

The Assembly met at 10:00.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today on behalf of my constituents who are concerned about the high cost of education tax on property.

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.

The people that have signed this petition are from Rama, Quill Lake, and Wadena.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise once more on behalf of the constituents of Cypress Hills to present a petition with regard to the government's reluctance to renew Crown grazing leases in our constituency. Their prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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 petition is signed by residents of the Cabri area.

I so present.

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The petitions just keep rolling in. The prayer of relief reads as follows:

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

Your petitioners come from Hamlin, North Battleford, and Battleford.

I so present.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition by citizens concerned with the almost unbelievable lack of a hemodialysis unit in the Union Hospital in Moose Jaw. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the 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 from the city of Moose Jaw and the community of Caronport.

I so present.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise again with a petition from citizens of rural Saskatchewan who are very concerned about their lack of health care services. 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.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed in total by the good citizens of Rockglen.

I so present.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to present a petition with concerns regarding health care from west central Saskatchewan. 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 ensure continuation of the current level of services available at the Kindersley Hospital and to ensure that current specialty services are sustained to better serve the people of west central Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Flaxcombe, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens opposed to possible reduction of services to Davidson and Craik health centres:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Davidson and Craik health centres be maintained at its current level of service at a minimum of 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctor services available, as well as lab services, public health, home care, long-term care services available to users from the Craik and Davidson area and beyond.

I so present.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Davidson and Girvin.

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. 12, 18, 21, 27, 35, 36, 40, and 90.

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of the Crown Investments Corporation: how much did it cost SaskTel in advertising to attract the 5,000 customers of *Max*?

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Highways minister: can the minister please say when the plans will begin to repave the section of Highway 42 from the junction of Highway No. 2 to the junction of Highway No. 19?

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Environment minister: for the fiscal year 2001-2002, what was the total dollar value spent by your department on the sexual harassment prevention program; further to that, how many sexual harassment prevention program general awareness workshops were conducted and in what specific departments?

And as well, Mr. Speaker, again with regard to the sexual harassment prevention program:

How many manager/supervisor workshops were conducted; how many sexual harassment prevention program training facilitator workshops were conducted; and how many sexual harassment prevention program consultation workshops were conducted?

I so present.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the CIC minister: have SaskTel officials recently travelled to Peru or any other South American country on Crown corporation business; if so, what was the nature of the trip and the business opportunity involved?

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you two friends of mine seated in your gallery, and I'd ask them to stand. Mike Androsoff, who is an emergency medical services consultant, and also my friend, Wally

Duychah, who is the CEO (chief executive officer) of WPD Ambulance in the beautiful Battlefords.

I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them here this morning.

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

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, is a good friend of mine from the opposite end of the province, Mr. Speaker — not the width but the length. We have the mayor of Stony Rapids who is visiting the Assembly today. I'd like to ask the members to welcome Georges Mercredi.

And Georges was here for a New North gathering in which we had a number of ministers meet with a number of northern mayors. And Georges of course is very pleased because this year Stony Rapids received a \$7 million — or last year, sorry — water and sewer system that wasn't there before. And he's here of course to work on other issues that the Far North needs to have addressed.

And I want to ask all members of the Assembly to welcome Mr. Mercredi. And I'll say in Cree.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

And welcome to the Assembly today, Mr. Mercredi.

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

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

#### Mother's Day Wishes

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Sunday is Mother's Day, a special day set aside to honour our mothers who loved us no matter how many times we made mistakes, fought with our brothers and sisters during six-hour car rides, broke curfews in high school, or played our music too loud. Despite all of that our mothers seemed to love us anyway.

One day is not enough to reflect upon how our mothers contribute to our lives and society. They guide, nurture, love, and support us. They let us have that last piece of rhubarb pie. They make us chicken soup when we're sick. And for those of us in political life, they are our biggest fans and sometimes — not often — our greatest critics. They are indeed shining examples of selflessness.

It's a wonder our moms have time to do all of the things that they do when increasingly society demands more of mothers. But this is a testament of how strong our mothers are. They have a knack for being in 10 places at once, and wearing several different hats. They're amazing women.

I think the following Moroccan proverb captures the essence of motherhood perfectly, as the saying goes and I quote:

In the eyes of its mother, every beetle is a gazelle.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to salute all mothers and

grandmothers who deserve this very special day.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the member has said, this Sunday we will be celebrating Mother's Day.

While we set aside many different days throughout the year to celebrate other events and achievements, Mother's Day is truly a special day for each and every one of us.

The facts are none of us would be here today if it wasn't for our mothers. They were the individuals who brought us into this world; who put up with the scraped knees, runny noses, torn clothes, messy rooms, etc. And many times they did it without a word of complaint.

Mr. Speaker, as members of this Legislative Assembly, I'm certain each and every one of us have been encouraged at some time or other by our mothers. While we were asked to seek . . . or when we were asked to seek nominations to public office, we probably sought our mother's advice. After all, she was always there in the past when we needed an answer to a question or advice on a particular issue.

Mr. Speaker, my remembrances of my mother are ones of a loving, caring, encouraging, and patient individual. And Lord knows she needed patience.

She was a person who took great pride in her family, a mother who enjoyed cooking her sons' favourite dishes especially on their birthdays, one who enjoyed reading to us when we were younger and helping with that school assignment, and on occasion administering correction when needed.

Mr. Speaker, as members we all have fond memories of our mothers. To all the mothers across this province, happy Mother's Day.

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

### **Job Statistics**

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is a very important day. Today is a very happy anniversary for Saskatchewan businesses and our province as a whole.

In April, Saskatchewan recorded its 12th consecutive increase in employment on a year-over-year basis.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Despite two years of severe drought, Mr. Speaker, there were 12,900 more people working this April than last. This follows increases of 11,400 in March, 10,600 in February, 16,800 in January, and 25,000 in December, Mr. Speaker.

These numbers tell me, Mr. Speaker, that among those who believe in Saskatchewan are the business people of this province who hire the people and who give us these numbers. And, Mr. Speaker, I add my optimism for Saskatchewan and

that of my colleagues for the business and workers who are driving this economy — not bad for a province that the Saskatchewan Party leader describes as a mess in his speeches, Mr. Speaker.

There's more good news. In April 2003 there was an increase of 5,400 youth employment jobs. The youth employment rate dropped by more than 2 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Our youth are finding jobs at home in Saskatchewan close to their families, Mr. Speaker.

Regina has the second lowest unemployment rate of all Canadian cities, Saskatoon tied for fourth. Mr. Speaker, there is moisture in the ground and activity in the workplace, reasons to feel good about where we live. I thank the business people of Saskatchewan for their efforts and their confidence in our great province, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **YWCA Woman of Distinction**

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to applaud the achievements of Lori Besplug of the Kindersley area.

Lori is the owner/operator and resident artist of the Garden Gallery. She was recently recognized, along with 38 other Saskatchewan women, at the YWCA Women of Distinction Awards for women who represent an exceptional range of talent, achievement, and commitment.

Lori was nominated in the business and trades category and chose to decline a nomination in the arts area. An accomplished artist in her own right, Lori sees art not only as a hobby but as a business as well.

Ms. Besplug houses her galley in two reclaimed buildings, the Madison Legion Hall and the Brock Catholic Church, both of which have been moved to the Besplug farm.

Lori has been a farm wife for 20 years and has three children. She has worked tirelessly for 14 years to make her business the success that it is today. She values her lifestyle in rural Saskatchewan and promotes it at every opportunity.

She is well known in the Kindersley area for the wine and cheese galas that feature different local, national, and international artists along with live musical talent and valet parking, all on the open prairie.

Lorie has an encouraging word for any budding or established artist who is fortunate enough to come into contact with her. She strives continuously to make her gallery better and to offer the arts to anyone who is interested, by way of workshops and exhibits.

Lori Besplug certainly deserves the recognition given her by this prestigious nomination. Please join me in congratulating Lori and wishing her continued success.

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

### Writing Awards Reception

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night myself and the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation had the privilege to attend the reception for the City of Regina 2003 Writing Award. This annual award of \$4,000 is designed to enable a writer to devote three months to work on a specific project.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to say that Trevor Herriot is the winner of this year's award. Mr. Herriot is a Saskatchewan naturalist, writer, and illustrator who is perhaps best known for his work, *River in a Dry Land* about the Qu'Appelle watershed. Of this book one critic said, and I quote:

Every once in a . . . while a book comes out that is so entirely persuasive, so beautifully written, so well informed, so brimming with humanity, so obviously inspired, that it changes my way of viewing the world.

(10:15)

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more. And in fact, I'm such a fan of this book that I'm on my fourth copy because I keep giving them away to friends and family.

The Regina Writing Award is the latest in a long list of honours for Mr. Herriot. Others include the Canadian Booksellers Association Award for a first-time author, the Writers Trust of Canada Drainie-Taylor Biography Prize, the Saskatchewan Book Awards Book of the Year, and the Regina Book Award. He was also shortlisted for the 2000 Governor General's Award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Trevor Herriot and his wife, Karen, and their family on receiving this well-deserved award. And I'm sure we are all looking forward to reading his new book, *Jacob's Wound*, that he is hoping to complete this summer.

As well, compliments of this Assembly to the city of Regina and the Saskatchewan Writers Guild and their funding supporters in the Saskatchewan Arts Board and Saskatchewan Lotteries for providing this excellent award.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Hafford Students Win at Drama Festival

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a group of 25 students from the Hafford Central School who braved a huge spring storm to participate in a drama festival in Moose Jaw on April 3 to 5, 2003. The group presented the play, *Barry Wotter Son of a Witch* — that is with a W — a parody of the popular book and movie, *Harry Potter*.

