in congratulating Iain and Denise on their excellent adventure in Boston.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

University of Saskatchewan Commerce Students Win Competition — Again

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as someone who has actually run four marathons, I would like to join in, in giving my best wishes to Iain and his girlfriend as well.

Mr. Speaker, I was minister of Post-Secondary Education for just a few brief months. But in that time I was very quickly made aware of the excellent students in our universities and technical schools, as were other members.

For instance, Mr. Speaker, my statement today is an encore of one given on March 25 by the member for Saskatoon Meewasin. Same member statement, same award-winning students, different competition.

(13:45)

You will remember that the member announced that two U of S (University of Saskatchewan) Commerce students won first place in a student business plan competition held at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Dan Murza and Cory Weiss won with the idea for Sandow SK Classic, a manufacturer and on-line store that features replicated and authentic collectible 1970s hockey jerseys. By the way, Mr. Speaker, they won 7,500 US (United States) for their efforts.

I'm happy to report that the team has done it again — this time

at the Queen's entrepreneur's competition in Kingston, Ontario. With the same business plan, they placed first among 20 teams, defeating runner-up teams from Ontario, Nova Scotia, and some school called Harvard.

This is Canada so they won a bit less — 3,000 Canadian, but I'm sure that they happily accepted the award and the prize.

I join the member from Meewasin in congratulating Dan and Cory. Thanks to the outstanding university education opportunities here in Saskatchewan, these students are now prepared to make their mark in the workplaces of the world.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Biggar School Division Labour Dispute

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, a bitter labour dispute has been going on in the Biggar School Division for some time now. Forty-six support workers have been on strike since February 4 of this year. Library assistants, secretaries, and caretakers are seeking an agreement on working conditions.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the nurses who recently received the 20 per cent increase in this strike, money is secondary. It's really about labour practises.

Although I support the collective bargaining process, I think that it's time that this province moved away from adversarial approaches to bargaining and focusing on problem solving. And it disturbs me, Mr. Speaker, when I see increasing incidents of labour unrest in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I am told that this is the first strike in the K to 12 system in 25 years, and I certainly hope that it isn't an indication of what's to come.

This strike is affecting the communities of Biggar, Cando, Landis, Handel, Sonningdale and three Hutterite colonies, and it is driving a wedge between the people in these communities. These communities are too small for this kind of conflict and divisiveness to be going on, and it will take a long time to heal the wounds that this dispute has caused in these communities.

The people of these communities want their situation to be resolved as quickly as possible. This strike is adversely affecting children, teachers and parents. I strongly recommend that the two sides sit down in a non-adversarial way and reconcile their differences once and for all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Pangman Duo Win Top Prize at Science Fair for Second Year

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, the *Weyburn Review* recently reported that the community of Pangman is home to two budding scientists. Shannon Lozinsky and Megan Howse are grade 12 students who will represent Saskatchewan at the

Youth Science Foundation's Canada-Wide Science Fair in Saskatoon, after winning first in the Southeast Regional Science Fair.

Mr. Speaker, these students demonstrate the high quality of education in schools across this province. Saskatchewan students do excel in the fields of mathematics and science. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this Pangman duo has shown their ability in science not once but twice, since this is the second year in a row they will appear at the national competition.

I am certain, Mr. Speaker, that Ms. Lozinsky and Ms. Howse will represent this province well, no matter their placing. These two young people have something far more valuable than a blue ribbon. They have scientific imaginations that will bring our communities greater health and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this Assembly to join with me in congratulating their work so far, and in wishing them luck in the national competition in May. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Lakeland and District Citizens of the Year

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure to participate in the Lakeland and District Citizen of the Year Dinner on Saturday evening, April 6, 2002. Traditionally, Mr. Speaker, events such as these provide communities the opportunity to recognize one of their own for dedication and contribution to their hometown.

Often, Mr. Speaker, communities are faced with the difficult choice of narrowing the field of qualified candidates down to one. It's a difficult choice indeed.

The Lakeland area was able to narrow its choice down to two, Mr. Speaker. Fortunately, these two people are husband and wife.

Maurice and Doris Parent are the Lakeland and District 2001 Citizens of the Year. Affectionately referred to as Mo and Do, Mr. Speaker, this couple of high-energy, community-involved entrepreneurs are always found in the middle of or at the forefront of local events.

Whether it's with the local Lions Club, the Métis local, or the Archery Club, Mo is kept busy with his passion for the great outdoors.

Do is kept equally involved, either assisting Mo in his endeavours, plus, Mr. Speaker, she is also involved with the snowmobile club, chamber of commerce, and other sundry opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to bring to this honoured Assembly further recognition for Maurice and Doris Parent, and I ask all members to please join me in congratulating this very special couple.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Water Quality

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of excuses.

Yesterday the minister revealed that Saskatchewan communities facing . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I would remind the member that he's to refer to all members by their proper title in the Assembly. Question period is to ask ministers of the Crown questions.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then to the Minister of Northern Affairs. Yesterday, the minister revealed that Saskatchewan communities facing water quality problems have two months to get their act together or face the consequences. Communities across the province are scrambling to try and understand what that will mean for them. Well, according to the minister, it might mean jail time.

Mr. Speaker, for 10 years the NDP have made cuts to the water quality monitoring program. They did all of this knowing that water quality in the province of Saskatchewan would be compromised. They did this knowing that people's health would be put at risk.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP say if municipalities don't comply with still unknown regulations, they will be thrown in jail.

Mr. Speaker, how can the NDP charge municipalities for poor water quality when they have not fulfilled their own mandate to provide safe drinking water in the province of Saskatchewan for the last 10 years?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, when I stand in this Assembly and say this government has a plan to talk about helping communities with infrastructure work, this government has a plan to make sure inspections are done on a more timely basis, this government has a plan to work with regulations, Mr. Speaker, this government has a plan to work with all the communities that have challenges out there, Mr. Speaker, this government has a plan, I've asked that member not to play politics with this and I'll explain to him very clearly: we are going to work with all the communities.

And we're pointing out that those communities that don't follow the rules on a constant basis, those communities that knowingly operate their system while breaking the rules, those are the communities that we're going to focus on, Mr. Speaker. And I can assure you that it's only in extreme cases, Mr. Speaker, that there will be trouble. I know that many communities, mayors and civic leaders take their responsibility very seriously.

So I point out again, rules and regulations are part of the process, we will work to explain those rules and we'll work this thing through, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well in one of those communities that the minister referred to last night, in the city of North Battleford, they held a public meeting to discuss Justice Laing's report on the contaminated water situation. The people who attended the meeting were very concerned. And I'll quote a CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) report about this concern:

People said the provincial government has done more to cover its own assumed liability than help communities ensure safe water.

That's it in a nutshell, Mr. Speaker. While Saskatchewan towns and villages are doing everything they can to fix their water problems, the NDP is doing nothing but threatening them. They've had their revenue sharing cut, they've been told to wait and see if the infrastructure program is approved, but in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, the NDP says, be prepared to go to jail if you don't comply with our rules.

Mr. Speaker, why will the NDP not accept their own responsibility for reducing water quality in this province over the last 10 years?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, this government has a plan, as I mentioned. We've gone through the inquiry, we've learned, and as a result of the recommendations — we accept the recommendations, we have a plan to meet those recommendations, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, we are going to work with all the communities. We are going to explain the rules. We're going to take time to work with the communities.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said, only in extreme cases where people knowingly and consistently don't follow the rules . . . well this government has got to stand up and we've got to say, you will follow the rules because the recommendations in Laing says you will follow the rules, Mr. Speaker.

We are showing leadership. It is time that we get off our duff and both parties on both sides of this House have to know this is an incredible responsibility.

And I would point out, Mr. Speaker, I will point out one thing. That party's Finance critic, and I will give you the information here, dated March 30, 2001, and I quote:

Incredibly the NDP has added 515 new government employees in one year, Krawetz said.

Quote:

It is really a slap in the face for every Saskatchewan resident taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, that was their comment a year ago. Have they changed their mind?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Over and over and over again in Mr. Justice Laing's report he states that it was the NDP's decisions over the last 10 years that contributed directly to the contamination to the water supply in North Battleford and in other communities across the province. He says the cabinet knew what the consequences of their decisions were going to be. He said that even after the NDP accepted the CDI (cabinet decision item) in 2000, that they didn't commit the finances to accomplish the objectives. He said SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) was an inadequate and ineffective regulator and the NDP had not fulfilled their mandate.

The people of North Battleford and the people of Saskatchewan are quite right, Mr. Speaker. The NDP are hiding from their own responsibility and are now dumping everything onto the backs of communities.

Mr. Speaker, last night the mayor of North Battleford had the grace to apologize to the people of that city who got sick from contaminated water. When, Mr. Minister, are you going to apologize?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I just remind the member to make all of his remarks through the Chair.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, it is very important to point out that Justice Laing was asked to find out what went wrong and to make sure it never happens again. That was good work that he done, Mr. Speaker.

And on this side of the House we are going to respond to those recommendations by way of action. Not only are we going to make sure that there's some funding support — and those details are coming; not only are we going to make sure that we have inspections — and those details are coming; not only are we going to make sure that we protect water at source — those details are on their way; but, Mr. Speaker, we also got some rules and regulation that we have to enforce.

But before we do all that, we're going to work with every community, Mr. Speaker. Every community will be fully aware of what the rules are and the regulations are and the implications. We have to make sure we take a tough approach with this. Public health is so very important in this effort, Mr. Speaker. And that party ought to know that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in answer to the written questions I submitted to the Minister of Environment earlier in this session, the Environment department says that there six discharges of raw sewage that were reported to them in the last year. Of those six discharges, three occurred in the city of North Battleford on the dates of July 16, July 22, and July 25, 2001. Coincidentally, the

boil-water advisory in North Battleford was lifted on July 25 — the same day as the last raw sewage discharge into the North Saskatchewan River.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell this House why SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) lifted the North Battleford water advisory when they knew that there had been recent discharges of raw sewage just upstream from the water treatment plant, including one on that very day. Will he tell us if the people of North Battleford were notified?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, it should be known that the commission has done some good work. It went through all the processes, it went to a lot of people to hear a lot of different stories, Mr. Speaker. We are here today to say that we have a plan of action. And what we're not going to do, Mr. Speaker, is we're not going to speculate, we're not going to allow the fearmongering that the opposition is trying to do.

We are going to stand in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we're going to answer questions over the next coming weeks and hope . . . the next coming months about what we need to do to work together to put forward this plan of ours to make sure that water quality in Saskatchewan's towns, cities, and villages is there for the people to enjoy, Mr. Speaker.

And furthermore, you can make all the allegations you want. The bottom line here is we have some good progress being made, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan, we got inspectors, we got rules, we got regulations, and, Mr. Speaker, we have also some financial support.

And those details are coming so we do have a good plan.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's been some good work done in the past and there's greater work to be done in the future, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — . . . Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government made deliberate choices that resulted in over 7,000 people getting sick. Why didn't they at least respect the right of the people of North Battleford to know there had been a sewage discharge and allow them a choice not to use the water if they didn't feel safe?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the moment we heard there was trouble in North Battleford, our Premier went to North Battleford. And what did our Premier do? The same day the Premier was there, and what did the Premier do, Mr. Speaker? He didn't make any excuses. He said, we will have an inquiry. We will find out what went wrong and we'll find out how that will never happen again to another Saskatchewan town, village, or city, Mr. Speaker. That's what . . .

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

Recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — So, Mr. Speaker, I think the most important thing is leadership is being on this file. What you've got to do is make sure you keep the fearmongering out of it, make sure you keep the politics out of it.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the opposition to stop whining and let's get on with the work that is necessary to make this file finally come to a conclusion where all people of Saskatchewan can have safe water for decades to come, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Fish and Wildlife Development Fund

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

Mr. Speaker, the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund is part of the Environment department. It earns its revenues from the sale of hunting, trapping, and angling licences which are used to secure fish and wildlife habitats, improve resources, promote resource education and endangered species programming. This fund, Mr. Speaker, is overseen by a steering committee.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is this: can the minister explain the role and the responsibility of the steering committee for this fund?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Well finally, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to take a question on the environment. And I believe that the member opposite, quite frankly, has already outlined in detail for members of this House just exactly what the purposes of the Fish and Wildlife Fund are and also the steering committee.

They are an oversight committee. They look . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Overseeing committee then, if people would prefer me to use that.

This committee is there to ensure that the mandated uses of the Fish and Wildlife Fund happen. The mandated uses of the fund are habitat protection, habitat development and management, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has obtained a copy of a budget briefing document that was sent to the Fish and Wildlife Fund steering committee. And, Mr. Speaker, committee members are outraged that the NDP are going to redirect their fund's surplus to pay for the NDP's new water regulation plan.

Mr. Speaker, according to the document, the NDP will move \$1.6 million from the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund to supply the annual half a million dollar grant to the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation and, Mr. Speaker, to hire 17 full-time equivalent positions.

Mr. Speaker, the document says a grant to the Wetland Conservation Corporation will now be an ongoing expenditure for the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund and that, because of the loss of the fund's surplus, will require future reduction in other habitat programs in future years.

