

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 citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about certain inadequacies in the province's 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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition is signed by citizens of Carrot River.

I so present.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by residents of Saskatchewan about recent changes to the crop insurance program that resulted in a 7 per cent premium increase for insured farmers for reduced coverage, including the exclusion of spot loss hail and variable rate insurance. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads:

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 premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from Kelfield, Landis, Handel, Doddsland, and Ruthilda.

And I'm pleased to present the petition on their behalf.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present today from people from Hendon and Wadena that are concerned about the tobacco laws.

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

I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to do with the overfishing of the 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 Spy Hill, Esterhazy, Crooked Lake, and Langenburg.

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition regarding crop insurance premiums. The prayer is:

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 to hike farmers' crop insurance premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good people of Glentworth and McCord.

I so present.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I have a petition concerning crop insurance premium hikes and consequent coverage reductions. And the prayer reads as follows:

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 premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by producers in the Cabri and Pennant areas of southwest Saskatchewan.

I so present.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition on behalf of citizens who are concerned about the deductible on the prescription drug plan. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reinstate reasonable annual deductible amounts for prescription drugs in Saskatchewan.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by folks from Estevan, Corning, Bienfait, Roche Percee, and Lampman.

I so present. Thank you.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan 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 products; and furthermore, anyone found guilty of such an offence be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Weyburn and Gladmar.

I so present.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of residents in southwest Saskatchewan concerned with the government's decision respecting the prescription drug plan in the province. And the prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reinstate a reasonable annual deductible amount for prescription drugs in Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the communities of Aneroid, Simmie, Pambrun, and the city of Swift Current.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, 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 premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

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

Signed by good citizens from Conquest, Outlook, Dinsmore, Macrorie, Milden.

I so present.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I have a petition from farmers in my constituency who are outraged by the changes to the crop insurance program in Saskatchewan. And the petition reads as follows, Mr.

Speaker:

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 premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by the good people from Paddockwood, Meath Park, and Albertville.

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from citizens concerned about the increased premium rate for crop insurance. The prayer reads:

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 premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Biggar.

I so present.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it would be no surprise that I have a petition today of citizens concerned about Highway No. 15. And the prayer reads as follows:

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 again, the signatures show how well travelled this highway is because they're from Holdfast, Simpson, Kenaston, Watrous, Imperial, Regina, and Wainwright, Alberta.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan concerned with the commercial fishing on Besnard Lake. And the prayer reads as follows:

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, to bring about a resolution to the Besnard Lake situation, and to ensure that our natural resources as a whole are used in a responsible manner by all people in the future.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Regina, Humboldt, Saskatoon, and Wilkie.

I so present.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise with a petition today from citizens who are deeply concerned about the crop insurance program that's been unveiled and the petition reads as follows:

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 premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good citizens of Climax, Woodrow, Killdeer, and Limerick.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petition has been reviewed and is hereby read and received as an addendum to a previously tabled petition being sessional paper no. 31.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I am truly pleased to introduce to the Assembly and welcome on your behalf, and behalf of all the members of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, 14 tremendous students from the fine school of Ituna who are here visiting us today. And they're with their teacher, Ms. Shirley Fowler, and their chaperones, Laura Berezny, Barb Kuschak, and Tracy Ivy. And I'll be meeting with this fine group of people after question period, Mr. Speaker.

And I would ask all members of the Assembly to welcome this fine group of youngsters to this Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I too have a class of students here from Marion McVeety School in Regina Lakeview. There are 21 students who are in grade 4 and they're seated in the west gallery. And they're accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Sheila Acton, as well as parents, Rhonda Hipperson, Carol Wakelam, Barb Hendrickson, Cathy Johnson, and Marion Finucane.

And I would ask all members to welcome them here to the legislature. They live in this neighbourhood so they know about the building, and I'm sure they often are curious to hear and see what happens here. So let's welcome them all.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Saskatchewan Opportunities Week

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is home to many business and economic success stories and it is filled with opportunities for our youth. In order to celebrate and recognize our achievements and the possibilities that exist here in our province, this government has declared May 13 to 17 to be Saskatchewan Opportunities Week.

Our government is proud to do its part in the celebrations around this special week and we are glad to do what we can to help provide a positive focus on the accomplishments of the people of this province.

This week's festivities include a trade show to showcase innovative Saskatchewan products and services, a Saskatchewan business ambassador's breakfast, a youth rally announcing the winners of the Only in Saskatchewan contest, and a mini job fair.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan does have many challenges to face, but we will not let them detract from our pride in what we have accomplished and in what we can accomplish. For most of the past decade we have been among the top provinces in terms of economic growth. We have many entrepreneurs creating opportunities in both the urban and rural sectors. And for the coming year, the investment intentions of the business community are expected to increase by 9.3 per cent — the highest in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let's all come together and recognize what we have here at home in Saskatchewan and let's celebrate Saskatchewan Opportunities Week.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

National Police Week

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to ask all members to recognize May 12 to 18 as National Police Week.

Mr. Speaker, National Police Week is an excellent opportunity to strengthen the partnerships between the police forces and the communities. The four objectives that govern this particular week, Mr. Speaker, are: (1) to act as a vehicle in which to reinforce ties with the community; (2) to honour police officers for the public safety and security they provide to their communities; (3) to promote the work police do in their communities; and (4) to inform the community about the police role in public safety and security.

Mr. Speaker, all across Canada this week, communities will be paying tribute to the dedicated and committed work of those men and women who are proud members of municipal and federal police forces.

Here in Saskatchewan we would be remiss if we didn't pay extra tribute to our police personnel because we know the

province's high crime rate, coupled with the lack of resources due to underfunding, have made a difficult occupation that much tougher.

All of Saskatchewan should be justifiably proud of the province's municipal and federal police forces. Their dedication in this often dangerous line of work goes above and beyond the call of duty. We owe much to them for providing us with safety and security 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of police week, I ask all members of the House to honour those who keep us, our families, and our communities safe from harm. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

Tourism Saskatchewan Web Sites

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is more good news for Saskatchewan people during Opportunities Week — more good news for people who want to visit Saskatchewan and more good news for Saskatchewan people who want to see more of our great province. We have some of the world's best natural and cultural tourism attractions, and now they will be much easier for tourists to access.

This morning the minister of Information Technology helped launch seven new tourism Web sites which will enable the industry to do better booking, planning, and merchandising. These sites will receive \$672,000 of financing under the Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement.

As well, Mr. Speaker, Tourism Regina and five rural tourism regions will have their Web sites integrated with Tourism Saskatchewan's site so that all may benefit from a common database.

Annually tourism is a \$1.3 billion industry in Saskatchewan which directly employs 21,000 people. We expect these numbers to grow and technological advances like those announced today will ensure this growth will happen.

Mr. Speaker, from across Canada, from the US (United States), and from around the world, people are escaping to Saskatchewan. From the Cypress Hills to the Athabasca Sand Dunes, from Taylor Field to Duck Mountain, from Wanuskewin to Lac La Ronge, from Yorkton to Meadow Lake, people are enjoying the awesome, natural, and cultural . . . natural beauty and cultural heritage of our wonderful province.

Why, Mr. Speaker? Because it's the right thing to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

National Mining Week

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in this

Assembly to share with my colleagues some facts regarding the National Mining Week which is underway starting today.

The Saskatchewan Mining Association reports that mining contributes more than \$2 billion to the provincial GDP (gross domestic product). Almost 20,000 people are employed, either directly or indirectly, through the mining industry.

Mr. Speaker, our province is the world's leading producer and exporter of both potash and uranium. We account for almost 30 per cent of the world's production of both of these commodities.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Mining Association also states that Saskatchewan has the fourth highest sales of minerals in Canada, after Ontario, Quebec, and BC (British Columbia).

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that there is so much more that we can do in this important industry; so much more to do in terms of cutting restrictive red tape in the industry; cutting the high taxes the industry faces; and aiming our sights to become number one in Canada in terms of sales.

Mr. Speaker, we need to take the brakes all the way off this industry in Saskatchewan. We need this important industry to spread its wings to fully realize what it can do. The Saskatchewan Party believes in the mining industry and how it can play a major role in our plan to grow Saskatchewan by 100,000 people over 10 years starting right after the next provincial election.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

South Saskatchewan Youth Orchestra Wins Awards

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We in Regina have had the good fortune over the years of being able to attend the annual excellent performances of the South Saskatchewan Youth Orchestra under the very capable direction of Alan Denike, who by the way plays a pretty mean bassoon in our grown-up orchestra.

The young people in the orchestra grow up and move on but always behind them is a new crop of musicians. The only thing that does not change in the SSSYO (South Saskatchewan Youth Orchestra) is the quality of the performance. These youth can really play, Mr. Speaker.

And now music lovers of the American Midwest know our secret. Recently the SSSYO attended the Chicago Heritage Music Festival. The SSSYO was one of seven youth orchestras but the only one from Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to announce that the young musicians came home with all three trophies available to them in their class, including the award for outstanding instrumental group.

They toured Chicago, including a performance by the Chicago Symphony.

Mr. Speaker, in Regina we are very proud of our youth orchestra. We are fortunate having one more opportunity to hear them this session when they give their season finale on May 25. This concert will feature some of the Chicago repertoire and other works. This is an opportunity that no orchestral enthusiast will want to miss.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Nipawin Physician Honoured at Convention

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Bev Karras of Nipawin was recently honoured by her peers with an award for meritorious long medical service to the community. She was presented with the honour at the 10th Rural and Remote Medicine Convention in Kelowna, British Columbia.

Dr. Jill Konkin, president of the Society of Rural Physicians, said in announcing the award:

Many rural communities don't have enough doctors. Others are privileged to have a series of doctors contribute to the care of their community. Only a few have the long-standing contributions of physicians, such as Dr. Karras, who have made a real commitment to their community. With this award we are recognizing those physicians.

The Society of Rural Physicians established the Rural Service Awards on its 10th anniversary to recognize long-serving rural doctors. The society was established in 1992 and currently has more than 1,300 members.

Dr. Karras is also the immediate past president of the Saskatchewan Medical Association.

I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Dr. Karras in being honoured with this prestigious award, her outstanding commitment to rural health, and her service to the Saskatchewan Medical Association.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Valley School Division/SaskPower Partnership

Ms. Jones: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, another example in a long list of reasons that justify the Crowns, model corporate citizens.

This morning the Saskatchewan Valley School Division No. 49 and SaskPower announced a partnership worth 2.5 million to upgrade 18 schools and administrative facilities. This partnership also provides education for students on energy conservation through the Destination Conservation program. The electricity and natural gas savings of this project will reduce carbon dioxide emissions into our air by 920 metric tonnes annually which would be the equivalent of taking 13 cars off the road or planting over 200,000 fully grown trees.

As part of this program, students and teachers will notice a new lighting system which will eliminate eyestrain. Upgrading or replacements of worn equipment will improve building operation controls. Over 12 years the energy performance contract with SaskPower will help the Saskatchewan Valley School Division save the electricity used by 105 homes for one year, or burning 845 100-watt light bulbs continuously for an entire year.

This will also mean a savings to the Sask Valley School Division of \$161,693 that can be diverted to a repayment schedule to pay capital expenditures of 2.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, this partnership will also spur about \$630,000 in spinoff business through subcontracting work for local electrical and mechanical contractors which . . .

ORAL QUESTIONS

Job Creation

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're finding out that Canada is in the midst of a job creation boom. In the first four months of the year 2002 there were more jobs created in Canada than in all the other G-7 countries put together.

The Canadian job market is on fire. And this should be good news except for one thing. While every other province in Canada is creating jobs, here in NDP (New Democratic Party) Saskatchewan jobs are being killed.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan was the only province in Canada to lose jobs last month while job growth in all the rest of the country was surging ahead. Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP so out of step with the rest of the country? Why is the NDP killing jobs while everybody else, every other province in Canada, is creating jobs?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, my question is: why is the Leader of the Opposition out of step with every economist, every analyst in the way he looks at the jobs and the job impact on agriculture in Saskatchewan? Why is he out of step with the business community who see a positive future? Why, Mr. Speaker, is he out of step with the young people of Saskatchewan — 75 per cent of whom graduate from university and stay here to work, and 90 per cent of the SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) grads who stay here to work? Why is he out of step with them, Mr. Speaker?

I'll tell you why, Mr. Speaker. He understands full well that Canada has lost 35,000 jobs in agriculture, that Saskatchewan has lost 50,000 jobs in agriculture since 1987. He understands that. But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, what the people of Saskatchewan understand — he's got a negative attitude because he's only got one goal and that's political power. Nothing else means anything to him or the members who sit with him in the opposition benches.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister's lack of understanding on this issue is absolutely appalling

because, Mr. Speaker, in fact it's young people that are leaving Saskatchewan. In the last year 6,500 jobs in Saskatchewan have disappeared for people aged 15 to 44. And in the last two years 19,000 jobs have disappeared for people between 15 and 44 years of age.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP is killing thousands of jobs for our young people and forcing thousands of young people to leave the province to find work. Mr. Speaker, in just two short years the NDP has killed 19,000 jobs for young people.

The question is, why is that government killing young people's jobs? Why are so much of the job loss actually represented by young people who have lost jobs and left the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition. Why is it that he can't understand that the 50,000 jobs that we've lost in agriculture have been offset in other areas of our economy, Mr. Speaker? Why is it that he can't understand that?

Mr. Speaker, where was he for eight consecutive years when the economy of this province was growing? He never stood in this place one time. In 2001, Mr. Speaker, we had some very difficult times in this province as it relates to agricultural jobs. But I tell you he was here the year before that, and when the economy and the jobs were growing, he never said a word.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what this is about. This is about a Leader of the Opposition who has one goal and one goal only — negative. Every day he gets up, Mr. Speaker . . . You know, it's almost like Groundhog Day. The groundhog gets up to see if spring is coming and the sun is shining. This guy crawls out of his hole to see if there's anything negative he can talk about. That's what he's about, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That minister can blather on with the rhetoric, but the facts speak for themselves. Mr. Speaker, 19,000 jobs lost by young people. Mr. Speaker, these are more than just numbers.