The group did extremely well, bringing home the following five awards: Wendy Linnell received the Cheer Award; Chad Michalenko and Stephen Parchewski each bought home acting awards; the group was recognized with an award for Excellence in Costumes and Special Effects; and also their favourite

distinction, Most Courteous Cast and Crew.

It is refreshing even though not surprising to see such a talent pool of up-and-coming actors and actresses, costume designers, special effects technicians, and set designers coming from all areas of this great province.

Please join me in congratulating directors Janet Baranieski and Jim Shevchuk, along with those who received special recognition, and the entire cast and crew of *Barry Wotter Son of a Witch* for their achievements at the Moose Jaw drama festival.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Psychiatric Nurses Honoured During Mental Health Week

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 5 to May 11 is Mental Health Week. The theme this year is Respect, Don't Reject and focuses on reducing the stigma that is often attached to having a mental illness.

Mr. Speaker, a healthy society is based on healthy attitudes and, although awareness and understanding has increased over the years, there still remains a sense of fear and shame about mental illness and social exclusion continues to be one of the largest barriers faced by people who experience mental illness. A mentally healthy society, Mr. Speaker, is one where this fear and lack of acceptance will finally be overcome.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge a group of people who work every day with and on behalf of people who are experiencing a mental illness. I'm speaking of course about psychiatric nurses. May 10 is designated as Registered Psychiatric Nurses Day, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank these men and women for the excellent job they do, delivering quality mental health care services across the province.

Mr. Speaker, it is through the efforts of people such as the RPNS (Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Saskatchewan) and the Canadian Mental Health Association that negative attitudes towards mental illness will change.

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

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member from Regina Centre on her feet?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — To introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and to all my colleagues, some very important guests. We had an opportunity to meet this morning as they arrived on the steps of the legislature and had breakfast together.

We're joined today by a number of individuals committed to

raising awareness about the tragic problem of youth suicide on reserves and in our communities. They began their walk in Nanaimo, BC (British Columbia) on April 1, 2003. They are hoping to finish in Ottawa by June 21, 2003, which as I think we all know here is National Aboriginal Day, and I believe hope to meet with Jean Chrétien about the issue of resources for suicide prevention, and not only conventional supports and approaches but the benefits of sweat lodges and other cultural and traditional approaches.

So I'd like you to welcome each, and please stand as I mention your name: Steve Rush, who's the elder with the group, Gina Meldrum, Candice Clappis, Vincent Watts, Sheila Simpson, Greg Brown, Thomas Watts, Reno Trimble, and Dave Elliott.

And I know that any help they receive is appreciated, Mr. Speaker. If everyone would please join me in recognizing the important work they've taken on here.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to members. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming her very important guests here today from British Columbia, on your way to Ottawa. We all know that suicide hurts. It hurts families and friends and it's a hurt that nobody ever gets over. And it's especially incomprehensible when it's a young person.

So on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party, we congratulate you on taking up this very important initiative. And good luck in all your endeavours.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Crown Corporation Investments

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago the Minister for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) promised that the NDP (New Democratic Party) would be more forthcoming about its money-losing foreign investments. But, Mr. Speaker, I guess he failed to clear that with Don Ching.

Don Ching said that SaskTel will never disclose its losses. So we have the minister saying one thing and we have Don Ching overruling him. Mr. Speaker, who is in charge over there?

My question — this minister is helpless — will the Premier intervene and order Don Ching to disclose these multi-million-dollar losses?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, as is often the case, we will be anxious to find out what Mr. Ching may or may not have said because what is reported in this House from members

opposite is very, very often not accurate.

Mr. Speaker, you will know that this government has provided, in accountability of the Crown corporations of Saskatchewan, a higher level of accountability of transactions and affairs that ever has existed. Is there work that we can yet do, Mr. Speaker? Yes, there is work that we can yet do.

Now if we want a question of accountability, how about the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party being a little bit accountable, for once, to the people of Saskatchewan about his plans for the Crown corporation should he ever form government?

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party, to make known to the people of Saskatchewan, what is it? Is it the policy they announced in the last election that before he's going to sell things off, he will have a referendum? Or is it . . . And I will reserve my further question for further answers.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it appears to us that SaskTel has lost about \$66 million in foreign investments over the last few years, but the Premier says he doesn't agree with our numbers. Mr. Speaker, the problem is that they have a big credibility problem because they won't tell us what they think the numbers are. That's the problem, Mr. Speaker.

A few years ago the Saskatchewan Party suggested that the NDP might lose as much — as much — as \$20 million on the SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) fiasco. The NDP said that was crazy, Mr. Speaker. They said they were just having a few start-up costs. Well it turns out, Mr. Speaker, that they didn't lose \$20 million, they lost a whopping \$28 million.

Now they're saying exactly the same thing about their SaskTel losses and, Mr. Speaker, they're covering them up.

Will the Premier live up to his own commitment that he made after the SPUDCO disaster? Will the Premier take charge and order Don Ching to tell us how much SaskTel is losing on their foreign investments?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, the opposition leader, the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party said . . . says, well it seems to them and appears to them certain things are true. I will tell you what does not need to be seeming or appear to be true. The fact of the matter is that the Crown corporations of Saskatchewan, the public utilities and public enterprise and public investment, has returned to the people of Saskatchewan in the last 10 years \$1.6 billion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that \$1.6 billion, Mr. Speaker, will disappear from the people of Saskatchewan if that Leader of the Saskatchewan Party should ever form government. Because it's clear to the people of Saskatchewan it is his intention — it is his intention — to sell off the public utilities. It is his intention to cease all — all — public investment in the economy.

I ask him therefore, which is the position of today? Is it the position that he identified in the last election, in his own platform material, that he would provide for the people of Saskatchewan a referendum? Or is it the position then taken by his party in resolution that the Crowns would be just simply sold? Or is it the position he takes on public radio two years ago that in fact the Crowns should be kept and should be allowed to expand outside of the province? Or is it the most recent position which is sell them all? Which is it, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Premier is not aware that a . . .

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Apparently the Premier doesn't realize that a \$1.6 billion return on Crown investments is a very low return. The Crowns are not reporting well because they've lost their way, Mr. Speaker. They are investing where they oughtn't to invest.

And in the wake of the SPUDCO scandal — one of those wayward investments, Mr. Speaker — the Premier in this very House promised, he promised to be more accountable to the people of Saskatchewan about how his government was spending the people's money. Yet in today's paper, if you could imagine, SaskTel President Don Ching says he's never going to tell us how much money SaskTel is losing. He will not do it. He will overrule the Premier of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we know SaskTel is losing millions of dollars on foreign investments. So we ask, who is running things over there? Is it the Premier or is it Don Ching? The evidence indicates that Don Ching has the upper hand.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP continuing to cover up its losses on SaskTel's investments out of the province of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I repeat. This government over the last several years has extended accountability into the Crowns, as they have never been accountable or available . . . the information available to the public of Saskatchewan in the history of the province. I repeat, are there ways we can extend this accountability; are there ways we can better inform the people of Saskatchewan? Yes, there are and we are working towards that.

Mr. Speaker, I committed to this legislature, I committed to the people of Saskatchewan, for instance, that when public investment is going to be made in the economy, that there will be third party review of those investments. That is happening. That has happened and it will happen in the future. There's no difference there.

But, Mr. Speaker, the man who leads the Saskatchewan Party, who would seek to be Premier of the province, will not stand publicly and declare what he intends to do with public utilities. He will not stand publicly and tell us what he intends to do with public investment.

He has his House Leader, the member from Cannington, saying there will never be a public investment if they form government. I wonder what the member from Wilkie thinks about that when he knocks on the door of government asking for support for his community. I wonder what other members think about that when they come asking the support of government.

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

### Ethanol Industry

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, people close to the Broe ethanol deal at Belle Plaine tell us they do not believe that anything is going to be done on the project this year. They believe the deal may be dead, but at the very least construction is unlikely to begin this year.

For the minister responsible, Mr. Speaker, what is the current status of the Broe ethanol project at Belle Plaine?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, a fair question, a fair question from an opposition. What is the status of the ethanol growth in our province? What is the status of the project at Belle Plaine? As the Minister of CIC has indicated, we have committed in an arrangement with the Broe group of companies to see the ethanol industry grow in our province.

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

(10:30)

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, the terms of that agreement are the same. They are not changing. We are working together with the Broe group of companies to put the financing together, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're doing.

Now why is it that the member of Thunder Creek, and why is it that the Saskatchewan Party is so opposed to developing an ethanol industry in this province? Why is that, Mr. Speaker? An industry that will support agriculture and the diversification of agriculture, an industry that brings more jobs to the people of Saskatchewan, an industry that will be helpful to the environment of our province. Mr. Speaker, why is it that the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party and all of his MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) oppose every economic development in this province?

It's just a good job they're not in government, Mr. Speaker. The evidence is in today with this government in power — 12,900 new jobs, year over year.

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, that Premier and those members opposite and every person in this province understands that this party supports the ethanol industry. In fact . . .

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — In fact, Mr. Speaker, we announced our

ethanol strategy some months — some months, Mr. Speaker — before they announced theirs.

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — And that member from Regina South, who was minister of Energy and Mines for a heartbeat in history, announced their strategy. Our only question at the time — we supported the strategy — our only question at the time, Mr. Speaker, was we didn't believe. We didn't believe him when he said that the private sector would finance this venture.

