

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of people in my area who are concerned about the high cost of education tax:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly urge the provincial government to take all possible action to cause a reduction in the education tax burden carried by Saskatchewan residents and employers.

People that have signed this petition are from Kelvington and Lintlaw.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today on behalf of citizens of Moose Jaw and district who are concerned about the lack of dialysis services in their community. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause government to take necessary action to provide the people of Moose Jaw and district with a hemodialysis unit for their community.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are all from the community of Moose Jaw.

And I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have done repeatedly over the last number of weeks, I stand again today to present a petition on behalf of individuals in the constituency of Cypress Hills, concerned particularly about this government's policy on the issue of Crown grazing land renewals. And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown land lessees maintain their first option to renew those leases.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this three-page petition is signed by producers and Crown leaseholders in the communities of Cabri and Pennant.

I so present.

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition, the prayer of relief of which reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the Minister of Highways preserve the old bridges between Battleford and North Battleford.

Your petitioners come from Battleford and North Battleford.

I so present.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the ruthless and careless lack of a hemodialysis unit in the city of Moose Jaw. And the prayer reads, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take necessary action to provide the people of Moose Jaw and district with a hemodialysis unit for their community.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals all from the city of Moose Jaw.

I so present.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of people from my constituency very concerned about the premium increases in crop insurance. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take necessary steps to have Sask Crop Insurance reverse the 2003 premium increases and restore affordable crop insurance premiums to our struggling farmers.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by people from Bienfait, Estevan, North Portal, Frobisher, and Macoun.

I so present. Thank you.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise again with a petition from residents of rural Saskatchewan who are concerned about access to adequate health care. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the proper steps to cause adequate medical services, including a physician, be provided in Rockglen and to cause the Five Hills Health Region to provide better information to the citizens of Rockglen.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good citizens of Fife Lake, Assiniboia, and Rockglen.

I so present.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of farmers who are worried with the 52 per cent increase in the crop insurance premium. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to have Saskatchewan Crop Insurance reverse the 2003 premium increases and restore affordable crop insurance premiums to our struggling farmers.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Eston and Plato.

I so here present.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here with the constituents concerned about the cost of prescription drug costs.

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.

Signed by the good citizens of Davidson.

I so present.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from citizens concerned about the fairness for Crown leaseholders. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown land lessees maintain their first option to renew those leases.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Biggar and Perdue.

I so present.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of constituents. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 22 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Southey, Strasbourg, and Regina.

I so present.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the government's handling of the crop insurance premiums. And the prayer reads

as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to have Saskatchewan Crop Insurance reverse the 2003 premium increases and restore affordable crop insurance premiums to our struggling farmers.

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

The signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Glenbush and Spiritwood.

I so present.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 13, 18, 21, 23, 27, 36, 40, and 90.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 40 ask the government the following question:

Who were the persons and their companies currently licensed as gaming suppliers by Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming in 2002?

I'm asking the same question for 2001, for 2000, for 1999, 1998, 1997, and 1996.

And who are the persons and their companies currently licensed as gaming suppliers for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming?

While I'm on my feet, I have three more questions, Mr. Speaker.

Were the bids for the software contract for mega bingo open for public scrutiny or was it a sealed bidding process; which companies bid on this contract; which were the persons and their companies presented by Western Canada Lottery Corporation for the final decision in awarding of this contract?

And the same questions, Mr. Speaker, about the hardware that was contracted for mega bingo.

And the last question:

What are the specific contents contained in the request for proposal package that was presented by Western Canada Lottery Corporation to persons and their companies interested in the RFP, reference no. 621-97; and will Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority provide this package or a copy of this package to members of the Legislative Assembly wishing to review it?

I so present.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 40 ask the government the following question:

To the CIC minister: what is the terminology for Crown corporations underwriting or lending money to other Crowns; and further to that, relative to that terminology, what are the lending guidelines specifically for debt to equity ratios?

I so present.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and all members of the Assembly, a group of Saskatchewan public servants seated in your gallery who are touring the legislature and I know having an opportunity to learn a little bit about our world here in the legislature.

The participants are employees from the departments of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization; the Public Service Commission; Health; Industry and Resources; Intergovernmental Relations and Aboriginal Affairs; Labour, Community Resources and Employment; Justice; Saskatchewan Environment; and the Legislative Assembly. And welcome to the interpreter as well.

And I look forward to meeting with this group shortly after question period. And I'm sure all members will want to join me in welcoming them today and thanking them for all the good work they do on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming the members of the public service to the galleries today.

We look forward to the procedures that we have here and hope that you enjoy them as well. And the Whip and I look forward to meeting with you after question period and after you have a chance to talk with the minister so that you get both sides of the story as to what actually happened here on the floor today.

I would ask the members to welcome the members of the civil service here today.

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

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### World Junior Curling Champion Honoured

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday the community of Maryfield threw a celebration to honour a very special person. The person the community was honouring was their very own Janelle Lemon. Mr. Speaker, Janelle Lemon was the second on Canada's world champion Junior Girls Curling Team.

Over 200 people gathered in the community centre to enjoy a

roast beef . . . pork supper, pardon me, and an evening of celebration honouring their hero, Janelle Lemon.

Janelle began her curling career in her primary school years. Mr. Speaker, it wasn't uncommon to find Janelle at the curling rink throwing rocks and practising shots whenever she had a spare moment. Janelle has been encouraged by her parents, family, teachers, and her community as she has pursued her curling endeavours.

On Saturday Janelle was joined by her teammates, skip, Marliese Miller; third, Teejay Surik; alternate, Tammy Schneider; and coach, Bob Miller, as well as family members of the other team members.

What an honour for my wife and I to join with the community for this joyous celebration. Mr. Speaker, I extend my congratulations to Janelle Lemon and her teammates on their successful World Junior Curling Championships for 2003. I know that there will be many more successful curling successes in their futures. Thank you.

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

##### Mossbank Historical Society to Re-enact Debate of the Century

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the Premier's advice to the people of Saskatchewan to seize their own future, the Mossbank and District Historical Society is sponsoring a daylong event where visitors will be transported back to 1957 to the debate of the century, when in the town of Mossbank, Tommy Douglas took on Ross Thatcher. The issue, the issue? Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

The old saw about those who forget history are condemned to repeat it comes to mind. It's one of the reasons that days like this, reminding us of our past, are so very important to our future.

This re-enactment of the debate of the century is the cornerstone of a special day for Mossbank but there are many other activities planned as well, Mr. Speaker. Main Street will be adorned with 1950s vehicles, people dressed in 1950s fashions; there'll be a pancake breakfast and much more.

Congratulations to the people of Mossbank as they remember their past while reaching for their future. Mossbank has the spirit and the vision to thrive.

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

##### Volunteer Cleanup Campaign Underway in Swift Current

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a massive cleanup campaign is underway in my hometown, the city of Swift Current. The Swift Current Masonic Lodge and Shrine Club, along with the city, are coordinating the effort to clean up Swift Current.

Over 1,000 volunteers will be taking to the streets, the back alleys, the parks, and the ditches around the community to pick

up all of the litter in Swift Current to start the spring. The Good Sam's RV Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Eliminators Car Club, volunteers from the abilities centre, and all of the schools in Swift Current are going to be involved, Mr. Speaker.

Residents are being encouraged to clean up their own yards and back alleys, and those who are willing to go the extra mile can visit the Shrine Hut to pick up a map showing them the areas of the city that still needs a little TLC (tender loving care).

I'd like to congratulate the Masonic Lodge and the Shrine Club for grabbing hold of the reins for this particular project.

As well I'd like to ask all members to recognize the efforts of all of the hardworking volunteers and children in the city of Swift Current who are helping to clean up the city. And better yet, I invite the members to come this summer to Swift Current and check out just how clean and wonderful the community of Swift Current is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Regina Musician Wins Prize at National Music Competition**

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The depth and the breadth and the variety of talent to be found throughout the province is a constant joy and a source of amazement to me, and I suspect to all of us.

One of the real pleasures of being an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) is this constant reminder that yet another Saskatchewan person has distinguished him or herself in the wider world.

The case in point today is a constituent of mine who is quite well known in Regina, throughout the music community, Bob Evans.

(13:45)

Bob is a gifted guitarist with a wonderful singing voice. His main area is folk music and he also plays the blues and gospel music. We have grown accustomed to hearing him about town either as a solo performer or with a group. But by the way, Mr. Speaker, he also has a day job in the Department of Health.

Recently he was a winner at the National Fingerpicking Championships in Winfield, Kansas. This is a prestigious festival, familiar to guitar, banjo, mandolin players and fans across the continent. Contestants enter from around the world, but only 40 people in each category make the final cut in the competition. The most popular category is instrumental solo guitar, Bob's category.

His first time out he won the third best guitar picker in the world. His prize was a custom built guitar and a great deal of prestige among his peers. Prestige, which by proxy and with pride, Saskatchewan can share.

I know all members will join me in congratulating Bob and his nimble fingers.

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

#### **Math Students Test Nestlé Canada Brainteaser**

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently a group of math students in Naicam learned that advertising can stretch the truth and that math has a practical application in everyday life.

Mr. Erick Hufnagel's grade 8 math class had been working on a unit focusing on perimeter, circumferences, diameters, etc. A student, Jake Christianson, brought to the attention of the class a brainteaser math fact that was on the Nestlé Canada Smarties box. It stated the number of Smarties produced by their company in one day could encircle the earth.

The student found out that Nestlé manufactures 17 million Smarties every day. They then figured out that each Smartie had a diameter of 1 centimetre so that meant that 17 million Smarties could cover a distance of 17 million centimetres or only 170 kilometres.

After much discussion and encouragement by their teacher, Bradley Nienaber e-mailed the company and told them that their math was wrong. The company replied to Bradley and admitted that they were wrong and they would correct their packaging. They also sent the students 25 gift certificates for Nestlé's chocolate bars.

Mr. Speaker, this class learned many valuable lessons in this exercise that will hopefully make them question advertising and take facts at face value, as well as teaching them to draw their own conclusions. These skills will serve them well throughout their life. I ask members to join with me in congratulating the grade 8 students in Naicam for thinking outside the box.

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

#### **Students Celebrate Century Festival**

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, when you take your next break, as I'm sure you will, I invite you, as I invite all members, to go downstairs to the wall just outside the Cumberland Gallery and look at a huge, colourful poster that was made by the students of Connaught School, which is in my constituency of Regina Centre.

Now the poster was created by the students as part of their participation in Youth Week, which occurs the first week of May, and this week showcases the talents, ideas, and abilities of young people.

Now this was a very special thing, Mr. Speaker, because they celebrated Youth Week by having a Century Festival. As you know, it's Regina's centennial this year and Connaught School's been here nearly as long as the city.

But the idea of the Century Festival came from a remarkable young man called David Mark. And David worked with Street Culture Kidz Project on this festival using the idea of the Century Festival to provoke the kids into thinking about the future by asking them this question: what is your vision for the next century? After all, Mr. Speaker, it's not only us adults who

can dream dreams and have vision.

The students have recorded their ideas in books, murals, artworks, and stories. On May 5, the students presented their ideas and their works to an assembly which I was proud to attend. And they had ideas on environment, peace, combating racism, as well as inventing new technology such as flying cars. The assembly was filmed and Connaught will be communicating their ideas with other schools.

Mr. Speaker, it was very encouraging and satisfying to realize the future is in such good hands. Thank you.

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

### Weyburn Women Win at Hair Design Competition

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, two exceptional young women from Weyburn were recently recognized at the national level for their outstanding creativity and ability in their chosen field of hair design.

Courtney Stott and Rhea Labbee both won first place in different categories at the Wella Young Protege Competition held in Toronto. Courtney, with her model, Kendell-Jo La Coste, won first place for consumer fashion, which included haircut, colour, and style. Rhea, with her model, Kendra Saboe, won first place in the young perm category, which included a perm, colour, cut, and style.