Now we knew that the NDP didn't care about our seniors. We found that out when they hiked long-term care fees and had to back down in disgrace.

Now we also find out that they don't care about the young people in this province. They don't care about the people who will provide a future for this province. They don't seem to mind that 19,000 young people have lost jobs in Saskatchewan over the last two years.

The minister says everything is fine. He says the opposition is being negative. Mr. Speaker, the government is being irresponsible by not putting forward a plan to stem the outflow of job loss by our young people.

Mr. Speaker, why did Saskatchewan lose 19,000 jobs by young . . . for young people in the last two years? Why is the NDP content to drive out young people from our province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — You know, Mr. Speaker, we listen to this Leader of the Opposition every day. He's the guy who developed the plan for ethanol, some mythical plan for ethanol that no one except them understands, Mr. Speaker.

He's the guy who last fall got up and outlined a three-point plan for economic development growth. Did you want to know something, Mr. Speaker? When we brought that plan to the light of day and when even he started to realize that it couldn't work, he quit talking about it.

He's got a one-line economic development plan, Mr. Speaker, and that's in 10 years he's going to grow the population by 100,000. That's the plan. Now how do you get there? You know what, Mr. Speaker, he doesn't know.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — He doesn't know. He doesn't know and I want to tell you why he doesn't. He offered up a great big tax reduction package.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — He offered . . . well, and let me tell him about it. He's going to cut the corporate capital tax in half and, Mr. Speaker, he's going to eliminate the small business tax. And they're all over there cheering. But you want to know, Mr. Speaker, what none of them know? None of them know how he's going to pay for it, Mr. Speaker, because the only way to do it is deficit budgeting. That's their plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister does not understand that we're going to pay for these things by growing the province, something that his government has failed to do over the last 11 years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, I think the minister is jealous because we have a plan and he doesn't. Nevertheless, we see more damage caused by the NDP in Saskatchewan every day.

Look at Saturday's papers: Tuition fees are soaring; contract talks with teachers are at a stalemate; the outgoing president of the SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association) says the provincial health system is falling apart and that's a direct result of the NDP government's failure to grow the province of Saskatchewan. And that's what happens when you drive 19,000 young people out of work in this province.

Mr. Speaker, how does the NDP propose to pay for health care and education in the future if they keep driving young people out of jobs, out of the workplace, and in fact right out of the province?

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan to create jobs and to bring young

people home. Why is the NDP content to kill jobs? Why don't they care about young people? Why don't they have a plan to grow Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, he's going to grow the province, he's going to grow the economy. You know what? He's going to get out of his negative attitude hole and he's going to stand up with his watering can, Mr. Speaker, and he's going to spray some water on this economy and miraculously it's going to grow and it's going to create 100,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, there is some reality to governing. There is some reality to understanding what it's going to take to build this economy. There is some understanding to know that agriculture has lost 50,000 jobs and we have replaced them in other areas of this economy, Mr. Speaker. And we didn't do it by standing in an opposition bench and watering the plant, Mr. Speaker.

We worked with the business community, we worked with the educators in this province, we worked with the people of Saskatchewan. They're the people that grow the jobs, they're the people that grow this economy, and it's not going to come from some mythical plant from the member from Biggar. It isn't going to come from him, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Farmland Ownership

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. The Standing Committee on Agriculture will begin hearings this week to review The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act, as directed by the NDP's 2002 Throne Speech.

A few months ago, the minister indicated to the Farm Land Security Board members that the Act would be changed this spring. As well, comments by the minister to the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention have led many people to believe that the NDP do intend to introduce changes to the legislation that would allow more landowners in Saskatchewan by non-Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, after the Standing Committee on Agriculture does its work, will the NDP commit to making changes to the land ownership laws during this sitting of the legislature?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, to the member from Watrous, the member understands fully that during the Throne Speech of this year, we included in the Throne Speech the process of reviewing the farmland security Act, and that's why we established in this province the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

The Standing Committee on Agriculture over the next several weeks is going to review, with Saskatchewan people, the kinds of voice and concern and issue and thinking that Saskatchewan people wanted directed. That information will come back to the Standing Committee and to the Government of Saskatchewan,

at which time we'll then make a decision about the future of the farmland security Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the members on this side of the House agree with the minister that this Act is a concern. There are farmland owners in Saskatchewan who are having great difficulty because of the restrictions on the out-of-province land ownership.

Earl and Jack Zenert have owned and operated a mixed cattle and grain farm near Drake for many years, but decided to sell their farm in 2000. They've had very little interest over the last two years and have had to rent out their land.

This winter, however, an offer did come in from Ringstead Ranch of Millarville, Alberta. The owners of this ranch would like to buy the whole farm parcel, move a family onto the farm for permanent Saskatchewan residency, and start up a large livestock breeding herd operation. But their application for exemption to the Farm Land Security Board was turned down.

Mr. Speaker, how is the existing legislation, which prevents new economic development and growth in Saskatchewan, how is that good for our province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, as you may know and the House may want to know, Mr. Speaker, that through the course of its work the Farm Land Security Board approves somewhere in the neighbourhood of 95 to 97 per cent of all the applications that come before them. And in this particular instance, Mr. Speaker, the Farm Land Security Board has made a decision that it's not prepared to make that kind of an approval.

And I say to the members opposite this is precisely why we said that we'd have the farmland security Act under review. That we want to take a look at this piece of legislation because there are many circumstances, Mr. Speaker, of which this piece of legislation, in my view, needs to be upgraded. This piece of legislation needs to be brought into the modern time. And this piece of legislation will assist, Mr. Speaker, in my view, in some of the . . . (inaudible) . . . the future investments that farmers in Saskatchewan will make.

And that's precisely why, Mr. Speaker, that this piece of legislation is coming through the Standing Committee on Agriculture and back to this Legislative Assembly during this session, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — . . . but serious enough to review.

Mr. Speaker, the owners of Ringstead Ranch have made efforts to try to make a deal to work with the . . . for the Zenerts and for the province. They have even offered to have the family, who would take up permanent residency and manage the operation, take majority ownership to comply with the Saskatchewan residency regulations. But again, the Farm Land Security Board rejected their offer.

The Zenerts would love to sell their whole farm parcel as one unit and are anxious to get out of farming. They believe the Ringstead Ranch would contribute to the community by moving a new family into the area and hiring local workers for their farming operations.

Mr. Speaker, this deal would not only be good for the Zenerts, but it would be good for the economic development in the Drake area.

Will the NDP commit to loosening the restrictions of the farmland ownership in Saskatchewan before this legislative session ends?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you. As I've said already in my previous two answers, this kind of a case that the member from Watrous brings forward is precisely the reason why we have in front of the standing committee today, Mr. Speaker, the examination of this piece of legislation. Because it's our view that this piece of legislation is restrictive, Mr. Speaker, and it provides, from time to time, issues of which doesn't allow for other people to come and do business in our province.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, to you and the members opposite, you too sit on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and so you'll need to examine, you'll need to examine your own constituents, Mr. Speaker. Because on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, they will be confronted with issues, as well, where their people who support their party will say to them they shouldn't change that piece of legislation. So they'll have to deal with people who they see on a regular basis who'll be encouraging them not to change the legislation, Mr. Speaker.

So I say to the members opposite, we're going through the process today. You need to support the work of the committee and bring a recommendation collectively to the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Government Aircraft

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Speaker, on a TV news item at noon today there was a piece about one of the government-owned aircraft no longer being in service. So my question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier.

Did the provincial government recently buy another aircraft, in particular a King Air aircraft?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I don't know why all the other ministers are so scared of question period. This is a pretty friendly crowd from what I can see.

I want to tell the member opposite that in fact the one 1975 Cheyenne that we have in the air service has been grounded. It, of course, does have 16,000 hours on its airframe and, as such, its maintenance record was simply too much to maintain it. We have not purchased an aircraft. Instead what we have opted for is to look for a lease and to lease a new — well, new to us — a used aircraft, a used propeller aircraft.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wakefield: — Well, Mr. Speaker, on a review of Transport Canada's Web site, it does in fact show that a new registration has been issued as of last Thursday, just this last week. And it's registered to SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) for a KingAir airplane, with a base here in Regina.

I'd like to know, Mr. Speaker, how much did the government pay for this aircraft? Under which budget is it to be included? And what was the purchase price of this aircraft?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, we have not purchased an aircraft. What we have done is leased an aircraft for a short period of time. It's a five-year lease, approximate cost is about 250,000 per year. This is certainly more economical than having purchased, and one of the reasons we've had to do it is we need to replace an aircraft.

The KingAir 200s are a smaller aircraft than the 350s. They are the workhorse of the air ambulance fleet and this will still be the . . . this will now be the new standard for ours.

In terms of the aircraft in the fleet, the second Cheyenne — which is again another 1975 Cheyenne — is nearing its time out on its life and as such will be basically used for backup purposes.

I will make all members aware shortly to their own offices of the new operational protocols which will be in place to help manage the restraint that we're going to find as a result of having two active aircraft and one in backup.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Speaker, just to follow up on that question. The registration does not go onto an aircraft until there is an ownership change.

Now on the Transport Canada Web site, it shows that the province of Saskatchewan is the owner of this new aircraft. Is it leased from CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan)? Are they the purchasers of this aircraft? And who is this aircraft for? Is it for the cabinet ministers; is it for the Premier? In fact is it . . . considering the recent notoriety on Ron Clark's travel account, maybe it's for him. Does he need his own aircraft?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly this aircraft, I have already explained, is a leased aircraft. It is not leased from CIC; it is a lease that we have entered into otherwise. And certainly the aircraft is there for the use of civil . . . of the civil service and the members of this legislature in their activities.

I notice that the member for Lloydminster, last year, billed some \$14,000 in terms of air travel using these very aircraft. So I think if anybody understands the need for these aircraft, certainly the member for Lloydminster should.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Care Issues

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

The Saskatchewan Medical Association held its spring meeting this last weekend. During its presentation to SMA, outgoing president Dr. Bev Karras referred to existing health systems in the province as hallway medicine because the system doesn't meet the timely health care needs of patients.

Dr. Karras says and I quote:

This rationing of access has reached levels which threaten the professional integrity and morale of practicing physicians, and compromises our ability to provide reasonable patient care.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why the NDP is severely limiting access to operating time and compromising patient care?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this government has set forward its action plan for health. And one of the issues that we've been dealing with are the management of waiting times for surgery and we are doing that together with the professionals, members who . . . of the SMA are included in that, as well as the hospital administrators and other people.

What we are going to do is we're going to work with the people who are running the system to make sure that we have the resources that will allow for the care that's needed in this province. And what we will continue to do is work with the SMA, work with others who are in the system to make sure that everything works for the people of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've heard over and over again from this government that they will work with people. The people of Saskatchewan are wondering when there's going to be any results from their work with the people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, Dr. Karras says a contributing factor to the difficulties faced in providing timely health care is the critical shortage of physicians, nurses, and other health care providers. She says and I quote:

We continue to hear about patients being discharged too early or having their surgeries cancelled because there are no beds.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP are putting more money into health care, but waiting lists continue to grow. In the 1999 election campaign, the NDP promised to hire 500 more health care providers. It has not worked and it has not happened.

Mr. Speaker, why have the NDP failed to hire more health care

professionals and where is all the money going?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we do on this side of the House is spend a lot of time and effort to try to prevent truth decay. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have a way of skirting around what is accurate about what is happening in our system.

And what I would point through to the member opposite and say is that we have more doctors this year than we had last year. And we're moving slowly and carefully. We do things like increase the number of spots at the medical school; so now we have 60 instead of 55. We're working with all kinds of bursaries and other ways to make sure that we have the right kind of tools that we need to make sure that we get physicians practising right across the province.

We're working together with the nursing profession around magnet workplaces that encourage people to go to work.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to do that because that's the right thing to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, Dr. Karras says providing sustainable, quality health care that meets the needs of patients and communities in a timely fashion should be the end goal. Sadly, we are a long way from achieving this goal in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, last fall the NDP announced an action plan for health care in the province but so far doctors are not witnessing any results. Instead, doctors deal with, on a daily basis, these issues. They deal with reduced operating times, they deal with outdated equipment, and they deal with a lack of RNs (registered nurse) in the operating rooms, in the emergency care, and also on the wards.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, when are health . . . when are health care providers and patients going to see results from the NDP's action plan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Part of our problem in this province is dealing with members like the member opposite and the negative attitude that they have. I would have to give . . . A practical example of this, Mr. Speaker, is that a year ago we announced that we're going ahead and building a long-term care facility in Weyburn.

Guess who didn't show up? The member opposite didn't show up and she has been fighting that project right from the beginning. And what we want to do, Mr. Speaker, is work with the people in the community, not those members opposite who create a negative environment around many, many issues.

And so what we will do is we'll work with the nurses, we'll

work with the doctors, we'll work with the people in the community, and we're going to continue to build a very good system for all of the Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 45 — The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 45, The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2002 be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 32

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 32 — The Land Surveys Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The whole system of land surveys and that whole operation that this NDP government has started this year has turned out to be a total disaster, and it's going to be a privilege and a joy to discuss this today because it comes up, Mr. Speaker, I believe in the next two or three Bills as well. So we'll have a good opportunity to discuss this and to voice a little bit of information that comes factually to us from all sides.

This piece of legislation, as the minister indicated, authorizes the controller of surveys to refund fees in whole or in part, or allow on-line searches of plans to access the plans that were maintained by the former chief surveys officer, among other changes.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this whole LAND (Land Titles Automated Network Development project) project has become a total disaster. First of all we know the amount of money that it's cost and I think we'll discuss that a little further on today. But it's been a fine example of how socialist NDP thinking exists that if they can't do it themselves then obviously no one else could. And that's why they had a budget that started off with this whole concept some time ago of under 20 million.