And, Mr. Speaker, apparently, apparently nothing is being done at the site this spring. They haven't even started site preparation, let alone construction. Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm whether or not construction will begin on the Belle Plaine ethanol project this year?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of government I can confirm that we continue to work towards the financing of this project. The terms of the agreement are not changed. And, Mr. Speaker, it will be unknown of course to members opposite, that to build together with a partner you work carefully. You work carefully to ensure that you're getting the best, the best arrangement that you can possibly receive to build the ethanol industry in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this session, this whatever day we're at — 36, day 36 — has been very illustrative about the Saskatchewan Party. They come into this legislature with nothing but negative criticism, nothing but negative criticism. They fight the ethanol industry in that member's own constituency. They fight the forestry industry. They fight the film industry. They fight, they complain about our Wide Open Future campaign. Negative, negative, negative. Mr. Speaker, this government is not interested in these negative nabobs' opinion. What we are interested in is building and expanding our economy. And the evidence is in today — 12,900 new jobs.

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, the only construction that site has seen to date was when they put up a tent for the Premier's photo op, and pulled in an ATCO trailer that was flooded this spring. Since then nothing has been done, and there are apparently no plans to begin construction or even site preparation any time soon.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier confirm whether construction of the Belle Plaine ethanol project is going to begin this year? And if not, is the deal dead?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, this deal is far, far from dead, I can guarantee you that. And I hate to disappoint the members of the Saskatchewan Party who obviously wish it were dead.

Now there's been a peculiar change of heart, Mr. Speaker, in the member from Thunder Creek and in the Leader of the

Saskatchewan Party, because the day we were at the tent to celebrate this tremendous opportunity for the province of Saskatchewan, who was in the tent? The member from Thunder Creek. Who, Mr. Speaker, was clapping in the tent? The member from Thunder Creek.

Mr. Speaker, it's because we will work with partners, community-based, international investors, it's because this government believes in building and expanding the economy that we see the results today — 12,900 new jobs, 5,400 of them for our young people, and 12,000 of those jobs, Mr. Speaker, full-time jobs.

Now if I can just conclude with this. There are going to be a few folks out of work pretty soon, and they're all sitting right across the House from here.

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, this is another deal where we're not getting clear answers from the NDP, which is sort of ironic, Mr. Speaker, given what the Premier said about another deal — ironic, Mr. Speaker, given what the Premier said about another deal at Belle Plaine a few years ago.

This is what the Premier had to say about the . . .

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you. This is what the Premier had to say about the Belle Plaine Saskferco fertilizer plant when he was in opposition. And he said, and I quote:

It's very strange the deal would be announced without the details in place.

Well, Mr. Speaker, isn't that exactly what the Premier has now done at the Belle Plaine ethanol plant? He made a big announcement last October when obviously the details were not in place.

Mr. Speaker, and this question is for the Premier: why did the Premier do that after he criticized the former administration for exactly the same thing?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, let me tell you exactly the circumstances here. When their government, when their government — you know, the cousins, the Devine government — when they were doing the deals, they weren't talking tens of millions; they were talking hundreds of millions, Mr. Speaker, let's remember that, of straight public investment, straight loan guarantees. They announced Saskferco with no detail.

When we commit to work with a partner, we have the detail. The detail is available. This government is in for equity of 20 per cent. The Broe Companies are in, there's financing in place, the detail is all known. Mr. Speaker, and when we can find, and there is interest, our segment will of course be moved out, down to 10 per cent.

Now that's a government that provides the information as

opposed to what was going on in the 1980s when these people were in government signing hundreds of millions of dollars of loan guarantees, bankrupting the province while they're at it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I hear the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party sitting in his bench, talking about flip-flops, flip-flops. Well some of us are now describing this as the pickerel party, the pickerel party. Isn't that what . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . no, the walleye; I'm sorry, the walleye. I'll come back in a moment, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, that isn't the only thing the Premier had to say about the Saskferco deal. He also questioned why the government of the day was being so secretive about the financing arrangements.

He said, and I quote:

It's very difficult to judge the merits of the deal when the facts always seem to be changing.

Well isn't that exactly what's going on with the Broe deal? Mr. Speaker, it's the Premier who announced the Broe deal, it's the Premier who had the big photo op at Belle Plaine, and it's the Premier who promised to be more accountable to the people of Saskatchewan.

Will the Premier give us a straight answer? What is the status of the Broe deal and are they seeking new partners?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, in my enthusiasm I want to again say to this House with clarity, this government is partnering with the Broe group of companies. The maximum investment of this government will be \$20 million — \$20 million or 40 per cent of the equity.

Our plan of course is to see that industry prosper in the province. And as it grows and prospers, we are entirely willing to see our equity investment reduced to other partners, Mr. Speaker. That's the plan. We've made that very public.

I challenge the member of Thunder Creek to show me how once — once — that when they were in government, they displayed that kind of openness and that kind of accountability to the people of Saskatchewan, when they were signing us up for hundreds of millions of dollars of loan guarantees to put us in a situation where the bond raters of the continent said, this province is in bankruptcy.

Now we were talking about fishing, about fishing for a party . . . a position of the Saskatchewan Party. You want to talk about flip-flops. What has happened this week?

We've got the member of Sask Rivers coming in here saying, this party opposes the forestry centre. We've got the member then of Sask Rivers going home and saying, no, no, no, I've listened and this party now supports it. The leader says they don't support it. What is the position of the Saskatchewan Party?

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

### Financial Support for Education

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is again for the Minister of Learning. The SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) is reporting that at least 61 school divisions are being forced to increase their mill rates this year. Some school divisions have to increase their mill rates by at least 2 mills because the NDP government has broken its promise to cover the increased costs of the teachers' salary contract. But, Mr. Speaker, according to the minister, a 2 mill increase is minute and insignificant.

Mr. Speaker, a 2 mill increase would drive education property taxes up in an average community by 10 per cent. That's a massive tax hike for Saskatchewan families, and it's an all-out attack on Saskatchewan seniors.

Will the minister explain how the NDP government can think a 10 per cent increase in property tax is small and insignificant?

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nobody likes a tax increase, but I want to add some perspective to this conversation. Two, two school divisions have decreased their mill rates. Twenty-eight school divisions have held their mill rates at the same. Twenty-one school divisions had increases under point five mills.

This year's budget invests a record \$1.2 billion into education, 500-plus million of that going into the grants for school divisions. This is a \$23.6 million increase or 4.9 per cent over last year's grants.

Nobody likes to see tax increases, as I said, Mr. Speaker. The average mill increase across the province will be point six mills.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, 61 school divisions in this province had to raise their mill rates to cover the contracts that this government said they were going to cover.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, it's becoming increasingly clear that the Minister of Learning doesn't have the foggiest idea what a mill rate is, and she clearly doesn't understand how difficult it is for a 2 mill increase in property taxes for our families. She doesn't understand how devastating a 10 per cent education property tax will be for seniors.

Mr. Speaker, maybe the minister will understand this. If every school division in Saskatchewan increased property taxes by 2 mills — an increase that the minister describes as minute and insignificant — it would translate into a \$68 million tax increase across Saskatchewan.

Will the minister please explain to the people of Saskatchewan why her and her NDP government thinks \$68 million is insignificant?



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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was going to move on to a different answer, but I don't think this member understands what I said the first time. Two school divisions have dropped their mill rates; 28 school divisions have held their mill rates; 21 school divisions had increases under point five, and the average increase across the province will be point six mills.

What we do understand, Mr. Speaker, is that yesterday the critic for the Sask Party said . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. Order, please, members. Order. I'd ask members on both sides . . . Order.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we do understand is that yesterday the critic for the Saskatchewan Party said that their plan was to fund education at the cost of inflation — nothing over and above that. That's what he said in *Hansard*. Well since 2001-2002, we have increased the K to 12 (kindergarten to grade 12) school operating grant by 9 per cent, while inflation was 5 per cent.

Their plan would have left school divisions short \$23.3 million over this period. Their plan would have had . . . at the freeze of the level of inflation would have had this year's increases to 2.1 per cent. That wouldn't have covered the cost of the teachers' salaries. We do understand what their plan means to education — it means freeze.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, what this party understands and what the people of Saskatchewan understand is if this government would have froze the money that they are giving to K to 12 education at the 1991 level, there would have been an additional \$385 million in education in this province by up to 1996.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — And that's something that's a fact.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Learning admitted that she didn't know what impact a 2 mill increase would have had on each community. Mr. Speaker, that's what the Minister of Learning's job is. She's responsible for knowing what kind of an impact the mill rate would have because she's part of a cabinet that's supposed to know what the impact will have on education and the economy.

(10:45)

Mr. Speaker, if the minister truly was excited about knowing about education issues, she would have put the same weight behind ensuring education was funded adequately as she did at getting a cabinet position.

Mr. Speaker, the minister said, and she was given a cabinet position, that if she wouldn't have, she would have quit politics. Mr. Speaker, who in this government really considers education a priority?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to speak on behalf of government. This government considers education to be one of its top priorities.

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — This is the government that in the last four years has increased funding to K to 12 education by over 20 per cent. This is the government that has instituted the nation-noted School<sup>PLUS</sup> program. This is the government that has doubled the number of community schools. This is the government that has doubled the number of pre-kindergarten spaces. This is the government that's adding 1,200 spaces of child care in this province . . . (inaudible) . . . education.

And what do we get from this opposition? That's what we get, opposition from the Saskatchewan Party. All the time criticism, criticism, criticism. The member opposite says . . . bases her questions, if you can believe it, on if — if this and this, it'll be this.