Both Rhea and Courtney qualified to compete at the national level by winning at the provincial level last fall, and their prize for winning in Toronto included a \$1,500 scholarship to Vidal Sassoon in Toronto.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of Rhea and Courtney, not only because they are from my constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy, but because both Rhea and Courtney worked for me at the Weyburn Dairy Queen. By their recent achievement it shows that the strong work ethic that they had then continues to serve them well today.

I'd like to ask all members of the legislature to join with me in congratulating Rhea and Courtney and to wish them much success in the future.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Financial Support for Education

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Learning. School divisions across Saskatchewan have been finalizing their budgets and the news for taxpayers is very bleak. According to the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, education property taxes are going up right across the province. And school divisions are blaming this directly on the shoulders of the NDP (New Democratic Party) government. School divisions know that the NDP government has forced them to increase education property taxes because the provincial funding didn't cover the cost of the teachers' salary or the operation of the school district.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP government gambling millions of taxpayers' dollars right across this whole world and forcing school divisions to increase property taxes to Saskatchewan taxpayers?

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has put a huge investment in education this year — \$1.2 billion in education. We committed to fully fund the teachers' increase and we did so. We put the total amount of the increase into the foundation operating grants and from there it was disbursed into the school districts. They have the autonomy to make their own decisions at the local level and have done so. But our commitment this year was a major statement of our value of education in this province.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Learning is well aware that there are 15 school divisions that don't get one penny from this government, nothing to cover the cost of teachers' salaries.

Mr. Speaker, according to the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), at least 64 per cent of school divisions have had to increase their education property tax because the education grant did not cover the cost of the teachers' salary increase and the operation of their division. The average mill rate is going to be going up in virtually every school division across this province, and it has for the last three years.

To make matters worse, the NDP has also increased the computational mill rates. That means that the amount of money they get from the province is less so they have to add more money to the education property tax bill. In the meantime, the NDP government is gambling millions of dollars in Australia, in Atlanta, in Nashville, all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP government gambling taxpayers' dollars outside of Saskatchewan, making us pay more for property tax, and they still say that education is a priority for their government?

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That question . . . Or if there was a question, it was pretty much all over the map. But I will talk about the foundation operating grant which we put our money into, and that is the formula that disburses our money to the school boards in the province.

We have total support from the school boards to the Teachers' Federation and the SSTA for the foundation operating grant formula. That is the fairest way. It is an equalization type of formula, and I'm not too sure if the member opposite understands the formula but that is the fairest way to distribute our money, which we have got full support from all the partners in the education sector. And that is how we continue to do it, with their support.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, there's not many taxpayers in Saskatchewan who think this is very fair when their taxes are going up every year and this government is gambling their dollars outside of Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — The minister seems to be missing a very important point. School divisions have to increase property taxes because the NDP have misplaced priorities. And the NDP doesn't care, Mr. Speaker. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation presented the Minister of Finance with more than 8,500 petitions. Every one of those petitions called for lower property taxes.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP took those 8,500 taxpayers' petitions and they either lost them or shredded them because they really didn't care that people were concerned about property taxes.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP shredding the concerns of thousands of taxpayers of this province and then telling school divisions to get more money from property owners in this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Melnychuk:** — Mr. Speaker, as was indicated in the budget on March 28, there was an increase to the foundation operating grant. There was a record investment in education of \$1.2 billion. And I might point out to the members opposite that the amount of dollars in the foundation operating grant in 1999 was \$397.5 million; in this year's budget it's up to 510. That's a hundred million dollar increase in just four budgets, Mr. Speaker. That's investment that this government has been putting into education in this province.

But I might add that the petition that has been presented to the government will be tabled by myself here in the absolute near future. We have that petition. And also, Mr. Speaker, I wish to indicate that the no. 1 recommendation on that petition was that we create a commission to investigate the financing of education and we have done that, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, the SSTA said at least 64 per cent of school divisions have increased their education property taxes. That's a fact. That's a fact that we have to live with every day.

The education grant does not cover the teachers' salary increase and it did not cover the costs of operating a school division. Every . . .

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, the NDP keeps telling school divisions to prepare for a loss of 35,000 students by the end of the decade. And the NDP keeps shortchanging school divisions on education grants. But the minister clearly has no intention of

following her advice when it comes to being efficient in her own department. When young families continue to stream out of Saskatchewan and the K to 12 (kindergarten to grade 12) enrolment continues to drop and the NDP continues to tell school divisions to cut back and become more efficient, the salaries at the Department of Learning on the K to 12 side has gone up 12 per cent this year.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP shortchanging school divisions and driving education property taxes up across Saskatchewan while the Minister of Learning increases the amount of money given to her staff and her department?

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

**Hon. Mr. Melnychuk:** — Mr. Speaker, we've already talked about the record investment in education of \$1.2 billion. We've talked about an increase to our foundation operating grant of over 20 per cent in the last three or four years. We've talked about our investment in terms of what we're doing for school divisions on the foundation operating grant. We promised to cover fully 100 per cent of the teachers' contract, and we've done that. And, Mr. Speaker, we have the best equity outcomes of any jurisdiction of 32 OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries.

So I talk about this. I talk about our investment in education. And I ask the member, who in the last campaign and the platform on her campaign literature did not mention education once, and she has the gall to get on her feet and talk about why we're not spending more, Mr. Speaker . . . Well they froze spending on education in the last election. We're providing investment to our citizens, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Supply of Nurses

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we pointed out the severe doctor shortage in this province. Saskatchewan has the second worst doctor-to-patient ratio in the country, over 300 doctors below the national average.

But it's not just doctors. Yesterday I attended the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association conference. The Minister of Health addressed the conference and gave his standard everything's-fine speech. And then he left, which is too bad, because if he had stuck around he would have heard SRNA (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association) executive director, Donna Brunskill, blast his NDP government for the severe nursing shortage in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, why isn't this NDP government getting the message? When are they going to address the severe nursing shortage in this province?

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

(14:00)

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government, our NDP government . . .

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party is saying I can't talk about education. But interestingly enough, I can talk about both health and education.

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, this government, our NDP government has made a strong commitment to both education and health care. In this budget we committed \$2.5 billion to health care and \$1.2 billion to education. We are continuing to work with our partners in the educational institutions and the professional associations to address the nursing human resources. And we will, we will await the outcome of a study that we have commissioned from Doug Elliott, and we will use that information to inform our decisions.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the Minister of Learning is knowledgeable about nursing because after the next provincial election we'll have one more nurse back in the health care system.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote, since the minister wasn't there, I would like to quote from Donna Brunskill's speech. She said, and I quote:

What is going on around us in response to the nursing shortage is unacceptable. We need to take a stand.

She goes on to say:

In Saskatchewan, nursing education seats were reduced from 475 to 180 by this NDP government. The conscious reduction in education seats coupled with high-stress work environments have resulted in a chronic nursing shortage. Enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, what is this NDP government doing to address the shortage that's outlined by the SRNA?

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After the next election this nurse will be still here. And there will probably be another chicken fryer in Melfort.

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Anyway but, Mr. Speaker, our government has increased the nursing seats capacity since 1999 by 65 per cent. As late as this last March we added 40 new seats in the northern nursing Aboriginal program, and we continue to look at ways to address the nursing shortage and the nursing human resource issues in this province.

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

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

again this minister is very convenient in missing some of the real facts. The facts are this NDP government reduced the education training seats for nursing from 475 to 180. Now they bring it back up to 260 and say they've increased it by two-thirds. Mr. Speaker, they are still seriously behind what they were educating when this government took office. Mr. Speaker . . .

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, the executive director of the SRNA also said yesterday that we don't have to study this any more; it's an excuse for inaction. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, she has also said last year there were 700 applications for the 260 available spots. This year she understands that that number is approaching 1,000.

Mr. Speaker, these are young people who want to join the profession of nursing and are being turned away because of this government's lack of vision for the future of this province. Mr. Speaker, when will this government realize you can't reduce waiting lists, you can't advance the opportunities to get diagnostics, unless you have health care professionals to provide the service? When will they recognize this fact and take action immediately?

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it fairly ironic that the Saskatchewan Party stands in their seat and tries to defend health care or education, when in their 1999 platform their fight for Saskatchewan was: for education, audit and freeze; for health, audit and freeze; fighting for the Crowns, audit and sell; fighting for the public service, audit and fire; fighting for Justice, audit and interfere.

If people in Saskatchewan think the Saskatchewan Party is fighting for them, they should look close and think hard.

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

#### SaskTel Investments

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) provided the opposition with a copy of a presentation that Don Ching, the CEO (chief executive officer) of SaskTel, is making, has made here in Regina, that highlights the success or the lack of success of SaskTel's investments out of this province, Mr. Speaker, their out-of-province investments.

But, Mr. Speaker, as much as we appreciate getting a copy of the presentation, we're alarmed by what appears to be some misrepresentations in this particular presentation, Mr. Speaker. And we'd like the minister to be able to clarify whether he's approved this.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — We'd like the minister to clarify some information on here where, under the category of total return, return of the taxpayers for Retx, Soft Tracks, Craig Wireless,

tapped into, and BWI (Business Watch International) there's a . . . Instead of highlighting the losses that these investments have racked up, there's an initial, N-A, beside each of those — N-A.

Will the minister tell us what N-A means? Does it mean not applicable, not available, not accurate, or not accountable? Which of those does that mean?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, N-A means none of the above. What it means, Mr. Speaker, it means, Mr. Speaker, that SaskTel for its investments have returned — as I have said 100, 1,000 times in this legislature — it's returned to the people of Saskatchewan first of all good service, low cost, high quality to the people of Saskatchewan for many, many years. It will continue to do it for many, many more years unless that party, the Sask Party, ever gets in government, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, this is an important question. The president, the hand-picked president of SaskTel, former Premier Romanow's roommate, made a presentation to the Regina Chamber of Commerce about defending SaskTel's foreign investments. That's what he did, Mr. Speaker.

And in this presentation on foreign investments by SaskTel, all of the information isn't provided. Even as we are debating in this legislature and the government is admitting to losses at Retx in Georgia, at Soft Tracks, at Craig Wireless, at tapped into in Tennessee, even as the government officials are admitting to those losses here, he's not disclosing those losses in these public presentations around the province. Does the minister believe that is acceptable on the part of the president of SaskTel?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well again, many of these questions that he asks could be asked in Crown Corporations. And he knows when he asks these questions in Crown Corporations, where there are many officials present, that he gets full and complete answers, Mr. Speaker.

And on a daily basis he stands in this Chamber, says that they don't get the information. How is it that he's even able to ask the questions about many of those issues? Because we provided the information, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I say again, many of the investments that SaskTel has made in this province and outside of this province have benefited people of Saskatchewan in a very significant way. They have provided high-quality service for the people of Saskatchewan at very, very low and affordable rates, amongst the highest-quality service in all of the world, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, apparently N-A means not answering and that's nothing new for this minister in this

House. If he's inviting the opposition to ask these questions in Crown Corporations, he ought to turn around behind him and talk to the chairman, the NDP chairman of the Crown Corporations Committee of this legislature because just yesterday — just yesterday — I had a discussion with him and invited him to reconvene. Let's reconvene that committee.

I asked the chairman of committees, when will we be meeting again? So he may want to ask the member for Regina Victoria who will indeed be able to convene a meeting of the Crown Corporations Committee. We'll ask the questions there. We're not getting the answers in this House, Mr. Speaker.

The minister has not answered the question. I'll put it very simply and very clearly. This presentation is disingenuous at best. It does not represent the state of SaskTel's international investments. It represents something other than the facts.

So does the minister believe that that is acceptable, to have SaskTel officials making a presentation like this around the province of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well when this member from the Sask Party talks about misrepresentation, he is treading on very, very thin ice given what that party has done in this legislature over the last few days, Mr. Speaker — very thin ice.

Mr. Speaker, SaskTel — part of what these folks in the Sask Party want them to do — has gone around the province, and most recently with the chamber, providing them detailed information. They accuse this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, of not providing information. I say look at the list and there are pages, Mr. Speaker, of what this government has done to become more accountable.