Mr. Speaker, the question to the minister is this: can the minister explain why the NDP is draining the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund to now pay for the Wetland Conservation Corporation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Wetlands Conservation Corporation will receive exactly the same money this year as they received last year — \$503,000. They will then be able to be in a position to find matching grants or grants exceeding that amount from various partners to continue their work of wetlands protection. Mr. Speaker, we work in concert with various community groups to ensure that we have adequate wetlands conservation.

Mr. Speaker, on budget day, I have to tell you, I spoke with Lorne Scott and Joe Schemenauer of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Fund. I talked to them about what was happening with the Wetlands Corporation. As well, one of my staff, Dennis Sherratt, talked with them, and we've sent them letters and we continue to communicate with them about this fund.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, the 17 positions being funded by the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund is said to be a one-time expenditure in this budget document, yet the document says these jobs will all be specifically related to the administration of the fund or be eco-regional staff, but it is curious why the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund needs 17 more people to do its work when its surplus is being drained but the fund's budget is exactly the same as last year and the expenditure is said to be a this-year-only occurrence.

Mr. Speaker, there is definitely something fishy going on. Perhaps the NDP are using this fund to hire more people for the Environment department and hiding the expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will the minister explain exactly what the 17 new staff people will do . . . will be doing in her department?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the only thing that's fishy in this House is the members opposite. You know they are deliberately trying to create a controversy where there is none. Habitat is being protected and will continue to be protected.

Mr. Speaker, even before budget day there were 30 staff of Saskatchewan Environment, formerly the Department of Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, that were paid for out of the fund — fish hatchery staff, seven; fish development staff, seven; and the balance worked on wildlife habitat developing and delivering the representative area

network program, which delivers over the past year over 14 million acres to habitat protection.

Mr. Speaker, now the extra staff are ecologists and technical field experts dealing with habitat protection and development.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister tells us that there was consultation with the members of the Wildlife Development Fund.

However the steering committee members say they weren't consulted about their budget drain. They had specific conservation projects in mind that they needed to use their budget surplus to fund. The committee members say they had no idea what 17 new full-time employees will be doing because their budget was not increased this year and now their surplus has been drained.

Mr. Speaker, they think, and we think, that this is more fudge-it budget activity — robbing Peter to pay Paul; draining the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund to hire 17 more people for the Environment . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order. I'm finding it increasingly difficult to hear the member. Would the member proceed directly to his question.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, draining the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund to hire 17 more people for the Environment department, using this fund to pay for the new level of bureaucracy, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, why were the steering committee members not consulted about this budgetary move? And why is the minister using this fund to hide expenditures in her department?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Mr. Speaker, the steering committee were consulted about the general programs in this fund. They were consulted — they continue to be consulted. Mr. Speaker, at . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Mr. Speaker, at 8:30 this morning I had well over a half hour conversation with Mr. Lorne Scott about this very matter. Mr. Speaker, on budget day, I spoke with Lorne Scott and Joe Schemenauer about this matter. Mr. Speaker, on budget day Mr. Dennis Sherratt of my department spoke with many of the other members of the steering committee. We've also sent out a letter which appears to be the cause of the outrage on the side opposite.

But I have to point out the mandated uses of the fund are habitat protection, habitat development and management. The staff that are now being paid out of that fund will be doing exactly that — habitat protection, development, and management.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Investment by Saskatchewan Government Insurance in Alberta

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Crown Investments Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that the minister responsible for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) has violated his own financial disclosure rules as it relates to Crown corporations investments outside of the province.

Mr. Speaker, here's what the minister's own rules say from the CIC annual report. Here's what their rules say about disclosing these kinds of investments . . .

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

Mr. Wall: — Here's what their own rules say about how . . . what must be disclosed to the taxpayers of the province in terms of Crown investments:

Crowns must report transactions likely to be of interest to legislators and the public, for example, external investments.

Mr. Speaker, clearly a \$1.7 million investment in the province of Alberta by SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) is an external investment. The question to the minister is this: why did he . . . why did the NDP violate their own disclosure rules? Why did they try to hide this deal from the taxpayers of the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I didn't think I would get the opportunity for more bonus answers to the questions that were raised yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

Let me be absolutely clear — I find it incredulous coming from this party talking about disclosure and transparency, Mr. Speaker. Our Crowns and our government should always strive for improved transparency; we should always do that. But let me tell you about some of the improvements that this government and our Crown corporations have engaged in, Mr. Speaker.

Since 1996 with the review of the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, we meet or exceed Toronto Stock Exchange standards, Mr. Speaker, for debt/equity ratios, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we received praise from the Canadian Royal . . . from the CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce) World Markets for what they call, our enlightened dividend policy based on cash flow, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Conference Board of Canada rated our governance structure amongst the best in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And that member says we don't, we don't provide transparency, Mr. Speaker. We should continue to strive to improve but I argue we have improved an incredible amount.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer the question. We're talking about his rules, we're talking about the NDP rules for disclosure of these investments. Why did the minister ignore those rules in the case of SGI's investment in Hi-Alta? And will he commit to the Assembly that there are no other such deals out there that would violate his own disclosure rules?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's incredulous that that member would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that there's not disclosure here, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the rules are clear — as he describes, they are clear, Mr. Speaker. That transaction did not come close, Mr. Speaker, to triggering the mechanism for describing what is a significant transaction, Mr. Speaker.

Our government and our Crowns, Mr. Speaker, should, as I have said, strive to improve transparency, Mr. Speaker. They should always do that. But they have made, they have made monumental strides, Mr. Speaker, from what that government used to disclose, Mr. Speaker.

I can talk also as well, Mr. Speaker, about the Institute of Public Administration of Canada who awarded CIC the Governor General's gold medal, Mr. Speaker, for our governance and performance management systems, Mr. Speaker. That is much better than what that, what that party and that government has ever done, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Speaker, as you look over to your right side and you see about 30-odd faces all with that same deer-in-the-headlights look, you have to know, Mr. Speaker, you're looking at a group of men and women, you're looking at a group of men and women who apparently don't understand that this isn't their money. This is the taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker.

And the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan have a right to know when they're spending multi-millions of dollars in other provinces and around the world. That's what we're asking for, Mr. Speaker, to the minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, to the minister. We're not holding them to any higher standard than their very own. In 1997 that NDP government, that NDP government announced their own disclosure guidelines for Crown corporations. Now they appear to be violating them.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier issues a press release when he loses his briefcase. Why won't the minister tell the taxpayers of the province when he's invested \$2 million in Alberta?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well I might as well put it on record, Mr. Speaker, as well. That

member talks about . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister for Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, that party would know all about Dearborns caught in the headlights, Mr. Speaker — all about it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, let me also say, Mr. Speaker, that if that member is so concerned about transparency, Mr. Speaker, so concerned about transparency and disclosure he might want to tell us and the people of Saskatchewan a little bit about the Country Music Hall of Fame, Mr. Speaker. He might want to tell us a little bit about that as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 23 — The Registered Plan (Retirement Income) Exemption Act/Loi portant insaisissabilité des régimes enregistrés (revenu de retraite)

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 23 — The Registered Plan (Retirement Income) Exemption Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. Before orders of the day, I would like to make a statement.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Rulings on Points of Order

The Speaker: — Yesterday the Government Deputy House Leader raised a point of order concerning a phrase used by the member for Swift Current during oral question period. I also wish to thank the Opposition House Leader for his comments.

I have reviewed the record and found that the member for Swift Current used the phrase hurricane Maynard in his question.

Order, order, please. Order. Order, please.

While the word hurricane is not unparliamentary by itself, the use of it in conjunction with the Christian name of a sitting MLA is not appropriate. I do not interpret that the phrase was derogatory to the minister. However, when referring to other members in debate, it has been a long-standing practice that members be referred to in the third person, by their constituency, or by their title.

I therefore ask the member for Swift Current to refrain from incorporating the names of members into his remarks.

But this incident underscores a growing concern of mine. On

occasion, the amount of noise in this Chamber has reached unacceptable levels and renders it difficult, if not impossible, for members of both sides of the House and the Speaker to hear the words spoken in debate.

In fact I had to consult the written record before we could address this matter and this illustrates the difference . . . or the difficulty caused by excessive noise. It also prevents the Assembly from dealing promptly with questionable language or possible rule infractions.

I therefore remind all members of the need to measure their exuberance so that they are not drowning out the recognized member.

I also wish to make a comment on another matter. Last night at 10:25 p.m. the member for Moose Jaw raised a point of order that a quorum was not present. At that time I stated that it was not a point of order but I was obliged to proceed with a quorum count.

To maintain consistency and clarity, I want to correct my statement and indicate to all members that this indeed . . . that it is indeed our practice to call for a quorum count on a point of order. The rule of order that is being breached by a lack of quorum is rule 5 in the *Rules and Procedures* of this Assembly.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By leave, I stand to respond on behalf of government to . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Members, please control your exuberance. I recognize the Government Whip and I would like to be able to hear specifically the questions that he is supplying . . . responses he's supplying.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, I stand on behalf of the government to table responses to written questions numbers 78 through 87, and once again to thank those civil servants that worked extremely hard putting this information together so we could answer these questions for the members of the opposition.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, and 87 have been tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 2 — The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, before proceeding to my prepared remarks in response or in comment on Bill No. 2, I'd like to ask your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, to introduce four guests who have joined us who are seated in the west gallery. And I would ask for permission to make introductions, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I thank you and I thank all hon. colleagues for giving me the leave to do that. I'd like to introduce to members of the House four people in the west gallery who have joined us because of their interest in the second reading of Bill 2.

We will find in the gallery Peggy Rubin, who is program coordinator of the Prince Albert Outreach Program; seated next to her is Brian Delorme, outreach worker with Safety Services here in Regina; next to Brian is Shari Daughton, outreach worker in Prince Albert; and finally, Stephanie Springer who is a program director with Safety Services here in Regina.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 2 — The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, generally when members rise in this Chamber to move second reading of legislation, it's not uncommon to find that we preface our remarks with the phrase, it gives me great pleasure or, it is a great honour.

Mr. Speaker, I find neither pleasure nor honour in rising today to move second reading of The Emergency Protection For Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act.

The fact that circumstances exist in this province that require this legislation is repugnant to me as Minister of Social Services, as a member of this legislature, as a citizen, and as a father.

The sexual exploitation of children and youth on the street is child abuse of the lowest order. Mr. Speaker, this is morally reprehensible behaviour and it cannot and it will not be tolerated. To that end, Mr. Speaker, our government has made this issue a priority.

Over the past number of years we have worked with First Nations, Métis people, police, and other partners to establish community-based programs in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. Through these partnerships, services such as safe houses, outreach, family support workers, and mobile safety vans are helping children get off the streets and into a safe environment. We've also been working with agencies to support in a holistic and culturally sensitive manner youth and adults to exit the street.

One example is Operation Help in Saskatoon. Operation Help is a unique project that provides intensive support to youths and adults exiting the street in a holistic and culturally sensitive manner. A key contributor to the success of Operation Help was that it brings together social workers, elders, law enforcement, legal aid, health care providers, and others to ensure services are delivered in a coordinated manner and respond to individual needs.

In January 2000, we amended The Child and Family Services Act to provide more direct services to youths 16 and over who are involved on the street.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have moved aggressively to address the root causes that lead children to the street.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, we announced the creation of the Kids First program. Kids First greatly expands the capacity of communities to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and their families in the crucial early years of life.

The implementation of the School^{PLUS} model announced recently by my colleague, the Minister of Learning, is another important development. And through School^{PLUS}, young people, particularly vulnerable children and youth, will have available to them a network of programs and services within or attached to the school system and close to home.

Building independence, the most significant reforms to welfare in Saskatchewan in 30 years, has helped 4,600 families, including 10,500 children, leave social assistance since 1998. In fact, Mr. Speaker, since 1994 social assistance caseloads in Saskatchewan have decreased by more than 22 per cent and the number of children living in poverty has dropped by more than 26 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — But while, while addressing the root causes is critical to preventing sexual exploitation of children in the future, we cannot forget those children who are on the street now. And to this end, Mr. Speaker, this Assembly established the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade.

Over the course of 18 months, the committee held hearings in 11 communities and heard from nearly 200 witnesses. In June 2001 the committee tabled its final report and this report, which contained 49 recommendations, was comprehensive and far-reaching.

With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to extend my thanks to the 188 individuals, groups, and organizations who participated in this important process initiated by this Legislative Chamber. I would also like to thank the members of the legislature and staff who worked diligently as a part of the committee.

A very special thanks goes to the government members whose proactive work began once the table . . . once the report was tabled. I appreciate very much the ideas, feedback, and hard work they have given to this task, working with me and the department officials in preparing not only this legislation, but the government's action plan.

I would also like to especially recognize the member from Greystone for his personal and professional commitment to this issue. Mr. Speaker, he brought experience and insight to the legislature, and therefore down-to-earth, practical advice that has proven invaluable to me.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, the committee's report was tabled. Several departments of government have been working together as well as with our community partners — youth, First

Nations, and the Métis Nation — to examine how these recommendations can be acted upon to build on the responses already in place.

For example, we've amended the regulations pursuant to The Victims of Crime Act. This amendment ensures children and youth who may be required to assist in the prosecution of offenders will have full and immediate access to victim services.