Well let me put an if on the plate. If they'd never seen the benches of government, we'd have the \$650 million we're spending on interest payments to pay for their debt, available to education, health, and everything else.

Mr. Speaker, we've been in this session 36 days — nothing but negative criticism; not one new solution, not one new idea in education, health, or the economy. Mr. Speaker, they're exposed. They are exposed to the people of Saskatchewan.

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

**The Speaker:** — Order, please.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 32 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Security Management) Amendment Act, 2003

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 32, The Miscellaneous Statutes (Security Management) Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read for 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. 33 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Security Management) Amendment Act, 2003 (No. 2)/Loi corrective (gestion de la sécurité) de 2003 (n° 2)

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 33, The Miscellaneous Statutes (Security Management) Amendment Act, 2003 (No. 2) be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

**Bill No. 34 — The Film Employment Tax Credit  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 34, The Film Employment Tax Credit 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. 35 — The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation  
Amendment Act, 2003**

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

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 35, The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

**The Speaker:** — Members — order, please, members. Order, please, members. I'm finding it difficult to conduct the business and to be sure that we have all the statements and motions properly recorded. And I ask members just to tone it down a bit.

**Bill No. 39 — The Municipal Revenue Sharing  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 39, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

**Bill No. 40 — The Rural Municipality  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 40, The Rural Municipality Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

**Bill No. 41 — The Urban Municipality  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 41, The Urban Municipality Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

**The Speaker:** — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, leave to move a motion regarding sitting hours.

Leave granted.

**MOTIONS**

**Hours of Sitting**

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Cannington:

That notwithstanding rule 3(1) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, the times for daily meeting and adjournment on Thursday, May 15, 2003 shall be 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.; and further, that when the Assembly rises on Thursday, May 15, 2003 it do stand adjourned until Wednesday, May 21, 2003 at 1:30 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased to stand on behalf of the government and table written responses to questions 198 through 210 inclusive.

**The Speaker:** — Responses to questions 198 to 210 inclusive have been submitted.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**SECOND READINGS**

**Bill No. 3**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hagel that **Bill No. 3 — The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in the debate on Bill No. 3, An Act to amend The Child and Family Services Act. This Bill focuses on prioritizing and using kinship care as a preferred alternative of foster care which, Mr. Speaker — and I've gone through the *Hansard* and listened to a number of our speakers, and I've looked at the minister's speech when they introduced the Bill — and it looks like it's going in the right direction.

I think unfortunately there are times in society that people aren't able to live in a family unit as lucky as I was to live in a family unit growing up in a small town and a mom and a dad that were there all the time. And so many of us have grown up in those family units, and how strong and protective that family unit can be.

It's interesting that this Bill would come up today. And at the end of my remarks we'll be moving it on to Committee of the Whole. But it's interesting on not quite the eve, but very close to the eve of Mother's Day, and talking about the two members' statements that talked about mothers and how instrumental they

are in our lives, and how instrumental the whole . . . Really it's not just mothers although they're a major, major part of it, but it's the whole family unit that raises children.

Unfortunately there are situations where that isn't the case for some children as they're growing, and in past the whole process of putting them into foster parents' home, although intent was good, I don't think the results were always what we wanted to see. And that's what this Bill addresses. It looks at kinship care as opposed to foster care.

And of course kinship care talks about moving the kids, children, into relatives, aunts and uncles, grandma and grandpas, or people that they know very well. So it's an easier setting for a bond with the family members that are still around to make with those kids so that there is still sort of a family structure around even though it is extended, Mr. Speaker. But even an extended family structure is better than, I think, what we were looking at before. Even though often, you know, the best results, intent . . . the greatest intent for best results were there in the foster home, I don't think you can ever replace the issue of parents or relatives or close family members raising those children. I think it must be a bit of an intangible there of having someone close, as far as whether it's a relative or aunts and uncles, that type of thing, or family friends. It's an intangible bond that's there that helps kids reach their potential, I think even greater than in the other setting, Mr. Speaker.

So this Bill, after we've had the opportunity to look at it and listen to a number of people that have spoke on it and raised any concerns that they have, we think is going in the proper direction. I guess our only concern is it's too bad it hadn't been done years earlier because we see the benefit of it now. And I think when you talk to the Child's Advocate they were talking about this many years ago, that they would have liked to have seen kinship care in place. So I guess that would be the negative side that it wasn't done sooner, but it is . . . been introduced this year.

And as an opposition party we would support the Bill. So at this time I would move that we put it into Committee of the Whole.

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

### Bill No. 8

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 8 — The Youth Justice Administration Act** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to enter into the discussion and debate on Bill No. 8, An Act respecting the Administration of Youth Justice Services and making consequential amendments to other Acts.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill basically outlines a whole number of definitions and basically nothing more. And one of the concerns that we have with this is what is the government, the NDP government, going to do with this? Is it going to end up turning it over to bureaucrats and let bureaucrats run it and they would be less accountable, as we've seen in the past, to the public?

(11:00)

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to crime, Saskatchewan has the dubious distinction of having one of the highest crime rates in the province. Mr. Speaker, this city of Regina had the distinction of being the number one car-theft capital of Canada, if not North America, when it came to population.

And what did this government do about it? They waited until, in fact, this province became number one as car-theft capital before there was any action. And I'm happy to say that there was some action taken, prompted by the city of Regina, to reduce car thefts. And that program has been working, Mr. Speaker.

But it is also interesting to note that on the day that it was announced, the then minister of Justice, his car was stolen.

Mr. Speaker, it's also interesting to note that as we see car thefts going down in this province and in this city, that break and enterings . . . break and enters are on the rise. And I don't think that really says much for our crime prevention program. As one area of crime is reduced, another one is rising.

Mr. Speaker, there's a number of issues and when I look at issues related to crime, and youth crime specifically, what causes this? Why is it such a high item? Why are we such a high rate of crime in this province?

One of the reasons is that youth, if they don't have anything to do, if there is no jobs . . . And we know the job creation program by this government who promised 30,000 new jobs, and we hear rhetoric today of they've created 150 new jobs or something. Well really what is the job status of this province? What do youth have to look forward to in this province?

If there are jobs available and if there's a challenge for the young people in an environment of . . . a work environment, something that they can look forward to, I personally believe the crime rate will subside.

I spoke to some people in the Battleford area who were talking about corrections facilities and remand facilities. And in my discussion with the people there, they said it would cost in the neighbourhood of \$5 million to build a remand centre that they figured that they would need.

And I asked them, I said if we took that \$5 million and put it into programs for work or earmarked the money for getting young people to work, would we need the remand centre? And the answer was quite loud and clear. We probably wouldn't need the remand centre if we had all of these young people doing productive work.

So I think there's a lesson to be learned in that statement, Mr. Speaker, that if we tunnel our efforts into helping out young people, that maybe we'll take them away from the crime and the direction that they're going.

Another issue, Mr. Speaker, is youth addictions I'd like to talk about. We have in this province a problem with youth addictions. And how's it being addressed? We spoke about this last year. I questioned the Minister of Health in this Assembly

last year about what we were doing for youth addictions. And the answer was, basically, nothing. Youth with drug and alcohol related problems were dealt with in the same manner as adults, which we know is a huge problem. And, Mr. Speaker, when questioned, the minister said we have 12 beds in this province dedicated to youth addiction.

Now I relate youth addiction to this Bill, Mr. Speaker, because youth with addictions require funds to support their habits. And where do they get their funds from? In a lot of cases these people turn to criminal activities to support their addiction problems.

Now if we had a program in this province for youth with addictions, I again think that we would reduce our crime problem substantially. And I think the emphasis is actually going in the wrong direction when it comes to this. We should be looking at youth addictions and how we can treat the problem with youth and getting them back into a . . . as a productive member of society and getting them back where they can actually be part of the workforce. And again it goes back to what I mentioned earlier. Some of our focus should be creating jobs for our young people also.

So there's quite a build-up here, if you wish, and look at the systemic problems that we have. And it goes back to how this government's been operating over the last decade, of total mismanagement of resources. And if it would tunnel their efforts into doing something productive for this province, rather than straying off into other parts of the world and the country with investments, if some of that money was placed into programs to help our youth, we would not have the same problems and issues that we're talking about today with youth justice.

Another issue I'd like to touch base on is the problem that we have with FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome) and FAE (fetal alcohol effects). At present, Mr. Speaker, we have no way in this province to adequately deal with people, youth that have FAS and FAE.

And the propensity is, if these people with fetal alcohol syndrome or fetal alcohol effects are involved in crime — and there are a number of them that we know that have been — what do we do? They go into our system and they're locked up. Well one of the problems with individuals with FAS or FAE, they don't really realize that they're doing anything wrong. And so we lock them up and they sit incarcerated, not really knowing why they're there.

And so there's another example, Mr. Speaker, where I believe if we tunnelled some of our efforts into dealing with the direct issue of youth with FAS or FAE, that we may detract from the crime rate. We may lower the crime rate by dealing with the problem rather than dealing with the results.

Another issue I'd like to just quickly address is our crime rate is still extremely high. And what have we done about it? We had an election promise from the NDP in the last election to provide 200 more police officers in this province. And how have we made out? It's just another broken promise by this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, it is a dubious honour that we have that we have the highest rate of young offenders in Canada. And I know the NDP just love to stand up and say that they're leading in certain areas. Well unfortunately, they're leading in crime rate in Canada and I don't think that's a very good distinction to be having.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk a little about this Bill and the legislation that was handed down from the federal government. It has a number of different targets; among them seeking to deter first time offenders by looking at extra judicial measures instead of custody and implementing measures that can range from intervention to community service to fines.