Given what I had read in this Chamber sometime ago where the auditor couldn't even rely on the statements when they were government, talking about the Crown corporations . . . Mr. Speaker, we provide significant transactions. We provide now semi-annual reports, Mr. Speaker. The boards are recognized as having amongst the highest standards in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we meet or exceed TSX standards, Mr. Speaker.

And I could go on and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the minister has a chance to explain exactly how he comes to this conclusion because we know even from Mr. Ching's presentation that there are only two . . . there are three winning deals in all of this, Mr. Speaker. Two of them were done by the previous government. One of the them is a privatization of SaskComp, if you can believe it.

So there's one deal that the NDP can claim in international investments that made them 6.1 million, but once you throw it into the mix, the net result is this, Mr. Speaker. The net result is that under this government, SaskTel has lost \$45 million, 45



million taxpayer dollars in out-of-province investments that it doesn't have for things like education in the province of Saskatchewan.

In the meantime, it looks like SaskTel officials are less interested in telling the truth about that fact. And I want to ask the minister if he will direct his officials to correct their public presentation on SaskTel's international investment . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well let me say two things about that question. There were a number of questions that were in that statement, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, first of all he is correct — the deal under LCL (Leicester Communications Limited) was first structured under the Leveine government, Mr. Speaker. But there isn't a telephone company in the world that would not disagree with SaskTel in believing that if they had sold it, sold it under the construction or under the model that existed when they had it, that it would have been a huge money loser.

The fact is that under this government and under SaskTel, and under the management of SaskTel under this government, they restructured it and made a huge profit for the people of Saskatchewan to be directed to better service, Mr. Speaker. Anybody knows that.

And in addition to that, they can attack SaskTel in this Chamber and the people that work for SaskTel across our province on a daily basis. The fact is that SaskTel is, if not the strongest, tied with MTS (Manitoba Telecom Services) out of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, for the strongest telephone company in Canada.

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

#### Effective Use of Health Care Resources

**Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Speaker, in the past 10 years health care spending has increased by \$1 billion. This year alone, 72 per cent of the increased spending in the budget went to health, but so far we have seen no results. We have a shortage of 300 doctors, a shortage of 700 nurses, it takes eight months to get an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), and three years to get a hip replacement.

My question for the minister: how is it that, after spending \$1 billion, waiting lists just keep on growing? What guarantees is he putting in place to ensure that the 184 extra million dollars being spent this year will actually get through to patient care?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been working very carefully with the regional health authorities around an accountability structure like we've never seen in this province before.

(14:15)

We are working together to set out a plan where they get their budgets on budget day and they move forward.

One of the key things that we're doing is making sure that our health system is accountable for exactly the kind of questions that the member asks because one of the challenges that we all have is making sure that we use our health dollars, here in Saskatchewan, in the most efficient way possible.

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

**Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Speaker, according to Roy Romanow, Canadian health care is now at the crossroads. Either we will continue to have a one-tier publicly funded health care system if we can fix it or we are going to devolve into two-tier health care where access is determined by income.

Mr. Speaker, people judge the quality of their health care by the length of the waiting list. And on that test, Saskatchewan has failed them. Without concrete results this time, confidence in our public health care system will be irreparably compromised.

My question for the minister: how does he account for increased spending of \$1 billion with no results to patients and longer waiting lists today than we had 10 years ago? What guarantees will he put in place? What guarantees will he give us that patients will actually see waiting lists decrease?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, there are a number of answers to this question and I'm going to answer it in two ways. First question is, 10 years ago approximately — actually it's about nine years ago — we had a federal Liberal government where that member is affiliated that ended up taking out a huge chunk of money in health care. It put the whole system out of kilter. We got a bit of the money back in September 2000. We got a bit more in February of this year.

But we need to continue to press the federal government to play their true part, the federal Liberals. And I ask that member, in his role as a Liberal, to make sure he gets that one.

The second point is around . . . dealing with waiting lists. We in Saskatchewan have the first province-wide surgical care network that we're developing. That will be coming into place in another number of weeks. And that will end up providing us with exact information about how we can allocate the resources throughout the province so that we can deal with waiting lists in specific areas.

Mr. Speaker, we in Saskatchewan are the strongest defenders of medicare in Canada and we continue to keep that role.

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

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill No. 26 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2003

**Hon. Mr. Melnychuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 26, The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

**Bill No. 27 — The Condominium Property  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 27, The Condominium Property Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

**Bill No. 28 — The Health Information Protection  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 28, The Health Information Protection Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

**Bill No. 29 — The Non-profit Corporations Amendment  
Act, 2003/Loi de 2003 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les  
sociétés sans but lucratif**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 29, The Non-profit Corporations Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

**Bill No. 30 — The Pawns Property (Recording) Act**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 30, the pawned property (recording) amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

**Bill No. 31 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation  
Amendment Act, 2003/Loi de 2003 modifiant la Loi de 1997  
sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de  
hasard**

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 31, The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

**Bill No. 36 — The Agricultural Safety Net  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 36, The Agricultural Safety Net Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

**Bill No. 37 — The Crop Insurance Amendment Act, 2003**

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 37, The Crop Insurance Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read a first time.

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

**Bill No. 38 — The Farm Financial Stability  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — I move that Bill No. 38, The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 192 and no. 193.

**The Speaker:** — Responses to questions 192 and 193 have been submitted.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to stand to convert this for debates returnable, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Question 194 converted to debates returnable.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased once again to table on behalf of the government responses to written questions 195 through 197 inclusive.

**The Speaker:** — Responses to questions 195, 196, and 197 have been submitted.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**SECOND READINGS**

**Bill No. 25 — The Personal Care Homes  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Personal Care Homes Amendment Act. Mr. Speaker, this Act is being introduced to further our commitment under the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care announced by this government in December 2001. Mr. Speaker, we are following through on our commitment to protect the security of seniors and persons with disabilities while continuing to improve and expand long-term care options for Saskatchewan residents.

The Personal Care Homes Act was passed to govern licensing of personal care homes in the province. The Act regulates private accommodations that provide care for individuals who choose not to remain in their own homes. The Personal Care

Homes Act was developed in consultation with consumer, health, and social interest groups to ensure that private care homes were regulated and monitored and would provide the best possible care to their residents.

Saskatchewan Health has monitored these facilities, keeping in mind that residents of personal care homes must receive safe and secure care. The Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care reaffirmed our commitment to providing the best possible care for our residents and supporting those most in need.

The amendments being proposed today, Mr. Speaker, were developed after consultations with seniors' organizations, personal care home residents, current and potential operators, health sector unions, health administrators, and professional associations. These consultations emphasized the need for financial security should a personal care home face sudden closure. This amendment, Mr. Speaker, includes two provisions to protect residents in the event that a large, privately operated personal care home faces sudden closure.

First, new operators of large personal care homes will be required to post a bond or other form of security to assist with transition planning for residents in the event that the personal care home is no longer financially viable and goes out of business. As well, the government will now have the ability to appoint a public administrator to ensure safe and secure care for residents through such a transition process.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to offering those residents of the province who need special care, whether they are seniors or persons with disabilities, the best options for their individual circumstances. We are satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that these amendments will provide another level of protection for those residents of large personal care homes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move second reading of this Bill.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a very complex Bill dealing with a very important issue, and that is the safety and security of people in care homes. And, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter whether those people are in care homes that are run privately or if they're in care homes that are run publicly. Each and every one of those citizens deserves and should know that they are safe and secure in their home, in their place of lodging, Mr. Speaker. And it should not matter whether it's a private or a public facility.

Mr. Speaker, because while private homes do close from time to time — and that is certainly an impediment to the people living there — public facilities also, Mr. Speaker, have been known to close and that causes a severe impediment for the citizens that are living in those homes. So there needs to be some security for both, Mr. Speaker, that when you're in a long-term care facility that you have some assurance that there is going to be a place for you in the system.

And, Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about that residents need to have comfort and confidence. They deserve to live happy and productive lives. Well, Mr. Speaker, that means that they need to live in the communities that they were living in prior to going

into a long-term care facility, Mr. Speaker. That's why the private care homes are increasing in this province, is because people want to live in the communities where they worked and lived their entire lives. That's where their friends are, that's where their families are — those that remain in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, because a good member . . . a good number of those families have moved out of this province. But those that remain, Mr. Speaker, the seniors in long-term care facilities want to stay in those communities.

And, Mr. Speaker, in a large number of cases that is not able to happen because the facilities either aren't in their communities or the facilities in their communities are not large enough to accommodate the demand. And I know that the Minister of Health has said that there are enough long-term care placements across the province to accommodate the needs that we have according to the statistics for the numbers over the age of 75.

(14:30)

But, Mr. Speaker, what the problem is, is they're not in the communities where the seniors are living. They're being transferred 50 miles away. They're being transferred 100 miles away, Mr. Speaker. And in those cases, in a lot of those cases, the spouse is not able to travel those kind of distances on a continual basis.

So the person who is put into the senior's care facility is away from their family. Their spouse has no access to them. The family is living a long ways away. And frankly, Mr. Speaker, they live miserable lives under those circumstances. So it's very important that there is the ability to have security and safety and comfort in their home communities.

Mr. Speaker, when the minister talks of large private care homes, it's going to be important for us to find out from him what he means by large. Is large more than 5 residents, more than 10 residents, more than 20 residents? What is the criteria here? Because everyone needs to have that security, Mr. Speaker — not just those in a large but those in smaller care homes as well.

Mr. Speaker, when you're looking at these bonds, also you need to take a look at what is the cost going to be to the individual who resides in one of these long-term care facilities. Obviously the private care homes are there not to be a charity, Mr. Speaker. And in a large number of the cases where they are a charity organization, they're already part of the government system known as affiliates, Mr. Speaker, and receive some government support, if not all of it through government support.

Those private individuals who provide these kind of long-term care facilities because there isn't enough available in the public system are not doing so, Mr. Speaker, because they are wanting to lose money. So the cost associated for the imposition of a bond has to be transferred then on to the residents of those private care homes.

And I think it's going to be critical to find out from the minister what kind of costs are we looking at? How big is that bond going to have to be? What kind of a time frame are we looking at if there is a closure of a long-term care facility? The bond is in place to cover what kind of requirements? Is it to provide

residency for 30 days, residency for 60 days, residency for a year? Because in a large number of cases when you look across the province, Mr. Speaker, the waiting lists are over a year long to get into long-term care facilities in this province. And so how long does that bond have to be in place to cover the residency for the individuals involved?

When that bond is in place, Mr. Speaker, and the administrator is appointed, if — and we don't know what the minister has in mind for this operation; those questions still need to be asked — but if the administrator is going to take over physical control of that long-term care facility, who now becomes responsible for the costs? Is that applied against the bond? Is someone else responsible for those long-term costs that the administrator might impose on that long-term care facility?

There are a large number of questions here, Mr. Speaker, that need to be addressed by the minister and clarify what this bond will do. The people in residence in those long-term care facilities certainly need to have the protection but there needs to be a lot more answers and a lot clearer explanation than what the minister has given in his second reading speech, Mr. Speaker, so at this time I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

### Bill No. 6 — The Podiatry Act

**The Chair:** — I would recognize the Minister of Health to introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair, or Mr. Chair, I guess of this particular committee.

I'm pleased to have with me today Lois Zelmer, who is on my right, who is the director of health services policy and legislation from the policy and planning branch; and on my left, Cathy Dermody, who is the health professions consultant from policy and planning branch.

#### Clause 1

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome minister and your officials this afternoon to discuss the Bill No. 6, An Act respecting the Profession of Podiatry and making a consequential amendment to The Medical Profession Act.

Mr. Minister, there are a number of things that this Bill is designed to do and I'd like to go over them briefly.

First of all I believe it moves the Bill and the practice from the chiropodist type of legislation that was in place in the past, and updates it and brings it into the more contemporary terminology of podiatry, and also updates the regulatory structure for the podiatry as a self-regulating organization. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, that's correct. And if you wish I can give you a summary of the changes that are here, and then if I've missed something that you have a question about, well we can go that way.