Earlier this session, Mr. Speaker, government released our response to the special committee's report and this Act, Mr. Speaker, is but one outcome of this work. One theme that is consistently clear from the committee's deliberations and our own consultations is that these children are victims and need to be supported.

We have made the decision that these children are our first priority when it comes to accessing services. There will be 26 spaces in our present array of resources, plus the new safe shelter for Regina announced a few weeks ago. These kids are victims, plain and simple. And when it comes to services, they will be our first priority; they will go to the front of the line.

The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act supports a child welfare approach to victims. This means two things. First, the safety of children and youth must be paramount. And second, sexually exploited children and youth are victims and must be supported. And thirdly, Mr. Speaker, offenders must be held responsible for their actions.

This Act will clarify and strengthen Social Services' response to children sexually exploited on the street. It enhances the capacity of outreach workers to provide victims with proactive intervention.

(14:30)

The Act contains provisions that further serve to protect children and youth by preventing contact between child victims and johns, pimps, and other sexual offenders. Police, social workers, and outreach workers can obtain emergency intervention orders on behalf of a victim immediately through a simple infrastructure and procedure to keep offenders away from victims.

In addition to responding to the needs of victims, Mr. Speaker, the committee heard broad consensus on the need to increase deterrents of those who victimize our children, and strengthen law enforcement's capacity to prosecute offenders. This Act does just that, Mr. Speaker.

The Act includes search and seizure provisions to strengthen the ability of police to gather evidence of child sexual abuse. The burden of proof to obtain protective intervention orders will be lower than in criminal matters, and hearsay evidence will be permitted as under The Child and Family Services Act.

There will be special training provided to members of police services in our province in order to effectively carry out these provisions in this Act.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Act creates offences for sexually abusing a child or failing to report a child . . . or failing to report that a child has been exposed to abuse for a sexual purpose. When the provisions of an order are breached, the Criminal Code of Canada provides for a maximum penalty of up to two years in prison upon conviction and/or a \$25,000 fine.

Mr. Speaker, ending the sexual abuse and victimization of our children has been a priority for this government for some time and it will continue to be a priority until we have eliminated it. This legislation is neither a starting point nor an end point. It represents an important addition to a range of responses we already have in place to support victims and prosecute and deter offenders.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a great honour for me to stand today and speak to this Bill. As you know, as many of the members know, I was part of the committee that was dealing with prevention of child abuse and with children in the sex trade.

And I want to start by first of all also welcoming the guests that were . . . are here today. I know that this Bill means a lot to a lot of people in this province and people have been watching with interest for over five years when the member from Humboldt first starting bringing this whole issue to the attention of the House.

I know the minister talked about the member from Greystone, and it's important to recognize that he was Co-Chair of the committee that we all worked on. The Co-Chairs worked incredibly hard and the member from Humboldt brought it to the House many, many years before the government started working on it. And I think we should be congratulating her.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, in 1999 at the end of that year when the committee was first started, I was really honoured and privileged to be asked by the member from Humboldt to sit on this committee. I don't think often when we're elected we have the opportunity to embark on a committee that changes our lives the way that this committee did mine and many of the members that were actually on that committee.

We were introduced to the lives of people that we don't deal with in our ordinary life. And when we came to know the circumstances surrounding children on the streets that, I think, was heart wrenching to everyone of us. I know that many of the members opposite have read the *Hansard*, they've read the reports from the witnesses, but it's not the same as being in the room. It's not the same being . . . as talking to the people that actually are living those lives.

Mr. Speaker, there was 188 witnesses that came to our committee. And everyone of them had story to tell or everyone of them had a suggestion. Something that the government

opposite has an opportunity, through this Bill and through many other actions of their government, to deal with.

In our report, the first reports, one of the first things that we all agreed on — and I have to keep reminding the members opposite that this was an all-party committee — and we agreed that, in the first place, a child is everyone's responsibility. We can't go to bed at night thinking that's somebody else's problem or we don't have to think about it. Every child in this province belongs to every one of us and we all have a responsibility to know that they are being dealt with in the most wonderful manner possible.

Secondly, the involvement of children in the sex trade is child abuse. For too many years we talked about . . . we used the words child prostitution. There isn't prostitution when it comes to children under the age of 16 years old, it's abuse. They have no idea what's happening to their mind or to their body and we have no right as adults to say, that's just a child prostitute; it isn't happening. We don't do that in every other aspect of our life and we can't do it here.

We also agreed that zero tolerance is our goal. The member from Humboldt said many times in our committee meetings that maybe we should have a big sign as we enter into the province saying that there is zero tolerance for child abuse in this province. Maybe that will be the first sign that we have as showing that Saskatchewan is against this. Everyone in this province is against abusing our children. And I think that was something that of course never went any further than that — making signs, talking about child abuse isn't something that we do, but it is something that we should all feel in our hearts and then it's going to go without saying.

The committee also recognized that there was four main headings that we have to deal with when we're talking about children in the sex trade. We have to talk about the offenders. How can we actually deter the offenders? And that was something that this government and every government has really been focusing on over the years. We talk about the johns and the pimps, but that's only one part of the equation.

Another part is the protective services for the children and youth that we have. What do we have for them to go to after we actually get them off the street, or as an alternative for them being on the street?

And more importantly we have to talk about the root causes. Why are the children on the street in the first place? And then we have to talk about prevention and early intervention.

Mr. Speaker, the key factors that actually involve . . . that make children go on the street, or allow them, or force them to be on the street in the first place is summed up in the first recommendation or in the first issue that we talked about, and that was the deep poverty among the vast majority of families whose children are involved in the sex trade.

We learned often on our travels that many of the children involved in the sex trade are Aboriginal — I think it was over 85 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And those families and those young people are living in poverty that you and I can't comprehend.

And because of their involvement in the sex trade and because of their deep poverty, we have a loss of self-esteem. We found that there was a lot of abuse in the homes of children. The ones that are now on the streets learned that from the very beginning of their own life in many cases. They didn't know any better or they didn't know of any other type of life. We know that there was a lot of family dysfunction and we also know that they are suffering from the results of racism in many cases.

And again the word substance abuse — we heard that from so many of the witnesses that came forward.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are . . . there is a number of the witnesses that we spoke to that made a lasting effect on many of us. And I want to read you a poem that was written by one of the young women. I'm not going to give her name because she didn't say that we could, but I'm sure that if you speak to any members of the committee we could get a hold of her.

Her words aren't written in master's English; they're written by someone who lives on the street and someone who knows what happens when you live on the street. This is her words and this is what she was talking about, about her own life. She said:

The sun is shining
I think I'll take the kids for a walk
As I walk down the street
My kids are laughing
But I see them looking and whispering and pointing
They know what I've done
But they don't know me.
My children don't go to their friends to play
Their friends don't come to play with them
They're scared of me.
If I change, they can't see that.
My children didn't do anything wrong.
Their only wrong is having me as a mother.
My sins are theirs and my life is theirs.
I have no future, so do they?

I'd like to forget the life that I've lived
But if I forget who will remember?
Who will care?
And if no one remembers and if no one cares,
then nothing is going to change.
Is that what you want?
Is that what you really want?

Mr. Speaker, the kinds of words that this young person said were spoken over and over again to us, and we know that the life that they live is something that you and I will never understand.

We learned that the 600 children that are on the street right now are loving, lonely people. And we can't address them by merely having one Bill introduced. We have to look at it as a philosophy of our province, and as a government; we have to look at it as knowing that all of our children are special people that we look after.

Mr. Speaker, one young person's . . . talked about the first time she turned a trick. That's the term that she used, and it's something that we actually shuddered at the first time we heard,

but we know it's something that they talk about quite openly.

This young girl said that she was 12 or 13 years old, and she hadn't had anybody at home for two or three days, and she had younger siblings in the house, and there was no food in the house. And she didn't know what to do with the younger sister and brother that were crying in the house. And so she did what she had learned; she turned a trick. And she made \$20.

And she put her younger brother and sister in a wagon and she went down to Mac's store, and she bought diapers and food, and she took them home again.

That's the kind of life that these children are living. And she's a child herself. And she knew what had to be done, and she knew the only way she could think of, the only knowledge she had from her background was what her family had taught her, and that was what she learned how to do.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that many of the members on our committee learned that often drugs and the sex trade go together, and we often thought that people turn tricks or are involved in the sex trade so that they can support their drug habit. But you know what, we're wrong; it's the other way around.

Because young people's minds are so hurt and so . . . they need healing. They have to get away from the abuse that they've had, of not only their body and their mind, and the only way they can escape it is drugs.

And I'm going to read you just one more short poem from this young person that will explain to you how she feels:

I'm tired of this life.
I'm alone and afraid.
The guilt traps me like a cage.
I can't get away and I can't think.
What do you want from me?
I'd like to go to sleep now
But I see them all when I close my eyes and I remember.

The thing that scares me the most is tonight
Like every night, I long to be numb.
To stop the pain and the memories.
So I need a fix
So I can sell my body
So I can forget what I've done.
I have nothing left but my body and a fix.
That's all I need.
I'm a worthless piece of trailer trash.
That's all I am.

Mr. Speaker, we can't continue this. We can't allow our province to continue the way it has been going. And I know that there are . . . that members opposite are working hard to deal with the problem, but it's not just a single problem. It happens not only in Saskatchewan; it happens right across, right across Canada and probably right around the world.

But we have to . . . somebody has to make a stand and somebody has to start to make a difference. Saskatchewan is number one in so many things that I'm not proud of. I would

love to be able to say that . . . Something I'm proud of is to say that we, as a province, learnt . . . stopped the child sex trade — the first place in Canada — perhaps the first place in the world. We can stop the child sex trade.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the Bill addresses part of the problem and I congratulate the government for that. They talked about mostly the offenders. But we don't . . . we're not talking enough about the protective services; we're not talking enough about the root causes; and we're not talking enough about prevention.

As the critic of Education, I've spoken to teachers who tell me that with some of the changes in the community schools, they thought having a breakfast program in the school was going to be something that would allow the children to go to school and to be able to learn because they were fed; they were physically comforted and they would be able to learn. Do you know what? They had to change the time of that breakfast program for the school because there were perpetrators. There were johns that were willing to pick up those children before they got to school in the morning. That kind of thing is happening and our school system knows about it.

So on one hand, I'm pleased that the Minister of Learning has accepted the responsibility that Education isn't a stand-alone department, that we have to deal with Health and Justice and Social Services. But we have to do more and we have to do it quickly.

Mr. Speaker, all members of the committees and all members in this legislature want to make a difference. I think every one of us want to leave this Assembly knowing that we left Saskatchewan a better place to live in. I think that we all have a heart and we all want to show it.

And often . . . I should maybe, I should say seldom do I agree with the members opposite philosophically or fiscally, but we did agree on the recommendations, all 49 of these recommendations.

And I know that we have to deal with the children as part of families and we have to recognize that there's a shortage of money. And I can go into that whole area of money, but it's not really going to be dealing with this at the moment.

But I want to remind the minister that when we talk about protecting our children, we know that that often means a safe refuge home. But that doesn't mean we have to spend money on bricks and mortars. Heaven knows, there's lots of empty buildings in this province that's losing people. We've got schools and hospitals and buildings right across this province that can be used and functioned in a way that it's going to help children.

(14:45)

So please, Mr. Minister, when we talk about having . . . spending our money helping our children, let's do it on the people — on the front-line people — and not waste any more dollars.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Humboldt has been spending a lot of time on . . . going through this Bill and she's going to be bringing forward a number of amendments that we believe will enhance the Bill.

And I think . . . I'm hoping that the members opposite will be looking at these amendments and knowing that any thoughts that are brought forward are just as critical now as they were when we were a member of an all-party committee. I think that open . . . looking at them with an open mind and recognizing that just because it came from this side of the House doesn't mean they're wrong — that everybody has the same goal in mind.

So, Mr. Speaker, I . . . hoping that we'll find a way to measure the outcome quickly so we don't have to spend another four or five years seeing if the . . . if what we're doing today is going to make a difference.

I'm pleased with the intent of this Bill. I know it has to go further, and I'm hoping that the minister is going to look at the amendments that were brought forward by the member from Humboldt.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make a few comments in regards to the Bill that we have before the Assembly. And it's noteworthy to note, Mr. Speaker, that normally on the second reading of a Bill, the first time it comes forward, we would move to adjourn and do some more research and the Bill would come up later.

But I think, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we're taking the time this morning to put two or three speeches forward talks to the importance of the Bill. And the importance of this Bill is such that we feel that it move, it move forward rather than just kind of sit on the order paper. And I believe the government is aware of that as well.

And at the end of the day I would trust that they would appreciate the fact that we believe in this Bill and what the intent and the purposes for this Bill in addressing the needs of young people on the streets — and specifically children — being taken advantage of in the sex trade.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if there's anything more appalling than to think that a little child would be violated to that point. As my colleague, the member from Kelvington-Wadena, related that a 12-year-old girl would find that the only way that she could provide for her siblings was to sell her body. And I'm not sure if there's anyone in this Assembly or in this province would even vaguely agree with that means of providing for your siblings.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue.

Now when I think of children, and each and every one of us can look at our lives, and many times we wonder how these bodies tick. And I'm reminded of a . . . the words of the psalmist when he talked about the fact of us being conceived in the innermost parts of his mother's body, and he talked about how fearfully and wonderfully made we are. And biblically speaking, we're

made in the image of God, and I don't believe that being created in that image was to be used in this manner and abused by adults . . . children being abused by adults or anyone.