And I'd like to just talk a little bit about the community service issue because again there's been a distinct lack when it comes to preparedness for this. And this is very much outlined by Vice-Chief Lawrence Joseph who talked about this initiative, this Bill 8 initiative. And basically what he said, communities have not had the time or resources to prepare for the change. Here's another example of introducing a Bill without the stakeholders having time to prepare for it or not having the resources to deal with it.

It's also worth noting that under the new federal legislation, violent or repeat young offenders will face custody sentences that are to be served in conjunction with intense rehabilitation and reintegration programs.

Again, where are these intense rehab and reintegration programs? Where are they being set up? Is this going to be after the fact that they're going to be set up or are they being worked on right now? And we very much have a concern with that.

Yet an overriding concern, Mr. Speaker, that has been mentioned time and time again by various stakeholders, is that, while Ottawa appears to be giving the provinces some latitude in adapting the new federal legislation to each province's specific requirements, in reality what Ottawa is also doing is virtually leaving it up to each province to try and figure out how to implement the various programs and services that will be required to enforce the Act while working without adequate funding or resources to do so. And with Ottawa leaving this up to the NDP government of this province, I think that's a concern for a number of citizens of this province.

Mr. Speaker, there's a number of issues that we have some concerns with yet in this Bill. Aside from those that I've mentioned, there's a couple of issues surrounding this Bill that we have some concerns with. And it deals with the funding and resources; there's no mention of funding or resources in this Bill. It doesn't give specifics about existing or new programs and services; it doesn't tell us how police forces, social workers, community workers, victims' groups, or educators will be better equipped to enforce this Bill or the federal legislation.

So that being said, Mr. Speaker, I think there's a number of other people that would like to talk to this Bill and we're waiting for some replies to come back in from some of our sources. So at this time I'd like to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Bill No. 10 — The Saskatchewan 4-H Foundation  
Amendment Act, 2003**

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

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have with me today, Mr. Hal Cushon, who is the assistant deputy minister of the Department of Ag and Food, and Kari Harvey, just seated right behind me, who is the manager of operations of extension branch. Those are the two officials that are with me this morning.

**Clause 1**

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I want to thank the minister and his officials for the changes that they made to this Act. Again I would like to stress how important the 4-H club is to Saskatchewan and the youth of Saskatchewan. With that, we have no questions.

**The Chair:** — I think we'll do it by clauses this time.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

(11:15)

**Bill No. 9 — The Agricultural Implements  
Amendment Act, 2003**

**The Chair:** — I recognize the minister if he has an additional . . . Well we'll pause for a moment while the minister assembles his officials because they are disassembled.

I see that the officials are now reassembled; I would recognize the minister to introduce them.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have Mr. Cushon, as well still with me. The additional official who is with me this morning is Mr. Lorne Tangjerd. He's the senior policy analyst from policy branch and he's seated right beside me . . . right behind me, Mr. Chair.

**Clause 1**

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have a few questions on this particular Bill, and I will begin by thanking the minister and his officials for being here today.

The first question that I would have is, how many formal complaints did the Ag Implements Board receive last year? And how many does it receive on any given average . . . or average amount any given year?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Chair, I'll just mention to the member that there have been, through the course of the year, about 100 to 150 more inquiries as opposed to complaints through the

course of the year.

The board hearings have been between two and three. The issues primarily have been around warranty and around performance and the . . . Since we've taken over the issues, there have been two hearings with payouts now, my officials advise me, of about \$5,000.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — So just to follow up on the minister's answer. There'd be two hearings, that would be over the course of the last year?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Yes, Mr. Chair, there were two hearings.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I thank the minister. I notice that this changes . . . or the changes to the Act increases the maximum amount that can be awarded for any one claim. That will be raised from 5,000 to \$10,000.

So what would an average claim usually be? There obviously seems a need to increase that and I think it's probably a necessary change, but what would an average claim be?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Chair, my officials tell me that most of the awards in the past have been under the \$5,000 level. But we have had now, well one of the two hearings, were paid out at the max, which was 5,000.

There is some sense here that had the threshold been higher than the \$5 million . . . or the \$5,000, that the award would have been higher than that but would have fallen within the benchmark of the 5 to the 10,000 which we're amending the legislation to protect the producer.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I thank the minister for that answer. How much money is presently in the Ag Implements Compensation Fund to cover these claims?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Well, Mr. Chair, there's \$153,851 in the account.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I thank the minister. Changes to the Act, if I'm understanding it correctly, gives the board the discretion to impose a penalty fee on a dealer or a dealership if they've failed to attend hearings or if they have repeated violations or if they, you know, intentionally violate the Act. And the amount of the penalty fee, if I'm understanding the Act correctly, is to be determined by the board.

Why did the minister feel that it was necessary to add this provision in the Act?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Chair, the request was really at the request of the industry. The industry wanted to have that. They wanted to ensure that the board had a bit more authority and so that was the rationale for including it. To hold, I expect, the manufacturer a bit more accountable would be the response.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I thank the minister. I am curious as to what sector of the industry would have made that request, simply because I find that usually the market will dictate or eliminate, quite frankly, a poor dealer, because it soon gets out there that he's not to be trusted or his deals are less than honest and

therefore he loses business and can no longer stay viable. So I found this unusual.

Can the minister tell me what segment of the industry had asked for this request, and is there any examples of dealers who have posed a problem, that there have been a number of complaints filed on any one given dealer that would have made this change necessary?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Chair, to the member, the Ag Implements Board is made up of producers or farmers, of dealers, and of manufacturers and to ask specifically about, was there opposition from one group as opposed to another, my officials tell me that that's not the case in the consultation; that really the recommendation for the change came from the board and because the board is composed of or made up of all of those sectors that we're simply responding to the request of the board.

Now there may be on an individual basis here across the province — and I don't have any sense of that; the member might — where you have individual either dealers or maybe manufacturers that might have some concern of it. But collectively the wisdom of the board is what initiated this particular change.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Presently, prior to any changes, does the board have the jurisdiction to suspend or cancel a dealer's licence; and if so, has that ever been done?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Chair, under the current Act that authority currently rests with the minister.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Could the minister tell me how often the board meets and if they have any duties outside of handling complaints from implement customers?

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

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — With leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Chair, we are very pleased to have in the gallery, in the west gallery today, from the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), hosting the Nibinimik Adventurers from Summer Beaver, Ontario. Boy, they have come a long way to see us, Mr. Chair.

There's 15 youth, grades 7 to 11, plus three advisers who have come from Summer Beaver. And together with them from the YMCA, who as we know does a lot of good leadership development work, Shawn Weimer and Christine Ashcroft. So if you could just join me in welcoming these folks who have come so far today.

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

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

#### Bill No. 9 — The Agricultural Implements Amendment Act, 2003

(continued)

#### Clause 1

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, to the member. Normally they would meet once a year, but as I outlined in the first question that the member had asked, they met two additional times around complaints or concerns that I'd raised with you or shared with you.

Now as well, what they do is they review the calls or the inquiries that are made through the course of the year, that are made to us, in case there's some sense here that they need to intervene. And so they review those calls.

And in the past year, my officials tell me that collectively they've met a few additional times outside the times that they were dealing with complaints because they were providing advice to us as we were preparing to do the amendments on this piece of legislation. So there would have been some additional meetings through the course of this year.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I thank the minister. Could the minister provide for us the cost of operating this board on an annual basis?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Chair, we don't have that specific detail with us but we'll provide it for the member as quickly as we can now.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I thank the minister. Could he also provide for us a list of the members that are on the board and when they were appointed. Once you're on the board, is it an evolving membership or is it something that changes every two years? So if the minister could also provide that information for me, it would be greatly appreciated.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Chair, we'll undertake to provide for the member not only the amount that is paid to this individual board, but also provide the names of the individuals. And I believe the member's interested in the terms of each of the members as to whether or not they're consecutive or whether or not . . . or what the length of those terms are for each of those members. And we'll have that available for her.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I thank the minister and I'll be looking forward to that.

I noticed another change was increasing . . . The fines for operating without a dealer's licence went from 2,500 to 10,000. Has a fine ever had to be levied within the last year or two?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Chair, the answer is no.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Also, Mr. Chair, it appears that the minister . . . The changes to the Act allows for the minister to impose additional terms and conditions on the dealer for their licence that the minister deems appropriate. It gives more power, in my mind, to the minister and this is not a provision that's in Alberta or Manitoba. Why did the minister feel that this provision was necessary to put into the Act?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Well the accountability, Mr. Chair, is — in

our case — is directly here to the legislature. If I might use the Manitoba model for example, the Farm Machinery Board itself is given the authority. In this case it allows for the opposition to bring to the legislature this very discussion that we're having right now, where the authority is vested with the ministry. And as a result of that, then the accountability for the decisions that are made here can be addressed in this environment which we think is an appropriate exercise.

Furthermore I think because the board is appointed at the discretion of the minister, the board would then have the presence — or the ministry would have the presence — of having that dialogue with the board, changing whatever policy needs to be changed. And then bringing to this Assembly the opportunity for us to do what we're doing here today, is to hold the government accountable for the decisions that it's making as it relates to change of legislation or its practices within the regulation.

(11:30)

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I thank the minister for that answer. And I guess that's another debate, as to whether or not questions in the House provides better accountability, because we obviously debate that every day.