Basically this legislation follows our template legislation for health professions with one exception, which is that we're going to put in bylaw-making authority to allow podiatrists to prescribe medications and order diagnostic tests.

But the Act will update the existing Act and change the name of the Act from The Chiropody Profession Act to The Podiatry Act. It will change the name of the Saskatchewan Association of Chiropodists to the Saskatchewan College of Podiatrists. It sets out the requirements for meetings and other administrative matters. It provides for the appointment of three public representatives on council, one of which must also serve on the discipline committee.

It sets out the bylaw-making powers for both administrative and regulatory bylaws and the filing requirements. It provides bylaw-making authority to allow podiatrists to prescribe medications and order diagnostic tests. It provides for ministerial bylaws. It sets out registration requirements, and requires that educational qualifications be specified in the bylaws.

It provides title protection for podiatrists and chiropodists, and provides that the title, doctor, may only be used in conjunction with the words podiatrist, podiatry, chiropodist, or chiropody so that it clearly indicates that the person is not a physician.

It also includes investigation and discipline provisions. It includes penalties of up to a maximum of \$6,000 for those who use the title, podiatrist or chiropodist, but who are not licensed to do so.

It requires an annual register and an annual report and it provides for transitional bylaws, transitional provisions for the bylaws for the council and for licences.

So that's a summary of the whole Act and what it's intended to do, and I'm happy to answer any further questions.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that overview because it touches on many of the specific questions about this legislation that I was going to ask so that we might get it on the record. I think that's important in these discussions as well, not only to sort of go over it together but to make sure we have it on the official record what the intent is.

Mr. Minister, you mentioned in your summary that there is going to be an exception from the normal template, if you like, and framework in that podiatrists are going to be given the authority to subscribe or to call for certain tests and certain procedures. Could you outline specifically, have they been decided, what specific tests and what specific procedures are envisaged by bylaw in this legislation?

**The Chair:** — Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Forbes:** — To introduce guests, please.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. In the west

gallery I'd like to introduce to the House, through you and to the House, 43 students from St. Edward School that is my riding in Avenue P. And they are accompanied today by teachers Dustin Kasun, Mel Sysing, and Klarissa Komarnicki. I hope I got that right. I see a face — maybe I didn't quite get it right.

But I do want to say one thing about this school. It means a lot to me, St. Edward School on Avenue P. I used to coach softball on the playground with the Kelsey Jets. I don't know if the kids there, if any of them are on the Kelsey Jets team. But I'll be meeting with the group shortly for a photograph and to review some of the proceedings that we're taking part in here today and answer any questions.

So welcome to our House today, and we're glad that you're down here from Saskatoon seeing what goes on in the legislature. Thank you very much.

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

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

#### Bill No. 6 — The Podiatry Act (continued)

##### Clause 1

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you. I'd like to respond to that question about the prescribing of medications and ordering of tests. This area of the development of the bylaws will be done in close conjunction with the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Saskatchewan Medical Association. It's contemplated that for the medications it'll be primarily topical medications that relate to some of the foot infections and things like that.

And practically, they will be working very closely with the College of Physicians and Surgeons as they develop this, and I think they're just starting to do that. And till they have those rules in place, this particular part of the legislation wouldn't be proclaimed in effect till we get the regulations in place first.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Minister, I assume that in these discussions, once the specific bylaws are prepared, they need to be approved by the board of the podiatric college. And then are these bylaws that also require the Minister of Health's approval?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, the bylaws would have to be approved, as well as the drugs schedules and the regulations that go with that.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Minister, I believe that podiatric surgeons are going to continue to be under the responsibility of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Is part of the discussions that will go on between the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association), and the college of podiatry, are they going to work on some of the protocols exactly of that relationship so that that is pretty clearly defined and transparent?

(14:45)

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I think you've anticipated what will happen is that as they work on this particular Act, they'll also be looking at some of the other definition of the role of some of the people with surgery training.

Just out of interest and I think to inform the public, it's important to know that both British Columbia and Alberta right now allow podiatrists to order X-rays and lab tests and there are a number of other provinces that do regulate podiatrists.

But part of the challenge comes in, for example, British Columbia, they regulate primarily or almost exclusively American-trained podiatrists. And so one of the challenges we have in Saskatchewan is to work with the British-system-trained people and the American-trained people. And we think that we've been able to set out a process that allows for that to be qualified.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I agree that these are some of the challenges, but I think that the template framework provides the kind of flexibility that this can be worked out.

Mr. Minister, in discussion with podiatrists, they indicate their support for this and they believe that it's an improvement and a much-needed change to the oversight regulatory structures that they have in their association. They also indicate that they are very much hopeful that when this legislation is approved, that the department will approve and proclaim the administrative sections of this legislation early on.

Is it your intent to proclaim at least the administrative sections early on so that they can go about much of the organizational work, and then perhaps proclaim some of the other parts of the legislation later on because that I believe is a request and a concern by the podiatrists?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I think the plan is clearly, as you suggest, that we would proclaim some of the administrative sections so that they can allow for the college part to go ahead and also allow them then to be developing some of their professional status in that part, even if we don't have all of the parts around the medication and ordering tests completed or some of the other parts.

So our plan would be to work very closely with the profession, and proclaim those parts which will work as soon as possible.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair. We certainly support this initiative and are prepared to see it move forward now.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, members. This is a fairly lengthy Bill. Is leave granted to deal with it in part?

Leave granted.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 55 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Bill No. 7 — The Occupational Therapists  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**The Chair:** — I see the minister does not have any new officials.

**Clause 1**

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Minister, as you realize this is a very short Bill and as I understand it, it deals largely with the educational requirements for occupational therapists, and I wonder if you want to outline in an overview, to start, exactly what the intent of this legislation is.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you very much. I would be very pleased to outline the very straightforward things that we need to do with this particular legislation.

The amendments will remove the requirement for an undergraduate degree in occupational therapy from the Act, thus allowing the Saskatchewan Society of Occupational Therapists to license an occupational therapist who has a professional master's degree in occupational therapy without first having received an undergraduate degree in occupational therapy.

Another amendment will require the Saskatchewan Society of Occupational Therapists to specifically outline the educational requirements in its bylaws. And this will include both the undergraduate degree — occupational therapists education — as well as the professional master's degree.

Another amendment will require the society to specifically outline the re-entry educational requirements in its bylaws. This is to allow people to return to the profession. And then there are a number of small housekeeping amendments.

But the key point here is that the society, Saskatchewan Society of Occupational Therapists requested that we amend this so that professional occupational therapists with a master's degree would not have a challenge under our legislation.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. In our discussion with occupational therapists, they certainly are very much again in favour of this legislation and the flexibility to make their educational requirements more appropriate to their profession.

And so, Minister, we have no objection to this Bill. We think it is a worthwhile improvement on the current state. So, Mr. Chair, we would be prepared to see this move forward.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Bill No. 14 — The Registered Nurses  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**The Chair:** — I see that the minister has new officials — not that the other officials were old, but I recognize the minister to introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, I'm very pleased to introduce all of the young, capable officials from Saskatchewan Health.

I have new officials on this particular Bill. I'm pleased to introduce Elizabeth Kalmakoff, who is a health professions consultant in the policy and planning branch, as well as Vivian Krakowski, who's a consultant in the primary health care branch.

And we'll be pleased to respond to any questions on this matter.

**Clause 1**

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And welcome to the different officials. I won't get into that debate.

Mr. Minister, this amendment to The Registered Nurses Act is, I think, in recognition of the continued commitment that the SRNA and the professional registered nurses in the province have to their continuing educational requirements and the specific commitment to making sure their competencies are up to date.

Minister, would you outline the intention of the Bill in summary, and then we'll proceed?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you. I'd be pleased to set out a brief summary of the amendments that are proposed here. The amendments will provide the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association with the authority to make bylaws to establish and govern a continuing competence program and to require the participation of members in that program. They will also ensure the confidentiality of any information related to a member's participation in the continuing competence program.

Another amendment will limit the term of office of a public representative to three years, and since the Act allows for two terms this means that a public representative would be able to serve for a total of six years. And it also . . . another amendment provides for filing requirements for administrative bylaws.

And that's the total package of what's proposed here.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Minister. Minister, has there been discussion in the planning of this amendment with your department in terms of what would be the terms of reference and the scope of the continuing competency program as envisaged by this legislation?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — What this legislation will do will enable the Registered Nurses Association to set up a continuing competence program within their bylaws, and they've been working at those and doing it throughout the profession. And as you can understand, this takes a lot of discussion.

It's also, I think, in many ways modelled on what the medical doctors have done around some of their programs, and so it is something that we'll continue to develop. But what we're doing here with this legislation is providing that protection for the program that they will develop.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Minister. Minister, the terms, continuing competency program or competence program,

implies that it is for people who are currently engaged in the profession. Is there any provision in this program for people to acquire the skills in order to re-enter the profession after some time of not practising in it, or is that covered by a different program?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I think the answer to that question is that we now have re-entry programs for nurses that go back and do the refresher course. But what may happen is that somebody would take the re-entry course, go back and start working, and a competency issue would reveal itself through this process and this program that's being organized. And then at that point it could be dealt with through this particular process because they would have completed the re-entry but they maybe still need some assistance in some skills that they have to improve.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Minister. Minister, some time ago the licensed practical nurses were also given the framework and the structure similar to other health professional templates, if you like, to self-regulate. Is a program similar to this envisaged for the licensed practical nurses as well as the registered nurses?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The answer is that the licensed practical nurses do have a continuing competency program within their organization, but at this point they have not come forward to request the kind of protections that are in this particular piece of legislation for the SRNA. It is conceivable that at some point they would come forward with that kind of a request but at this point they have one that they operate within their own profession.

I think I should also say that one of the sort of reasons that this program exists in Saskatchewan is that it's part of a national nursing program in the sense that every province and territory has looked at these kinds of things. And so they build it on their own knowledge and skills here, but it's also related to nursing right across the country.

(15:00)

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and thank you to the officials this afternoon. Mr. Chair, we certainly are in support of this legislation and prepared to allow it to move forward.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

#### **Bill No. 5 - The Teachers Superannuation and Disability Benefits Amendment Act, 2003**

**Mr. Chair:** — Order. I would invite the minister to introduce her officials.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. On my right I have Dr. Michael Littlewood, executive director of legislation and school administration. Behind me I have Shirley Robertson, manager, superannuation program, teachers' superannuation commission; and Norma Knuth, manager of

financial operations, teachers' superannuation commission.

#### **Clause 1**

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, and to your officials, the Bill that is being . . . we're looking at right now is something that I understand has been given agreement to by both the SSTA and the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), so there are just . . . Maybe we should have an opportunity to just quickly review the Bill so that everyone is aware of what we're talking about in this Bill.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. The provisions of the collective agreement require the government to introduce these necessary amendments. There are a number of housekeeping and administrative amendments, but the main substantive amendments are as follows.

In section 2, the definition of contributory service is amended such that teachers in receipt of a disability allowance are not required to return to teach in order to have the period of disability fully included in the calculation of their pension. This amendment will eliminate a problem whereby such teachers are financially disadvantaged in their pension solely on the basis of being disabled.

In section 18, teachers will be allowed to purchase periods of parenting leave beyond one year for pension purposes as required by The Labour Standards Act. The government will pay the employer portion of the required contributions as it currently does with respect to the purchase of the first year of parenting leave.

A new section 36.1 is added to eliminate an unfair and unintended consequence of the replacement of previous interprovincial reciprocal agreements with a new agreement. For a small number of Saskatchewan teachers who have transferred their service to another province, the new provisions will eliminate a potentially significant financial barrier to returning to teach in Saskatchewan.

In section 49, the current requirements that the annual report of the Teachers' Superannuation Commission include personal information about pension plan numbers are being deleted as they are inconsistent with the principles of privacy and are not necessary for effective public reporting by the commission.