They didn't bother checking to see if some private enterprise was prepared to come in and make a commitment — a commitment to say we'll provide this service for this amount of money. They'd know exactly what it was. By now they've taken that amount of money and it's been multiplied by about four or five and they still don't have the system going.

Land Surveys Act — total disaster. We recall some of the other plans that have existed in the province before. This is by far the one that has been the most mismanaged. This whole LAND project came up for debate many times in this legislature and around the province. The idea of computerizing the system may be worthy but the way the NDP has gone about it has been a total recipe for disaster, total recipe for disaster.

Mr. Speaker, they have spent in the vicinity of \$80 million — \$80 million. It doesn't work. So far it only is operating, more or less, in only part of the province.

And how effective is it? You yourself, Mr. Speaker, will be reminded very well, some days ago, when I held a sheet of paper in this particular House and indicated that in the old system all the information that individual needed was in that one piece of paper. And then I rolled out what you get now, which is 20 pieces of paper, each one with a separate cost that was greater than that one single piece of paper before.

That's The Land Surveys Act. That's how this NDP government functions. And it's this kind of a mentality that has driven this province to the situation that we discussed, Mr. Speaker, in question period where we asked: what's happened to the jobs? What's happened to the growth?

And it's just as in the LAND system. They don't want anyone else coming in from outside and taking the land because they have it figured out that if we keep enough people out, eventually all the NDP will own all the land in the province.

It's as the minister of Economic Development said some time ago, the fewer people that are around here the more there is for the rest of us. It's that mentality that drives this kind of legislation, this kind of legislation that doesn't allow other people in, that doesn't allow other ideas to come in, and just say if it doesn't come from those few individuals on those benches opposite, it obviously can't be worthwhile doing.

Well we're seeing with The Land Surveys Act, Mr. Speaker, what a total disaster this is, how mismanaged this is.

A number of years ago, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity of visiting the Ukraine, a land that's been rife with socialism for just about a century, just about a century. And you know it's unfortunate, but when I came back here to Saskatchewan I can see that in 50 years the NDP have been able to do to Saskatchewan just about what it took the Communists 100 years to do in the Ukraine. They're efficient, but inefficiency at . . . but efficient at mismanagement. Efficient at mismanagement.

How else could you spend, Mr. Speaker, \$80 million in such a short period of time, spend so much money and accomplish so little for all the rest of us? It's a complete disaster, Mr. Speaker.

The government's own records said . . . say that they've spent up to 80 million. And those are the numbers that they are releasing to the public, Mr. Speaker. Those are the numbers that we're releasing to the public. This project isn't finished. This project isn't completed. This project isn't working. It doesn't even cover all of Saskatchewan up to this point. Where this cost will go by the time they're done, we have absolutely no idea, Mr. Speaker. It could definitely, in the way they've been going,

end up getting close to double this — 100,000, I don't think would surprise anyone.

Well they don't have the Saskatoon office going, they don't have the Prince Albert office going. They've already spent 80 million. It's not working where it is instituted. What will the cost be when they finally get it working throughout the whole province? And when will that take place? The inefficiency and the waste that this project has at present time is truly amazing, Mr. Speaker, truly amazing. When we ask questions about this system, Mr. Speaker, we hear from the ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan) chief executive that millions more will still have to be spent.

Mr. Speaker, wouldn't it have been a whole lot simpler if this government would have just left its socialist, NDP, self-centred mindset alone for once and just said, is there someone out there, is there someone out there who would come and give us an offer to put the system in place?

If they would have said, for 80 million bucks, who would come do it, they would have had people flocking across the border — bad roads or not, they would have come with plans. They would have come with plans for a fraction of the amount they've misspent so far.

They didn't even ask the question. They didn't even ask the question. Had they asked the question and had the number come back, yes, it'll cost 100 million to put this into place, they might have been justified trying to create their own system. But they didn't do that, Mr. Speaker. They didn't do that.

They didn't even contact provinces next door, provinces who have systems in place, provinces who have a similar survey system as we have here which is different from what they happen to have in much of Ontario and much of Quebec. They have a different land survey system here. They could have gone to the provinces that had a similar system and said, could you come and help us; do you have some ideas; could we use your same system? But no, they wouldn't do that.

Reminds me a whole lot, Mr. Speaker, of the Education minister of some years ago who, when they found out that they had a problem with the math curriculum, instead of going to the province with the highest math scores and saying, we want your curriculum, they said no, we'll have to create our own. That's the way the NDP thinks. We have to create our own system.

Well it wasn't more than a month or two ago we got the results again, Mr. Speaker. Math students in Saskatchewan are lacking. So they had to create the idea themselves. They think they know it all. They couldn't do it in the math system in schools. They can't do it when they count quarters of section of land across this province. It's been a total disaster, Mr. Speaker.

We receive all kinds of calls, faxes, e-mails at our office from people who've attempted to use the system and get back misinformation or get back information that comes in 20 pages, as I've just finished explaining, instead of one page. Only the NDP could waste this much money and get so little for it.

One way we know that we have a white elephant on our hands is when we put the freedom of information request on the

travelogues of people involved with the Crown corporation ISC and we learn that well over \$100,000 were spent on travel to places around the world — Florida, California, and Europe — to ask to see how many sales they've made of this great plan.

Well you know, Mr. Speaker, they've sold this plan to exactly the same number of people that they sold their math curriculum to — none, zero, nil, whatever term they need to have to get it through to them. It's been a total disaster, no success whatsoever. But they've spent another \$100,000 on trips around the world.

Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe if we look at where they went, it might explain why they were going. It might have had precious little to do with selling this system. They went to Florida, California, Europe. Well those are places that tourists go to sightsee and visit and have a good time. That's where they're going to try and sell this program. But they're unsuccessful.

I'm somewhat suspicious, Mr. Speaker, that these are just nice, friendly little junkets they're going on — trips to sightsee, look around the countryside, maybe buy some artwork, take that home. It had probably precious little to do with selling the system because if it did, either the system stinks or the selling was totally inept — one of the two, or both. It could have been both. But it was one of those situations.

Florida, California, and Europe, Mr. Speaker. That's where they go to sell this program, but totally unsuccessful.

There are many questions that have to be asked about ISC and all the related pieces of legislation introduced in the Assembly. Bill 32 is one of those. We have sent this Bill to many interested third parties to get their opinion. We are still getting responses to those, and there's a whole lot more time needed to debate this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, all members on this side are waiting their turn to get up and discuss with the members opposite — and for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan — what a disaster this is, how this is so indicative of the mismanagement that we see from day to day to day from the NDP across the way over there, Mr. Speaker.

And for those reasons, and very good reasons they are, Mr. Speaker, I'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 32 at this time.

Debate adjourned.

(14:30)

Bill No. 33

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 33 — The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a . . . Members on my side would like for me to repeat exactly what I said. And I think we can probably oblige them because this Land Titles Act, Mr. Speaker, is sort of a — not a divine comedy — it's a political comedy, that the people opposite

could actually create such a piece of legislation that happens to be very much else but just a bad joke.

If it was just a joke, we could probably all enjoy it, but it's a bad one, Mr. Speaker. It's an expensive joke, and it's a joke that creates a lot of confusion and work for people across this province at great expense to the taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, quoting the Justice minister's second reading speech and referring to what he said on this, Bill No. 33 allows for:

... new provisions concerning the process for the sheriff's sales of land by court order; new provisions for removal of a court certificate of impending litigation from a title; clarification of the circumstances in which the title can be held by joint tenants with no (surveyorship) ... and in which an application (must) be made to a court to end a joint tenancy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister states that the key in this Bill is to ensure that there's a clear definition for each new parcel of land after a new plan has been approved. Now the system ... They're changing the whole way of doing things, Mr. Speaker.

You're quite aware of some of the old systems that worked well. They worked well in our province for over 100 years. When you discuss concepts such as metes and bounds, where if you had a particular piece of property and you bought part of it you might get all the land with the exception of the northern 500 feet, this sort of thing. And that's what's meant by metes and bounds. You wouldn't divide it up and put down a separate title for it; it would just indicate what was happening with it.

This particular concern is things that we hear about a lot in our office. Many rural people are calling us, Mr. Speaker, or they e-mail or fax us about the problems with this new computerized LAND system. It's a headache, Mr. Speaker. It deals with land descriptions and new parcels of land in ways that are totally different.

The old system, Mr. Speaker, worked perfectly well. Neither you or I, Mr. Speaker, are aware of any situations where metes and bounds were used and a problem was created. People understood what that was ... meant. People knew what the north ... you know, the north third or the north half of a particular piece of land was. They understood those sorts of things.

But apparently, those systems and those values that we used to have, to be able to use descriptions that made eminent sense to everyone in this province, are no longer good enough. We have to have some new systems, apparently. So we spent \$80 million on this particular aspect as well.

The question that has to be asked: how many pieces of legislation are we going to see regarding ISC and the LAND system? There are already two on the order paper in terms of problem with this system.

Now we need to just look at that, Mr. Speaker. This system isn't even totally working. It's not even covering the whole province and we're already operating with corrections. We're already

making corrections and amendments to something that isn't even totally in place.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, it would have been a whole lot easier had that group of people opposite, those NDP socialists who want to create the world for themselves — and we know what a disaster that happens to be — if they would have gone someplace else, used someone else's system, modified it for any differences that happen to exist in this particular province, we wouldn't have to deal with a whole lot of amendments to a system that isn't even in place.

It's a whole lot like General Motors or Ford or Chrysler putting a recall in place after the first car comes off the assembly line. We'd say, well, what a mis-thought car that must be. You got to recall it and the first one hasn't even come off the assembly line.

That's as ludicrous as this piece of legislation is, Mr. Speaker, and as ludicrous as the whole concept of their new land titles and LAND system that happens to be. The whole ISC concept isn't working. It isn't working.

We have many, many people, as I said, Mr. Speaker, who are frustrated with this, who have lots of questions. And when I started speaking on this particular Bill, Bill No. 33, I had a number of my colleagues ask me very immediately, as soon as I said that, would you make sure that you go ditto on this one as you did on Bill No. 32 because we all want to get up, we want to speak on this one as well because there is so much mismanagement that needs to be discussed, needs to be clarified, and brought to the light of day.

And for that particular reason, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 33 at this time.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 9

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 9 — The Real Estate Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up this afternoon and say a few words on Bill No. 9, a Bill that's been brought by the Minister of Justice to make some changes and, according to the minister, we got the impression that these were kind of housekeeping kind of changes.

But on first glance, we already began to see some problems with this Bill, Mr. Speaker. And so I think it's important that ... to spend a few minutes this afternoon just discussing, for the benefit of the legislature, some of the problems that we see here.

Now one of the things that's being talked about to begin with, Mr. Speaker, is the confidentiality that is required when business deals are taking place surrounding the exchange of property from one owner to another. And certainly it's important, Mr. Speaker, that when property changes hands and real estate agents are involved ... And often there are other

outside agencies that are involved, whether they be law enforcement or a financial institution, Mr. Speaker. Through this entire process, of course, confidentiality must be maintained in order to maintain the integrity of all the institutions involved.

And certainly for the individuals who are involved in a property sales on a personal basis, Mr. Speaker, we certainly want to be able to assure them that when . . . Confidentiality respecting their business and their personal lives certainly remain at a level where what could happen in a deal such as this purchase of a property that confidentiality will remain at a high level.

In the case of people being moved about, what could happen of course, Mr. Speaker — you take a financial institution that may be involved, they would be dealing . . . could be dealing with one person who's specifically involved in helping with the transaction.

And of course in Saskatchewan you know so well — and of course the Leader of the Opposition raised it very clearly in question period this afternoon, Mr. Speaker — is that we have a great deal of out-migration in Saskatchewan. And of course what happens in cases such as that, Mr. Speaker, is that — especially for financial institutions, law enforcement agencies, real estate brokers, and what have you, Mr. Speaker — is that when people move to another jurisdiction looking for a better life for themselves, is that then someone new then comes into the picture and starts to deal with the people involved in the real estate transaction.

And so then it's important — important, Mr. Speaker — that we have procedures in place in this province to protect people who are involved in the buying and selling of real estate and to protect them because someone who's been first involved with the, with the transaction and then has been removed and someone else replaces them, that the first person carries that confidentiality with him.

It's important that people who are involved in real estate transactions on a personal basis, a personal level, Mr. Speaker, that there's an assurance out there that as a society we recognize that their personal life is no one's business but their own. And certainly that's something that we want to maintain rather stringently.

And now some other aspects of the Bill too, Mr. Speaker. One of the things that has often been found is that this government, this NDP government, is not afraid of putting tight restrictions on other agencies other than themselves to be able to provide reports back to auditors and what have you.

And certainly they're talking about the Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission needs to file an annual report every year. And certainly by the time their end of their year comes around, Mr. Speaker, in the past they've been provided with 60 days to get the report in.

Well often, Mr. Speaker, the real estate business in Saskatchewan has at times — and maybe certainly not in the recent times — has been quite busy. And 60 days of course, is certainly not an adequate amount of time and the government is looking to up that to 90 days.

And that's certainly something that we would like to be able to discuss probably sometime in August with the Justice minister, at that time. And I think that would be a great opportunity to be able to discuss with the Justice minister, why they're looking at freeing up the tight restriction that was placed upon the Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission.

Because we certainly don't see from this government that same kind of enthusiasm towards an appropriate time frame when it comes to job creation. We take a look at this government in the last election. They talked about creating 30,000 new jobs. And of course, what's happened is that they've lost 19,000 jobs — a kind of a switch of almost 50,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker.

So when we look about the appropriateness of time frames that are involved, you know, they're putting expectations upon the Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission. Unfortunately we'll have to go to another election before we'll be able to do the same thing for this government, Mr. Speaker.