One more change that I would like to ask the minister about is that the fund . . . The Ag Implements Compensation Fund is being moved out of being a separate entity into the General Revenue Fund, if I'm understanding the changes correctly. And that creates some concern quite frankly because if a designated fund is moved in the General Revenue Fund it rather disappears and it may not be there to address the issue that it's meant for.

So could the minister please provide for us an answer as to why he deemed it necessary to move the Ag Implements Compensation Fund into the General Revenue Fund?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Chair, the fund continues to be maintained by the individual board. And what we're simply doing here is just showing that this particular fund will be accounted for under the General Revenue Fund in the normal fashion of which we do under many occasions where the . . . in fact funds are collected. We'll report them through the financial reporting of the government, but the proceedings of the funds that are within the account will continue to be managed by the Ag Implements Board.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — To follow up on the minister's answer. So it will be an entry, if you have a list of funds in the General Revenue Fund, it would have its own entry?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — It would be . . . The fund would be continued to be held separately. Where it would get reported is when the Ag Implements Board reports its annual statement, it would show up then in their annual statement as to the amount that's in the fund, the number of fines that are collected, which payouts are made. So it would be in that area of reporting.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank the minister for being available for questions, and his officials. I would like to join the other minister in welcoming the youth to our legislature. And I have no further questions.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 28 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Chair, just before we conclude I want to thank my officials and the member for helping us through this piece of legislation. It will be very, very useful for the work of the ag implements folks and the people within the 4-H organization.

I'd hoped though, Mr. Chair, that as we're heading into the 4-H Bill that the member opposite, who I listened carefully in her comments in second reading, said that she knew the song to the, to the . . . the 4-H song. And I would have hoped that she might have sang it, but she didn't, Mr. Speaker. So we'll be looking forward to that in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 10 — The Saskatchewan 4-H Foundation Amendment Act, 2003

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

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

#### Bill No. 9 — The Agricultural Implements Amendment Act, 2003

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a 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 Labour Vote 20

#### Subvote (LA01)

**The Chair:** — And I recognize the minister to introduce her officials.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. To my right is Christine Tanner, the deputy minister of Labour. Directly behind Christine is Jim Nichol, the assistant deputy minister. Directly behind myself is Peter Federko from the Workers' Compensation Board, the chief executive officer. And behind Jim Nichol is Sharon Ackerman, manager of budget and operations. To Jim Nichol's right is John Boyd — sorry, John — John Boyd, the executive director of planning and policy division.

Also sitting behind the bar, we have Corinne Bokitch, director Status of Women office. We have Eric Greene, director of labour standards. We have Glennis Bihun, manager of

occupational health and safety partnerships. And also Gail Kruger, vice-president, finance and information technology from the Workers' Compensation Board.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome to the minister and to all your officials. I appreciate the opportunity to ask some questions today. And most of my questions are going to revolve around what used to be known as the Women's Secretariat and is now the Status of Women's office.

I know that this Status of Women department was moved into Labour two years ago and since then has taken a dramatic decrease in budget and in the number of people. In 1999-2000 the Women's Secretariat had a budget of 1.19 million; 2000-2001 it had a budget of 1.15 million; 2001-2002 it had a budget of \$1.17 million.

Now I would imagine that the work that the Secretariat is still trying to undertake is still going on. I don't believe their philosophy or vision has changed, but I'm going to give the minister the opportunity to explain it to my . . . and the people that are watching, what the work of the Secretariat now involves.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — I'd like to thank the member opposite for her question. One quick clarification. The changes to the Women's Secretariat was made a year ago, March. So it only has been one year . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon me? Partially it was . . . That accounts for some of the changes in our budget numbers.

Since the Status of Women office has been moved into the Department of Labour and become a unit within the Department of Labour, some drastic changes have taken place. The member is accurate.

And really what this is, is a different focus and way of achieving many of the same goals. When we look at the restructuring, instead of a stand-alone department or secretariat, integrating it back into the Department of Labour has offered us some very good opportunities, and some new opportunities, and some new opportunities of achieving the goals that are needed throughout the province for women and women's organizations.

Very few things . . . I'm sure the member opposite is aware that very few things are done in isolation within individual departments and that's appropriate for women's issues. They are not handled that way. It's more appropriate, and we felt it was more appropriate, that women's issues be looked at across government and that every department have a responsibility to look at the initiatives and the programs that they were putting forward and are putting forward, and have a look at those initiatives and programs to see how they affect women and equity issues throughout the province.

(11:45)

A more appropriate way of doing that is to have contacts within each of the departments. And that's what part of the changes that began a year ago, that's what has been worked on over this past year, that in each of the departments and the Crown corporations there has been policy advisers that have been designated and have been trained to look at issues within their

departments that pertain to women and make sure that the equity issues are addressed and are taken into consideration at the beginnings of programs and policies and in their early formation.

So that's something we've been working at.

Also there's been a number of consultations that have been done. I know myself, I took on a number of meetings and travelled in the province to meet with as many women's organizations and community groups that we could, once the changes were first announced, because there was some unrest with the decision. Some folks weren't happy with it. We took a great deal of time to go out and explain the changes and what we were focusing on and how we were working to achieve the goals within government and the equity issues that are out there.

I undertook a round of meetings with many of the groups and we talked about the things that they felt were important that the Women's Secretariat had done previously, what they would like to see maintained. There was some variety of opinions that came back but in many instances the things that they had felt were important — some of the research, the communication, the connect point in government for women's organizations to have a central one-window connect to government — they all felt that that was very important.

So what we did, the changes that took place when the secretariat moved into the Department of Labour, became the Status of Women office. The staff was put in place. Our new executive director was hired.

Then our executive director went out and did another round of meetings with women's groups, again seeking input on what they felt was important and giving her a feel for the issues that were out in the province and the areas that they felt needed to be maintained and things that they would like to see addressed.

After that, the decision was made to have a forum. That was held in the fall. Many women's groups were invited. Those that could attend, attended the one-day forum, where we had the senior policy analysts from the government departments and the Crown corporations also in attendance, and representatives from the women's organizations and community-based organizations throughout the province that deal with women's issues were present. Those that couldn't attend that day were sent a questionnaire so they could also have some input and feedback into the process.

And what our ultimate goal is to look at the issues and set direction for what we feel and what women's groups feel are important areas that we can work together to have a better gender balance through . . . not only through our policies but in services that are provided throughout the province.

It's been a very interesting year and a very enlightening year. We have some remarkable women's organizations and women in this province and it has been a very good year. Lots of work has been done. We have a great deal more to do, but that is where our focus is right now, is on the action plan for Saskatchewan women.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I agree with you



— we do have a lot of very remarkable women in this province. And the opportunity that they have to get together for this . . . in the forum you discussed was important. I'm wondering if there was actually a compilation of all the reports or information that was gathered at that forum and if it's something that's available for the general public.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — The document . . . After the forum was held, there was a document that was compiled to summarize the comments, the issues that had been raised not only at the one-day forum but also through the questionnaires.

This summary document was again sent out to over 100 women's organizations and groups throughout the province for input again back to the Status of Women office. And that information is being used in the . . . our eventual goal of having the status of . . . or the action plan for Saskatchewan women. But it is available if you would like copies.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And to the minister, I believe you had indicated this report would be available and I would appreciate a copy of it if that's possible.

The minister indicated that she'd spent, or her staff had spent a lot of time travelling around the province to discuss the amalgamation of the Women's Secretariat into the Department of Labour. Can you give us an idea of how much money was spent on the travel around the province?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — To the member opposite, the travel that I do is itemized but we don't have it broken down as to specific meetings. We can get that information and do the breakdown for you.

But I would like to say to the member opposite, one of the things that we have done is, we coordinated our meetings to meet with as many groups as we could in various centres, and also to alleviate the concerns that these organizations would have pay for their travel to come to Regina. That was unfair to many of these groups.

So we felt for us to coordinate the meetings and us to go out and meet at their location, wherever possible, because many of these groups are volunteer-based, work on a very thin margin, and don't use their dollars that they have or any funding they have for travel. So it was more appropriate that we did the travelling to them instead of expecting them to come to us.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I would appreciate the list of the expenditures, not just of the minister herself but of her staff, so we could . . . It would be interesting to determine how much of the \$257,000 was actually spent on that travel part of it last year.

I do see that there's a considerable increase this year — up to 379. Can you give me an idea of how you're going to be spending the increase in money this year?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — The increase to the 379,000, when the initial changes were made we had made some decisions. When the shift was first done, in the beginning, that was the budget that was earmarked. But when the decision was made to establish the Status of Women office within the department, we

had not made accommodation for the executive director's position, also communications, and the administration help for the executive director. So that's what that would take into account.

Also it's some additional grant money. The member may know that the International Women's Day grants, that are very small in total value but mean a great deal to women's organizations throughout the province, and it has been a very successful program. It was . . . The decision was made.

That was one of the things that the women's groups said to me, and to I know to the executive director when we had our meetings, was that was something that they felt was important to maintain.

So there's a bit more grant money in that, also the communications executive director and administration position.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, this Women's Secretariat or Status of Women office is part of Labour, and yet now you're telling me you need an assistant executive director. Could you give me an idea of the cost of an assistant executive director of this department?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — I apologize. Maybe I didn't explain this clearly enough. Your question — my understanding previously — you had been asking as to the difference from the 257,000 that was in the budget to the increase of 379,000. That difference was put in there to accommodate these positions when the Status of Women office was structured to be a unit within the Department of Labour, to accommodate the position of executive director for the Status of Women office, and also an administrative person . . . assistant for the executive director.