As the member has said, the amendments have been reviewed and approved by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the Teachers' Superannuation Commission.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'm wondering how many teachers will actually be involved in the first issue, where there may be somebody on long-term disability and will have to have the government and the pension plan covered up to the age of 65? Do you have numbers of people, of the teachers who would be affected by this first issue of the Bill?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — There's currently 371 teachers on disability at the moment. The majority of them do not return to work, but over the next several years it could affect a couple of hundred teachers.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, does this amendment or change take place starting now or is it retroactive?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. This agreement, on proclamation, will be retroactive to September 1 of '02 when the contract was began. So it will be retroactive to September of '02 upon proclamation.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Can you give us an idea of what the anticipated costs will be?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — In the remaining life of the plan, which is about 50 years, it will add about \$9 million to the cost over the next 50 years.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, will it matter where the teacher resides while he's under this disability part of the clause?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — No.

**Ms. Draude:** — In the second part of the Bill, we talked about maternity leaves. And I'm wondering how many maternity leaves are granted each year for young women in Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — We see about 150 to 200 maternity leaves a year.

**Ms. Draude:** — And, Madam Minister, under the third clause or the third issue, we talk about allowing teachers who transfer their pension from one to another province under the old teachers' plan and then are able to return. How many people are affected by this clause of the agreement?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — It's really hard to determine because it depends on who leaves and who comes back. So it's not something we can predict or that we would know, but we don't anticipate it to be a high number.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, I imagine the fourth issue that this Bill deals with, eliminating the requirement to publish the names of plan members who have died, is something that everyone would be in agreement with because there wouldn't be really any point of doing this. So I imagine The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act was . . . This was probably looked at as an important part of the agreements.

Is this something that all other plans within your department have already dealt with, and is it something the government was dealing with right throughout the various departments?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — This is the only plan under our jurisdiction and we're not familiar what the other plans are doing throughout the public service.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, I know we have two different pension plans — the Teachers' Superannuation Plan and the Saskatchewan Teachers Retirement Plan. What percentage of teachers are under the superannuation plan?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — We're down to about a third of the teachers in the old plan and two-thirds in the new plan.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, when is it expected that the old plan will actually be finished?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The last teacher under the old plan would be expected to retire in the next 10 to 15 years. And after that the plan keeps going until all those teachers are no longer with us. So it's hard to predict how long it would be.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I think that this Bill has been reviewed by a lot of people. It has been agreed to in negotiated contract and is something that we've heard since has full support of everyone that's involved.

So I would like to congratulate you for your work, and say that we have no objections to the Bill and hope that it goes forward quickly.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 12 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

(15:15)

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 6 — The Podiatry Act

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — 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. 7 — The Occupational Therapists Amendment Act, 2003

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — 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. 14 — The Registered Nurses Amendment Act, 2003

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — 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. 5 — The Teachers Superannuation and Disability Benefits Amendment Act, 2003

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Deputy 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.



## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**General Revenue Fund  
Learning  
Vote 5**

**Subvote (LR01)**

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you. On my left is deputy minister, Dr. Craig Dotson. On Craig's left is John Biss, executive director of university services. And behind is Brady Salloum, executive director of student financial assistance. Next to Brady is Dr. Margaret Lipp, executive director of Saskatchewan Learning.

Directly behind me is Gillian McCreary, executive director of Saskatchewan Learning. On her right is Wayne McElree, assistant deputy minister. Behind Wayne is Nelson Wagner, executive director of facilities, and Kevin Hoyt, director of finance, corporate services.

Behind the bar is Glenda Eden, manager of financial planning.

And before we start questions, I just want to bring to the attention to my colleagues that this morning I was in Cypress Hills Regional College, opening the regional colleges conference, kicking it off, actually. And the enthusiasm at the regional college level was very high. They're a very interesting group.

The keynote speaker from Ontario said wonderful things about our regional college structure and about the people in it. And his speech, his presentation was extremely interesting to all of us and I was very glad I could attend it as well.

He had some innovative, refreshing ideas about accepting change and complimented all of us on the flexibility and how we are moving forward with our regional college system which is a strength in our commitment to lifelong learning.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, I'm gratified to hear your pleasant comments about the community of Swift Current.

Although that's not within my constituency of Cypress Hills, it is the largest trading centre in the southwest part of the province. And naturally we're very proud of that city and all of southwest Saskatchewan. So we would welcome you back for a longer visit the next time you come so you can see all the great things that the Cypress Hills area has to offer.

Having opened your comments with the salute to the regional college system in the province of Saskatchewan, and recognizing its rather unique nature in comparison to some of the other post-secondary opportunities in other provinces, would the minister care to develop for us this afternoon her vision for the regional colleges; what it is the provincial government hopes to attain educationally through the regional colleges and the roles that they play in the province of Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — It's too bad the member wasn't there this morning and I could have given . . . and heard my speech which talked about exactly the strengths of the regional college system, which is the fact that they are the lifeblood of learning in rural and northern communities.

They broker classes from the universities and SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) and they bring learning to the students close to home.

They are also a centre for e-learning. And their conference theme was T.Rex to High Tech. And it was very . . . They had the gymnasium decorated in a jungle theme and it was . . . and little dinosaurs on the table. So it was very effective.

And they were very proud of the fact that they are an integral part of our education system in lifelong learning when they take the learning out to our northern and rural communities. That is their strength.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Chairman, through you to the minister. The phrase, brokers of courses, as it applies to the regional colleges, is an interesting one. And I think that's maybe one of the strengths and possibly one of the weaknesses of our regional college system because it's neither fish nor fowl. It's sort of a broadcast approach to a variety of different educational opportunities.

Has the minister and her department given any consideration to more carefully identifying the specific role of the regional colleges in maybe the offering of post-secondary courses at the university level versus credit courses in upgrading or possibly technical courses? Can you give us some indication if the department has given any thought to more carefully defining what it is that the government would like to see regional colleges provide for educational opportunities in the more rural areas of the province?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — There is a mandatory review in law of the regional colleges every five years. The last one that was done was called futures . . . they recommended futures close to home. And they validated the role that the regional colleges are playing in our post-secondary education system.

And interestingly enough, the speaker this morning, he had a comment that we are no longer going to be earning a living; we're going to be learning a living. And so this was, I think, a major comment to all of us that lifelong learning is something that everybody agrees we are into and should be into.

And the regional colleges are flexible and responsive to the needs of their students. So if there are changes that should happen to address the needs of students close to home, then we would see that those would be discussed and implemented as necessary.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Chairman, through you to the minister, because of the uniqueness of the regional college system that the province of Saskatchewan enjoys, I'm wondering if there isn't greater opportunities that might be provided.

These particular institutions are located in very strategic areas in the far-flung corners of the province and, as you have

indicated, they bring educational opportunities close to home. But I'm wondering if the colleges have ever expressed a concern to the minister or the department about limitations in their ability to provide educational opportunities.

Have you ever had the opinion expressed to yourself, Madam Minister, or to your officials, that these colleges would like to be more than they are now, that they might want to provide greater opportunities, more in-depth training opportunities? Possibly, as in the case of SIAST, which is a little different situation in Prince Albert, they might benefit from additional research opportunities there — not just be a technical school but be an institution of research and maybe some applied science.

Is that the kind of opportunity that regional colleges have been calling for? Have they expressed a desire to do that type of enterprise as well?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The regional colleges have eight campuses and plus one in Lakeland, or one called Lakeland. The education is a provincial program and we have discussions routinely with our partners — the universities, SIAST and its campuses, and all the regional colleges — about what is appropriate to deliver and the training needs of the population where the colleges serve.

So that is a dynamic discussion and if there are things that would be needed or should be done, then that's where that discussion would happen and things would move on from that partnership, of discussing what we need in Learning.

(15:30)

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, can I assume from your comments then that instead of a master plan for regional colleges, that dynamic ongoing discussion would result in possibly different outcomes for each individual college as the process unfolds?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Each campus is different; it serves a different part of Saskatchewan and a different demographic and there's different needs in that demographic. For example, the Northlands College serves the North and has a different emphasis, perhaps, say, on forestry, where in the South the emphasis may be on oil and gas.

But the colleges do have that ongoing knowledge of the students that they serve and the communities that they serve and they, along with their partners in post-secondary sector and the Department of Learning, have those discussions to see what is most appropriate and what is needed in those communities that they serve.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Chairman, through you to the minister, can I assume from your comments that the colleges individually are as autonomous in their mandate and in their determination of the programs they'd like to pursue as some of the more senior institutions might be, for instance SIAST or the two public universities in this province?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — I think that some of my earlier answers when we talk about partnerships, there is a very close partnership with the regional colleges, not only with the

partners in education and post-secondary but with the department as well. And so there are different needs in each college, but there's a relationship of discussion and collaboration with the department that's very close and very, very necessary.

And so I don't know what your definition of autonomy is, but I think we're talking about responsiveness to communities and the community individually that the campus may serve. But then we also talk about the education system in Saskatchewan as a whole. So we are all keeping our eye on the big picture as well as the small picture.

**Mr. Elhard:** — So, Madam Minister, when I look at the budget document here, and it talks about the amount of money that the provincial department of Education, or Department of Learning in their post-secondary sector provides to regional colleges, that's just the portion that comes from the provincial purse.

If the colleges in their wisdom wanted to pursue a program of studies that required a considerable larger sum of money than was being given them through the Department of Learning's budget, would they be free — would the board of governors, the directors, the administration of those colleges — would they be free to pursue those programs or is there a vetting process? Do they have to get prior approval from the Department of Learning to achieve those ends? And could you elaborate for us what that process might be?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The colleges have an ability to work with partners in their community; it might be business, it may be industry. They have that ability to work out some contracts, if that may be the case, to deliver different programs that that certain industry or business may need. They do then have to submit a business plan to the department which we will then approve.

**Mr. Elhard:** — So if I understand your answer, assuming the program makes sense from a business point of view, there would be no reason to withhold approval of those programs by the ministry.

Looking at the budget document again, I noticed that under regional colleges, the amount of money set aside is \$16.101 million. Could the minister outline for us today how the money is apportioned between the nine regional colleges? What criteria might be used, or is there a formula of some sort that applies?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Each college got the same base increase, the 3 per cent, in the budget but their baselines were determined by the population that they serve and the industry demand.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, the population that they serve, are we talking about the registered number of students or are we talking about the population of the region in which the college is located?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The adult population of the region.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Can the minister give us some indication what percentage of the operating budgets of the schools the money from the Department of Learning would represent?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — In last year's total budget for the colleges we provided 32 million of the \$44 million total budget.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, I think I'm going to need some clarification — 32 million of a \$44 million total budget? That must be a figure that includes more than just the regional colleges.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Since you're in your book, we might as well talk about that. On page 92 is what you're looking for, the budget. And then if you flip to page 94, regional colleges also get a proportion of the budget under JobStart-Future Skills, northern skills training, basic education and literacy, and the technology enhanced learning, to comprise their total budget.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, you mentioned earlier that there's an annual, I'm sorry, a five-year review process that's been put in place to look at the mandate and some of the issues that regional colleges face. Can you tell us when the next review will be and are you aware of growing issues that might need to be addressed as part of that review?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The next required review is 2005. But we have regular meetings with the board Chairs and address issues on an ongoing basis, and larger issues are collected and dealt with as well.

**Mr. Elhard:** — I haven't had direct conversations with very many of the individuals charged with the administration of the regional colleges. I have had some indirect approaches made, and one of the things it seems to me that regional colleges are grappling with is how can we as educational institutions offer more, be more significant, provide more pertinent opportunities for our students, and how much of this can we afford and how will we achieve these particular endeavours.

And I'm wondering if the minister has given any thought to creating a committee of study, a commission of some sort, to address some of those questions.

You know, the universities and SIAST in this province are wonderful institutions, but I think they are anticipating considerable growth over the next decade or so. And if that in fact is true, we might find the existing institutions overburdened by an influx of students. And if that is to be alleviated without the investment of a lot of cost and infrastructure and expanding of faculty and so forth, maybe there's a role here for the regional colleges to provide some of the maybe first-, second-, and third-year classes that students might otherwise take.