Another aspect of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, that we have questions about and certainly we're going to take the opportunity when we get a chance in Committee of the Whole — which we see as again as sometime in August, Mr. Speaker — is that when it comes to real estate, often — well not often — occasionally, occasionally, Mr. Speaker, is that through the business of real estate and the transaction that will take place that on a rare occasion a real estate broker or a real estate agent will make a mistake. It doesn't happen very often. Certainly the people in the real estate profession are very professional, Mr. Speaker, and we want to applaud them for all the efforts they have . . . they've made in the past of trying to help Saskatchewan grow. Certainly that would go against the grain of this NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the incumbents, of course, upon real estate agents, the real estate brokers, would be to carry a degree of insurance that would protect themselves and most specifically to protect their customers, to protect their customers, Mr. Speaker, against errors and omissions.

Now certainly in the past, of course, we're well aware on this side of the House — maybe the other side of the House is not quite as well aware as we are — is that very seldom do real estate agents have to be invoked for their errors and omissions clauses in their . . . in contracts, but it does happen on a rare occasion.

And real estate agents in a prudent manner, Mr. Speaker, have always carried an appropriate amount of errors and omissions insurance. They've always carried it with a reputable insurance agency. As you know, Mr. Speaker, in a society where you allow competition, insurance agents then sell errors and omissions insurance plus they'd be very aggressive in trying to promote their errors and omissions insurance so that real estate brokers and their clients can be protected in case something goes wrong in a real estate transaction.

And for years, for years, Mr. Speaker, this has worked very, very well. The insurance business, through its competitive rates and competitive opportunities, has provided outstanding errors and omissions insurance. And certainly, it's certainly been a well regarded safeguard when it comes to the clients of real

estate brokers and real estate agents, Mr. Speaker.

Now but unfortunately, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we see in this Bill that the government for some reason or other is taking a look at changing this. They are taking a look at changing how insurance for errors and omissions are to be carried for real estate agents and brokers, Mr. Speaker.

As I've already mentioned, for years real estate agents and brokers have been able to go into a competitive market and been able to purchase their errors and omissions insurance and it's worked very well. Now the clause that we're seeing in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, talks about a specified carrier — a specified carrier, Mr. Speaker, in regards to errors and omissions insurance.

(14:45)

As we know, that then will restrict down to a company of one whom real estate agents and brokers are going to be able to purchase their errors and omissions insurance from. Now this certainly would be an inappropriate type of process in a competitive insurance market. And certainly when we have a government such as we have here, this NDP government who already own their own insurance agency, is that it leaves a great deal of questions out there as what's going to happen to errors and omissions insurance.

Is then, as an example, a Crown corporation, the Saskatchewan SGI, going to be the designated carrier for errors and omissions insurance for real estate brokers in this province, Mr. Speaker? And on this side of the House we have a great deal of concern with that. Now because we've certainly seen where SGI, when it gets out of its basic core insurance, it seems to have a lot of trouble trying to compete and actually does not do very well when it's not dealing with its core business, Mr. Speaker.

So what is the intent of this government? To have a Bill with no specific that's going to put into regulations who is going to be the carrier for errors and omissions insurance for real estate brokers, Mr. Speaker? And that's a great deal of concern to us on this side of the House.

As you know, in a competitive market, insurance agents who sell errors and omissions insurance must provide top quality service. And certainly to the real estate agents and brokers — and certainly to the clients of those agents and brokers — and now we go to a specified carrier that we've brought forward in regulations rather than in an Act, Mr. Speaker.

Does that mean then that we're . . . that the real estate agents and brokers, and certainly the buyers and sellers in the real estate market, are going to be left at the whim of regulations carried out by the Department of Justice? We have a great deal of concern around that. Because certainly we want to make the marketplace in Saskatchewan as friendly as possible because it's incumbent on this time in our history that the real estate market be as friendly as possible, Mr. Speaker.

As we know, real estate property is slow right now in Saskatchewan. We know that the NDP government has talked many times about how buoyant the market is. Well as an example I would like to explain to the members opposite, Mr.

Speaker, what we consider a definition for buoyancy, and that certainly is not the province of Saskatchewan.

In a buoyant economy, Mr. Speaker, there would be a demand for housing. In Saskatchewan we don't see that. There's a demand for sales. There's a lot of people trying to sell their property, Mr. Speaker.

In fact in the area where I live, in the . . . near Prince Albert, and surrounding the city of Prince Albert, and I know also that inside the city of Prince Albert that through the late winter and early spring there was approximately 700, 700 houses for sale in the Prince Albert city and immediate area. Seven hundred houses, Mr. Speaker.

Now that's . . . that does not speak to those of us on this side of the House of a buoyant market. And so when we see restrictions like this coming in a Bill, we're kind of wondering, Mr. Speaker, how this is going to help a downturn in the market when we're putting restrictions on buyers and sellers and certainly those agents who are involved in the movement of real estate property.

Now we take the city of Prince Albert, and what we should do to explain to the members opposite, the NDP government, is that they need to understand what an up market might look like. Some friends of mine, Mr. Speaker, are trying to sell their house in Prince Albert. They moved . . . from Prince Albert, they moved to the city of Lloydminster. Certainly the member from Lloydminster is very proud of his city and all the activity that is going on there.

Well these friends of mine, Mr. Speaker, they moved to Lloydminster from Prince Albert. They put their house up for sale. They bought a house very, very similar, very similar, Mr. Speaker, in Lloydminster. And lo and behold, in Lloydminster there was 28 houses for sale when they bought, Mr. Speaker. So, of course, when they bought that left 27 houses for sale. Unfortunately they are selling an almost identical house in the Prince Albert area, Mr. Speaker, and there's 700 houses for sale.

Now certainly we don't want to think that the city of Lloydminster is anywhere near the size of Prince Albert. Certainly it's only about 75 per cent of the size of the city of Prince Albert. But in reality then, there should only be 75 per cent more houses for sale . . . or 25 per cent, pardon me, houses for sale in the city of Prince Albert. But there's not. There's hundreds of per cent more for sale in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. In fact, it works out to about 300 per cent more. And that's the difference between having an upturn in the market and a downturn in the market.

And certainly in Saskatchewan, in real estate, we're seeing a significant downturn as people continue to leave in droves as the member from Rosetown-Biggar, the Leader of the Opposition, mentioned in question period today. And the member from Prince Albert Northcote was unable to defend and was all . . . had to blame it on the farmers — it's the farmer's fault that things are going bad in this promise . . . province. Certainly they want to turn and blame the farmers, because after all the farmers didn't vote for the NDP, Mr. Speaker, so therefore it must be their fault that things are going bad in the

province.

Well unfortunately for the rest of Saskatchewan, maybe the farmers of Saskatchewan are just a little bit more enlightened, just a little . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. I would just like to remind the member for Saskatchewan Rivers that the motion before the House is Bill No. 2, second reading, The Real Estate Amendment Act. And if he should stray once in a while, he should try to bring his topic back to the debate on that particular Bill.

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Speaker, of course I'd be . . . When I talk about the changes to The Real Estate Amendment Act, we want to be very clear that what I am talking about has very much to do with real estate and the amendments to the Act and how this . . . the changes to the Act, this Real Estate Amendment Act, has a severe negative effect upon real estate, real estate transactions in the province of Saskatchewan.

And of course, as was mentioned earlier in question period, when we bring people into Saskatchewan, who are trying to buy and move to Saskatchewan, and yet we see a government who's wanting to have changes to The Real Estate Act, and this amendment that talks about real estate brokers and agents only being able to purchase errors and omissions insurance from a single carrier, from . . . removing competition in this field. It must be a very large field of insurance, or should be an even larger area of insurance in this province, Mr. Speaker, but unfortunately, because of the downturn in the real estate market in this province, it's probably not anywhere near as big as it should be or anywhere near as big as it could be.

And so then what this government's doing is bringing in a clause here in this Act that will probably even further restrict the opportunities for people wanting to come into Saskatchewan now, because every time we turn around, Mr. Speaker, we certainly see red tape piling up everywhere, and here again in Bill No. 9, An Act to amend the Real Estate Act, is more red tape — more red tape for the people who are wanting to come to Saskatchewan.

Maybe what the government is doing, on the advice from the Minister of Industry and Resources, is put red tape in place so people can't leave the province of Saskatchewan.

So when we see clauses like this that are brought in — specifically this one in Bill No. 9, An Act to amend The Real Estate Act — is that the intent of this government is make it so prohibitive people can't leave this province? And we certainly see that in many areas of the red tape that they create is that this NDP government seems to have a tendency to put up a red wall — a large red wall — around the province of Saskatchewan to keep people out.

And certainly, when we have clauses such as this brought in, in The Real Estate Amendment Act that speak very clearly to putting even further pressure on real estate agents and brokers, is that we're very, very concerned that the intent then of this Bill is to further restrict the opportunities in business surrounding real estate.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we need to, we need to hold this government accountable for further red tape that they're putting on the people of Saskatchewan. And that's something that's a great deal of concern to us on this side of the House is the amount of red tape that they have a tendency to put in front of the people of Saskatchewan.

Every time you turn around there's more red tape. We see that in this Bill again — a restriction on real estate in this province, on real estate transactions. And so we can't see how that's going to help grow Saskatchewan.

Because of this type of clause that's been brought in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, I think it's incumbent that more work needs to be done. Certainly we, on this side of the House, have received a significant amount of mail and faxes and e-mail in regards to this clause. And I'm sure that the government members opposite have also been receiving an equal or maybe even more — maybe even more — mail, e-mail, faxes, Mr. Speaker. Because certainly much of the correspondence that we've received has already been carbon copied to us and has already gone to government members. Certainly some of it has gone to the Minister of Justice.

So then we know that the government is quite well aware that there is a problem with this Bill. And when we see a Bill such as this that's going to bring in even further restrictions, we have a great deal of concern in regards to real estate, real estate opportunities, and any restrictions that this government might bring on real estate agents and brokers in this province. So I think it's more appropriate at this time that we adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 34

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Melnychuk that **Bill No. 34 — The Education Amendment Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation** be now read a second time.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's certainly a privilege to enter into the debate on Bill No. 34, a Bill that enables the setting up of the Prince of Wales Scholarship, something that is certainly viewed as a helpful and positive mood in the education field.

The Bill indicates that initially there'll be 10 scholarships, the value of \$500 each, set up for students entering grade 12 in community high schools. The minister indicated that there are presently 17 high schools that meet the criteria and have been designated as community schools, another 11 K to 12 schools that have been designated as K to 12 schools, and those grade 11 students from these 28 schools will be eligible to apply for the scholarship.

Most of these community schools are in areas of our province that are somewhat underprivileged. Some of the families perhaps don't have the stability and social structure required to support young high school students to continue and finish their high school graduation, and so many . . . oftentimes these young

people are left to their own resources and certainly don't have the financial wherewithal to complete their education. And of course we certainly know how important education is to our young people, for without it, they are severely handicapped and their future certainly is in question, Mr. Speaker.

I guess one of the questions that we would have as . . . deals with the community schools and the designation of other schools in the future. How many of the present community schools are located in rural Saskatchewan versus urban Saskatchewan? Oftentimes these changes take place in areas the rural . . . in urban Saskatchewan, and rural Saskatchewan gets left behind. And there's definitely a need. Perhaps the numbers aren't there to fit their criteria for classification as a community school. Or perhaps there isn't a community initiative in some areas. But that . . . there certainly doesn't mean that there isn't a need, Mr. Speaker.

Another question that we would have as far as the establishment of this scholarship is, what are the criteria for being approved under the scholarship process? There's oftentimes when there's these type of funds are available, there are those in our society who change their situation so that perhaps they can take advantage of some of these funds and maybe, probably don't need them.

And what type of safeguards will be put in place, Mr. Speaker, to guard against that? It's certainly not always possible to prevent that entirely, but if adequate safeguards are put in place, the money can be directed to those people who will benefit most from these types of scholarships, Mr. Speaker.

And then of course completing high school and completing grade 12 is only part of many students' educational process. It's the first step, Mr. Speaker. A number of students go on to post-secondary education, whether it be attending one of our universities or our technical colleges. And what we have seen just in the weekend's papers, we've seen that the University of Saskatchewan has announced some fairly substantial increase in tuition fees. And so there will be additional help needed for these students who will be qualifying for the Prince of Wales Scholarship to get their grade 12.

(15:00)

As I said, that's just their first step. And if they don't have family backing and financial resources of their own, we certainly will need an increase in bursaries and student loans to . . . so that those students, those graduating students from our high schools, will be able to continue on with their education in our post-secondary education systems.

Mr. Speaker, another part of the . . . of Bill 34 allows for the amendments . . . or is an amendment to The Education Act which allows amalgamating school divisions to have a grace period to harmonize their mill rates. Quite often if you have two or more school divisions amalgamating, they will . . . it's not uncommon for them to have different mill rates. And to require them to have the same mill rate after amalgamation could cause them hardships in a number of cases.

There's . . . the most recent example of amalgamation process is taking . . . part of my constituency is being affected by the

amalgamation of the Buffalo Plains, Indian Head, and Cupar school divisions. And it's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that for the 2000 tax year those three school divisions, they have . . . they will be operating as one school division but it'll be an informal process for this upcoming school year and they will achieve complete amalgamation in the fall of 2003.

But for the taxation year of 2002, those three school divisions have three different mill rates, Mr. Speaker. And so therefore with this amendment and the provision of allowing them to phase in and . . . so that they can eventually harmonize their mill rates, I think it would be useful in this whole amalgamation process.

There's the greater issue of amalgamation, Mr. Speaker, which this Bill doesn't address, and . . . But there are some issues that I would like to outline at this time, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly we are happy to see that this amalgamation process is a voluntary process, that it's not being forced upon the boards of education unlike the plans a couple of years ago when this government was bound and set on a forced amalgamation of rural municipalities and we saw the backlash and the dissatisfaction with rural residents with that type of a process. And this is certainly a much better approach, Mr. Speaker.