So I think it's very important, Mr. Speaker, as we've heard over the past, past two or three years and certainly the member from Humboldt — my colleague from Humboldt for the past number of . . . eight years or so since she's been elected to this Assembly — has been bringing this question forward and talking very specifically about the need to address this problem.

And, Mr. Speaker, as the member from Kelvington-Wadena noted — and being a part of the committee that was struck in December of 1999 and then going on the road and listening to presentations by groups across this province and by young people themselves — to be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, I found it quite appalling to really begin to understand that this is as big a problem as it is.

My first impressions, the first thoughts I had, well it's just a few kid . . . children here and there. But it's a bigger problem, well certainly, a bigger problem than what I thought it was. And I'm certainly . . . the minister in bringing forward this legislation, the government bringing forward this legislation are aware of that as well; otherwise they would not have come forward with this piece of legislation.

And as has already been mentioned, we believe we need to go further than what the legislation is doing and I'm trusting that the government recognizes this; that this is a part of addressing the number of recommendations that the committee brought forward. And this is just one part of a puzzle. It's not just the be-all and the end-all, it's a part of an ongoing puzzle to address a problem — an ongoing problem on the streets of this province and the cities of this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, we trust that the decisions that are being made here, the changes in legislation that are being brought forward, we trust, Mr. Speaker, that they will have an impact; and that indeed, for a change, the province of Saskatchewan can provide leadership, if you will, across this nation in addressing the problems of child prostitution and the abuse of children on the streets.

Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt we have to offer and we have to find ways of protecting our children. Normally we would expect parents to provide a loving and caring environment — provide a clean and healthy home, home environment for the children.

But as we found from our committee, many times some of the . . . many of these children actually find themselves almost fulfilling the role of adults because their parents aren't there. And a lot of it has to do with the drug culture, with the . . . and with alcoholism. And it leaves children in very vulnerable positions.

And it's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that we have to actually sit down and create laws, or make laws to try and address a problem that we would normally think that parents would provide themselves — they would provide that home environment; that they would provide that loving environment; that caring environment, that environment of providing for their

families — providing the shelter, providing the food, giving them the opportunity to get to school and become educated.

And, Mr. Speaker, while in many cases society has failed these young people and, as a result of that, we are forced to come forward with rules, with laws, with guidelines, we trust, Mr. Speaker, that we can begin to work within the community as well, because all the laws in the world will not necessarily address all the concerns or stop the problem.

Mr. Speaker, you can create laws from one . . . from A to Z, and they don't always do what you intended for them to do because society has to change its thoughts, has to change its views, has to change its impressions of the responsibilities that they have.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague indicated, we need to look at the root cause. And I'm not sure if we've identified all the problems and the root causes out there. We need to take a serious look as to why these children find themselves in this situation. And maybe it's a matter of providing parenting opportunities or courses or what have you, so that parents can begin to realize their responsibility.

It's easy to have a child, but it's another thing to learn what the . . . responsibilities you have in providing for that child and taking care of that child. And if a parent grows up and hasn't really been given an opportunity to be a child when they were younger, a lot of times what we've found as a committee is that, Mr. Speaker, most of the times these children . . . Actually, it's just a revolving cycle within a family environment, because . . . my mother was there; there's a lack of the food or the clothing or even just having some fun, some finances to buy a nice pair of shoes or a nice pair of jeans or clothing or what have you.

So the parent happened to follow this avenue of providing some income. Well it sounds like it might be an avenue that we can look into, that maybe we can pursue to provide the financial needs that we have.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we heard, there is an ongoing social problem out there as well that needs to be addressed. I personally do not believe that it can always be addressed by just creating avenues whereby government provides the finances, the resources, the homes, or what have you. And I think those are necessary; it's necessary because we need to have some steps. We need to have places, secure places and safe places for children who are in situations that want to escape the problem they're in.

We need to have places that they can go to, to receive help and assistance. But we need to begin to work in the larger picture of really working with community to address the issues. And as my colleague from Kelvington-Wadena indicated, the largest number of young girls on the street happens to come unfortunately from our First Nations community.

And I believe we need to work with that community, and I believe that community is beginning to realize as well that this is a problem that they have to deal with. And we need to work together to build bridges so that we can address the issue of children in child prostitution.

So what we have, The Highway Traffic Act that allows the

police to seize vehicles and now we are bringing forward this emergency . . . another Bill, a second Bill to address some more of the recommendations. Mr. Speaker, I would hope we don't just rest on that fact that maybe we've done enough.

And I think, as my colleague the member from Kelvington-Wadena and my colleague the member from Humboldt, and I'm certain the government members as well will indicate, that we need to go a little further, that we need to find ways of really providing for these children and addressing the problems that are out there, so that down the road we won't have to really worry about children on the streets, being abused — that these children can actually feel safe and they can go out and run and play with their friends.

They can feel safe that they can go to school and enjoy the companionship of friends in the schoolroom and on the school grounds without the johns and the pimps coming to prey on them, Mr. Speaker.

This Bill is a start, along with the Bill, An Act respecting Emergency . . . or changes to The Highway Traffic Act.

Mr. Speaker, as well I think we really need to take a close look at how decisions are made in our courts. And unfortunately I see a lot of times decisions are coming down now, based on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and I look at the recent ruling in BC regarding Robin Sharpe.

And it disturbs me, Mr. Speaker, when the courts would rule that because there might be some literary merit or value to information that is totally obscene and totally goes against the mainstream flow of society, that we would abuse and that we would even talk about and call that as having literary value. I would hope, I would hope that our courts would begin to realize that children are a very precious commodity and we need to begin to protect them, Mr. Speaker, as well.

So while we have these two pieces of legislation . . . And I commend the government for moving forward in this regard. And, Mr. Speaker, we also want to see the government move further. We want to see the government . . . And my colleagues and I are committed to working with the government, if that's what it takes to address these issues. This is important. This is important that we, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we put aside our political differences for an important matter such as this.

Mr. Speaker, if I can say this: we have a resolve to address this concern. And I would have to suggest as well that if we didn't have a resolve in our caucus, the member from Humboldt would see to it that we did have a resolve, because this is such an important issue. And she has done an excellent job in bringing to our caucus the importance of this issue and the fact that it is a matter that we just cannot sweep under the rug. It's a matter that we have to take into account very carefully.

We talk about the fact that while we can remove the vehicles of the perpetrators, while we can . . . this piece of legislation talks about ordering individuals to stay away from certain areas if they have been apprehended, and if the police suspect that they might be in a certain area because they want to prey on children, they can be ordered out of those areas.

Mr. Speaker, we need to be very careful as well that we go beyond that; that we begin to reach out to the needs of families and these children who unfortunately end up on the streets.

(15:00)

And, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about reaching out to these young people and we talk about sometimes we always like to point the finger at government and say government should be doing something to address this issue. Government should be putting in, if you will, more money into safe houses, or putting more money into programs to begin to address the concerns we have regarding the child sex trade or children who happen to be on the streets.

But, Mr. Speaker, as well, I think that it's important that we take a look at some of the agencies . . . a number of agencies that are already out there that are reaching out to young people, that are basically putting programs together. And I believe Mayor Fiacco is doing something in the province of Regina regarding basketball and wrestling to — or in the city of Regina, pardon me — to reach out to some of these children and show them there's more to life than just sitting on a street corner; that they can get together and they can be an encouragement to one another.

There are other agencies that are putting programs together to bring young people in off the streets and providing recreation, providing an environment of support mechanisms, and giving them something to eat, something to drink.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud those community groups that are doing that because I believe they can have more of an effect than just government building, creating programming, and creating spots and safe houses and opportunities . . . or methods, if you will, of removing a child from the street.

Because, Mr. Speaker, when we remove them and put them in a safe house, in many cases, as we heard on our committee, we find that sometimes young people don't . . . While they want to get away from the effects of street . . . of the street life, they also want, Mr. Speaker, they still . . . Family is family, and they want to be part of that family.

So let's look at . . . let's take a look at some of the avenues that are already out there and the community groups that are working to reach out to young people to assist them to develop in their character and in their lives.

So, Mr. Speaker, having said that, I would like to, as I've indicated earlier and the member from Kelvington-Wadena has indicated, we certainly want to express our support for this piece of legislation.

We trust, Mr. Speaker, that as this legislation moves forward and as we take a serious look at the 49 provisions that have been brought forward, the recommendations that have been brought forward by the committee, that we will be able to add to the legislation and add to methods and ways in which we can address the concerns of children on the street, address the concerns of child prostitution, and indeed, Mr. Speaker, guarantee the safety of young people, young men and women, in our community. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this particular piece of legislation.

I'd just like to deal with one issue that has been raised by members opposite, and the member for Moosomin I think expressed it best when he asked, why are children caught in this situation? That is to say, why is it that children are involved in the sex trade on the streets and communities of Saskatchewan? And the member said that this is something that we needed to study further, as if there was some mystery about why it is that children are caught in these situations.

I don't think that there is any mystery about this, Mr. Speaker. All of the experts, all of the people who study these things, all of the people who comment on these things, say that — and they agree — that if you want to have healthy, happy children in our communities there are three preconditions that have to be met — three. One is an absence of poverty. Secondly you have to have effective parenting. Third, there have to be an appropriate level of institutions that deal with the needs of families and children.

As to the absence of poverty, Mr. Speaker, the children that are caught in this sex trade on the streets today, are the children that were born in the grinding poverty of urban Saskatchewan in the 1980s. A 1980s, Mr. Speaker, a 1980s that saw massive, massive cuts; massive gutting of social programs in Saskatchewan; an increase to poverty levels in Saskatchewan at that time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is no mystery about this. If you want to have healthy children you have to have an absence of poverty. Mr. Speaker, it took this government, it took this government, it took this government some years, some years, to rectify the complete financial mess that we found in the early 1990s. So, that by the mid-1990s, we were able to put into place effective changes to our income support, effective support for families in Saskatchewan so that we could begin the job of, not only reducing the number of people that are caught on the welfare rolls, but also to reduce poverty in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to see that we're finally beginning to make some progress on that, Mr. Speaker.

We're beginning to see a reduction of the number of children in poverty in Saskatchewan. And there is no mystery about that, Mr. Speaker. You have to have concerted government action, you have to have a plan. You have to have a strategy that has to be funded if you want to reduce poverty, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to see that we're making some progress on that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, another precondition that has to be met if you want to, if you want to have healthy children growing up in our communities, if you want to have happy children growing up in our communities, Mr. Speaker, is that you have to have programs that promote effective parenting, Mr. Speaker. You have to have programs that promote effective parenting.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see that the Government of Saskatchewan has begun programs such as Kids First that begin

to deal with the root problems that exist in some families in Saskatchewan, that provide help for many of these young parents. And we know that by introducing programs such as this that we can reduce abuse; that we can reduce the number of children that grow up in environments of abuse, and hopefully, reduce the number of children that are caught up in situations such as this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you also have to have effective institutions in a society. You have to have effective health programs. You have to have effective education programs. You have to have programs such as community schools. You have to have programs such as School^{PLUS}, Mr. Speaker, that reach out to children, that help those children grow up in a better way than has been the case, Mr. Speaker. That is something that needs to be done.

And all of this, Mr. Speaker, all of this means that members of the Legislative Assembly need to provide the budgetary approval for these strategies and for these initiatives, Mr. Speaker.

Members cannot say one day we want to end this problem, we know that it's a problem, we know that it's caused by poverty, we know that it's caused by a lack of effective parenting and then say on the other hand, but we don't want to fund that. You can't say we want to end the problem, and then the next day say we want to gut social programming and we want to reduce, in a massive way, funds for social programs in Saskatchewan.

You can't have that kind of inconsistency. If you want to put an end to this problem. If you want to reduce this problem you have to consistently provide the support that is necessary in these three areas. There is no mystery about this, Mr. Speaker, no mystery whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to provide support for this legislation but I did want to take the opportunity to remind members that these . . . that this horrible social problem does not grow up in a vacuum, is not sort of something that comes to us of isolation of anything else, Mr. Speaker.

This comes to us because we have had conditions of grinding poverty — continue to have poverty — but it's something that we're working on. Happens because we have a lack of programs for parents, happens because we don't have the necessary institutional supports, Mr. Speaker. And if you want to change that, you have to support that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've very pleased to rise on this very important issue. Mr. Speaker, an issue that since we had an all-party committee that toured the province to investigate the reasons and the solutions for the situation of children involved in the sex trade of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. A committee that came forward with 49 recommendations that were agreed to by all sides of the House, Mr. Speaker, and all members in the House.

We had, Mr. Speaker, in place here a very good non-partisan piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. A very good non-partisan

situation, Mr. Speaker.

When we talk about the sex trade, when we talk about children in the sex trade, we're not talking about something that happened just today. We're not talking about something that just happened yesterday, Mr. Speaker. This has been an ongoing problem in society. Not just in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but around the world.

You often see documentaries, Mr. Speaker, dealing with this situation from countries far and wide. Not just in affluent countries like Canada and the US and Europe, Mr. Speaker, but around the world. It's a universal problem, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, as a universal problem, it has also universal reasons as to why it takes place.