I'm not advocating that particular position or view but I know that there is some interest among regional colleges to be more active in that, in that provision of education at that level. So I'm just wondering, Madam Minister, if you would consider undertaking a more thorough review of the role of the regional colleges to the end that I've just discussed.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — We have had a major review of the regional colleges in 2000 and we will have another one in 2005. But the colleges are represented on a learning sector strategy planning steering committee already with the universities and SIAST. So this would be the place where these sorts of things would be discussed and we don't need to create another one.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, I hope that through the ongoing process that you just referred to though, that the issues of advanced education and the requirements for our population are being aired and not just discussed, but there is some plan in place to address some of these pressure points that are going to develop in the province as a result of the burgeoning need for greater educational opportunities at the post-secondary level.

You know our situation, as tight as finances sometimes are, our situation is often reactive instead of proactive. And what I am finding frankly is that when we make, when we make decisions relative to post-secondary educational opportunities strictly in a reactive way, we end up losing students from this province to other jurisdictions.

I brought with me a letter today from a young lady who wants to get into the Faculty of Education at the University of Saskatchewan and she's simply not going to be able to make it because I think that her marks probably aren't quite as good as some of the other people. But as a consequence, because that opportunity isn't available to her at the U of S (University of Saskatchewan), she is looking seriously at the University of Calgary or the University of Alberta. Now that's an anecdotal incident I suppose but, you know, when you have dozens and dozens of these anecdotal experiences brought to your attention, pretty soon a pattern develops. And I think we're seeing that.

I guess I'm hoping, I'm hoping that the regional colleges will be able to play a more important role in addressing the growing demand for post-secondary opportunities in this province without laying the burden at the feet of our two largest public institutions and saying, here, you've got this problem, deal with it — especially when we see increases to post-secondary education limited from year to year to just a bare minimum.

(15:45)

And I think we had a situation like that in this year's budget. My understanding is that the post-secondary institutions as a whole were looking at least at a 5 per cent increase in their funding to just, to maintain the sort of status quo. And in one instance I think the funding was in the two and a half per cent range; the other had about a 3 per cent increase. And as a consequence, Madam Minister, they aren't looking at expanding their opportunities for post-secondary delivery. They're looking at ways they can cut expenses and maybe cut back programs and hone certain expenditures to beyond the bone. They're into the marrow already of some of their endeavours there.

So if we're going to see, if we're going to see the province of Saskatchewan respond positively and successfully to the demands for greater post-secondary opportunities, I think one of the first places, and maybe one of the least expensive and most efficient places might be, is to invest money in the regional colleges.

And that's hard to do I suppose for a government unless there's a rationale for it. And what I'm asking I guess with the line of questioning I've tried to develop this afternoon is a clear picture that your government has an understanding of this particular desire and need in the province, and that you are putting something in place to help address that growing need, and that

we will see a very active and developing post-secondary strategy to accommodate the increase in demand over the next number of years.

Madam Minister, if you have a response to what I have just said, I would appreciate that right now. But if not, we'll move into another area.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Okay I'm running out of places to put notes so let's talk now and continue on.

Back to the first part when you were talking, you were talking about a meaningful discussions which . . . And I've met a few of the people now through the sector, and I respect their ability to bring their issues to the table that they're at and make those issues heard and move forward on them. So I have confidence that all the players and the partners in the education sector will do that. So I don't think that they're sitting around talking for the sake of talking. I do think that they will move forward on their issues.

When you're talking about students leaving, I think there's some interesting things that we want to talk about in Saskatchewan that we are doing that are of interest to students.

We have what we call Campus Saskatchewan which has a Web site. It was launched in the fall of 2002 and it offers a pathway to adult and post-secondary education via the Internet, and by television and video, independent study, off-campus courses, and other alternative methods. Through Campus Saskatchewan, post-secondary institutions in the province are working together to increase flexible learning opportunities that will extend across and enhance the quality of educational programs and services.

In 2003 and '04 the partners in Campus Saskatchewan will continue to expand on-line educational opportunities and to enhance services to learners, including access to computers and the Internet, counselling, and study support. Over 90 on-line courses and learning resources are now offered through the universities, SIAST, and other post-secondary institutions like the colleges, with more than 100 additional offerings under development.

And a third point I want to make before you move on to your next group of questions is that regional colleges have seen an increase of 17.5 per cent over the last two years, I believe it is. Two years, 17.5 increase in financing, funding, compared to the Saskatchewan CPI (consumer price index) of only 5 per cent.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, I appreciate that response. I don't mean to suggest that the individuals participating in the ongoing discussions and review are just logging time or spinning their wheels. But I guess they have to know that there is a vision on the part of your government and your department for the role they can play here. And I suppose that their discussions would be much more fruitful and much more energetic if they thought that there was a clear vision emanating from your department and your ministry for the benefits of post-secondary education to our, to our province.

The reality is that post-secondary education is seen as an expense, as a budget item that costs the government a certain

amount of money every year. And I guess I would like to look at post-secondary education in all facets and at all levels as not an expense but an investment, an opportunity, a means of promoting increased knowledge, increased development, increased participation in our economy, increased population. It might be a commodity we could sell. But I think that possibly the leaders of the post-secondary institutions in this province are looking for, you know, real impetus and real vision from your government.

And I'm wondering if you can explain to us or give us an indication of what your strategy is, personally and as part of your ministry, to achieve the great benefits that post-secondary education can accrue to this province.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — When I was first elected president of SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses) in 1993, I went . . . as a nurse, I went to a public health conference in Edmonton, national public health conference in Edmonton, and they talked there about the social determinants of health. And one of the major social determinants of health is education, which certainly opened my eyes to what we should be focusing on. Health or health care does not make you healthy. What makes you healthy is what else you have in your life, like education.

So this is an extremely important commitment on myself personally, from myself personally, for education and for the whole province to have access to a quality education. I think in anything I've ever said, we have always, I've always used the word investment in our children, in our individuals, in our province, in our communities, and an investment in education. I think all my colleagues have used the same language and I think we're pretty clear that we consider education to be a cornerstone of economic development in the province as well.

So we continue to make an investment year after year as an NDP government in education. This year, \$1.2 billion.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Chairman, through you to the minister. Madam Minister, I'm happy to hear you say that, but I guess the proof is in the pudding. You know, the reality is that post-secondary education in this province has suffered as a whole at the behest of demands made on the government for investment in other areas.

You know, if I remember correctly the increase in the spending of the provincial government dedicated to health this year was about \$180 million. And it seems to me that that increase in health care spending was more than your government is spending at the University of Saskatchewan this year.

You know, so while health issues are important, so is public education and so is post-secondary education. And I guess I am concerned for the future of the province when I hear the member, the minister say that education is important, but then I look at the commitment of resources by the provincial government to that sector. And somehow the spending doesn't seem to match the stated desire or the point of view that the minister enunciates.

So, Madam Minister, what we have is a situation where not only are costs for post-secondary institutions escalating, but so are the costs to students through tuition fees and a variety of

other areas. And we're finding greater and greater competition to get into the seats that are available at our public institutions. We're finding some funding cutbacks. We're also finding student loans not keeping up with the costs of getting an education. These are all areas that restrict. Whether intentionally or not, they have the effect of restricting access to post-secondary education.

I think that the significance of that may not be seen today but it's the kind of thing that will come back to haunt us within the next decade, the next generation. And I don't think we can afford that in Saskatchewan. We have a small population but we have great potential here, and I think the proof of successful societies has been in their commitment to post-secondary education.

We need health care, but we can't sacrifice the demands of post-secondary education for all the other budgetary needs that a government balances. And that's why I'm getting back . . . or, that's why I'd like to get back to the concept of investment in education. You don't see the immediate benefit of putting that money in post-secondary opportunities for Saskatchewan residents but there is a very clear benefit in a short order, anywhere from three or four years to maybe ten years down the road.

So, Madam Minister, I know that you say that the province has spent \$1.2 billion in education this year and it's the largest amount that the province has spent in that sector, probably in history. But it's not enough. I guess, given the requirements, given the demands, given the opportunities that we have in this province that need to be explored by well-educated young people; it really is not enough.

And if we want to benefit economically in the fullest sense possible from the opportunities post-secondary education will bring, we need to make sure that just about every last person in this province who wants to avail themselves of a post-secondary opportunity can do so as conveniently and as readily as possible, and maybe at as little expense as possible. I know that there's some argument around that last part of the equation.

But I guess, Madam Minister, I just want to state clearly that we believe in the Saskatchewan Party that post-secondary education is absolutely critical to the future of this province and we would encourage you to look at finding means and methods of making it more readily available to the people of the province at any level whether it's, you know, whether it's in a technical program or a university level program, whether it's in the apprenticeship program, I really don't care. I just think that we need to see that kind of commitment to our future in a very real and specific sense and that includes dollars and cents.

Madam Minister, you talked about the Campus Saskatchewan initiative a few minutes ago. I was pleased to learn about that particular endeavour by the institutions that have come together to co-operate in the delivery of distance education. But earlier when we had estimates, we had talked about the role of SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network) and how distance education had been pulled back into the Department of Learning. And I'm wondering how the contraction or the change of delivery of distance education will affect the arrangements the government has with the department of media

and technology at the U of S.

It seems to me that they were very dependent on their relationship with SCN — it was a symbiotic relationship — and I'm just wondering how that particular change by your government will affect your working relationship with the media and technology department at the U of S.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — I'm sure the member from Cypress Hills won't be surprised that I'm not going to start with an answer to the question that he just posed.

What I'm going to start with is going back to the beginning of your conversation. I'm very happy to hear that the Saskatchewan Party has now articulated a strong support for the post-secondary education system.

And I'm assuming that you're talking about the proof being in the pudding, you're talking about a frozen pudding, since what we heard from you in your platform in '99 was, freeze education. So this is quite a difference that we're hearing now.

And I appreciate your concern for the future of education since we do this daily in government when we talk about, how do we balance the priorities of the whole province — that is, balancing what we need in education with what we need in health, what we need in highways, what we need in social services, what we need in training, what we need in justice. We need to balance all of that.

And it's very easy . . . As a wise man said, nothing is impossible if you don't have to do it.

So what I'm happy to see is that you have moved off your freezing for education and have moved into realizing that it is a difficult position when you talk about what the whole province needs in all the areas I just articulated, and what do we put in education.

And we as a government have made a major investment of \$1.2 billion this year, as we have made every year, an investment in education to do just the things you were talking about because we believe every person in Saskatchewan should have access to a quality education their life long.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, I guess it might be important — if we're talking about going on the record — it might be important to indicate that the 1999 election platform of the Saskatchewan Party indicated funding at the price or the cost of inflation, nothing over and above that. And I think that at that point, I think at that point we were very concerned about whether or not the resources would be in place to commit a whole lot more to funding . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well we probably have an ongoing dispute about that.

But, Madam Minister, you didn't answer my question about the relationship between your department and the media and technology department at the U of S.

(16:00)

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Again I'm going to get to SCN in a minute, but I do want to talk about increasing funding to

post-secondary or to education in general at the level of inflation.

If we would have done that . . . K to 12 got a 9.2 per cent increase over the last two years; 5 per cent was the CPI. They wouldn't have been happy with your platform. Universities, federated and affiliated colleges, and Aboriginal institutions got 8.1 per cent; the CPI was 5. They wouldn't have been happy with your platform.

SIASST got 10 per cent; the CPI was 5. They wouldn't have been happy with your platform. Regional colleges, as I said, got 17.5; the CPI was 5. They also would not have been happy with your platform.

Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission and public libraries all got increases over inflation. None of them would have been happy with your platform.

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

**The Chair:** — Order, order. Just to remind hon. members a couple of points. One, there seems to be some private conversations going on that is distracting to the business before the Assembly, so I would ask hon. members to please curtail their comments.

And secondly, the rules generally in the committee is to not have personal attacks between one another. And the Chair is loath to enforce that rule unless necessary, but I would ask comments to be directed to the Chair and through the Chair if the debate continues on in that continued vein.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Chairman, thank you. Madam Minister, I'm still waiting for the answer on your relationship between the Department of Learning and the department of media and technology at the U of S.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When the preamble goes all over the political map, it does get our answers a little delayed.