But it certainly has . . . there are some concerns that should be addressed, Mr. Speaker, as far amalgamation. The government, the Minister of Learning has announced financial incentive to school boards of education who want to undergo the amalgamation process.

A word of caution to those boards from the experience of other boards who have either completed amalgamation or are in the process of amalgamating, that the financial incentive probably won't offset all the additional costs if the boards of education are going to take this amalgamation process seriously and do all the work that's required to achieve a good product at the end of the day. However, the financial assistance that the Minister of Learning has announced is helpful and useful in that process.

And then there's also a question of boundaries of these new school divisions. Do they fall . . . are they logical? Do they fall within other boundaries of service providers? Perhaps one could look at the health districts. Do the school . . . do the new school division boundaries fall within the health districts.

But perhaps the health districts aren't the best example to use because this government had an opportunity to rationalize and . . . the health district boundaries so that they made some sense and that they would follow a common trading . . . practices and those sorts of things, and they certainly didn't. They backed away from it and they just accepted the old boundaries.

And then we have some unusual circumstances with the new health region boundaries. In my constituency, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon Health District comes all the way down to Strasbourg. Well, Strasbourg is a 40-minute drive out of Regina. It really doesn't make any sense to have those . . . that whole area of my constituency in the Saskatoon Health District. Those boundaries should have been realigned.

So it seems like there isn't a lot of direction being given by this

government as far as rationalizing and making new boundaries that make some sense and would help for the efficient delivery of government services, Mr. Speaker.

But the . . . this mill rate, as I said this mill rate adjustment is a very . . . of great concern to boards of education that are looking at the amalgamation process or are undergoing the amalgamation process. And particularly when there's an ever-increasing . . . the ever-increasing cost of our K to 12 system of education is being funded by the property tax owner.

We've seen again this year in this budget, where the boards of education are asked to get one more mill from their property tax owners. The computational mill rate has been raised from 16 to 17 per cent.

We're hearing from the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) that the . . . that this much touted increase in funding in the K to 12 system by this government is going to do great things and yet it's not even paying the bills. It's not providing enough money to pay the increases in the teachers' salaries or the increases in the . . . in utility bills and so on. And therefore many boards of education are forced to increase their mill rates.

And this, Mr. Speaker, this whole amalgamation process leads to the question of this government's complacency and acceptance to manage a declining economy and a declining population, Mr. Speaker.

What we really need in this province is we need a vision of growth, a plan to grow the province so that we have a bigger pie, Mr. Speaker, so that there is more money for education, there's more money for health, there's more money for agriculture.

But these people, this NDP government really has no plan. The only thing they do is they look at managing . . . crisis management, putting out the fires and saying, well okay, I guess if we've got to lose 35,000 students in our K to 12 system over the next 10 years, I guess so be it, that's the way it has to be and therefore we need fewer school divisions, Mr. Speaker.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of concerns that we have with this Bill. We would like to consult with the stakeholders and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 10

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 10 — The Tax Enforcement Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few minutes to talk today about The Tax Enforcement Amendment Act. And at first sight, Mr. Speaker, it looked like this Bill probably had no problem passing, until we got into the part where the minister explained about the amendments to the Act that:

. . . the Lieutenant Governor in Council (will have) the authority to set the property value I just mentioned in regulation.

That was a quote from the minister.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all have concerns on this side of the House when it comes down to removing something from the floor of the legislature which we can scrutinize and discuss in here and debate, and removing it into regulation where it's out of sight from anyone in the public. A figure like this would be set behind closed doors probably by the bureaucracy.

And we've seen in the past by this government, the bureaucracy seems to be running the show over there and driving the agenda right now. An example I can use is with CIC right now and Mr. Hart, and with the new ethanol plan that this government supposedly has or the plan that Frank Hart has and the government is just following with.

Mr. Speaker, we see from time to time through every department in government when something is in regulations, something is slid through that actually the elected members of the House here have no opportunity to go out to the public and say, what do you think of this; do you like this; is it good for you? It's actually brought in, it's enforced, and it's actually happening before anybody has the opportunity to debate the issue, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think we've spoke to this Bill a couple, three times now, and we'll have a number of questions in committee, so at this time I would be willing to let this move to committee.

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 8 — The Family Maintenance Amendment Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les prestations alimentaires familiales

The Chair: — I would invite the minister to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right, Susan Amrud, who is the director of legislative services, with whom you will all be familiar; Lionel McNabb to my left, who is the director of family justice services — it used to be maintenance enforcement and other things — also you will be familiar with Mr. McNabb; and behind me to my right, Darcy McGovern, who is Crown counsel in legislative services, also you'll be familiar with him.

Clause 1

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And to the minister, welcome, and to your officials as well. I think some of the pieces of legislation that we're discovering today are ones that I think everyone in the province has sort of hoped would be coming down the path sometime because there have been substantial concerns over the past with things like . . . particularly the topic talked about, Bill No. 8, The Maintenance

Amendment Act.

And to that extent I think the fact that we're at least looking at those, obviously we're fairly supportive or we wouldn't be in the Committee of the Whole at this time. And so essentially this, I believe, is supposed to be a streamlining of our legislation with what's happened federally.

I'd wonder on some confirmation on that, and whether our legislation is now an identical overlap of what happens in other provinces or if we have some things that are unique to Saskatchewan? And if so, what are those?

(15:15)

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Chair, just to confirm the issue raised by the member. Indeed, this is a matter which is being undertaken by all provinces and it does merely serve to streamline the provisions for the affected parties. They'll no longer have to reassert the issue of family maintenance or child maintenance once the child becomes 18 years old.

And I might say too that this has received wide consultation across the province with both those interested in the matter from a family perspective and those interested in it from a legal perspective.

Mr. Heppner: — Just to sort of go on down that same road that we were on, is this legislation basically identical to what's happening in other provinces? If not, then in which way is it different?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — It's exactly the same, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. And I think that the part that we're discussing that this Bill deals with is the matter of educational responsibility. Where now that's an ongoing thing unless someone has to have it stopped, which is probably a good issue, rather than to have to have some 17-, 18-, 19-year-old have to initiate the fact that they want that maintained.

What precautions are there in Bill No. 8 that would ensure that this doesn't end up being someone in a lifelong educational venture and say, well now I've sort of attached myself to the family jewels so education now is open to me forever? What precautions are in there? And I think the term reasonable education is there. What is the generally accepted definition of that?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member raises an interesting point, Mr. Chair, about the potential for someone to, a child to be engaged in education or kind of engaged in education for a very long period of time and what issue that might raise for the payer . . . a parent.

Under the present legislation, which would require some assessment as to whether at the age of 18, if the payer objected, the child is still if you want eligible for maintenance, would require those kinds of assessments already. So we have some experience of the courts making decisions about the educational experience of children who are faced . . . who are the subject of child maintenance orders.

Generally the courts are recognizing support up to the level of a first degree, but the courts will respond in a reasonable way to that problem. And if there's some concern about the decision made by the court, of course there are options available to the parents.

So we're having some experience already with that particular question and it seems not problematic. Reasonable decisions are being made by the courts.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, and I think I want to go to one or two questions dealing with the . . . how the courts are going to operate in this.

I guess it'll be something we'll have to watch to see if the courts suddenly decide that one degree is not really worth a whole lot anymore, now it becomes two degrees and becomes a master's, and those sorts of things.

So it'll obviously have to be something that we watch and, as the minister said, the courts up to this point have been fairly reasonable and consistent in their judgments.

Will this have any impact on the amount of work that courts have to do? Like do we see the court load increasing, decreasing, or will it just basically the same because the same number of families that are coming through the system?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well because there wouldn't be a need to apply to have someone covered beyond the age of 18, when that was desired by all involved, this would actually save some time for the court's process, the court system.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. And I think that's a fairly major plus because I think one of the concerns that's out there is that courts always seem to be bogged down, overloaded, and there's long court waiting times. If this is one of those efforts that tends to reduce the load in our court system, I think it's a very big plus to that extent.

Having said that, that concludes the questions that we have on Bill No. 8.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Bill No. 26 — The Enforcement of Canadian
Judgments Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 sur l'exécution des
jugements canadiens procurations**

The Chair: — I recognize the minister if he has other officials to introduce, if not, that's fine.

Clause 1

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. We believe that we had a Bill somewhat similar to this passed three or four years ago. And I'm wondering if this is just an extension of that that moves beyond monetary matters to things that are more non-monetary. I'm wondering if the minister would want to respond to that and

maybe give us a brief listing of the kinds of things that are covered in here that are non-monetary?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The member is quite right that under the present legislation non-money judgments are not addressed and this Act will rectify that, that issue so that such things as injunctions, restraining orders, orders requiring specific action on the part of a person, those kinds of things will be the subject of this legislation.

It also will include orders that define certain rights in relationships, such as adult guardianship. So a number of issues, quite rightly, as the member mentions beyond money judgments. I guess the most familiar would be an injunction stopping somebody from . . . ordering somebody to stop doing a particular thing.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. If I read the Bill correct, this is not an amendment . . . Well, it does make certain amendments. Is the part that relates to the monetary aspect that was passed a number of years ago, has that changed at all, or is that . . . that part of this whole concept still identical to what it was years ago?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Chair, the member's quite right that the old provisions dealing with money judgments remain in operation in the same way. It was regarded as easier and better and cleaner to bring a new Act to cover the whole package of amendments rather than to make a number of specific amendments.

So this really restates the money judgment question and adds the non-money judgment issues too, so that now it'll be pretty straightforward for those affected to register all of the issues that they have on their concern . . . in their concern with another province, if somebody has moved from Saskatchewan to Alberta, Manitoba, whatever.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. This Bill, I believe, is similar to some of the other ones we're discussing today where we're sort of doing a parallel legislation here as other provinces. And I will probably have the same question for each particular Bill because I think it's somewhat important to ensure that. Are there any differences between this Bill and parallel legislation in other provinces?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — This Bill, Mr. Chair, is the uniform Bill proposed by the Uniform Law Conference of Canada and will in time be the legislation across the country in each of the provinces and territories. And they are in the process of legislating, in the same way as we are, this uniform Bill.

Mr. Heppner: — Provinces are sort of adopting that parallel legislation on a piecemeal basis like they are doing it when it suits them for whatever reason. And I'm just curious how long . . . Do you have any idea how long before all provinces will have a similar piece of legislation? Because if another province doesn't have an identical piece of legislation then the carry-over and the movement back and forth becomes somewhat difficult. So where are we at with all provinces being on side?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Chair, we don't have an exact date, but plainly with Saskatchewan introducing this legislation,

it will spur other provinces to move along. So we would anticipate in short order that all provinces will implement this . . . will introduce and implement this legislation. And it's not regarded as a controversial matter, so it really is just a question of getting it done across the country.

Mr. Heppner: — And as again with the previous Bill, Mr. Chairman, it's one of those directions that I think is noteworthy that we're putting in some legislation in place dealing with family and family law that's similar across, across our nation. To that extent we have no more questions on Bill No. 26.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 16 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Bill No. 27 — The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders
Amendment Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 modifiant la Loi de 1997
sur l'exécution des ordonnances alimentaires procurations**

Clause 1

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. This particular Bill, I think, has a few more specific details in it that we'll want some clarification on and probably particularly the aspect dealing with corporations.

Now I think what we're trying to address here is that people who have a responsibility for enforcement or for maintenance don't try to and evade that by having their money shovelled off into some strange corners and then, you know, sort of say that that is not under their control.

I would like for the minister to discuss . . . I have sort of a key term that's in here, and that is the control of corporation. And we may have some other questions on that specifically as it will relate to family businesses where you have a number of families and different percentages of control.

So I wonder if the minister would want to go into some detail on what is specifically meant by control of a corporation?

(15:30)

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The member raises an important question and one which does need to be clear in people's minds. If a person who is the subject of a maintenance enforcement order is the sole shareholder of a corporation, I think the member will understand there's no real challenge there. It's clear that the corporation is just the alter ego of the person against whom the enforcement order is made.

It becomes more complicated when the member is not . . . or the person is not the sole shareholder or in fact . . . and particularly not the majority shareholder, or even more complicated where the . . . where somebody else is running the company and owning the shares in the company rather as a kind of surrogate for the person against whom the enforcement order is made.

It could be a new spouse; it could be a friend; it could be a brother or a sister. So it might then not be clear quite whether or

not the person against whom the enforcement order is made is in fact making money as a result of running a company, because it's being run by somebody else on his behalf.

So in those instances the maintenance enforcement office would apply to a court to actually make a decision as to whether or not that company is in fact being run for the person against whom the enforcement order is made. So where there's any doubt, the maintenance enforcement office will apply to a court to get the doubt clarified.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. And I think, as the minister correctly states, that there's so many variations in ownership of a corporation that it may be something that in legislation it would be almost impossible to cover it in detail and therefore it needs a court statement to clarify that.

It's our understanding that for the most part legislation in other provinces is quite similar, particularly British Columbia. But British Columbia has a section entitled a balanced approach to enforcement against a corporation, which doesn't exist in ours.

And I'm wondering, if we're sort of looking for overlapping pieces of legislation, there must have been a specific reason why our Saskatchewan legislation doesn't include that concept of a balanced approach to enforcement against a corporation and why it was chosen not to include it in our legislation.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member will probably know that courts will not very easily go behind the status of the corporation to look at shareholders running it, and treat shareholders and corporations as the same. And that's a long-standing kind of legal tenet.

But the view of the government is, and the view of the Department of Justice is, that because if there is any confusion at all or any doubt at all about whether the corporation is being run for the person against whom the maintenance order is made, then the court will resolve those questions and the court will do so in a reasonable way, and will not easily confirm that the person . . . or will not, without clear evidence from the maintenance enforcement office, look behind the corporation.