And also one of the issues that women's groups had raised with us was the communications that is done, not only within in networking but more formal communications with the pamphlets, the literature, etc. The communications position . . . So that is the difference in the figures to the 379,000. It accommodates those positions.

**Ms. Draude:** — So just to clarify then. There are three positions that have been created?

(12:00)

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — The people that are in the Status of Women Office . . . I'll be more precise. There are four actual staff people within the Status of Women Office. There is a pay equity analyst; there is a senior policy analyst; there is an administrative assistant; and also there is the executive director.

But also within the Department of Labour there is a dedicated communications person, and those costs and the resources for that position would be found under the information services budget in the Department of Labour. So there's five people that are dedicated to the Status of Women Office.

**Ms. Draude:** — Okay, Madam Minister, thank you. That means that not everyone that's working within the Status of Women Office is paid for under this department, or this part of the department.

You'd indicated that there was now someone in every department and Crown corporation that's looking at programs and women's issues within government. And I'm wondering if these personnel get together on a bimonthly basis or some type of basis to compare notes and determine policies and programs that should be brought forward by the department?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — As the member opposite can well appreciate, because we designated women in the departments across government as policy advisors, we can't assume that because we are women we understand all the gender-based analysis and equity issues.

So there has been a real effort to do training. There has been about two and a half days of training on gender-based analysis. And this group and what is referred to as an interdepartmental committee of policy advisors dealing with women's issues, they get together about every six weeks. And other than training, they have had input into the development of the Saskatchewan . . . the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women is an issue that I'd like to go into in a lot more detail but it's not something that we'll be talking about today. But I think it's important that we are given an update on it. It was an important issue. I know that when it was introduced a couple of years ago, it was something that a lot of work had gone into and we're wondering about the outcome. So I guess we will talk about that.

But I have one issue that I would like to talk to you about today and that is regarding alcohol and drug centre client profile, and this is women in recovery services. Now I know that it's talked . . . it was brought out by the Department of Health, but because your department is dealing with women's issues, I'm sure there's a number of the issues in this report are something that has affected you and probably concerns your department a lot.

In 2000-2001, the total number of female clients in the alcohol and drug centre, women in recovery services, increased 18 per cent from 1995-1996. And amongst . . . the proportion of Aboriginal clients, it's 66 per cent compared to 9 per cent of Aboriginal persons in the Saskatchewan population.

Is this something that your department is looking at, you're concerned about? And what is . . . What kind of steps are you taking to deal with the issue?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — To the member opposite, this is not something that we would be specifically involved with within the Department of Labour or the Status of Women office. We are dealing more with the policies.

So this would be something that the women's policy advisers in their departments may be able to put the gender lens on, to ensure that the women's areas for alcohol and drug rehabilitation are being addressed, that it's not . . . that it's something more specific. Because many times women's needs are different than what the general population needs may be.

So I'm pleased to hear that the Department of Health has been specific in establishing this program for women. Obviously there is some need by the statistics that you have given me but it

would be . . . That specific program would be something better addressed by the Department of Health.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, I guess it's quite upsetting when you think that the Status of Women now . . . although I do agree with the idea that we should have someone in each department checking to ensure that all programs and policies that are brought out by different departments have the women's issues at heart. But they were all supposed to have a focus point under the Status of Women and when we're talking about an issue that's important as this issue, I believe that we're missing the boat here.

We have to find . . . It's going to be . . . I can, as a critic, or any one of us can ask questions of each department and ask them how they're dealing with this. But as an overall gender issue in the government, it's something that should be brought forward to your department.

And I know that you're going to be concerned that in 2001 . . . 2000-2001, 35 per cent of female clients were unemployed. And in 2000, it was only 4 per cent were unemployed.

Also, Madam Minister, the one area that I'm always concerned about and that is FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder). This report shows that 78 per cent of all pregnant clients had problems with alcohol alone or in combination with drugs; 43 per cent have a problem with both alcohol and drugs; and 22 per cent had a problem with drugs alone.

These kind of statistics are very alarming and it's the type of thing that I believe that your department, the Status of Women has to be looking at seriously because even though each department is going to be keeping their information — and I know that it's an intergovernmental concern — it is still something that somebody's going to have to take the lead for.

I know that the Minister of Community Resources was at a conference earlier this week and discussed this issue and that's important, but somebody has to take the lead for it.

We introduced a Bill last year that was unanimously supported in this House. We all recognize that it's a concern that has to be dealt with and some place in the department, in the government, somebody has to be watching over it.

I asked the Minister of Justice the other day what his area was doing and he said there really wasn't . . . Even though people were talking about it, there really is no one person that's responsible for this.

And I was really hoping . . . I'm hoping to hear that your area, your Status of Women is going to be taking hold of this issue and ensuring that we can put all our resources and all our not only financial but personnel resources together to ensure that this issue becomes something that is not ever swept under the rug in this province.

How is your department dealing with this issue at this time?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. In the discussions, and when the member opposite spoke of specific programs, we've had this discussion within the Status of

Women office and within the Department of Labour.

And when you look at the previous forms, whatever they may be — when it began in 1964 as the women's bureau within the Department of Labour and the various stages that it has evolved through to the present-day Status of Women office, back in, within the Department of Labour, the women's bureau, Women's Secretariat — Status of Women office has never been a program deliverer.

What we have always focused on is more the research, the policy, the statistical research that is done on Saskatchewan women. And we have been a resource area more, I think, for the departments so that when there is programs that are being developed across the government for women, or programs in general, that they have access to information and resources concerning Saskatchewan women.

But we have never been a program deliverer as such. That's not a role we have ever taken.

And when we look at the policy advisers within each of the departments, that is what we are working towards so that we are the single-window entry into government as a whole, and we have access and connections right across government in each of the departments so that the information, the resources that we have, can be shared in the development or to enhance the development of initiatives and programs coming out of those departments when it deals with Saskatchewan women.

(12:15)

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. My questions are going to be regarding the WCB (Workers' Compensation Board) so I'll let the officials get into place.

And the report was released last week, last week, and we all came to the agreement that this past year, in the year 2002 the WCB suffered a \$93.5 million loss. That's the one point that we have agreed on so far.

There are a number of other points that we haven't agreed on. And so maybe with the time we have left we can work our way through that. And I'm not saying we're going to come to a whole lot of agreement, but maybe I can understand why your numbers are where they're at.

First of all, the \$93.5 million loss. I guess I would . . . When I look at the report, would it be fair to say that if we compare the 2001 numbers on page 4 and the 2002 numbers, the Reserve and Injury Fund, it drops down from 50 million surplus position to a minus or a negative position of 43.5. That's a difference of \$93.5 million. Would that be fair to say that's where you came up with that loss? Is that how you would calculate it?

Or I know the minister has referred to some other pages. Is it just a pure coincidence that that number is \$93.5 million as well? So I would ask that question to begin.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would say to the member opposite, go to pages 33 and 34. Those are the audited statements. Your page 4 does not create the numbers for the report. That is a quick glance, kind of a simplified version of

the year, just to give you the year at a glance. But you should really go to the audited statements. And on pages 33 and 34 it's easier to understand.

When you look at the year, coming from page 34, I mean quite simply your expense over revenue was the \$93.5 million. We had in reserve the \$50 million which leaves us with the \$43.5 million that is stated on page 33 and 34.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I realize it's not exact, it's not precise, it's at a glance, but it does show the \$93.5 million deficit position, well loss, not a deficit position, wouldn't be correct, but the loss that the WCB has realized.

When I was talking last week and stating that if you go back a year, the loss was shown at 55 or \$56 million. But if you look at the '91 or the 2001 — sorry, '91, wow that's stepping back — but the 2001 annual report and you compare it to the 2002 annual report, there are some real discrepancies there. There's a \$30 million discrepancy there. And that's what I was asking the minister last week.

If you look at the 2001 report and you look at the number below the 2000, on reserves and injury fund, it shows 105.8 million. But when you look at the 2002 report and you go to the year 2000 and you follow right down to the reserves and injury fund, it shows \$137 million. There's a difference there of about \$32 million.

Why . . . I guess, first of all the question would be, when you're looking at a year previous, let's say 2002, and you look at the annual report from one year and you look at the annual report the next year, and you see a discrepancy of a number — the year later the number has been changed — I would like to understand, have . . . so I could answer the question, why would the number have changed in the annual report from 2001 to 2002? And if that's an incorrect number, why was it in there? If it's correct, doesn't that show an \$87 million loss instead of the 55 which is shown in the 2001 report?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — To the member opposite, I would again refer you to the audited statements. When you're using the year at a glance that is on page 4, that is not an audited statement. And there is a proofreading error that occurred in the year at a glance in the restating of the numbers from 2000. There was an adjustment that had been made that was not accurately listed on the 2000.

That's why I've said a number of times, please use the audited statements. Pages 33 and 34 will give you the accurate numbers. They're very easy to understand and listed quite clearly. That's the audited statements that have been audited by WCB's auditors, also by the Provincial Auditor. They are accurate.

But there is, in the restating of figures on page 4, there was an inaccurate number that had been adjusted and in the proofreading it was missed. So that's where a lot of the confusion has come. The fact is that there was the \$93.5 million shortfall this year.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Well that's interesting. So the numbers, year in a glance, are really just numbers. It's the audited

statement, and I can understand that, but I would think that the year in a glance would mirror the audited statement, I would think.

And yes, there was . . . I guess there was a proofreading mistake for the year 2000. Can you then explain to me for 1999, was it also a mistake when in 1999 you show a \$1.1 million surplus and in 1999, in the year . . . the annual report, 2001, the year 1999, it was 1.1 million — and I'm seeing some heads shaking there — and in 2002 it was \$132 million. Was that another proofreading mistake in the 2002 annual report?