Mr. Speaker, the problem of children involved in the sex trade is here in the 1990s under a New Democratic government. Mr. Speaker, it was here in the 1980s under a Progressive Conservative government. It was here in the 1970s, Mr. Speaker, under a New Democratic government.

Mr. Speaker, no partisan political party has the answers 100 per cent to its solution and no partisan political party is 100 per cent responsible, Mr. Speaker, for the situation. We are all equally responsible, Mr. Speaker, and we all equally have to find the solutions. And when one member of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, stands up and says there is one cause for this problem of children involved in the sex trade, Mr. Speaker, it's wrong and it's unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, children in the sex trade is not just a problem in Regina and Saskatoon and P.A. (Prince Albert) and Moose Jaw and other communities across this province. It's a problem in Winnipeg. It's a problem in Vancouver. It's a problem in Calgary and Edmonton and Toronto and Montreal and any other place, Mr. Speaker, where children are in trouble, where parents do not care enough, and where society in general doesn't provide the necessities for life — be it Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, or any other location in the world.

And for a member of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, to stand up in this august hall and suggest that one group, one political party is responsible for this entire situation, be it in Saskatchewan or around the world, Mr. Speaker, is beyond comprehension. I think it shows, Mr. Speaker, the lack of real concern that individual has for those children . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — . . . the lack of understanding, Mr. Speaker, that individual has for the real problems in society with children, here in Saskatchewan or around the world. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, it shows that that individual has, Mr. Speaker, no class.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that needs to be resolved by unanimity in this House, not by acrimony.

Mr. Speaker, through exercises such as this piece of legislation and more, Mr. Speaker, we will be able to work towards a solution, a solution of people in the sex trade — children and

adults — goes back to time immemorial, Mr. Speaker. And while we need to work towards the solution, they are not going to come quickly and they are not going to come fast. But we fail if we don't try to provide some of those solutions, Mr. Speaker, and today is as good a day as any to start working on those solutions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(15:15)

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to be able to enter into the debate this afternoon to speak in support of the Bill before us — Bill 2, The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I'm very pleased that I sense that we're on the verge of all-party agreement on this legislation and perhaps second reading this day, which gives me great pleasure, Mr. Speaker.

I want to begin by thanking all the community organizations across Saskatchewan who have contributed to the development of this legislation. The members of our government could not have brought this legislation forward without this very valuable input. And to the 188 organizations that presented briefs throughout the work of the special committee that was set up by this Legislative Assembly to examine this important issue, I want to on behalf of all government members express our deep appreciation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, I also want to say a particular word about the young people who presented to our special committee. I think all seven members of the special committee were very moved by the presentations, the very powerful presentations and insightful presentations that we had from young people during the hearings.

Some of these young people, Mr. Speaker, had been sexually exploited themselves and as you will appreciate, it was extremely difficult for them to come before a legislative committee. But their insights and advice was extremely important to the workings of our committee and to the development of the legislation that has come before this House in the last year. And I want to say a special appreciation for them.

And third, Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to the members of the special committee that was set up by this Legislative Assembly more than two years ago now to bring forward recommendations that have formed the foundation of the legislation that's now before us.

I want to extend my appreciation to, first of all, the government members of the committee that have worked very closely with me and with the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Justice, our Attorney General, to frame the legislation that's currently before us.

I want to recognize my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Meewasin who has worked with me and met with many of the Saskatoon organizations in helping to develop this policy.

I want to recognize the two members from Regina who worked very, very long hours to develop the package that we have before us — the member for Regina Northeast and the member for Regina Dewdney. And the member for Regina Dewdney, Mr. Speaker, sits on our legislative instruments committee and spent many, many hours working to craft the details of the Bill that's now before us.

I also want to recognize the significant contribution throughout the hearing process that was made by members of the official opposition in this Assembly. I was very pleased to have the opportunity to work with them.

And I want to recognize the very important contribution the member for Humboldt has made in raising this issue over a six-year period and the diligence of the member for Kelvington-Wadena and the member for Moosomin in terms of their concern and work on our committee.

So all seven members have contributed, I think, in a significant way.

And the government members have made a very special contribution behind the scenes, Mr. Speaker, in terms of many, many, many hours of work after the, after the hearings were over and the report had been filed; in terms of actually shaping the parcel of measures — some of which are before the legislature, some of which are reflected in the provincial budget, Mr. Speaker — and of course, particularly the Bill that's currently before us. So my appreciation to each of them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the Bill now which is one part of our overall package of new measures that are intended to stop the sexual exploitation of children and youth on the streets of our cities.

And I want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that it is one step in a set of policies that is necessary to stamp out child sexual exploitation in our province. And that I think is the goal of all members of the Assembly — zero tolerance, Mr. Speaker, for the exploitation of our children; zero tolerance for the unethical activities of the sexual predators who are preying on our children. That's our . . . I think a value that is held by all members of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to specifically lay out as a . . . to add to the words of the Minister of Social Services some of the key provisions of this Bill.

The centrepiece of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, are provisions that will allow social workers, our police services in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, and perhaps elsewhere in the province as well, and outreach workers, and other agencies that are working with children who are being sexually exploited, to obtain emergency intervention orders at very short notice from a Justice of the Peace, in order to ensure that sexual predators are kept away from children at risk. This is the centrepiece of the Bill, Mr. Speaker.

And the orders, Mr. Speaker, go beyond just the notion that a sexual predator needs to stay away from a specific child that he has been in the company of, and that police believe to be at serious risk of abuse, or have knowledge that that child has been abused. They go beyond just keeping the predator away from an individual child.

They also allow a Justice of the Peace to issue an order that will keep a pimp or a john, as they are called — a sexual predator — away from a geographical area where children are known to be at risk: in other words, Mr. Speaker, the strolls of our cities in Saskatoon, and Regina, and Prince Albert.

This legislation allows for an order to be issued that over a 30- or 60- or 90-day period will require a sexual predator to stay away from the strolls of our cities.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, we can expect that in some cases the police may investigate further beyond the attainment of the order, to see if Criminal Code charges are warranted. But the important thing to note about the order is that it can be issued immediately by a Justice of the Peace if they believe that the evidence warrants it. And secondly, this is an order that is granted on the basis of a balance of probabilities in terms of the evidence at hand.

It's important to note, Criminal Code charges are not being laid here. The predator in question is not going to jail with this order. The order is to stay away from the child and to stay out of the geographical area that constitutes the stroll. But if the order is violated, if the order is violated by the man in question, there can be a jail sentence of up to two years and major fines involved, Mr. Speaker.

And so this is a very significant deterrent for those who, up until now, have unfortunately often escaped the hands of the police because the police didn't have the tools that they needed to, in effect, deter the predators in question. So this gives our police services a very important new tool, Mr. Speaker.

The police here also have the tool to conduct searches and obtain evidence from vehicles — that evidence that is required to substantiate a potential charge around sexual abuse, Mr. Speaker. So the police are being given new tools here with respect to search of vehicles if they have reason to believe that child sexual abuse either has occurred or is about to occur. And that is also a very important provision in the Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Now I want to point out that this initiative supplements, it complements the legislation that has just been proclaimed in this province around vehicle seizure. So what we're going to have, Mr. Speaker, is the initiatives that I just talked about and, in addition to that, legislation that is now in effect in Saskatchewan that enables the police to seize the vehicle of someone who has been charged with a prostitution-related offence and is using a vehicle in carrying out that offence.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, many of the sexual predators that have been driving up and down our streets over many years, now when they are charged with a Criminal Code offence related to prostitution, they will immediately lose their vehicle and they will have to pay for the impoundment fees for that vehicle to be gotten back, Mr. Speaker. And if a child is

involved in the prostitution-related offence, they won't be able to get the vehicle back.

And, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the vehicle seizure, if they're found guilty in a court of law, they will automatically have a driver's licence suspension for a year.

So we need to keep in mind that the legislation that is now before us is in addition to the legislation that has just come into effect in the province of Saskatchewan. And I think that that legislative package, Mr. Speaker, taken together, addresses several of the major recommendations that were put forward in the report of the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade and the 49 recommendations that are in there. Many of these recommendations dealt with the legislative package that has already been either passed by the Assembly or is now before the House.

So I think it's clear that our government has gone a very considerable distance in addressing the recommendations of the special committee, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that the legislation that's before us will require mandatory reporting of cases of child sexual abuse to an authorized child welfare authority for a timely and appropriate response to the needs of the child victims.

And, Mr. Speaker, the legislation also creates offences for sexually abusing a child or failing to report that a child has been exposed to abuse for a sexual purpose.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of measures that our government has introduced in the budget and that have been talked about to some degree in the Assembly already that complement this legislation. And I just want to, if I may . . . if I can have the indulgence of the House, just comment on three of those, Mr. Speaker, because I think they're an important complement to the Bill that's currently before us.

One is that our provincial government is setting up regional intervention committees, Mr. Speaker, that will bring together representatives who advocate on behalf of children who've been victimized, representative . . . social workers, justice officials, health officials, together with community agency representatives. And these committees will advocate and . . . to ensure that the needs of children who have been victimized are fully addressed, Mr. Speaker.

It's the position of this government that the needs of children who've been sexually exploited on the street are going to move right up to the top of the priority list in terms of service delivery by the Department of Social Services and other provincial government service agencies in our province, Mr. Speaker.

And I think that this is a very, very important message. It's a message of hope for all those children, Mr. Speaker, in our province right now who've suffered victimization at the hands of sexual predators in these past years and can now be assured that services will be there for them, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's a very important initiative that has been spearheaded by our Minister of Social Services.

(15:30)

I also want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that we are increasing the number of residential spaces within our Social Services residential network that are available for children who've been sexually exploited on the street. And in all there will now be 26 such spaces available in our province.

Five of these spaces, Mr. Speaker, of course are at the safe house in my home city of Saskatoon; it's run by the Saskatoon Tribal Council. There will also be a safe house established in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker, and I know that the community organizations that are working on this issue in the city of Regina will welcome that announcement.

Third, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that it is the intention of our government to significantly increase the involvement of the First Nations and Métis community on this issue. And one of the messages that I think all seven members of the special legislative committee will recall and agree with me on is that we heard throughout the hearings from First Nations people that they want to be involved in a major way in addressing the needs of children who've been victimized through sexual exploitation on the street.

And as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, our government is making a commitment that we will work with the First Nations and Métis community, and we will closely involve them in the development of programs and the design of services to meet the needs of children who are being sexually exploited.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are . . . these are some of the other measures that I think complement the Bill in question. And this afternoon, because I want to focus on the subject of the Bill at hand, there are many other areas that I'm not touching on in terms of initiatives that we will take. But clearly, our efforts in the area of Kids First, our preventive efforts in terms of preventing child abuse in the home, our initiatives in terms of the building independence program, and the extra funds that have gone to support low-income working people who are supporting children in our province — these things also complement the Bill in question.

Mr. Speaker, if I might make one comment with respect to issues around poverty. The member for Kelvington-Wadena was rightly recognizing that poverty is an important cause of children being at risk on the street. And it is my view, and I will continue to press the case, that we not only need to do more around the building independence program but we also need to take steps to increase the allowances for shelter and food and clothing under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, Mr. Speaker. And that's a view that I hold personally, and I'm putting that forward as a personal concern that I will continue to work on.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have an excellent package before us. And I want to thank the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Justice for all the work they've done within government to facilitate this package.

I want to thank the former minister of Social Services, the member for Regina Victoria, for the opportunity to serve as Co-Chair of the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade.

And I want to urge all members of the Assembly to support the legislation that's now before us, which I think will give our community, our police officers, and our outreach agencies additional important tools to achieve our ultimate goal in this Assembly, which is the complete elimination of child exploitation in our province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to rise today to respond to the minister's second reading speech that deals with Bill No. 2, An Act respecting Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I have some acknowledgements that are certainly in order and I hope express the appreciation that all members of this Assembly and all the people of Saskatchewan feel for contributions put forward to help us with this very, very serious and important matter.

And I'd like to make, first of all, an acknowledgement of all the members from our Assembly that were a part of the committee that was struck to prevent the abuse and exploitation of children through the sex trade. I would like to commend the other Co-Chair on the committee, the member from Saskatoon Greystone, who has put forward a great deal of work and whom is one person on the other side that I really believe has a great depth of sincerity for this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the many individuals and community organizations, people from those organizations that care very deeply about children in this province that came forward to our committee to put forward their knowledge, their views, and their suggestions about how we could address this. Some of those people, those very people are today with us in the galleries and I welcome them — the people from Regina as well as from Prince Albert.

And I'd like to make a special acknowledgement at this time, Mr. Speaker, to one member that called me one day about two and a half years ago — a member of this Assembly that is no longer sitting in the Assembly but who was in fact very instrumental in spearheading this whole effort for the committee. And that member was the member from Saskatoon . . . or rather from Regina Elphinstone, Mr. Dwain Lingenfelter.

Mr. Lingenfelter recognized that I had been bringing this issue up for five years. He recognized there were people in the province, in communities who were gravely concerned about what's happening to children on the streets. And I think he knew that the astute thing to do was to finally try to get forward some action. And so today I salute Mr. Lingenfelter for actually being the person that was the drive behind getting our committee going.