So it's our view that the provision the member mentions in place in British Columbia is not necessary because the courts will already respond in that way based upon the evidence presented by the maintenance enforcement office.

Mr. Heppner: — Okay. So it seems what's happened in the British Columbia situation is they have put a check and a balance in place which we have then just entrusted to the courts without putting it in legislation. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well essentially that's true. But I think the member needs to remember too that when an assessment of this sort is being made, the court will hear from the corporation, will hear from those who are on its . . . who are shareholders if they want to make a presentation, will hear from the president, and will hear from the offices of the corporation.

So the corporation itself will have an opportunity to present its side of the case, and presumably will try to argue that it is not a corporation run by or for the person not paying. So there are, I

think, fairly significant checks and balances in that whole process to ensure that the right decision is made.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. I guess that's another one of those items we'll have to watch carefully where the courts go with that, because I think in the business family the fact that a corporation is basically treated as an individual is a fairly sacred concept and we would hate to see that destroyed through the side door as this one might.

There's another phrase in Bill 27 in which we discuss how information is sent back and forth, and particularly when someone is going to be losing their driver's licence. And we see that in this section there is a term, ". . . ordinary mail; or . . . any other prescribed means." And we notice that there isn't . . . Registered mail doesn't seem to be a key factor in that. I'm wondering why it isn't set up in such a way that it has to be done by registered mail so that's there's a definite record of the item being sent and received.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member's right, Mr. Chair, that no longer would the decision to suspend a license be communicated or the notice of withdrawing a licence be communicated by registered mail. I understand that those who think that this might be happening to them go to great lengths to avoid the service of the registered mail, making it more time consuming, more difficult to administer.

It is also the way in which SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) administers other matters of suspending licences, and it is SGI that has a pretty up-to-date address for the person in question — at least that was the address when they renewed their licence. So it's a quicker and easier and simpler process which we can follow.

As the member will know, this is a fairly effective way of enforcing payment by those who need to ensure that they're responding to their responsibilities. And we want to make it as effective as possible. And by no longer requiring registered mail, it does make it more straightforward and easier and quicker as they say.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions on Bill 27 and possibly be that some of the questions might even be dealing with Bill 28, and if they do, you can just indicate and I can re-ask them under the Bill 28.

Over the last year I've had about three or four cases dealing with out-of-province maintenance orders. So I guess I'm here to look for some information and, at that end, to see how this Bill will, I guess, help me dealing with them cases.

In surprisingly all three cases I'm dealing with, it's . . . the spouse is living in the same province, BC; the other spouses with children are here in Saskatchewan. Will this legislation help in process of . . . In all three cases, the spouse in BC isn't paying maintenance. So what the spouse here in Saskatchewan is trying to get a maintenance order in force and they've registered here with the Saskatchewan end of it. And then apparently the Saskatchewan end, if I'm right, contacts the BC end. But so far, they haven't been able to get anywhere at that end.

And I know the one case has been six months. You know, there's letters going back and forth into BC, has written letters to the man and they're . . . What I'm . . . I guess my first question, will this new legislation help streamline or make it . . . or put some more teeth into making maintenance orders a little better to be enforced?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. In response to the member's question, some of what he raises is more appropriately raised in Bill 28. We'll get to that when we get there, and there are some facilitating measures there. And in this Bill, there are also some facilitating measures.

In the circumstance in which a person lives in British Columbia, say, or another province but has a source of funds inside Saskatchewan, say, it might be, say, money from Workers' Compensation or it might be an estate of a person who's passed away and that money is being administered here and will be transferred to the person in British Columbia. That's a sum of money . . . those are examples of sums of money which can be attached by the maintenance enforcement office to pay the maintenance enforcement order.

So that's a relatively minor modification but an important one for those receiving maintenance orders. It gives a . . . gives a number of sources of income to pursue. So if the person living outside the province has a source of income inside the province, that will now be a source which can be pursued by the Saskatchewan maintenance enforcement process.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Unfortunately, the cases I'm dealing with, if I can remember right, they have no assets here in Saskatchewan.

But one of the cases did deal with, I think it was joint ownership of a house in BC. The man had remarried and his new wife and him, the house . . . and both are owners. Under this legislation, does that deal with that asset?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The province in which the property is situated would be the province . . . would be the province whose rules would be applied to the dispute or the issue. But we can obviously do a lot of the . . . we can do the work here by contacting the other province. The member will be aware of that. That doesn't always get the matter resolved, as the member knows.

But we . . . When we get to Bill 28 we'll see ways in which we . . . they're instituting mechanisms to make this process a heck of a lot easier.

Mr. Brkich: — I look forward to asking a couple of questions then on Bill 28. I have one more question on this Bill.

Just going to the end of it they're talking about licensing. If the spouses in BC have licences, does this make it easier now to revoke them licence, or put the charge on? Could you do a little more explaining on it. I have a hard time following the Bill. If there's any more teeth with that, how does that deal with it?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member raises an interesting . . . He's got all these interesting questions that are of significant concern to those trying to find access to money to raise

themselves and their families.

And I know from my own experience, not personally but as an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) too, that the whole process of maintenance enforcement can be very, very frustrating when you just can't get your hands on that money and you know that the person is either playing fast and loose with whether they have a job or not, or the . . . everybody I think will have had many examples of this.

The issue of drivers' licences in other provinces will again be dealt with by the maintenance enforcement rules and regulations of those other provinces. But I might say that . . . but if it's here in Saskatchewan then we have an arrangement with SGI — the government has an arrangement with SGI — whereby those licences can be suspended and withdrawn.

(15:45)

With a number of provinces the Government of Saskatchewan also has — or the maintenance enforcement office also has — arrangements whereby if somebody's licence is suspended or in another . . . in that other province, they come here and apply for a driver's licence, they won't get one either.

So there's a lot of co-operation between provinces to try to facilitate the enforcement of maintenance orders. And in a federal system like ours, if that jurisdiction is not administered by the federal government, then there does need to be mechanisms whereby the provinces find solutions amongst themselves to these challenges.

And I think these . . . this and a number of other pieces of legislation indicate that the provinces have worked hard to try to find the solutions and that while they . . . all those solutions won't be found, there are significant . . . there is significant progress here.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 15 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 28 — The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act/Loi sur les ordonnances alimentaires interterritoriales

Clause 1

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions, probably pertaining along the same line of there with this Bill. What are the changes to the legislation will . . . that are going to be enacted dealing with other provinces? And also, is there any . . . going to be changes in how other provinces deal with Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — The member raised the question of the main thrust of The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act. And as a little bit of background, the member might be aware that each of the provinces, and indeed each of the premiers, have committed themselves to responding in this way to enacting legislation which will facilitate the enforcement of orders

outside of the province in which they're granted, which is an important part of facilitating and speeding up the process.

And all of the provinces have committed themselves to pass this legislation before the next time the premiers meet which is the fall, I think, or maybe even August. So it'll be done this session right across the province.

And just coincidentally, this will also integrate the process with the process in the United States so that whether people move around in Canada or in North America they will be covered by the same kinds of rules and regulations.

And essentially if an order is obtained here in Saskatchewan and the subject of the order leaves, goes to another province, once that is identified, once the residence of the person is identified in another province, the enforcement of that order can begin immediately. There won't be any need to follow any procedures other than for the maintenance enforcement office to send the file to Alberta or Manitoba or British Columbia for enforcement. So that will save quite significant periods of time and facilitate the whole process and consequently improve the situation of those who are receiving the orders.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I imagine a couple of constituents will be happy with that because I know the one case was on a 10-year maintenance order. So when I pass this on to her, I know she'll be, once the Bill's passed . . . And when will it be proclaimed, I guess? Because that's the next question they'll be asking me when I go home and I pass this information on to them.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well I want to thank the member for his indication that he and his constituent will support this legislation. I'm sure he'll also encourage her to vote for the NDP at the next election.

The . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay. Maybe I was expecting a little too much then.

An Hon. Member: — That sounds entirely reasonable to me.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well there you go; you never know. The . . .

An Hon. Member: — Can we quote you on that?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — I think I'm already quoted on that.

As the other provinces pass their legislation and we all work on common regulations and common pieces of paper and common forms, it'll take a little while but I think we can all expect this whole process to be operational in the fall, certainly by the end of the year.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. With that, I think I only have one more question on that. Are all provinces on board with this?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Each of the provinces and I guess the territories too. And the territories.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. Just one question. Does this Bill

affect a person's right to have the amount of support they have been ordered to pay reviewed in those cases where their circumstances change? And what would the process be on that?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Yes, it does facilitate that process, Mr. Chair, in the same kind of way as, as the order is sent to another province in the event that somebody . . . the payer lives there. Similarly a change will be sent as well. So it's a much quicker, more efficient, more effective process.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. And as with the other pieces of legislation that involve the families of this province and taking of the children and the maintenance, we support the philosophy as basically behind these. We'll look to see how in detail it works out. So we're quite prepared to end the questioning on this particular Bill as well, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: — Committee members, Bill No. 28 has 50 clauses and 8 parts. Would the committee give the Chair leave to deal with this Bill by parts?

Leave granted.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 50 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 8 — The Family Maintenance Amendment Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les prestations alimentaires familiales

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

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

Bill No. 26 — The Enforcement of Canadian Judgments Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 sur l'exécution des jugements canadiens procurations

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

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

Bill No. 27 — The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur l'exécution des ordonnances alimentaires procurations

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

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

(16:00)

**Bill No. 28 — The Inter-jurisdictional Support
Orders Act/Loi sur les ordonnances
alimentaires interterritoriales**

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

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**General Revenue Fund
Industry and Resources
Vote 23**

The Chair: — The minister responsible for Northern Affairs is here and I invite him to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just want to take a few minutes to basically introduce my staff and also to — there's a couple of students watching — to explain what the department of . . . or the estimates portion is all about.

So first of all I want to say hello to Kelly and Kaylie Rediron from Pinehouse who are watching television and they are going to be watching for a while.

And what we do during this process, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we go through different departments and what we're spending in each of the departments and agencies of government so people out there know what exactly is going on.

So with that I'd like to introduce my deputy minister, Alan Parkinson; and also next to Alan we have Cheryl Stecyk, and she's the business manager. And both of these officials work for the department of Northern Affairs.

And obviously, Mr. Speaker, or Deputy Speaker, there is officials from across the way that will be asking questions of the minister, and we'll certainly do our very best to answer. Thank you.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair of Committees. Mr. Minister of Northern Affairs, welcome to your officials. It's a pleasure to be able to spend a little time this afternoon working through the Office of Northern Affairs, the budget that you have.

Mr. Minister, I guess a few of us on this side of the House, and probably on your side of the House also, are not totally aware of the importance that your government places upon the involvement of your Office of Northern Affairs in northern Saskatchewan, certainly north of the northern administrative district line.

And I'm wondering if you'd take a few minutes this afternoon to help everyone understand the extent of the involvement of Northern Affairs in northern Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just want to point out that in terms of leading all the

negotiations and the discussions and the enhancement of northern strategies, Northern Affairs has been very actively involved in a number of files. And this is, of course, for all the folks out there to know that, first of all, we are the lead negotiating department that takes care of the northern accord. And the northern accord, of course, is a \$20 million federal/provincial agreement over the next five years that we're trying to put in place to make sure that we have economic strategies for the North.

As well, we have done a tremendous amount of work in leading some of the forestry files and working hand in hand with the Economic Development minister. As well, we're also responsible for the northern version of CREDOs. And what CREDOs are is, of course, the community regional economic development organizations and they are the northern version of REDAs (regional economic development authority). So certainly Northern Affairs also takes care of that.

As well, we are the lead department for the Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat. And this secretariat negotiates and works with many mining organizations and many mining companies. And I can tell you that the Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat is a world-famous secretariat because they have done a number of tremendously positive work with the mining sector. So Saskatchewan, through the Northern Affairs portfolio, has really shown the rest of the country and the rest of the world how to deal with northern mining companies when it comes to specifically meeting to address some of the issues of many northern people.

So I think overall, if you look at some of the facts and the figures and some of the past successes and certainly some of the future challenges that we face, that Northern Affairs is going to be a very solid and a very important part of this government. And whether it's forestry, whether it's commercial fishing, whether it's trapping, whether it's roads, whether it's mines, Northern Affairs has been very, very active. They've been very involved and that action and the activity and the involvement is going to continue for years to come. Thank you.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that brief outline. Certainly on this side of the House we're a little more used to you being able to harangue us for longer periods of time so maybe I can warm you up a little bit and give you that opportunity yet this afternoon.

You spoke about the northern strategy and certainly we have some awareness of your northern strategy. But I think we need to have a clear picture from you of this northern strategy and its effect upon the people of northern Saskatchewan and what it's going to entail for the people of northern Saskatchewan as they seek economic independence.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Well what I'll do just for the sake of not appearing to harangue the opposition which I'm . . . of course I plead not guilty, Mr. Deputy Chair. I would just point out that the response is very straightforward.

Northern Affairs has been working with Economic and Co-operative Development, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, and Executive Council on putting together key components of Saskatchewan's northern strategy.

One of these components, the strategic opportunities assessment, is now complete. It consisted of careful analysis of the potential economic and social opportunities that exist in the North, and what can be done to realize these opportunities. The other two initiatives under the strategy are the Northern Development Board, and the Northern Development Agreement. These two entities are also close to finalization.

To date an Interim Northern Development Board, the province, and the federal government have met several times negotiating an economic agreement that'll see several initiatives specific to northerners that will enhance employment and training opportunities for northerners.

The INDB, which is the Interim Northern Development Board, was established to represent the input of northerners in regard to the agreement. It'll also continue to serve as an interim board until such time that the agreement is ratified.

And I can tell you that the ratification and the permanent Northern Development Board will be certainly worked on over the next several weeks. And I anticipate very quickly into the future I will make the announcement on the changes, and certainly what strategy that . . . you know, to share that strategy with all northern people.