So the SCN question was, will the relationship change between the university media services and SCN under the Department of Learning? And the answer is no.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Well as I understand it, Madam Minister, SCN and the department of media and technology had a very close working relationship; they depended on each other. One provided services and the other provided equipment. There is some joint sharing of personnel and I would assume that since there is a change in the status of e-learning into the Department of Learning, that there must be some fallout for the university department of media and technology. You can't just stand there and say no.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — SCN will maintain the technology to broadcast and the people that used to do the programming will still do the programming, and the program delivery will not change because the people are in Learning. The relationship will not . . . or the program delivery will not change.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Has the department, Madam Minister,

considered expanding the opportunities of that arrangement, in terms of delivery of educational opportunities for the people of the province and maybe people outside of the province? Has the department looked at any particular opportunities that might exist to provide distance learning opportunities for the private sector, for instance?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — There's a channel available for the private sector to use on SCN if their purpose is for education.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Would it be the Department of Learning that would promote the use of that channel as a, possibly a profit-generating opportunity, to underwrite some of the costs of delivering distance education opportunities for other purposes?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The way SCN traditionally advertise their programs and their capabilities will not change with this new arrangement. They will do their own advertising.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Would your department be interested, Madam Minister, in promoting the use of that extra channel for profit-making opportunities?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — We have first opportunity to use SCN's capacity and we're pretty much at that capacity now for public education in this province.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, I think with the importance of diverse methods of delivering education to a widely dispersed population in this huge land mass, e-learning and satellite delivery of educational opportunities is something that really needs to be encouraged.

Is there a commitment on the part of your department to expand those opportunities maybe to small rural schools, maybe to individual students that are living in an isolated area, maybe to home-schoolers, to any group of people that might need educational opportunities that new technology would more readily provide, especially satellite delivery?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you for the question, actually, because this gives us an opportunity to talk about CommunityNet which is linking the province's educational facilities, health facilities, and reaching small communities all over the province.

For on-line learning there are 23 courses this year offered in places like Golden Plains, Gull Lake, Hudson Bay, Northern Lights School Division, Weyburn Central. So we are reaching out with our e-learning capacity to all areas of the province.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, I appreciate your response. I guess if I could say anything about it, you provided the basic response, the basic answer to the question, but you haven't delivered it with much enthusiasm, Madam Minister. And you know I think that one of the failures of our society in this province is that we haven't really got enthusiastic about a lot of stuff.

And you know I've had the privilege of being the critic for Post-Secondary Education for about six or seven months now. And I've learned a lot about post-secondary education in that

time, having visited the campuses of our universities and several of the SIAST campuses and some private post-secondary institutions.

And you know I'm amazed, frankly, at the resilience of some of our institutions, their determination to provide a good education against all odds — the financial constraints that they face, some of the other issues that burden them down.

And you know I guess I've been very impressed, Madam Minister, with what we have to offer here. And I think what we really need is a willingness not just to celebrate those successes, but a willingness to sell those successes to every person in this province and outside this province. I hope that as you continue in your appointment as minister of Education that you will become a lot more enthused about what we are offering in this province.

I know that it's hard to grasp all of the technicalities and details of your portfolio in a short few months and I think that that will undoubtedly come. But I think I'd like to see more energy in your support of education, Madam Minister. And I appreciate the time you've given me so far.

I would like to turn the rest of this particular estimate session to my colleague to deal with K to 12 issues.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you. I'd like to thank the critic for Post-Secondary. Before we leave this I would like to just point out to him that perhaps we express our enthusiasm in different ways.

I think this portfolio is extremely exciting. And as a member of this government, we are all enthused about the decisions we have made for the education system in this province. And we express our enthusiasm not by asking questions or condemning certain issues or bringing certain issues up in the minutiae. What we talk about is the big picture and our major commitment, where we can invest dollars, energy, and our enthusiasm as a government into post-secondary education.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to the minister and to your officials.

I'd like to start by asking you, Madam Minister, to receive our submission for the global questions. I didn't have the opportunity last time to give you these questions so I'll send them over to you. And perhaps you can have them filled out for the next time we meet or as soon as possible.

Well, Madam Minister, my colleague from . . . is looking after post-secondary education was talking to you about enthusiasm and excitement. And the issue that I want to talk to you about this afternoon, and to your officials about, is the Role of the School. And I assure you that is causing a lot of enthusiasm and excitement in the K to 12 area and by a lot of parents and teachers and the general public.

Because I believe I've heard you mention today a number of times lifelong learning, but I think that what we're really talking about is learning for life. And that's really what . . . I know that the Catholic school, the Public School Board in Saskatoon talks about learning for life. And I really think that states it very well

because that's what we're doing right now. Everything that we're doing is meaning that we're going to have a better life, not only in Saskatchewan but wherever we decide to move to.

And the School<sup>PLUS</sup> came out of the Role of the School report that was commissioned by your department a couple of years ago, and I believe that that was based on the idea of the community school. Often people are still thinking about School<sup>PLUS</sup> as a community school and in some ways it is. But it's much more than that, much bigger than that, and I think it's an opportunity to lead the country and perhaps the world in some of the areas of things that can be different.

I had an opportunity to discuss the School<sup>PLUS</sup> with a director of education not too long ago and she talked about it being something like a country school where the community looked after the child. Whether it was their health care needs or their social needs or their food or whatever it was, you came to the school and even though the school was there for the education of the student, we know that a child can't be educated if they don't have everything right in their background and in their home life, even when it comes to ensuring that their tummy is full.

And so we have the School<sup>PLUS</sup> initiative coming forward and I think you have heard nothing but praise from us, from this side of the House, talking about School<sup>PLUS</sup>. The frustrating part of course is it's not moving ahead very quickly. I did read . . . I was enthused to see that there was a commitment by four departments, I believe, on your — or it could have been six — I think it was four that have signed into an agreement that this is something that's important.

(16:15)

Minister is indicating it was six? Seven. My goodness, I guess I'm going to have to get a list of them. Seven departments.

I know that one that's missing is Economic Development, but we'll get into that later.

But, Madam Minister, I think that to start I'd ask you to describe what the criteria is this year for becoming . . . for getting funding for School<sup>PLUS</sup>.

I know that there was more schools that received funding this year and, in fact, there was either two or three school divisions that received funding from the department only for School<sup>PLUS</sup>. Through the FOG (foundation operating grant) grant, they weren't able to get funding for teachers' salaries or the operations of the school, but they did receive funding to initiate School<sup>PLUS</sup>.

So would you please outline for us what the criteria is for School<sup>PLUS</sup> funding this year?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Before I answer the question, and I will answer the question, I want to read an excerpt from the *Saskatchewan Bulletin* from the STF. It's quoting a teacher or a director of, division director of education from Davidson, looking at what School<sup>PLUS</sup> might ultimately mean. He says:

“A lot of lead work needs to be done, but . . . (he) see(s)

great potential. We can't be overly rigid in how we approach this, and it's important to realize there isn't going to be one solution fits all. This can't be a cookie cutter approach; we're going to need to be flexible because the implementation process will vary from school to school and from division to division.

Schools are very much individual cases, and they all have their own strengths to build on. The important thing is that they all fit in to a shared vision."

For the actual financing of School<sup>PLUS</sup>, we have up . . . the financing is now \$90 per student, totalling \$9.5 million in new funding. And the community schools have also received \$1.2 million funding recognition for 10 new designated community schools.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Well I don't think that the director that wrote that couldn't have stated it any more eloquently because that's exactly what we're talking about. The old way of teaching students when everybody was supposed to come out with a cookie-cutter shape doesn't work any more. We know it. And I guess I'm scared that this approach, if it's handled from the top down, isn't going to be as effective as if it's handled from the bottom up.

And I know that schools right across Saskatchewan — and I'm sure you know as well — are different. You can't decide that what works in Regina is going to work in Meadow Lake and what works in Ile-a-la-Crosse is going to work in Cypress Hills.

And when I talked about the criteria for becoming part of School<sup>PLUS</sup>, I know that there was a first module where . . . In fact I think teachers, the schools had to complete three modules before they could be considered part of the criteria, and that scared me because that meant that as long as you could get through this module then you would be part of, you would be able to go on to the next module.

Well when we're talking about students and children and learning, it doesn't work. So I'm wondering, could you again describe the criteria needed for becoming part of the School<sup>PLUS</sup> program?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — There is no set criteria for becoming involved in School<sup>PLUS</sup>. There are 21 school divisions who have come forward and are going to be the pilots for this right now. There are in-service programs; there's three of those. Perhaps that may be what you are referring to. And there is an in-service on needs assessment for the community, so 21 school divisions are going to be involved in that and many more are coming forward as we speak.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, are school divisions applying for the right to become part of the pilot project? Are all schools encouraged to be part of it or how are they determining which schools are going to be given that right this year?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — We asked for volunteers and 21 divisions came forward. Every school division got the funding. And there is nothing stopping other divisions from coming forward, and we would expect more to be ready to go next year.

But they are moving at their own pace and some of them are using all schools in the division, others are concentrating on a cluster of schools. So there are different approaches, and different divisions are coming forward with different needs, and we are encouraging them and supporting them in any way possible.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, do they come forward with their own plan, an idea of what they could be doing within this school? Or are they . . . is it some set of criteria that they meet? I'm encouraged with some . . . the schools in BC (British Columbia), for example, that make contracts with divisions, and the only thing the government does, the department does, is measure the outcomes. They're not concerned about how they get to this outcome. They're worried about the special needs of each child and how that child is progressing through the system. And that's what I'm hoping is happening here.

So I'm wondering, when they come forward with a proposal, is it something that strikes the department's fancy and says, hey, this is something that'll work for children, I'm going to give you extra funding this year?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Each school division sets their own measurable objectives, and we work with them to set those and meet those and we have a collaborative monitoring approach. So each division comes forward and has done their own needs assessment and has identified what area they want to focus on. And we work with them through the process and assist them as they need.

But as the school division person from Davidson said, this isn't a cookie-cutter approach. Each division is going to need something different within its schools. And it's going to be a slower process probably than some would want, but it's the communities that are developing it so we will have to give them the time to do it.

**Ms. Draude:** — You're saying the right words, Madam Minister, because that's exactly what people want to hear. But I'd like to be more specific. When you say I know that there's these 20-some, 20-odd projects that are coming forward, do . . . For example, does one school said that they want to . . . crime is an issue in their school, or is there some of them saying that they're going to need a language, another language available in their school? Is there some school division saying that food is an important part of their needs in that area? Can you give me some examples of what each . . . these different projects are working towards and how you're going to measure their outcome?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — There are six dimensions of effective practice in the School<sup>PLUS</sup> model, and I'm going to name the six of them. There's parenting, learning programs, partnerships in communities, assessment practices, caring and respectful schools, and early intervention and prevention.

So any division could pick of those, of that menu, what they wanted to focus on after having done their needs assessment. And in say, caring and respectful schools, you may find a nutrition program. So they can . . . they insert into those dimensions and pick from those dimensions what they need to meet the needs of their schools.



And we don't monitor the . . . We don't do the monitoring. It's a collaborative monitoring so that the measurable outcomes . . . It's a collaborative approach that we help them with.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, thank you. I can write but not that quickly, so I guess I'm going to have to get you to give me a copy of that because I do have a couple of questions.

A minute ago we talked about the different departments that had signed on to the School<sup>PLUS</sup> belief. And I know that Education, Health, what was Social Services is now Community Services, Justice, probably Aboriginal Affairs, and I'm not sure what other two departments would be part of this. Could you please identify them for me?

**Hon. Ms. Junior:** — The seven departments are Learning, Health, the Community Resources and Employment, Justice, Aboriginal Affairs, Culture, Youth and Recreation, and Corrections and Public Safety.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Now I am sure that this . . . It covers a very broad spectrum. And when one of the big concerns that both the school boards and the teachers have is that although this idea is absolutely fabulous and it makes people wired with excitement, they're saying, is this going to happen within the existing budget?