Truly, Mr. Speaker, this issue of child sexual abuse and exploitation is of such vital importance for all of us. For youth at risk — yes, for sure. But also of vital importance for the overall well-being of society.

The importance of this issue, Mr. Speaker, cannot be understated. The value we place on our children's lives is of paramount importance. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the inherent right to life and states shall ensure to maximum, child survival and development.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that states shall ensure that each child enjoys full rights without discrimination or distinctions of any kind. And, Mr. Speaker, the word, states, refers to jurisdictions — not only states like in the United States.

That Convention on the Rights of the Child also states that states shall protect children from physical or mental harm and neglect, including sexual abuse and exploitation. The child is entitled to the highest attainable standard of health. Children shall have time to rest and play. States shall protect children from the illegal use of drugs and involvement in drug production and trafficking.

So, Mr. Speaker, in a country like Canada — which according to the United Nations is the best country in the world for quality of life — children being continually abused through sexual abuse and exploitation on or off the streets of Saskatchewan or any jurisdiction in this country cannot be tolerated in any way or form. And it is our duty to fight for the rights of those children and their protection and their assistance.

Our social responsibility is to work towards the betterment of all lives in order to better society. But most of all it is to work for and protect the most vulnerable members of our society and ensure their healthy development.

Mr. Speaker, six years ago it became evident to me just how insidious this problem was in the province of Saskatchewan, the problem of child sexual abuse on the streets. When I learned what was happening to our children, that there were pedophiles out there — sick adults, very sick adults, hurting the bodies and destroying the souls of innocent children, sick adults who were taking advantage of vulnerable children — I was compelled at that time to start working with whoever would work towards this to stop the abuse and exploitation of children through the sex trade and to focus on measures that would concentrate on developing the strengths, the talents, and the capabilities of youth in a positive, constructive, and meaningful way so that eventually those children could experience healthy, life-enhancing opportunities.

There was work to be done and I was ready to do it. I was ready to take whatever was necessary to make . . . to do what was ever necessary to make this a reality.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I met with a number of people during the five or six years since I've been elected — people who not only work with children involved in the sex trade, but I also met some of the children who were actually being forced to turn to the sex trade to make some money or who had been forced by pimps and relatives to sell their bodies.

I was appalled and deeply distressed, Mr. Speaker, at what I heard and what I saw. The lives of hundreds of children were being attacked, and many of them destroyed through the abuses

they suffered. It was hard to believe that this was happening in our province, in this century.

The member from Regina Victoria mentioned when he was up speaking just a few minutes ago that it was a mystery . . . it was no mystery to him about — or to anybody in the province — about why this was happening. And he referred to poverty as being the reason. Well, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about the children when we speak about the poverty. Mr. Speaker, poverty of children certainly leads to why they end up having to be on the streets.

But there is one other reason that we must not overlook in this legislature or in society and that there's a spiritual poverty in this province and throughout the country and world of men and women who continue in their deprived way to mentally and emotionally damage our children to meet their own needs.

And so, Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that I'm so very pleased that the two pieces of legislation that have come forward in this legislature in Saskatchewan deal with deterrents — deterrents towards perpetrators and deterrents towards people who would continue to feed their deprivation, who would continue in their mental illness to hurt our children.

Mr. Speaker, there are 600 children in this province, that's an estimated number of children in Saskatchewan who are being abused through the sex trade. For the members on this side of the House and I know throughout the legislature, that's 600 too many. It's too many for all the citizens of this province.

Mr. Speaker, for years my efforts to draw attention to the urgency for action was unheard by this government. I tried desperately on behalf of the children to introduce some legislation in this very legislature in 1997, 1999, and the year 2000, hoping that the members opposite would recognize the issue and acknowledge the need to address it. And I can't begin to tell you how encouraged I was when the members opposite announced that they were finally forming a committee to study the abuse and exploitation of children involved in the sex trade.

I was pleased, Mr. Speaker, to serve as Co-Chair of that committee and after 100 meetings and literally hundreds more informal dialogues, the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade released its final report in June of last year. That report, along with 49 recommendations, was fully supported and endorsed by all members of this House. All members, Mr. Speaker, recognized the importance of the issue and that immediate action must be taken.

(15:45)

After that report was released last June we all waited impatiently for those recommendations to be implemented. And we all knew how critical this issue was and how important it was that something be done immediately.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I must say I was a bit disappointed because by fall there was nothing happening. And fall turned into winter, and Christmas came and went. And I can't help but think what a perfect opportunity Christmas would have been, Mr. Speaker. What a wonderful Christmas present that would

have made, not only for those working to help children involved in the sex trade, but most importantly, for those children themselves — some help, some hope, a chance at health and happiness.

But, unfortunately, there was nothing done last Christmas, or the Christmas before, or the Christmas before. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, those kind of delays mean that even more children become trapped in this horrible and devastating trade. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, more children's lives were being destroyed.

But now, finally, nearing spring, the government has taken some legal steps to do something.

Following the amendment to The Highway Traffic Act, we now have this proposed legislation before us, Bill No. 2, An Act respecting Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse. And I applaud this, Mr. Speaker. Every member on this side of the House applauds it. The entire province is in celebration because we have finally got something on the table in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it's a very important Bill; it's a well-intentioned Bill. In essence it talks about emergency intervention orders to keep child abusers away from vulnerable children on the streets — children at risk. And it gives police more authority to search and seize evidence from suspicious vehicles.

So, Mr. Speaker, the focus of this Bill is on the perpetrator. It's to deter and punish perpetrators or would-be perpetrators. It doesn't have any provisions though — and this concerns me — or immediate directives to take care of the abused child who is left behind on the street.

Now the member from Greystone mentioned that it is the law that anyone who recognizes a child in need of protection must report it. But what about after that?

Mr. Speaker, the emergency prevention order that this Bill talks about is allowing the police to order a john to stay away from a child.

When the minister introduced this Bill, he talked to the media about safe houses and designating spaces in group and foster homes for sexually exploited youth. He talked about intervention and about retraining service providers so that people working with children involved in the child sex would know how to deal with them. And in fact the minister talked about all the issues the child sex trade committee recommended and he talked about them as being addressed.

I believe that all members of this House have the best interest of the children at heart. We all want to do whatever we can to get them off the streets, keep them safe, and to show them that they do have choices, that they do have options.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'm a bit saddened that while the minister talks about doing these things, this Bill, the two Bills that have been laid on the Table of this legislature to deal with this issue, it doesn't allow for any of those things I've just spoken of to be implemented. It talks about intentions. It talks about what the government is focusing on.

But we need meat-and-potatoes legislation here to make sure that there is a follow-up for services that the children will need, ongoing services and support. In fact, I know that maybe some of the members opposite disagree with what I've just said. But it's patently clear that the Bill No. 2 doesn't really assist children involved in the sex trade.

The Bill doesn't do anything, Mr. Speaker, to assist them to exit the street life and fully recover. It doesn't provide any resources for that. There is no new funding, except a commitment by the Minister of Social Services of \$300,000, and I believe that must be for operating expenses in a safe house in Regina. We don't see any commitment for extra human resources or financial support for them.

We don't see any specifically designated police officers. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Assembly that one of the recommendations that came forward in our report was for a special police unit that would be funded by the government. We don't see that happening. We don't see any measures here for a pilot project for protective secure care. There is no commitment, Mr. Speaker, to actual measures for ongoing support or backup or recovery.

Mr. Speaker, the safe house that the Minister of Social Services was talking about as being set up here in Regina is good news. That's wonderful news. We have one in Saskatoon.

But there's no talk about establishing safe houses in other communities, Mr. Speaker. Now I wonder why, because the members opposite surely must realize that there are children in danger of becoming involved in the sex trade in places like Prince Albert, Lloydminster, Moose Jaw, and other places throughout the province. If they don't realize that, they should review the transcripts of the report which indicates safe houses are needed in many centres. The child sex trade has invaded virtually every corner of this province and action must be taken now.

Another thing this Bill doesn't do is address the fundamental question of what happens to the children after an intervention order has been served to a child abuser. What about the child on the street? Do we just leave them there without support?

Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 2 doesn't address some of the root causes of why children are involved in the sex trade. It doesn't look at underlying issues. What it doesn't look at is the need for rehabilitation and the need for recovery from addictions.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make any absolute, concrete commitment towards homelessness. As a result we have a Bill with some teeth, but not enough teeth, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't go far enough. It won't assist the children off the streets and it won't keep them off the streets. And it won't provide long-term safety or security. It will not provide long-term healing and opportunities to grow as the children deserve. And it most certainly won't provide more funding or resources to police or any other groups; people who work tirelessly day in and day out trying desperately to help children who are being abused and exploited through the sex trade.

While the ministers of Justice and Social Services basically reiterate the recommendations that were originally made by the

Child Sex Trade Committee, that's pretty well all much . . . as much as it does. So, Mr. Speaker, what we really need is follow through with all those recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of some of the things that the members opposite have said when it comes to addressing this critical issue. They say that keeping our community safe is a top priority for their government. They say that the abuse and exploitation of children will not be tolerated. They say that they are committed to children.

Mr. Speaker, commitment to action implies concrete, comprehensive plans initiated immediately. That's why, Mr. Speaker, during committees of the whole, I . . . Committee of the Whole, I will be introducing amendments to this Bill. Amendments that will strengthen it and make it more comprehensive. Amendments that will ultimately protect and assist children.

These amendments concur with the draft Bill inserted in the final committee report that were made by the Child Sex Trade Committee. And it is my sincere hope, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite will see the benefit of these amendments and will allow them to pass during Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, of all the legislation that has come before this Assembly, none have been more important or have had the capacity to profoundly affect more lives than this one. The very lives of Saskatchewan's children who are involved in the child sex trade or who are at risk of involvement depend on it. And while this Bill is not comprehensive enough to counteract all the evils that have been done, it is indeed a good start.

But so much more could be accomplished with this legislation, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, children involved in the sex trade have been failed by others so many times in so many ways. We must do all that we can to help them.

And I'd like to just recite some words that were presented to our committee by a young woman who I greatly admired, who has since exited the streets. And her poem speaks almost of her desperation. It speaks of whether she can really truly believe that as a society someone cares enough to try to help them to move on to a better life.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recite this woman's valuable words at this time:

What does the future hold for the child of a prostitute?
I know whole families that work — the aunties, the mother
and the daughter.
I know a prostitute. Her parents made her work.

The situation on the streets gets worse every day.
How do you stop this? How do you help them?
Do you throw them in jail? Do you think that would work?

Okay, so they get a fine.
How will they pay for that fine?
Well they'll go right back to working the street.

It is like any business.
As long as someone buys your product,

You'll stop what you're doing because you're not making any money.

Rather, I think I should have intoned that a little bit different, Mr. Speaker. Her next line is:

You'll stop what you're doing if you're not making any money.

The same goes for a prostitute.

If you stop people from buying them, they would stop working.

I lost too many friends to the streets,
And I don't want my children to make the same mistake as I made.
Something has to be done and soon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be quite brief, but I do think it is important for me to place on the record the support of myself and of my party for the measures that are being proposed before the House today.

I know that throughout this process the primary focus has been on the young people whose lives are being destroyed by the sex trade. This is of course appropriate; however, I think before we leave the subject altogether, I think we should express a thought for those law-abiding citizens and those community groups who are concerned about the effects on their neighbourhoods by the sex trade.

And I'd like to say that I have met with the concerned citizens of Riversdale who simply want to be able to sit in their backyards of an evening to have a barbecue, to have their children come and go from school or for their various evening activities, without being accosted and without being subjected to inappropriate displays of solicitation.

And for many of us who live in safe neighbourhoods, it is indeed sobering to be told that there are people not involved in any way in the sex trade who simply want to be able to sit in their backyard without having to witness inappropriate displays. And say, while I in no way detract from the work of the committee in saying our primary concern ought to be for the young people in the sex trade, I think we should also spare a thought for those citizens who see their neighbourhoods maligned and degraded by the problem of street prostitution.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think most of what can be said has already been said, but I would like to say that it is also important that we acknowledge that harsher and harsher penalties and legislation of a criminal or quasi-criminal nature will not, of and in itself, end the social ill of street prostitution and the child sex trade.

And in that regard, while I think some of the remarks of the hon. member for Regina Victoria were certainly unfortunate, he was in fact making a valid point. That if we really wished to end the street sex trade that requires stronger families, stronger

schools, and stronger communities. And simply resorting to the criminal or quasi-criminal power will not, of and in itself, correct the sickness which is unfortunately in some of our homes and some of our families.

(16:00)

So I think the fact that it does require a multi-faceted approach to deal with the sicknesses in our society and in our homes is a valid point and one that we cannot lose sight of, and we cannot lose sight of the fact that the criminal law, or the quasi-criminal law, is always a blunt instrument which always seeks to deal with problems after they've occurred as opposed to preventing them to begin with.

Nonetheless, this is in fact a noble initiative, and it is one that deserves the support of all hon. members. And it is my hope that some of the citizens' groups I've talked to will be able to have neighbourhoods where they and their children can move freely, especially in the evenings, without being confronted with inappropriate sights and without being confronted themselves with offensive solicitations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, in addition to the comments that I made a few moments ago, I certainly intended to inform the government that the opposition is . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The member has spoken once. Does the member have leave to complete her comments?

Leave granted.