Or if I go back, do I go back and check out the audited statements and realize that there was a discrepancy and . . . I guess I'm questioning that the year in a glance doesn't mirror what the audited statements are — give or take, you know, a plus-or-minus small factor — but I mean there's some major differences here.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. The restatement was applied retroactively to 2000 in 1999. It is the same 31 million. And if you look at 2001 annual report, the year at a glance is correct.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Let me get this right then. So the 2001 annual report is correct and the 2002 annual report is incorrect.

(12:30)

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — The year at a glance in 2001 is correct. In the 2002 annual report, the audited statements are correct.

The error is made in the year at a glance, which is meant to be a year at a glance, a quick overview. But the statements are not derived from the year at a glance. The year at a glance has a proofreading error in it. When the restatement was done, retroactively to 2000 . . . or 2000 and 1999, the mistake was made in printing of the year at a glance in the 2002 annual report.

But the statements contained in the report, the audited statements that are audited by the auditors at the WCB, also the Provincial Auditor, are correct. The facts, the figures, the information contained in the audited portion of the statements is correct.

**Mr. McMorris:** — And I think that's more or less what I said. The year in a glance 2001 report is correct. The year in a glance 2002 report is incorrect. The audited statements in the year 2002 annual report are correct, but the year in a glance is incorrect. The year in a glance in the 2001 is correct?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Now I apologize. When you had first said it, you said the 2001 report is correct, the 2002 report is incorrect. And that's why I was a little defensive maybe because it is the year at a glance where the problem is. It isn't in the actual report. It is just on that quick view summary, year at a glance page where the restatement errors were made.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Okay. So we've got . . . I think we've got that down. The 2002 here in a glance report is incorrect. And it's incorrect then in more than just one year. We see a difference in the year 2000. But if you go back, there's a

difference in 1999 as well.

In the annual report of 2002 year in a glance, it's more than just one mistake. There are a number of mistakes in the year 2002 annual report when you look at year at a glance. Is that correct?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, it is one mistake that has been carried through on two years.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Let's leave the year at a glance alone for a little while. And we'll move . . . The question regarding unfunded liability and going back to the audited statements on page 33 — make sure I've got the proper year here — 2002 report, on page 33 and it shows unfunded . . . We're in an unfunded position.

I guess I would ask the minister's comments on that, about being in an unfunded position. We could get into the numbers exactly but can you make a comment on the fact that WCB for the first time, I would think, is in an unfunded liability position. Is that a correct statement to make?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — I guess this is another . . . It's easy to explain but I guess it can be misinterpreted many times. And I know the member opposite when we were at a function the other day made the comment that the WCB is going broke or what if it went broke.

So those type of exaggerated statements cause me some distress because the board is . . . The board is 99.2 per cent funded and the WCB has the ability to meet 50 years of future benefit obligations to injured workers. So we're talking to the year 2053. Now we may still be here duking this out but the benefits will still be there.

The only WCBs that have the ability to even come close to the funded position that Saskatchewan has maintained is BC, Alberta, and Manitoba. And our WCB is very prudently managed and its status as a funded compensation board is consistent and has been year-in, year-out.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Well I'm glad we agree on that then, that the WCB is in an unfunded position. I notice that in the newspaper clippings the Chair of the board mentions that it's 99.2 per cent in a funded position.

It's interesting, because when we had questions last year and we're looking at the loss, your statement in *Hansard* of May 24, 2004 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . May 24. I won't give you the page but it says here in a statement, your statement:

By requirement . . . of the Act, Mr. Speaker, the WCB needs to remain 100 per cent funded.

Can you explain to me what you mean by that, when you said last year in the House that in a requirement by the Act the WCB has to remain 100 per cent funded and you've just finished saying that we're not 100 per cent funded? We're 99.2 per cent funded, and if the pattern keeps going, dropping. If the pattern keeps going the way we've . . . over the last couple of years — dropping. We won't be in a 99.2 per cent funded position next year.

Even though you stated in *Hansard* that by the Act, according to the Act, by requirement of the Act, it has to remain in a 100 per cent funded position. Can you enlighten me on that statement?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, the Act requires that we remain able to provide benefits and to meet the obligations of benefits that we have to injured workers, both currently and into the future.

And as I've said, the benefits are secure until the year 2053. And more discussions will be held on this during the annual meetings which will be held later this month, May 21 and 22, here in Regina and in Saskatoon. And they will look at other issues and maintaining the funding into the future.

**Mr. McMorris:** — So I guess then the statement that you made last year during question period is incorrect then. It doesn't have to remain 100 per cent funded. Is that correct?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — 99.2 per cent is pretty close to 100. But pretty close is not 100. Still, maintaining benefits currently for injured workers and into the future, those dollars are there, those benefits are there, and they are secure.

**Mr. McMorris:** — To the minister then, the 99.2 is close. We heard yesterday that 2 mills was minute. When you put 2 mills over the province it's not minute. And anybody that pays property tax and knows what a mill rate is worth — and people that have farm land — knows that a 2 mill rate is not minute.

I guess my question would be to the minister, 99.2 is close. How many million out is it from 100 per cent funded then? How many were 43 point . . . Is point eight per cent \$43.5 million? Would that be correct then?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well now, the member opposite can make light of 100 per cent or 99 per cent but it's a heck of a long ways from being broke, as you stated publicly yesterday at a function we were at.

And when we were talking about . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, he did. And the difference, the difference between 99.2 per cent funded and 100 per cent, is \$7 million.

**Mr. McMorris:** — The \$7 million is the difference on a point eight per cent? We've gone from being well funded, well over the 100 per cent, to a 99.2 per cent, which is \$7 million. It will be interesting when the report comes down next year, whether we're below that.

But I think it's interesting that the minister would say that I said that the WCB was broke. I never said that at all. I said that it didn't have the money in reserve right now to cover its liabilities. If all the liabilities were called in right now, it wouldn't have the money to pay for it. You're \$7 million short and you've just said that. I didn't say that it would go broke. So there's a huge difference there.

I think I would have one last question then to the minister. The Act says that it's supposed to be 100 per cent funded and we've kind of touched on that. What is the projection going forward? What are the steps that the WCB are taking?

You know, it's interesting. We just as of yesterday passed a Bill through regarding workers' compensation and the change in the firefighting . . . the Act to coverage . . . cover firefighters. And I asked the question specifically: would there be any increase in costs? The answer was no, there'd be no increase in costs to the WCB going forward with the change in that Act, which is quite a bit different than what happened last year when we passed an Act and we look at the cost increase of that Act — I believe it being \$37 million roughly going forward.

What type of insurances do business owners around the province have that this new Act won't reflect a huge deficit like the Act last year did? So I guess in a go-forward basis, what is the WCB doing to make sure that they're not increasing their unfunded liability with some of the provisions in this new Act as didn't happen last year when the Act was passed last year?

(12:45)

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — To the member opposite, Bill 72, I guess the major difference between Bill 72 and the firefighters' legislation is that Bill 72 introduced a number of new entitlements to injured workers. And the cost and the actuarial adjustments that were made to have those benefits in place into the future, into the 2053, that accounts for the adjustment, the actuarial adjustment of the \$36.7 million. That's providing for those benefits into the future.

The difference with firefighters' legislation that we passed yesterday is that it's not a new entitlement. What that piece of legislation does is recognize the link between the cancers and the occupation.

There has been some difficult issues and this is not an easy subject to understand. But I know at the annual meetings last year, the adjustment that had to be made, the actuarial adjustment for Bill 72 was reported at the annual meetings. There was projections of a shortfall this year. I mean, that was done at the annual meetings in discussions with stakeholders, before the rates and premiums. The five-year plan was released at that time to look at rejuvenating the injury funds and the funds that had been depleted with the shortfall last year. That was discussions that were held at the annual meetings.

This board has had a very good record when you look at this past year. Administration costs have gone down. Operational expenses have decreased over this last year; there has been efforts made. And we had talked last year that they were working on plans to improve, that the board had gone through a number of changes probably over the last three years — team-based case management, a number of other areas where improvements were made — and we're starting to see the benefits from that.

So we see the reduction in administration costs last year. We also see the reduction in operational expenses. That's good news.

When you look at it, a closer look at the investment portfolio from WCB, which is operated by professional management companies that look after this fund, we have outperformed the WCB in Alberta and in Manitoba. They have done a very good job. There is good news coming out of this report also. And

when you look back during . . . WCB will, through its annual meetings, it will work through these issues with stakeholders as they have done in other years, when during the years of high surpluses they paid rebates to employers over three years — \$95 million.

The WCB has a history of working with the employers in this province to provide good benefits to injured workers in this province. And, Mr. Deputy Chair, we will continue to do that.

**Mr. McMorris:** — I'd just like to thank the minister for the answers today on the number of questions that I had through the WCB and also my colleague from Kelvington-Wadena had. I look forward into the future a number of more times getting a little bit further in depth with the WCB report. We touched on a few of the things today but I'm looking forward to some extra time into the future because there will be many more questions arising from some of the answers today, quite frankly.

So I'd like to thank the officials today for coming in, also from the Department of Labour too, not just the two departments I mentioned.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you to the members opposite and I would like to thank the people from the Department of Labour, also the Status of Women office, and the Workers' Compensation Board for the work they do, and for appearing here today.

The committee reported progress.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Monday. And I wish everyone a good weekend and a Happy Mother's Day.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:52.



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