Once the NDA's (Northern Development Agreement) in place, there'll be further developments to report on that relate to the goals and objectives set out in Saskatchewan's northern strategy.

So there's been a lot of tremendous work being done in the past and certainly in the last several months. And when we talk about building up Northern Affairs and enhancing Northern Affairs and making it a very solid part of the government, this is exactly what we intend to do.

So we talk about the northern strategy. We talk about the \$20 million agreement. We talk about CIC's role in trying to enhance that as well. So there's a lot of work being done in Northern Affairs. And certainly in the Northern Development Agreement and in the strategy we have employed shows that in spades, that there is some solid commitment to the North and we're continuing to build on that.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, to the minister. When we talk about the . . . when you talk about the northern strategy and certainly it's . . . I think it's incumbent on all of us to understand and the economic development that needs to take place in the North and it needs to take place in the North in the very near future.

And one of the strategies that was used by your department in the past was that the deputy minister, to my understanding from previous ministers, was located in La Ronge so that he would be closer to so-called the action in northern Saskatchewan. And I understand now the deputy minister is not in La Ronge any more. I wonder if you can verify that. And if so, what was the reasoning the government and your department used not to house the deputy minister in La Ronge at this time?

(16:15)

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Well thank you for that question. There's no question that we did change the strategy. And certainly as a new minister, we were warned by the previous minister that it's important to have as much of a presence of Northern Affairs in northern Saskatchewan.

And to answer the question . . . I think I want to preface that by simply indicating, as we have students watching, is how the government works, of course, is you have a minister that is responsible for a certain portfolio. Then you have a deputy minister. And of course every minister has a corresponding deputy minister. And having all the DMs in one place certainly allows us as a government to coordinate activity.

So the reason why we moved the La Ronge DM position back to Regina here was for the simple fact that as a Minister of Northern Affairs, I felt that it would be more effective, and certainly something more efficient, if we had the deputy minister here in Regina to engage all of his other colleague deputy ministers.

And I feel if he is here from 8 o'clock in the morning till 6 or 7 at night engaging other DMs in Highways and housing and health care and so on and so forth, that makes for a more effective lobby. And that certainly makes for a more efficient way of delivering benefits back to northern Saskatchewan. So having your deputy minister engaged with his colleague DMs is so very important to bring a new face to Northern Affairs and to bring a more effective structure in place.

Now the other important thing is that we have been told on numerous occasions, and very good advice for a number of folks, is to have the concentration of Northern Affairs staff in the North. So I can tell you very boldly today that we have about 85 per cent of our staff that are based in the North. We have various positions; we're filling eight new jobs that'll be based in the North. We have a assistant deputy minister that'll be based in the North. And our deputy minister will be travelling north on a continual and consistent basis.

So I think having the Northern Affairs DM placed here in Regina with a skeleton staff is certainly very important for us to be efficient while having the base of our operations in La Ronge and certainly based throughout the North. That's probably a more effective way to get things done.

So the clear answer to your question is, as a new minister, I felt having the deputy minister here in Regina to fully engage his colleague deputy minister only . . . will translate only to an efficient, effective new Department of Northern Affairs.

Thanks.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair of committees, I would appreciate the understanding of why they . . . the change needed to — from your perspective — needed to take place. And certainly we accept your explanation.

Now one of the things you talked about in your preamble was the northern strategy. I wonder if you could break down the northern strategy for us even further, so that we have an understanding of what sectors, what specific sectors of northern Saskatchewan the northern strategy will actually be involved in

to promote growth in northern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — I just want to point out again, just for the sake of those that may be listening, is that the Northern Development Agreement is a \$20 million federal/provincial agreement that we are going to cost share over a five-year period.

And the Northern Development Agreement is something that a lot of northern leaders have been involved with, but the general public have very little information on. And we're in the process, through establishing our northern or northwest regional development councils, to explain to these councils what exactly the agreement is. We're also in the process of explaining to a number of community leaders and groups what the agreement entails. And certainly we have an Interim Northern Development Board that is aware of what's happening.

But the general public is not fully aware and so we're trying to undertake a communication effort to make sure that people out there are aware. And some of the vehicles that we're using, of course, include the northern development council that we're trying to establish.

But there are five goals and objectives associated with that \$20 million, five-year agreement. And I said six, so I apologize, it's actually five. And the first one is developing a stronger and more diversified northern economy, creating jobs and business opportunities.

The second one is enhancing community and regional infrastructure that will assist economic development and improve northern living conditions.

The third objective is strengthening education and training in the North, enabling northerners to pursue further academic goals and to better compete in the labour market, both in the North and beyond.

The fourth one is increasing community self-reliance and enhancing northerners' opportunities to participate in and provide leadership for northern institutions.

And of course the fifth one is increasing northerners' participation in the protection of the natural environment of the North.

So those are the five goals that we have, the Northern Development Agreement. And these goals are certainly lofty and achievable goals, but certainly we also want to point out that they're realistic goals as well. And there is room for flexibility so clearly we wanted to make sure we have northerners' participation. We want to have innovation. We want to have excitement.

And again when we often speak about developing Northern Affairs into a bigger and more exciting portfolio, it is in partnership with northerners. It's in partnership with the federal government, and it certainly recognizes some of the challenges that the rest of the province has in terms of meeting some of the infrastructure, some of the training components that are necessary.

So clearly it is an effort by northerners to build the North up and create jobs, and certainly that's what the provincial vision is. And I'm really proud to say that our Saskatchewan does include the North and those activities will certainly continue in the future.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair of Committees, to the minister, we've talked about the northern strategy and the five points that you mentioned. You talked about a \$20 million agreement that you're working on trying to set up with the federal government.

We're kind of curious on this side of the House. It's a \$20 million agreement. What share, what portion of that \$20 million will actually be the responsibility of the provincial government?

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you for the question again. Again I'll point out that it's \$2 million a year for the province, and it's over a five-year period for a total of \$10 million. And that is being matched by the feds at the cost of \$2 million per year for five years. So 10 from the feds and 10 from us certainly equals \$20 million over five years.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. In this \$2 million a year, I believe you said, from the provincial government for five years — I was looking at your budget. Now where does this \$2 million fit into the Northern Affairs budget?

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — One of the things that we've been sitting down and negotiating with the federal government on in this whole northern development agreement is it does not come directly from Northern Affairs' budget. We are negotiating with other departments to identify some of the priority areas and to identify where the money is coming from, from the, you know, from a variety of ministers.

So that discussion and all the corresponding negotiations are underway. They've been completed and we're on our way, as I mentioned, very quickly to finalizing this agreement and signing the agreement. So it does not come directly out of Northern Affairs; it comes out of a variety of different agencies. And we are going to work with the feds at finalizing those details.

And again, we have come up with our portion of it and it's an acceptable portion. And we're very excited at this opportunity to go forward with the \$20 million Northern Agreement.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair of Committees, I noticed on your budget it talks about that there's a line for the northern strategy. There's been a cut in it for this year of \$200,000. This budget line, \$366,000, is that your portion of the \$2 million to work toward this northern strategy in concurrence with other departments in the government?

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — One of the things, I think, is very important that people across the North and certainly people across the province understand that this was certainly a tough budget. It was not an easy budget, as we look at what happened in BC, Alberta. There were cuts that were made that were very significant cuts and we can never lose sight of that argument.

So having the budget come forward as it did, certainly, I think, was a recognition of our Finance minister's ability to make sure that we do have savings in place and that we are able to balance that budget for a ninth consecutive time. So I think having this kind of budget in place is certainly very promising for the people of Saskatchewan.

But Northern Affairs, despite it being a smaller part of government, did have to do their share as well. So I point out that the \$200,000 cut was not a cut that was going to form part of our contribution to the Northern Development Agreement, but rather it was a cut from the Interim Northern Development Board travel and costs of operating that board. So instead of spending \$350,000 which was a desired budget amount, we have made sure that the costs were kept low and that that amount was 150,000.

So the \$200,000 cut that you see was cuts that were made to the Interim Northern Development Board travel costs. And these cuts were not part of our contribution to the agreement. This was above and beyond the agreement. So clearly we are on our way of making sure that we are able to live, you know, within our means.

And certainly, Northern Affairs like all the other different portfolios around, I think, they appreciate that they have to be part of the government when they have an overall cut, and this was part of that process.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, Mr. Chair of Committees. To the minister, in your five-point introduction of the northern strategy the first item was the enhancement of the northern economy. And I'm wondering if we could get on this side of the House, a better understanding of what areas — and we would like all the areas of the northern economy — that you're trying to promote in the northern strategy.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Well I wish I had a couple of hours here to speak to speak of some of the progress and some of the planning that we have undertaken.

But very clearly I think a lot of people back home were at one time concerned of seeing a million dollar cut. But then after we explained to them that the cut is primarily made of lesser staff, lesser travel costs for the Interim Northern Board, and, you know, less significant costs, then they begin to realize that instead of losing a million dollars from Northern Affairs, Northern Affairs is aiming to achieve this \$20 million Northern Development Accord and this agreement with the federal government.

So after we work our way towards that project, and we are very close to getting it done, the way I would tell northern people is that instead of looking at this as losing a million dollars, we gain a significant amount in highways and housing and certainly through this Northern Development Agreement.

So what do we do next? What areas do we identify to make sure that northerners have opportunity in the economic area? And I would point out that, as you probably are aware, there's been some incredible work being done in forestry. Last week we heard for example the Economic Development minister talking about some of the investments and the 10,000 new jobs and

close to \$750 million of investment plus.

These are some of the things that we are working towards to make sure that we position northerners to take advantage of some of the forestry opportunities.

And some of the good examples that are out there: there's Wapawekka Lumber working, where you see the Weyerhaeuser folks working hand in hand with the Peter Ballantyne Band. Look at Meadow Lake for example, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council are now involved, you know, with the sawmill operations. You look at the northwest communities, they have partnerships with Tolko.

(16:30)

Of course forestry being the biggest sector that we're looking at kind of expanding, that's very important. As well as looking at the resource base overall, forestry being the beachhead, we're also expanding our efforts to look at some of the ecotourism opportunities for the North. And some of the examples I'd use is Buffalo Narrows is one of the communities in the North that is a business leader. They had many local businesses that are really doing wonderfully well, and they're preparing and they're developing some of their strategic planning when it comes to tourism.

And also the commercial fishing file. We can remember, being from the Northwest, that commercial fishing at one time was a very big activity, and again Buffalo Narrows being a centre at one time of three fish processing plants.

So as you look at some of the opportunities, we're trying to enhance and to liven up the economy of the Northwest. And so obviously you want to look at all the sectors, forestry, outfitting, commercial fishing, you know, look at ecotourism, and you know the service industry. And I understand there's been a lot of work being done, different communities working hand in hand with the private sector to look at oil and gas.

So what we're trying to do with the northern development strategy and with Northern Affairs — and you talk about the economic opportunities — is we're trying to make sure we position many of the northern communities and the business people to take advantage of some of the resource industries that traditionally have not been part of the northern people's culture.

And the reason we have not been part of it is many times we had large corporations and they would come in and they'd own the forestry rights. Well now it's different now. Many northern communities, both the First Nations communities and the Métis communities, are now placed in an ownership aspect. And from ownership you're able to control the profits, you're able to control the jobs, decision making, and so on and so forth.

So I think it's very visionary that this government have decided that people of the North have said, welcome, share our land, but we want our fair share as well. And the resources that we have in the North should be shared by all people but certainly involving the northerners as well.

So what we are undertaking to do is a very aggressive plan to not only look at the enhancement of the commercial fishing

industry but to work with the trappers, to work with the wild rice growers, to look at outfitting as an opportunity, to look at tourism as an opportunity, to look at forestry, to look at oil and gas, look at all the sectors that the northern lands offer people. This provincial government is doing that.

So when we talk about a strategy, it is encompassing. It's involving all aspects of the economy. And we're encouraging people to take the lead of many companies and many Native leaders and Aboriginal groups in making sure that their communities and their business people are involved with this overall strategy.

And I mention constantly — we always do this — is that a fine example of how we're able to create jobs is of course in Buffalo Narrows. If you look at Buffalo Narrows, they're now owners of NRT Trucking. If you look at Buffalo Narrows, it's probably the centre and the hub of many northern Aboriginal business people that have taken over the economy. If you look at Buffalo Narrows, they are talking about a post-treatment plant and trying to work towards a post-treatment plant. If you look at Buffalo Narrows, you're looking at cogeneration opportunities. If you look at Buffalo Narrows, they're preparing for, you know, the encouragement of all this tourism — especially if you get a road connecting northern Alberta to, you know, to northern Saskatchewan.

If you look at all the different examples of some of the business communities that want to take advantage of some of this opportunity, they are simply saying to us, give us the process, give us the opportunity, and we will realize the jobs and we'll realize the profit and we'll realize the control that is necessary. And all this does not have any guarantees, of course. But we're working our way to making sure that we give the people the opportunity for what they've asked for for many, many years. And of course that's economic and social justice.

So we position them well. Positioning does not guarantee success, but positioning allows them the opportunity. They say, we will drive that success. So today I can tell you that it's all encompassing in terms of what our economic strategy is. It's to give people the opportunity to take advantage of the resource industry in and around these northern communities in forestry, in commercial fishing and ecotourism, in sport fishing, in oil and gas, in the service sector, and so on and so forth.

So it's wide open, and we're trying to ensure that every bit of support and dollars that we can get goes to realizing those opportunities in concert with the private sector.

So again I wish I had a couple of hours to explain each individual business. But there's this incredible opportunity out there and we want to make sure that we position the northerners well and certainly develop the economy and the jobs that go with that.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I am looking at three news releases. The first one's dated April 17, 2000. It says, more training jobs . . . more training for forestry jobs. The next one is July . . . June of last year, new training jobs for forestry workers. And then there was another news release in November of last year, northerners get forestry training.