Ms. Julé: — All right, Mr. Speaker, I guess the rules of the House have got to be brushed up on, no doubt by myself.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to present to the government of the day that the official opposition would be most happy to move this Bill to Committee of the Whole.

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, I see that the minister is rising to conclude debate, and at this time it is my duty to advise members if there's anyone else that wishes to speak, this is the time to do it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker, and I thank all hon. colleagues for the opportunity to conclude debate as provided in rule 34(3) of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I rise not to repeat the words that I said earlier or really to respond to comments made by members, but more importantly, more significantly, to acknowledge a process that is occurring on this day, and that I think should . . . ought to be acknowledged because it is significant.

It is rare indeed. I've been in this Assembly for in excess of 15 years, and it is extremely rare that a Bill will move from the introduction of second reading debate to a vote in a single day. And that is in fact is what's happening here today and that

should be noted not only by the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, but I think by the people of Saskatchewan.

Because it does say loud and clear by virtue of this action that this is an Assembly that cares, that cares very deeply about the consequences of sexual exploitation of kids in the street, sexual abuse of those kids, and that we are resolved and we are united in our resolve in this Assembly to do something to deal with it in a very concrete and constructive and proactive kind of way.

Mr. Speaker, since I came to the portfolio — I had the privilege of coming to Social Services this fall — I had the opportunity to come to know in a very personal kind of way the passion that has been felt by the government members of the committee as we've worked together on the development of the government's response to the committee's recommendations and including the Bill as before us today.

Today in debate here in the Assembly, I was able to also, I think, enjoy the privilege of hearing the passion directly by the opposition members who were participating on the committee.

And I know that it was a committee that was made up of seven members who started with varying degrees of knowledge and experience but who became passionately united in their resolve to do something positive to deal with an ugly circumstance in our province. And I want to say how much . . . how deeply I appreciate of all the members that they have made that commitment and I have been able to experience, to experience that sense of passion.

Mr. Speaker, I also had opportunity of course to deal with the many stakeholders, and some of whom had dealt with the committee and others who hadn't. It is impossible, and I understand in a very personal way some of the comments made today, that it is impossible to be close to the subject without feeling absolute disgust for the ability it seems of some in our society to prey upon those who are vulnerable.

This is an issue, which focuses on some of the most reprehensible of human behaviour, and I am so proud to be a member of an Assembly that has said no more, no more.

I had the privilege some years ago, and I know to join with the member for Cannington and others to be a part of an all-member . . . all-party legislative committee to deal with an important issue, that in those days, dealt with a subject that I still believe to this day and till the day I die was a subject that brought about changes, partially through the result of this Chamber, that will save lives.

No less, Mr. Speaker, do I believe that the work of the committee resulting now in what's before us in this Bill, and other things related to it is any less significant in the fact that it will too also literally save lives.

And it is a motivation of all the members that come to this House — regardless of the party that we represent and the passions and the philosophical differences that we may have, we all come with a common purpose, and that is each in our own way to be a part of building a better world.

And I would like to say how pleased and proud I am of this

Legislative Assembly and the demonstration of what legislative committees are capable of producing, and the kind of actions that legislators are capable of producing in a non-partisan way because of the belief that we are acting in the common good of the people of Saskatchewan.

Bill No. 2 introduced as, obviously, the second Bill given notice in this Assembly, then brings forth just simply that — a piece of legislation which is part of a much broader package. I've heard each member who has taken their place this afternoon refer to the fact that this Bill itself is not an answer and I agree, I agree.

All by itself this Bill is not the answer. It is part of a broader strategy and a combination of initiatives which we are taking, building on, building on a solid foundation of what is already in place, and then in an uniquely Saskatchewan way using our Saskatchewan resources and our Saskatchewan commitment and our Saskatchewan dedication and our Saskatchewan experience to do what we see as the most sensible way of addressing this issue.

So it will be with much interest, I think not only by ourselves in this House, but by many who care passionately who are outside these Chambers, who are watching these proceedings, either directly or indirectly, and who also care very passionately about these vulnerable kids that we have on the streets of Saskatchewan, that we will look together, then, at the total package.

I welcome constructive criticism. It must be understood that what we're dealing with here today is neither a start because we started long ago, nor is it a conclusion because there is much yet to be done, and we are at a point in time which we are challenged as members of this Assembly to take the resources that we are given, resources include finances, but also resources include human resources and experiences upon which we must build.

And we will do that, Mr. Speaker, with the resolve that number one, through this Bill, we will be more effective. We're dealing in this Bill in an action that is first in Canada — first in Canada — to act in a very aggressive way to separate the perpetrators from the victim, and then as part of that, using that tool to then address in an effective way that being engaged in the process for healing the lives of the children that motivate us to do what we do. Because the end of the day, there is nothing — nothing — that is more valuable in attending to this subject than the futures of those kids who are vulnerable.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I take my place now saying thank you very much to the members of the Assembly, to the members of the committee, to those who work in our Social Services sector, who are dedicated to improving the lives of these vulnerable kids, giving them a chance to escape from the trap that they've been thrust into as part of this whole business of sexual exploitation and giving them the opportunity, as kids should have, to be able to dream about their futures and to think with some hope and optimism about building lives for themselves and for their families and the future of Saskatchewan.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it is with all of that in mind that I say thank you again for the contribution of members in the debate today and look forward to moving forward . . . looking forward

to moving forward with progress on this project. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 16:11 until 16:16.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 48

Calvert	Atkinson	Hagel
Lautermilch	Serby	Melenchuk
Cline	Sonntag	Osika
Lorjé	Kasperski	Goulet
Van Mulligen	Prebble	Belanger
Crofford	Axworthy	Nilson
Junor	Hamilton	Harper
Forbes	Jones	Higgins
Trew	Wartman	Thomson
Yates	McCall	Hermanson
Kwiatkowski	Heppner	Julé
Gantefoer	Bjornerud	Toth
Wakefield	Stewart	Elhard
Eagles	McMorris	D'Autremont
Brkich	Wiberg	Weekes
Allchurch	Huyghebaert	Hillson

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Nays — nil

The Speaker: — I declare the motion declared unanimously without any abstentions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

**Bill No. 14 — The Vehicle Administration
Amendment Act, 2002**

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2002.

The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act deals with many issues from licensing to registration, and very specifically with legislation regarding the penalties for impaired driving.

The proposed amendments to the Act will clarify some of the existing laws and make the Act more consistent, while at the same time ensuring fairness and safety for all Saskatchewan motorists.

The first group of proposed amendments I'd like to outline relate to the serious problem of drinking and driving, with a focus on drivers who are participating, I should say, in the ignition interlock program. An ignition interlock is a device that is attached to the ignition of a vehicle. In order to turn that vehicle on, the driver must blow into the device, which checks for blood alcohol level, in order to start the vehicle.

In an effort to encourage individuals convicted of drinking and driving to change their behaviour, the proposed amendments will enable the ignition interlock device to be used by repeat drinking and driver offenders. Currently, only first-time offenders are entitled to reduce their suspension through participation in this program.

Experience in other jurisdictions indicates that expanding the ignition interlock program to include all offenders has proven to be an effective way to reduce the numbers of repeat drinking and driving offences.

In the four months the ignition option has been available to Saskatchewan residents, 134 devices have been installed in vehicles with offenders paying all costs for participation in the program.

The next proposed amendment to the Act is required to add consequences to drivers and third parties who seek to circumvent the interlock device. Any attempt to bypass or tamper with an interlock device is a serious offence and may ultimately result in an individual being removed from the program.

By strengthening legislation regarding compliance with the ignition interlock program, the public will be assured that program participants are being closely monitored to ensure the safety of all road users. However, in an attempt to be fair and balanced, the proposed amendments to the Act will also allow for an appeal to the Highway Traffic Board when an ignition interlock program participant is disqualified from the program.

I would note, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan has among the strongest package of drinking and driving legislation in place in Canada.

These proposed amendments build on initiatives taken in 2001, including zero alcohol tolerance for new drivers and the immediate 90-day roadside administrative driver's licence suspension. The recently implemented 90-day administrative suspension is imposed if a driver has a blood-alcohol level of over .08 or if they are charged with refusing to give a breath sample.

The new proposed amendment to the Act will add the Criminal Code offence of failing to stop for a peace officer to the list of offences which will result in a statutory driver's licence suspension. Currently the Act provides for the suspension of a driver's licence if a driver is convicted of one or more of a series of listed offences such as driving while impaired, dangerous driving, or failing to provide a breath sample.

Enhancing the Act to allow for the suspension of driver's licences of individuals charged with failing to stop for a peace officer is further evidence of the hard work being done to deter dangerous driving practices on our roads.

Another group of proposed amendments I'd like to outline involves the monitoring of medical conditions of Saskatchewan motorists. SGI's medical unit reviews and monitors drivers whose health issues represent a potential danger to themselves and other users of roads and highways.

Presently the medical review unit must schedule a hearing to review a driver's medical situation before any safety sanctions can be added to the driver's licence. Time constraints and customer availability often result in delays which are very frustrating for the drivers involved. The proposed amendments eliminate the need for these hearings and fall in line with other policy changes to the medical review unit designed to help simplify and streamline the entire process for our drivers.

Recent customer service improvements to the medical review unit's policies include reduced reporting requirements for drivers with stable medical conditions, the elimination of periodic monitoring for some medical conditions, and a redesign of complex forms.

If the individual is unhappy with the decision of the medical review unit he or she continues to have the option of an appeal to the Highway Traffic Board.

The Saskatchewan Medical Association supports these proposed amendments which will improve service for drivers being monitored with medical conditions, and at the same time, enhance the safety of all other drivers on the road.

The new . . . I should say the next significant change to this Act continues to involve medical reporting but affects only commercial drivers. As of January 1, 2003 commercial drivers will be required to provide periodic medical reports to maintain their commercial driving status. The obligation is part of the National Safety Code program and must be implemented if the Saskatchewan drivers wish to operate in the United States.

Current legislation enables SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) to suspend a commercial driver's licence if a medical report is not provided upon request. The proposed amendments would authorize SGI to issue a class 5 licence to a commercial driver instead of suspending the driver, provided there are no other grounds to consider a suspension.

A class 5 licence allows a driver to continue to operate private passenger vehicles during the time their commercial licence is invalid and SGI is waiting for the medical information. Monitoring of commercial drivers for medical conditions that may affect their driving ability is another change that will improve our road safety for all users.

The final proposed amendment simply expands the definition of driving while disqualified to include the proposed medical suspension and the 90-day roadside administrative suspension.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes my outline of the amendments set out in this Act. These amendments work together to strengthen the rules and regulations in the areas of licensing and registration as well as to specifically target impaired drivers in an effort to make Saskatchewan's roads and highways as safe as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Vehicle Administration Act.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege to stand today and add some remarks to the record regarding Bill No. 14, An Act to amend The Vehicle

Administration Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is an area that I have spent a good deal of my life dealing with, is traffic safety. And as I listen to the minister talk about a number of areas that this Act is going to be dealing with and really working to promote safe driving on the streets and highways of our province, I would applaud that.

He covers a number of different areas. The first area that he talked about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is of great interest to me is the vehicle interlock process that the government is moving towards to try and limit the amount of drinking and driving done on our highways and to deal with some of the habitual reoffenders in that area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the drinking and driving issue has been a real sore spot in our province for a number of years. We normally would say that about 50 per cent of all the fatal collisions that happen in Saskatchewan have alcohol involved — not necessarily the person was impaired, but alcohol was involved. And any steps that we can take to limit that and reduce that number of fatalities we think is a good step.

I know a number of, back about six, seven years ago when government introduced a number of initiatives, one of them — and was also addressed today — was the 90-day suspension, administrative suspension as soon as the person was charged. And all of those things are working towards reducing the number of impaired drivers on our streets and highways.

I also remember for many years we keep saying that about 50 per cent have alcohol involved with fatal collisions which . . . and it has carried on that way. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we wonder if we're making any progress. But when the number of fatalities have dropped in half over the last 30 years in our province — a good deal due to seatbelts — but also this interlock would be another area that will hopefully bring that number of fatalities down. So when you cut your number of fatalities in half and you still say that 50 per cent are involved in . . . have alcohol involved, you've really reduced that instead of 50 per cent of 200 — which would be 100 — 50 per cent of 120 certainly is a lot better record.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we think the, you know, on surface it looks like a great idea, we have to do some more consulting in the area.

The other area that he talked about was the 90-day administrative suspension for people that fail to stop for a peace officer. And I think — I don't have the numbers — but certainly with anecdotal evidence in the city of Regina, we're hearing more and more of that with the number of car thefts that we've witnessed in the city of Regina. And it used to be it was one thing to steal the vehicle, the other game that a lot of the car thefts . . . thieves are playing right now is to get into a chase and then try and extend that for as long as possible.

So you know I'm not sure of the record of the people that are stealing the cars, how many actually have licences, but this is one way to hopefully get them off the street. Whether it will stop it or not completely, I don't know; but it's just one more tool in the tool chest to try and prevent the number of car thefts.

The medical issue is always an interesting one because I know again dealing with a number of people in my constituency that have lost their licences due to medical situations — they may have had a stroke, may have had a heart attack, that type of thing — and they normally have to go through a medical process to regain their licence back.