You and I have had the discussion many times about the money that's been going into education and I understand you just had a similar discussion with my colleague. So this isn't the time or place to be arguing about how much money was or wasn't put into it this year, but we do know that it's going to take money to actually build this program.

And the Role of the School report talked about it. They indicated how much money was going to have to come from various departments in order to make this actually work. I know that you've put some dollars into it this year, which of course took away from what was supposed to be teachers' salaries. But I think that we . . . This is going to be an issue that is going to have to be dealt with. I haven't seen other departments, the other six departments, talk about how they are contributing towards the Role of the School and their part in ensuring that our children are getting the education through this new type of learning.

Can you give me some ideas of what you're doing within your intergovernmental departments' collaboration to ensure that the Role of the School is working between these seven departments?

**Hon. Ms. Junior:** — Last year the funding per student was \$33; this year it's \$90 — it's almost tripled the funding. And the total budget for School<sup>PLUS</sup> is \$16.5 million.

The question about the different departments supporting the initiative — there will be next year reallocation of programs that will be more appropriately delivered through this initiative. So we are looking at how we can best integrate and support School<sup>PLUS</sup> through our department.

**Ms. Draude:** — You know, Madam Minister, that's just opened the door. And I'd like to know what you mean by, next

year they're going to have more work for the various departments. Please explain further.

(16:30)

**Hon. Ms. Junior:** — This is something that's in the discussion stage; that's why I'm saying next year we should see some of the results. But we're looking at things like our shared services mechanism that we have in place now — how we can better use that, or maybe use it differently to develop and deliver programs that are needed through this School<sup>PLUS</sup> initiative.

**Ms. Draude:** — That was a lot more sparse than I'd hoped for, Madam Minister, but I guess you're working on it right now. My mother used to have . . . Her favourite saying was, next year's country. Maybe it was because she was a farmer's wife but it was always next year was going to be better.

So I'm going to be looking forward to seeing what's happening, and I'm sure that during the year now you are having meetings between different departments and seeing how you can be working together.

I'm wondering now if there's, if within the department you're meeting or if it's happening at the local level where public health is going over to the schools to meet with the school boards. Is workers within Community Services going to school? What kind of thought process do you have on working at the local level?

**Hon. Ms. Junior:** — I think what might be more reassuring perhaps to the member is that there are some vehicles that these discussions are occurring through. And that is the Council on Children and youth committee and the human services integrated forum which brings the ADMs (assistant deputy minister) together from the different departments.

So through those different working relationships, the programs that we're talking about that could be identified for better integration into the School<sup>PLUS</sup> will be talked about and finalized. And we're thinking next year would be a target date.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you again, Madam Minister. At the local level, of the 23 schools that are working in the projects, have any of them come together with ideas how they're working with the different departments?

**Hon. Ms. Junior:** — The 21 school divisions that self-identified to begin this process only did so in January of this year, so they are having many discussions about the process, the needs assessment, how they will develop their School<sup>PLUS</sup> program in their area. So we'd anticipate they would be talking to the different partners in the community as necessary.

**Ms. Draude:** — In some of my travels around the province, and when I met with the Tisdale School Division, I was impressed with the fact that they had a public health nurse within the school, that their recreation centre was part of the school, that they and that the community saw it as the heart of their community.

Is Tisdale one of the schools that are a pilot project, and is this kind of work that other school divisions are working on?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — I'm actually going to read them off, the 21, because Tisdale is actually one of them. In Region 1 — there's Moosomin School Division No. 9, Scenic Valley School Division No. 117, Weyburn No. 97, and Weyburn Comprehensive school divisions. In Region 2 — there's Swift Current School Division 94, Maple Creek School Division 17, Eastend School Division No. 8.

In Region 3 — Davidson School Division 31, Moose Jaw Catholic 22. Region 4 — Saskatchewan Valley School Division 49, Saskatoon East School Division 41, Humboldt Catholic 15, Saskatoon School Division 13, and St. Paul's Catholic 20, joint core neighbourhood project. Region 5 — Melfort School Division 100, Tisdale School Division 53, Saskatchewan Rivers School Division 119.

In Region 6 — Lloydminster Catholic 89, North West Catholic 16, Meadow Lake School Division 66, Parkland School Division 63. And in the Northern Region — Ile-a-la Crosse School Division 112. That's the 21.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. One of the most exciting challenges we're going to be facing in this province is the fact that we have a number of schools being built on reserves now, a number of our students are moving back and forth between reserves and our public and Catholic school system, and the fact that we are having a number of hidden children within the system as well.

You talked about Aboriginal Affairs being part of the group that are making up the department initiative, and that's great within your department but how is the buy in out in the province? Are the bands buying into working with any of the school divisions to ensure that they could be part of a School<sup>PLUS</sup>?

I understand that the funding is separate, that most of the schools on the reserves are paid for federally, but we still have children that are moving back and forth between the two systems.

So have you had talks with FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) or any of the tribal councils?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Before we go into the more specifics of your question, I would like to at this time point out that there is a legislative secretary has been appointed to be the person in lead . . . the lead person on School<sup>PLUS</sup> and that's my colleague from Saskatoon, the MLA from Idylwyld.

And basically . . . Now to your question. The band schools are constitutionally discrete, but we are having more and more of their participation in our education system as well.

And one of those initiatives — it was the MOU (memorandum of understanding) that was recently signed with the FSIN and it's the first provincial government-to-government education agreement of its kind in Canada. And Lindsay Cyr and myself signed this February 27.

It formalizes the relationship between Saskatchewan Learning and the FSIN and allows the two organizations to collaboratively pursue a common work plan that will improve conditions for students in both the provincial and First Nations

school systems. And working together we're going to successfully ensure the future of all of our children and youth living in Saskatchewan. So this is one very exciting initiative that we do have.

Also the directors of the band schools attend the regional directors' meetings that we have throughout the province. And this is something that connects us all in our common goal of educating our students to the best of their ability and ours.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you. Again, Madam Minister, I thank you because you were kind enough to give me a copy of the M of U that was signed earlier this year, and I understand it was an important step forward.

It also is something that's again done at the top end and when we're dealing with children I'm always afraid that we have a lot of top people getting together, and how is it really trickling through to the children and how is it affecting them at the end of the day?

And I know that we talked about not having a cookie-cutter approach, but again when we're excited about signing these agreements that have to be done, they aren't the things that should be the highlights. The highlights are what's happening out in the schools to the children.

When you listed the seven departments that were working together, the one that I think was noticed by its absence is the one of Economic Development, because out in the community we have a lot of businesses that have knowledge and wherewithal that students could be gaining from. And I would like to be able to know that businesses are not only welcomed but encouraged to be part of the education system, because there can be a lot of learning acquired from life experiences and not necessarily something that has been taught in a book.

So is there any working right now at the local level with businesses within the school system?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — There's a couple of parts to your question. One was about Aboriginal support for students at the local level. We do have community schools which have been in place for quite a while. We have 14 co-management agreements between bands and our boards, and we have tuition agreements.

And your question about the connection to business with the Industry and Resources connection at the provincial level for the department, our . . . we have a business connection already that's in place with our curriculum and our practical arts program. So we're already connected with the business community at the very local level.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, I assure you, we're not connected enough at the local level — not by far. There's a lot of knowledge and experience that can be gained at the local level from people who are doing hands-on work everyday. And they drive by the school to go to their place of business and they have a lot of knowledge that can be given to young people that won't necessarily be taught in a book.

So I'm hoping that the doors open wider so that we can ensure that, if we are going to be having a school that is part of the

community, the community feels like they are part of the school as well and they can start working within it.

Madam Minister, there's two more areas or two more questions that I'm going to ask you now. You talk about community schools and I know that there are still community schools there. Is there going to be sometime in the future when you're seeing community schools are going to be just evolved into the School<sup>PLUS</sup> model so that we won't be having what is known as a community school separate from our whole public education system?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The 100 community schools that we have at the moment, designated and funded, will stay as long as the need is there. It is the intent of the School<sup>PLUS</sup> model that every school become a community school and address the needs of its specific community.

And what we see in School<sup>PLUS</sup> is that the school will be student-ready, instead of the student be school-ready — that's the philosophy.

**Ms. Draude:** — That's correct, Madam Minister; so if the school is ready for a School<sup>PLUS</sup> then you won't need a community school because it will be there.

Madam Minister, one of the cost barriers that we have in our education system is the bricks and mortar of the school system, and I know that the community schools have recognized the fact that there's no point in having a school closed for 19 hours of the day or 16 hours of the day when it could be used for different functions in the evenings or most of the evenings. There's so many . . . With so many departments involved in School<sup>PLUS</sup> I would — especially Community Services and even Culture, Youth and Recreation — I would see that there should be an opening or an opportunity to use the schools for more than just the education of a K to 12 student.

(16:45)

How is your department and how is School<sup>PLUS</sup> looking at using the bricks and mortar that we have in place in this province for more than just K to 12 learning?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Space isn't always the issue. A lot of times it's more the attitude of people working together.

**Ms. Draude:** — Pardon me, Madam Minister? I think that's what School<sup>PLUS</sup> is supposed to be, is people working together and changing the attitude of people working together.

So I think a two-word answer was not exactly what I was hoping for, not exactly what people were hoping for. There is opportunities here to make use of the buildings that we have for parenting classes, for cooking classes, for Teen-Aid, for lots of different issues. And I'm hoping that as we talk about building this province and growing this province, we start using these facilities for more than just schooling. So I'm sure, and I'm very hopeful, that when seven departments have got their heads together, they're thinking we've got a school that's not being used in the evening, is there something that we can use it for?

I'm sure the minister would have another . . . something else

she can say with response to this answer.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — My answer was short because I thought your issue was space. And what I'm saying is it isn't the space that's the issue, working together sometimes is what is the problem. And there are many schools who use their schools far more than just the 9 to 5, or 9 to 3:30, or whatever the hours are. They already have programs coming into their schools and they use them widely. And they determine — the building is theirs — they determine what they use in their facilities.

But it is sometimes changing attitudes of how people work together. So different programs can come into the schools that maybe not traditionally were seen to be done through a school.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, I know that you indicated earlier that over the next year there's going to be more work within different departments. And hopefully by next year we will know . . . we'll have answers that'll show that there is a thought process where everybody is working like cogs in a wheel and we can make better use of not just our facilities but of our people.

One other issue that I want . . . that I think is going to be affecting these departments as they try and work together is the issue of confidentiality between departments and about students. I think you probably heard me talk about a student that I was made aware of who had a social worker dealing with him for an hour in the afternoon from Health. Later on he had another worker working with him from Justice for an hour, and later on he had another worker working from Social Services. This was not only a waste of time and a duplication, but it was very hard on the student. Nobody benefited from it and the education system itself didn't benefit from it.

So I know that this is issues that you're going to be having to deal with to ensure that if there is an issue with Health, that the Health workers are allowed to give the information to the teachers so they aren't . . . know how to deal with it.

Is this something that you are working on at this time?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — We have an information-sharing policy that's . . . among human services that was implemented in 1996 that covers these issues. There is a complex, case-management strategy being developed right now that we would expect some new policies to come out of this fall.

**Ms. Draude:** — That's probably some of the best news that we've heard today and I imagine there are people right across this province are going to be doing a little jig for glee because this is going to be good for the students — good for everyone — and it's going to save a lot of money in duplication of services and inefficiencies.

Madam Minister, I really appreciate the time we've had this afternoon talking about School<sup>PLUS</sup>. I think it's one of the initiatives that we have an opportunity of making work if the thought process is right around it. I know that a lot of your department's personnel are excited about it and are aware of how it should be working, and it's a model that could be working right across Canada.

So I thank your officials today for their help and I appreciate the fact that perhaps as we go into the future we probably are working on the same page.

**The Chair:** — I ask the minister to move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you. I'd like to, before we do that, thank my officials for coming today and supplying very wonderful answers for the questions. And thank the members opposite for their questions.

And I'd like to move that the committee rise and report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:55.



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