And it's . . . between the two news releases that, you know, they're talking of training at a minimum 500 northerners for . . . in the forestry industry. And I guess my question is: of those people that are . . . have been trained or are currently being trained in the forest industry, how many of those people would be First Nations people? And once these people have received their training, how many of those people are working for First Nations forestry companies and initiatives in the North?

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What I would point out is that the training announcement that we have made certainly talks about a multi-party approach to training. I want to work with the forestry companies, with the communities, with the different colleges, you know, that are involved. So we believe that a multi-party and multi-training approach is very necessary.

But as I mentioned in my opening comments, is that we are in the pre-operating phase of forestry. So one of the things that we've been told, in terms of trying to develop this opportunity in forestry, is you got to have access to the wood, which is being done. You have to have access to the capital, which is being done. Now you have to have access to the skilled labourers.

So certainly in the initial start-up phases we don't have those numbers for you to date. But we'll certainly get them for you.

But what I will point out is the agreements that you talk about talks about finding that final component of having skilled labour available for these forestry companies. And that work is ongoing, there is a number of parties involved.

So I think if you look at the overall scheme of things it fulfils the three different requirements that are necessary to make sure that we have a successful forestry strategy that provides access for the northwest communities and for the Métis communities and for the treaty communities.

It provides capital funding to develop these mills and certainly the training component — as you mentioned in the press releases — that talks about finding the skilled labourers or developing the skilled labourers necessary for this industry.

So again, this is the start-up phase that is going on. We don't have those exact figures with us, but we can find them for you and then get them to you. But clearly the intent here is to find that final piece which requires us to have skilled labourers available for the forestry sector in order for us to ensure — or to at least try and ensure — success when it comes to the forestry industry plans for the North as a whole.

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Minister, you mentioned that there are a number of components required to move this forestry industry forward in the North, and of course availability of skilled labour is a key component to that whole equation.

I guess my question would be, I'm assuming that a number of . . . quite a number of these people that are being trained would be First Nations people and, you know, it really isn't important here for today's purposes, but if you could at a later date perhaps provide me with some of those numbers it would be helpful.

But once these people are trained, who are they working . . . who are they going to work for? Are they working for the large Weyerhaeuser type operations? Or are there a number of First Nations forestry initiatives that are moving forward?

As you've indicated, the . . . in order for a band to get involved in the forestry industry, they have to have access to logs. In fact, how many bands have access to logging rights in the North, Mr. Minister? I wonder if you could provide us with some information in that area.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much for the question. What I would point out is that prior to this government getting involved heavily with forestry, certainly there's a couple of giants that were involved with forestry rights in the province. And I can point out since the early '90s, this government — and we certainly are continuing with that to this day — wants to make sure that the position the Métis communities, the First Nations communities in the North, right across the forestry fringe area to be able to be involved with forestry.

We often talk about that, about trying to make sure we provide the tools to the Aboriginal community to make sure they make a difference in their own lives; provide an access to their resources and the training necessary to create those jobs. Well this is exactly what they're trying to do here.

So I can tell you today that any new FMA (forest management agreement) or a TSL (term supply licence) or any forestry agreements that we have undertaken, we've always insisted on three components: number one, that it be sustainable, because we don't want to overcut our forests, and people have told us that from day one; number two, is that we make sure that we do as much of the value-added processes as we can. There's no sense in sending out raw produce, you know, you're able to add to it, let us undertake to do as much of the exhausted . . . exhaustive value-added processes to our products. And the third thing is that there be Aboriginal ownership. And that's the most important key.

And we have fulfilled those strategies. We have kept to our word because, as many Aboriginal people will tell you, whether it's First Nations or Métis, we want a share of that land. We've all . . . we've often said let us share the resources in the land. So all they've been saying to us as a government is give us our fair share. So that's exactly what we're going to do to is ensure they have that opportunity.

Now because they have that opportunity and because they have that positioning and because they have that access, it does not guarantee them wild success and a thousand jobs overnight. We got to train our folks. We got to invest. We got to nurture this industry, got to build it up.

So the question that you had is how many First Nations and how many Aboriginal people in general are involved. I can tell you, right across the forestry fringe, every new FMA or TSL or forestry venture that we've undertaken on a large-scale basis has an Aboriginal ownership component to it.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I guess one of the questions we would have on this side of the House is if you could explain what a TSL is. I think we understand an FMA,

but we're not quite familiar with that acronym TSL.

Secondly, I had asked if there . . . if you could give us, give me some examples of some new initiatives that some of the bands in northern Saskatchewan have made in forestry. I understand that there are . . . that a number of bands would like to get involved, actively involved in an investment way and in a management way in forestry. And I'm wondering, is there . . . do you have examples of these, of bands actively involved in the forestry industry and new ventures in the last say three, four years, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — One of the things that I think . . . Well a TSL is a term supply license and a TSL is actually a prerequisite to a FMA. And of course, you know, before they do all this, they have to go through a land use planning process.

And certainly, what that land use planning process does, it takes all the stakeholders and gets them in a room together and saying this is what's being planned. And then, if things are moving along quite well in the business aspect of it, then they go to a TSL. And then eventually, they spend hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars, putting together . . . putting together an FMA so that we have forestry rights, you know, for a long time. And that's kind of the process.

And I'll point out that the . . . Some of the examples we would use of forestry companies would be the Wapawekka sawmill just outside of Prince Albert. And I believe, and I could be corrected on this but, that's a joint venture between the Peter Ballantyne band and the Weyerhaeuser folks.

(16:45)

Some of the more recent examples would be the OSB (oriented strand board) mill just being planned with Tolko. And that of course is being . . . this mill is being built near Green Lake. And that mill, of course, has some ownership components to it which include the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, which include the northwest communities.

So really I think if you look at some of the examples, there's smaller examples, but some of the larger successful examples we can see coming down the road and certainly some of the past examples are there as well. So there is very good planning being done.

And the reason I don't want to share specifics in terms of what exact projects are being undertaken is because when I said earlier that we're trying to position the communities to make these choices on their own by simply providing them the tools, what I don't want to do is I don't want to pre-empt them. What I don't want to do is I don't want to direct them. What I don't want to do is influence them.

We give them the opportunity so they are working through a committee, through a board structure, to determine how they're going to use their allocations to get the best value for their forestry strategies.

So in saying that there's some good opportunities, we know there are. We are privy to some of the examples and some of the ideas they're working on, but we have a committee in place

made up of different communities and the different partnerships, and they are working on finalizing their plan.

And of course as I mentioned earlier, we're just in the process of unveiling this plan and they will certainly do that to show what kind of plans that they have developed on their own. And as minister, it gives me great pleasure to stand here today saying that there's some very exciting plans that they are undertaking.

And when the appropriate time comes they will certainly announce it to their shareholders and then they'll announce it to the people. And what we want to do is certainly stand by and cheerlead that particular aspect of their role to develop this forestry initiative. So there is some good work been done in the past; there's much more exciting work to come.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, for those answers and that reply. I was just wondering, what role does the federal government play in this whole area? And I'm again speaking particularly about First Nations involvement in the forestry industry.

Does the federal government have any funding for First Nations to actively get involved in the forest industries? You would think, you know, since First Nations are largely a responsibility of the federal government, I was wondering if perhaps they . . . you know, if there were some funds available through the federal government that First Nations could tap into for forestry development?

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Well as you mentioned, they have been involved with the training aspect involving, you know, with the First Nations. I know that they do have some financial means in which they could assist First Nations in developing opportunities as well. I don't have the details of that, but what I do know is I made a comment earlier about the Northern Development Agreement, and that the federal government is going to be tied with that. So we have \$10 million coming from the feds and 10 million from the province, and I can almost assure you that a portion of that will go towards training — in addition to what we have in place already — training some of the forestry workers. So in a roundabout way, the federal government certainly is involved.

But I want to put a feather in the cap of the provincial government as well, is it's important to recognize that there is some federal support but it's also important to note that the resources are controlled by the province. So before the feds are able to come in to contribute to a resource development opportunity, if it's First Nations or Métis people, then the province has to make the initiative to make it happen.

So not only do we transfer some of the resources to the northern communities, but we also say to the federal government, bring some of your money so we're able to realize this opportunity quicker and get training quicker. Because many people in the North, as they drive south, you know, they drive by the Meadow Lake pulp mill, they drive by the Big River Sawmill, they drive by the Weyerhaeuser mill, and they say well these are great opportunities but we need opportunities back home. So as a provincial government, as most people know in the province, the province controls the resources and Ottawa

doesn't have that control.

So when we put the resource opportunity in front of people and all we tell Ottawa is bring some money over, we need your financial support to make things happen in the North, I can tell you there are very few opportunities that they have come forward. But this Northern Development Accord is one of the opportunities that they have said yes, we will contribute.

But I think the most important aspect, when we talk about the federal government's role, is that the resources — whether it's forestry, whether it's commercial fishing or whether it's outfitting or whether it's tourism — that clearly the province has control of those resources. And we're working with the Aboriginal community to make sure that they have opportunities associated with that and that the federal government can indeed help with some financial assistance for training, for investment, and certainly for developing infrastructure. So that's a role that they can play.

So often we hear federal politicians talk about having a resource industry or having access to our own land. Well the fact of the matter is Ottawa does not control the resources in the province, the province does.

And I think the other very valuable point we'd point out is that as much money that we can get from the federal government — whether it's to First Nations agreements or whether it's to TLE (treaty land entitlement), whether it's to economic opportunities, or whether it's for training — it is not coming at the expense of the farm community, it's not coming at the expense of the cities, it's not coming at the expense of anybody in Saskatchewan. Every penny that we can get from Ottawa is going to help the economy of this province.

So I think we need to get on board, all of us from across this province, and say: give us money in farm aid. No question about that — we certainly need it. Look at our huge trade bill. But give us money in forestry opportunity. Give us money in training opportunities. Give us money to enhance our economic well-being, and so on and so forth.

So I think if the Sask Party were to get up and say, yes, Ottawa, it's very important you recognize the First Nations, it's very important you recognize TLE, it's very important you recognize SaskEnergy expand to many First Nations land, it's very important you recognize some of the forestry challenge, so, Ottawa, send us some money here so we're able to develop the economy and make sure that the Aboriginal people, what they've always maintained from day one, want to be part of the solution. Not part of the problem, but they want to be part of the solution.

So any money you get for TLE, any money you get for forestry expansion, for training, Ottawa, we need you to send more money to make sure things happen at a faster pace in Saskatchewan and that it does not come at the expense of anybody in the province. It comes at the expense of some other initiative in Eastern Canada.

And I think the people of Saskatchewan like that concept; they want to see that happen. And I think on the wide scheme of things, that if they're able to make that happen sooner, quicker,

and with more dollars, then everybody in the province will certainly support that.

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Minister, I listened carefully to your comments, and I really didn't find a whole lot that I could disagree with. In fact, I agree with most of what you said. Certainly it's to all our advantage to access federal dollars, and particularly in the North for First Nations people.

Mr. Minister, I understand that the federal government actually has some money on the table, and that the province hasn't taken them up on it. I understand that there's \$15 million a year for the past three years that the federal government had on the table for First Nations forestry initiatives, and that the province didn't bring the resources, and the province didn't bring their share of the contributions required to trigger those dollars.

And I'm wondering why the province didn't access that . . . some \$45 million a year for First Nations forestry. What's the problem here? I mean, as I said, I agreed with everything you said. You said, it's not Saskatchewan taxpayers' dollar as such. Certainly we do contribute to the federal treasury, but quite often we're the net benefactors of federal dollars coming into the province.

So why aren't we accessing this \$45 million a year, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Well what I would point out is that, as much as I don't want to harangue the opposition, I would point out that your facts are wrong on that front. It was the provincial government that put in that money. The feds have not put any money in towards investment into the forestry opportunities in Saskatchewan. So I would suggest to that member that you check your facts and make sure that you're correct.

But any investment into forestry opportunities in this province, not only has this government given the resources and certainly shared the resources with the Aboriginal people, but they have put their money where their mouth is. And we have not one red cent yet from the federal government to help us realize those forestry opportunities.

And secondly, I point out to that member that it's from day one that this province has always put their money where their mouth is when it comes to northern development agreements.

La Loche Hospital, which is a fine facility — 12 to \$14 million cost overall. It was the provincial government that put every red cent into that facility.

So I can clearly point out today, when it comes to forestry, this province puts their resources up in concert and in co-operation and on a sharing basis with the northern people. But are also, through CIC, allowed investment into the forestry opportunities for the Northwest and certainly for the Northeast in the forestry fringe. And we have certainly put every cent into this forestry project, into this forestry initiative as possible.

So in closing, I would point out, on this forestry file, that this province has put the money . . . put their money where their mouth is when it comes to forestry development and we'll continue doing that to make sure that northerners have that

opportunity. And this is exactly what I mean when we say as a province, we stand up, we're going to build up the North. And Northern Affairs is a very effective vehicle to do that, but we've got grandeur and bigger things yet to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Minister, I understand that the federal economic development fund, some \$175 million, allocated \$45 million to Saskatchewan for forestry initiatives in Saskatchewan and the province hasn't triggered one dollar, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would ask that member to provide that information to us. And I don't know where he is getting his information from, but it's obviously wrong.

I would point out again, we have sat here and we have said to the northern people — and they've been saying it to us for a year, for years — is there's good opportunity, good resource base in the province. We need your co-operation to help us develop those economies

And to date, we have provided the resources, we have provided the time, we have provided the commitment, and we've provided the dollars for investment to this date with nothing coming from the federal government. And, of course, we want to encourage that, we want to encourage that. We want to encourage training dollars, we want to encourage investment dollars, we want that money to come, as I mentioned. So I would point out that we are clearly on target and on track, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and things will work out.

Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, I move the committee now report progress on Northern Affairs, and then following the supper recess, proceed to Finance estimates on the Department of Labour, and that we now call it 5 o'clock.

The Assembly recessed until 19:00.