(16:30)

The minister talked about streamlining that process, which we think is a good idea, and making it not easier for them to receive their licence, but maybe not quite so many hoops to jump through. And, you know, whether it's eliminate the need for hearings, that sounds on the surface like a pretty good idea, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we know that, especially in rural Saskatchewan — and I'll speak for that because that's the area that I know best — a driver's licence is everything for many of the seniors. I mean, without that driver's licence, they just can't get around. There isn't the availability of public transit, whether it's bus or taxi service.

And it doesn't have to be just in rural Saskatchewan. A lot of the small towns, you know, whether it's a senior that's had some medical problems, to lose their licence, then they're having to have somebody get them to the doctor and that type of thing. So to streamline the process we think makes a lot of sense.

The commercial driver issue and medical reports on commercial drivers, failing to provide the proper medical report and then, by failing to do that, taking their commercial licence away, again, you know, at first blush it looks like a real good idea. Certainly we don't want people driving out there when their medical condition is in poor shape.

We always used to say . . . I remember talking many, many times on the fact that if you looked at the fatal collisions in our province and you know that about 50 per cent have alcohol involved, how many other per cent have some other sort of factor, whether it's a medical issue or legal or illegal drugs.

So we need to try and work to prevent those people being on the streets and highways, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But before we move this on, there are a number of people that we feel this Bill is going to affect, and without proper consultation with those people, Mr. Speaker, it would be an injustice to move it any further until we have the opportunity to consult with a number of the affected parties. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this time I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 4 — The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before I begin my remarks, I'd ask leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — They are still there. Thank you very

much, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce to members of the Assembly, seated in your gallery, two SaskEnergy officials who have worked on this Act and the amendments that we're proposing.

First of all, Ron Podbielski with corporate affairs. And I want to point out to members they . . . if you've known Ron before and maybe didn't recognize him right now because of all of the bags under his eyes, he's a new father that I understand has not slept very much in the last week or two. So welcome very much, Ron.

And also with him is general counsel — our general counsel in SaskEnergy, I should say — Mark Guillet. So if I could ask members to please join me in welcoming these two gentlemen.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 4 – The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you again very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege for me to rise in the House today to move second reading of Bill No. 4, The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2002.

As the members know, The SaskEnergy Act is the governing legislation for SaskEnergy and its subsidiaries. It also enables the terms and conditions by which natural gas is distributed and transported within Saskatchewan.

And I'm proud to say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that all . . . and, I should say, to all of my esteemed colleagues, that this Bill means good news for the oil field industry and by the extension of that, for the people of Saskatchewan.

Over the past few years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, oil field activity and the competitive royalty structures have been a boon to our Saskatchewan economy. Last year a record 1,366 oil wells were drilled and cased here in Saskatchewan. Predictions point to another successful year in 2002. It's something that we here should all be proud of.

By another, but another reason why I'm proud today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is because this Bill will make it easier for commercial oil field producers to do business in our great province. Under The SaskEnergy Act, SaskEnergy has the exclusive legal franchise to own and operate a natural gas distribution system. But after discussions between SaskEnergy and various oil field producers interested in streamlining their business operations, this Bill was created to allow the producer community to run its own natural gas lines between its own facilities.

This, Mr. Speaker, creates a win-win situation for the producers and for SaskEnergy. Producers benefit from reduced cost and reduced time in installing underground pipelines, and it also . . . and it's . . . it is also, I should say, important to SaskEnergy. It will help the corporation strengthen its relationship with oil producers and facilitate an environment that makes it easier for these producers to do business in Saskatchewan.

I'd also like to add, Mr. Speaker, that through this Bill, safety will also be enhanced for all 320,000 customers throughout the province.

For a number of years now, SaskEnergy has implemented a successful call before you dig campaign to help educated landowners and contractors about the importance of calling for a line locate before any construction work begins. This program has been quite successful throughout the province.

These amendments will strengthen safety provisions in the Act by ensuring landowners and contractors are aware of their joint liabilities should they fail to call SaskEnergy or TransGas. This is a very appropriate . . . This is very appropriate considering the serious situation that could arise if a natural gas pipeline was contacted.

In closing, this Bill represents fundamental benefits for oilfield producers, SaskEnergy, and for natural gas customers . . . consumers across Saskatchewan and I urge all members to support this Bill.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 4, The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2002.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, anything that enhances the opportunities of producers and people who work and drive the economy of Saskatchewan is always good news.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take the minister's word that the changes to this particular Act as far as the distribution of gas, is good to the producers of this province. Because I have to believe that it will be good for them. If they can take production from facility A and move it to facility B for consumption there within their own services, that will be a good thing.

I know, Mr. Speaker, I've seen this happen before where that was happening but where the government was still intervening to a certain degree in that operation. If this Bill eliminates that interference and intervention, then that will be a good thing, Mr. Speaker, and will benefit all of Saskatchewan as the economic activity will produce results in the name of tax dollars which will benefit us all, Mr. Speaker.

Now when the minister talks about safety, though, I . . . While I support very much, Mr. Speaker, the need for safety in all our operations, I do have some questions in relationship to the safety aspects of this Bill because it talks about denying people access to property where it says gas lines are located.

Now what does that actually mean, Mr. Speaker? Does that mean the right of way that is in place for laying that pipeline and for accessing that pipeline? Which in some cases is a 16 foot strip, X number of miles long. Or does it mean the designated titled property on which that pipeline runs? That hasn't been clarified by the minister.

It's one thing to say that you shouldn't dig over top of the actual pipeline, which anyone who knows that it's there isn't going to do, Mr. Speaker. It's another thing to say that you have to

phone SaskEnergy up if you want to dig a rock out of your land that's a half a mile away from the pipeline, just because, Mr. Speaker, it's on the same title.

The minister didn't address that and I think that needs to be addressed. Because the owners of property need to be able to carry out their legitimate business upon that property without undue interference by government, Mr. Speaker.

There is also another part of the Bill that the minister didn't mention at all, and that is clauses 4 through . . . clause 4, Mr. Speaker, I guess. There's a number of subsections to that clause. And it talks about committees and the executive committee of the SaskEnergy Corporation. And this clause removes the words "the executive committee" and puts in its place "a committee appointed to pursuant to clause 1(a)." Which is:

The board may:

(a) appoint any committees that it considers necessary for the efficient conduct of the affairs and business of the corporation;

Now does this mean all of these other committees that are being mentioned in this particular Act will be board members who are elected or appointed to carry out their fiduciary duties on behalf of the board? Or does this deal with people selected at random or people selected by the government to sit as quasi-board members, perhaps, of SaskEnergy? Or board members somehow on some committee within SaskEnergy but in no way related to SaskEnergy?

What does this mean, Mr. Speaker? Because it certainly isn't going to be a committee without remuneration. Because it also changes the fact that the remuneration will be set by the board for these committees, whomever they might be, Mr. Speaker.

And I think we're opening up a can of worms here, Mr. Speaker, that is potentially to the disadvantage of SaskEnergy, Mr. Speaker. And clearly if you take, if you take the committees away from the board, Mr. Speaker, you're taking those committees away from the responsibilities to SaskEnergy.

SaskEnergy Board of Directors have a fiduciary duty, Mr. Speaker, to that corporation. What duties, what responsibilities do these new committee members have to SaskEnergy? Do they serve SaskEnergy or do they serve another master, Mr. Speaker?

Another amendment deals with "striking out '\$200,000' and substituting 'the amount fixed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.'" So within SaskEnergy there is a fee, a cost, a payment — I don't know — of \$200,000 for some action or inaction, and the government is substituting that the cabinet can make the decision on what this amount will be.

Does this mean it will vary based on circumstances and occurrences — it could be lower in one case, higher in another? Or does it mean that it is simply going to rise whenever the cabinet decides it needs more money or wants to pay somebody more money? We don't know, Mr. Speaker, because the minister in his address on this completely abrogated his

responsibility in even discussing this particular issue, Mr. Speaker.

So there are lots of issues that need to be investigated in this. There are lots of third parties that need to be contacted to try and gain an understanding and to try . . . and for them to gain some knowledge to what the implications could be of this particular legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate on this Bill, Bill No. 4, The SaskEnergy Amendment Act.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 12 — The Farm Financial Stability
Amendment Act, 2002**

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks, I'll move second reading of The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2002. And, Mr. Speaker, the changes are needed for various sections of The Farm Financial Stability Act that deals with the livestock loan guarantee program.

Mr. Speaker, the livestock loan guarantee program was introduced in 1984 and the purpose of the program is to allow Saskatchewan producers to establish livestock associations which are empowered to borrow funds from financial institutions in order to purchase feeder and breeder cattle on behalf of the association members.

(16:45)

The association members post funds in the form of an assurance fund. For breeder associations, association members are required to post 10 per cent of their borrowing level in the assurance fund; for breeders, it's 5 per cent. And the assurance fund is the first to be accessed in the event of a default.

The Government of Saskatchewan guarantees 25 per cent of the association's loan, should a default occur. Mr. Speaker, this program has proved to be very successful since its inception and its success has led to the many enhancements.

In 1991 the regulations were expanded to include breeder cattle. And in 1999 the regulations were further expanded to allow the inclusion of feeder bison and feeder and breeder sheep.

Mr. Speaker, the Act provides the opportunity for producer association members to access a significant source of financing for livestock purchases in Saskatchewan. And since the program's inception there has been in excess of \$1 billion in livestock loan purchases through livestock loan guarantee programs in Saskatchewan.

In 2001 alone, more than 127 million was borrowed from financial institutions to purchase livestock through the livestock loan guarantee program. And, Mr. Speaker, more than 6,500 livestock producers are members of 130 feeder/breeder associations in our province. Mr. Speaker, this program has provided a valuable source of credit for livestock producers in Saskatchewan. This has contributed to the growth of the livestock sector in the province and the diversification of

Saskatchewan's agricultural economy.

And since last fall, producers who are members of the feeder/breeder livestock association have consulted with me and the Government of Saskatchewan and these producers have requested that the Government of Saskatchewan make amendments to this particular piece of legislation.

The amendments are considered essential in order to clarify within the Act that livestock purchased by the association are the property of the association rather than the individual. And, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan livestock producers in the feeder/breeder association have discovered that the current language of the Act need to be changed to make it clear that the feeder/breeder association's cattle are owned by the association. This amendment needs to make it clear that association animals cannot be seized to pay other debts of individual association members.

Mr. Speaker, the producers association would like the Government of Saskatchewan to revise the Act so that The Personal Property Security Act of 1993 does not apply to transactions between the association and the member producers.

Mr. Speaker, other changes proposed would allow for regulations to prescribe the commodities to be included within the livestock loan guarantee program. The amendments proposed here today clearly state that the transactions between the feeder/ breeder associations and their individual members are not subject to The Personal Property Securities Act of 1993.

The proposed amendments will strengthen The Farm Financial Stability Act by clarifying the existing premise of the program that the association is the owner of the commodities.

The proposed amendments will enhance the integrity of the program and increase lender confidence in the program. The proposed amendments will allow for the continued expansion of the livestock industry through the feeder/breeder program.

Mr. Speaker, the specific changes to the Act would be as follows: section 41 of the Act would be amended to define the term of member producer; section 59(1) will be amended to ensure that the association is the owner of the commodities being purchased under the production association loan guarantees, and that the transactions between the association and the producers does not create the security interest and therefore is not subject to The Personal Property Security Act, 1993.

And further that section 60 be repealed and submitted . . . and substituted to clarify that the association is the owner of the commodity purchased and that the association does not act as the trustee for the member producer.

Section 61 amended to allow the regulations prescribed commodities for the purpose of section 59.1.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the members of the Legislative Assembly, I encourage you to adopt the amendments of The Farm Financial Stability Act, and therefore I move that The Farm Financial Stability Act, 2002 be read the second time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to speak briefly on this legislation that's being proposed by the government.

Mr. Speaker, The Farm Financial Security Act is — we understand in consultation, our brief consultations, with people in the industry — is a needed improvement to a program that has gone a long way in improving the development of the livestock industry in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the livestock loan guarantee program has been a very important segment of the ability of the livestock industry to expand in Saskatchewan. And I think that, in general, people are in agreement that this is a very worthwhile and fundamentally important bit of legislation, and an important program to make sure that Saskatchewan realizes its full potential in terms of developing a value-added agricultural business in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it's particularly important that we make sure that we do everything reasonable that we can in order to expand the livestock business, particularly in light of the debate that we engaged in yesterday about the ethanol industry, because the livestock industry and value-adding into livestock and grains are critical components of how we're going to grow the economy of this province.

Mr. Speaker, the minister in his statement said that it was important that there be clarity in the legislation to make sure that the legislation clearly outlined who the owners were going to be of the livestock that was under this program. And I think that in the past this has created some difficult situations when the guarantees had to be acted on. And so we think that potentially this makes a great deal of sense.

Mr. Speaker, as you can imagine, it's important for the official opposition to consult with industry people, to sit down with the producers who are going to be affected by this legislation, and to make sure that nothing has been missed in terms of taking this opportunity while the Act and the legislation is being opened, to make sure everything is being done that is reasonable to stimulate and encourage the livestock industry in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the official opposition looks forward to those discussions with producers about this important legislation, and until that discussion can take place, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:54.